

Armipotent 1031

Chapter 1031

The forest was giving off the same vibe as the Gigante Forest at the Ortis Continent. The enormous trees took over the forest, where the leaf was about the same size as his body. However, there was something off with the forest, the beasts that stayed in the forest, to be exact.

Tang Shaoyang glanced at his right hand. He was holding a giant bird, a giant dying bird, at its last breath. "This is the same." He muttered in a low voice as a frown formed on his forehead.

The giant bird in his hand was similar to an ostrich, having a long and featherless neck but lush feathers on its wing and body. Its size was twice of Tang Shaoyang's body, but its strength did not back up its size. The giant bird was weak, too weak for Tang Shaoyang.

[Karican - Level 892]

That was right; the bird was not even an Epic Rank beast. Tang Shaoyang felt like the beast was too weak for the beast on the eleventh floor. He expected the beast and monster would be at least at Epic Rank. He thought it was an infant or adolescent stage at first, so he hunted more Karican, and all the birds he had caught so far were below level 900. At this point, he concluded that the average beast in the forest was around level 700 up to level 900.

"Do I have a high expectation for the eleventh floor?" Tang Shaoyang thought he was overestimating the native on the eleventh floor. At this point, the eleventh was not different from the demon he faced on the tenth floor. The matured demon would be around level 850 to Epic Rank; in fact, the tenth floor had stronger natives than the eleventh floor.

[I think you have way too high of expectations for the eleventh floor than anything else. These beasts might be much weaker than you, but a pack of Karican may wipe out your exploration group.] Rosalie, the Flame Empress, responded to Tang Shaoyang's disappointment.

[Also, remember, you are not that far from the Starter City. From how the System named the city, the monster around the city should be the weak one. I think you need to go further if you want to find stronger beasts.]

"That might be the case, but it makes the forest the best training ground for Tarrior." Tang Shaoyang nodded. "I guess I have to go deeper into the forest...." His right way twitched a little as he stopped midway. "I need to get rid of the rats who followed first. I don't like being spied on."

He had his [Spirit Vision] activated as per usual, and he noticed a group of white-armored knights in range of his vision. There was no need for him to investigate to find who they were. The armor already told him that these white-armored knights were from the Divine Church.

"What did I do to them for them to be hostile toward me?" Tang Shaoyang was genuinely confused with the Divine Church. While they were not that close, they were not to the point where they would point their swords at each other. He thought the first conversation with Saintess Marisha was fine.

[Your Eye, Your Majesty. You have a demon eye, and that might be the trigger for them to be hostile against you. All human religions I face so far detest the demon race. It is as if they are created to exterminate us, the demon. I can say that because the churches and temples actively wage war

against us demons even though we don't do anything to harm humans.] Orlean, The Demon Prince, voiced his guess to answer his master's confusion. He could say that based on his experience when he was alive.

Tang Shaoyang subconsciously placed his right on his black eye. He indeed had a demon's black eye after he combined his race with Tang, the new race that was born from High Human, Dragon, and Demon. "That does not make sense. They did not show any hostility in our first meeting, but why now?"

[That.... I am not sure.] Orlean could not answer that. It was indeed confusing when his master brought up the first meeting. At that time, his master did not feel any hostility and also did not hide the black eye from anyone.

"At this point, it does not matter anymore." Tang Shaoyang shook his head. "Let's get rid of our tail, and maybe they have the answer for me... Huh!?" He was about to fly toward the white-armored knights. However, he then spotted another group following the white-armored knight. A smaller group of three followed the white-armored knights from a distance. He quickly realized the identity of the second group. The three were the people who stood near Reinart Thamsen.

"This is getting even more interesting."

Tang Shaoyang was certain that the Divine Church came to kill him, but there were two possibilities for Reinart's people following the Divine Church. First, Reinart wanted to finish him off in case the Divine Church failed to do so. Second, Reinart wanted to help him against the Divine Church. Even though the second was the least likely case, it still made sense. The Giteron Dynasty might want to deal some damage to the church's force by helping him. While they were in the same alliance, they were still rivals. Reducing their rival's force would help the Giteron Dynasty to contest the resource.

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The group of ten Holy Knights stopped their track. The knight in the front that was tasked to track Tang Shaoyang suddenly stopped, and the other nine stopped also. "Do you find him? Is he near?" The leader of the group asked.

The tracker looked up and around. "It's weird. His track suddenly disappeared." The knight still looked around while the other knights followed in tow, observing their surroundings. It was an ability to track someone based on mana, and the knight suddenly could not find any trace of mana, whether in the air or the ground.

"Are you looking for me?" A voice came out from one of the trees around them. The ten Holy Knights subconsciously pulled out their sword in high alert. In the following moment, they found the person they were looking for. Tang Shaoyang was on one of the giant branches, leaning his back against the giant trunk, observing the ten knights with an amused expression.

The ten Holy Knights grouped in one spot, having their backs touched each other. The leader of the ten felt like there might be a trap waiting for them. His suspicion was not groundless; that was because Tang Shaoyang dared to confront them openly.

"Three Ancient Ranks and seven Epic Ranks...." Tang Shaoyang muttered in a low voice. "The Divine Church thinks of me highly for sending three Ancient Ranks."

The Holy Knights were uninterested in entertaining Tang Shaoyang with the conversation. They kept observing the surrounding in case there was an ambush. The tracker soon came closer to his leader and whispered. "It's safe, Sir. There's no ambush; it should be safe unless they can fool me."

"Keep your guard. This heathen can hide his track and presence, and the ambush may have the same ability." The leader of the Holy Knight reminded his subordinates.

"Heathen, huh?" Tang Shaoyang heard the whisper, and he chuckled. "It seems you are right, Orlean. This church despises me because of my demon eye."

"So, why are you following a heathen? Are you just gonna stare at me like this?" Tang Shaoyang rubbed his cheek and jaw. "I might be handsome, but I am a straight man." He then jumped off the branch and landed twenty meters away from the group. He landed on the giant root, expecting the knights to attack him. However, the knights betrayed his expectation. They remained on the spot, staring at him intensely.

"What is this? Don't you want to kill me? Come at me." He motioned toward the knights to come at him. Provocation after provocation, yet the knights remained in the same spot and formation.

'Did I misunderstand these guys? They might not be following....' Tang Shaoyang suddenly doubted his judgment, leading him to think that the Divine Church might not come for him. The Divine Church might send this group to look for the other Starter Cities.

"Since you have no business with me, then farewell...." Tang Shaoyang turned around and dashed back toward the city's direction. He slowed his speed a lot, baiting the Holy Knights to follow him. It took a while before the knight tailed him again. At this point, he was a hundred percent sure the knight had come for him.

'Good. Keep following me.' An evil smile formed at the corner of his lips.

Tang Shaoyang purposely provoked the knights. He wanted them to chase after him, and he would lead them to the group from the Giteron Dynasty. The Giteron Dynasty's group was not that far; he quickly led the Holy Knights toward the Giteron Dynasty's group.

"I have baited them. Get ready to attack them." That was the plan, bringing the holy knight to clash against the Giteron Dynasty. He wanted to create a misconception that the Tang Empire worked together with the Giteron Dynasty.

The three Ancient Ranks from the Giteron Dynasty were caught off guard by the well. They took out their weapon, getting ready to protect themselves. Meanwhile, the ten Holy Knights stopped their pursuit, staring at the group of three warily. They were also ready to clash as Tang Shaoyang disappeared from sight, leaving the two groups in a tense atmosphere.

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"This is a misunderstanding. We are not his comrades, and the Federation of Allurion never worked together with the Tang Empire!" A quick-witted from the group of three immediately spoke up to make things clear. "We are a group sent by the federation to map the area around the city."

The ten Holy Knights did not lower their guard, but they looked more relaxed. The leader of the Holy Knight stepped forward. "If that's the case, then you can leave now!"

There was a few seconds' pause as the three were not expecting the Holy Knights to be that arrogant even after he told them they were from the federation. It stirred up the three people's egos, but they knew that they could not mess this up too.

"Tch." Then they heard the voice from above. "You guys are quite smart to avoid my trap, but come on you three. Are you trying to fool children with such lies? Do you forget that the federation consists of beastmen and elves? I wonder why you three try to fool them?"

Tang Shaoyang, of course, did not escape yet. He was watching from a distance and coming back when he noticed they would not fight. He expected they would not likely fight, but his intention was not to make them fight each other. His main purpose was to plant suspicion in the holy knights, and the fact that the three were lying helped him to make the Divine Church suspicious of the Giteron Dynasty.

"Not just you follow them, you also lied to them. I wonder why you pretend to be the federation's people. Are you trying to make the church fight the federation?" Tang Shaoyang watched the three Ancient Ranks with an amused smile. These three set the stage for him perfectly.

The three Ancient Ranks and the Holy Knights drew their swords. Not because of Tang Shaoyang but the two figures behind him, Avyn and Zara. The Angel of Death and the Kankara'Xeo floated behind him.

"Angel and dragon tribe?" The Ancient Rank of the Giteron Dynasty was astounded by what they saw right now. They never saw both races with their own eyes, but they had heard the tale about them. The Giteron Dynasty met those races at the Hell and Heaven Tower level, and they were superior races with high aptitude. They were the races that were strong even without the system, and with the system, they grew far stronger.

Everyone tried to use the detection skill on both of them, but it did not work. The notification they got was that the angel and the dragon tribe were affiliated with Tang Shaoyang.

"It should not be a problem for me to take care of them by myself. I am different from the other spirits." Avyn glanced at Zara. That was right; the system did not restrict Avyn's strength that much compared to the other spirits. Even though she could not utilize her God Rank fully, she was at the level of Legend Ranks, two ranks above Tang Shaoyang.

"You are not the only one who wants to have fun. Don't be greedy, dragon girl." Zara snorted back.

"Remember, don't kill them." Tang Shaoyang reminded the two girls.

"You are too soft on your enemy." Avyn shook her head as she disagreed with Tang Shaoyang. "I hope you don't regret this later."

Tang Shaoyang had his reason why he wanted these people to return alive. He wanted the Divine Church and the Giteron Dynasty to be suspicious of each other. He wanted these Holy Knights to return and report to their superior that the Giteron Dynasty followed and pretended to be the federation's people. That was enough suspicion for the two factions to be on guard at each other. That way, he would split the two factions' focus away from his empire.

He could just spare one of them from each faction, but he did not want to wage a full war against the two factions yet. At least, not until they got a whole picture of how strong the two factions were.

The federation might have been involved since they were in alliance, so he did not want the knights or the people from the Giteron Dynasty to die.

Meanwhile, Avyn landed on the grass, and as soon as her feet touched the ground. The whole area froze, spreading out so fast up to three thousand meters. The ice did not just freeze the ground but also the giant trees, except the tree where Tang Shaoyang was. The ten Holy Knights and the three people from the Giteron Dynasty were caught within the ice. The ice caught them in the ankle as they failed to reach with such a scale attack.

Zara managed to avoid her feet from being frozen as she sensed it beforehand. She realized that Avyn wanted to catch her with the ice, too, so Avyn could take care of her potion too. "What a sly bitch."

"Get out of the ice!" The leader of the Holy Knight yelled out, but soon he realized that he could not pull his feet from the ice.

"Unfortunately, you can't break free from my ice." Avyn was already hovering above the ten Holy Knights. She was about to kill them all, but then she realized that Tang Shaoyang had asked her not to kill them. The Kankara'Xeo flicked her finger, and all the ice broke into pieces, but that was not it. The ice broke the thirteen people's ankles and lower.

The scene was like a pile of snow being shaken off a tree, but this was on another level. Tang Shaoyang was amazed at the show, but the beautiful scene was not so beautiful with the scream below. The thirteen people screamed in pain as they lost their ankles. Even though they lost their ankles, there was no blood coming from where their ankles were cut.

"You..." The Angel of Death directed her glare to the ice dragon because the latter took her prey. She was supposed to fight the three Ancient Ranks from the Giteron Dynasty, but there was no point in fighting the people who lost their feet.

"What? I am helping you and making things easier for you. Now you can beat them without worrying they will escape from you." Avyn maintained her straight face as if she was doing a huge favor for Zara.

Tang Shaoyang could not watch the two girls keep arguing anymore. "Alright, that should be enough so they will not bother me for a while. Let's leave." He kept his composure, but deep inside, he was surprised by how strong Avyn was. He heard from her that they could not break free from the ice, which meant her skill was overpowered that even Ancient Rank could not break it.

"If this is not enough, we can fight more monsters later."

The trio left the thirteen people in the middle of the forest, but they should be fine even though they lost their ankles. Sure enough, after Tang Shaoyang left for a while, they stopped screaming. They adapted to the pain and calmed down, but the dread was implanted in their hearts. In a single move, the dragon tribe caught and crippled them.

"Can you use regeneration?" The leader of the Holy Knight asked one of his people.

"I can't. The ice blocks my regeneration." The ice froze the wound from the cut, and it blocked the regeneration. They tried to melt the ice with the fire, risking themselves being burned, but it failed to melt the ice. They realized that the ice was not just normal ice.

"This...." The leader of the Holy Knight was left speechless. None of them had flying skills, and they could not walk without the bottom part of their feet. They tried to create a new part with their mana, but the ice blocked their mana. The mana could not go through the layer of ice on their wounds.

"We have to return by our hands, or do we crawl?" One of the holy knights blurted out in disbelief. Coming back crawling was for sure a disgrace for the Divine Church, so did walk back with their hands.

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The Egunov Territory, the main building of the Divine Church

The Saintess sat on the honored seat in the hall as she saw the returned ten holy knights. Her eyes locked on the Holy Knights' missing part, their ankles. She heard that the Holy Knights returned by walking like that, enduring the pain from the wound as they walked.

"Did that heathen do this to you all?" Saintess Marisha asked.

"No, his ally did. He has a dragon tribe companion, and she alone crushed all of us, including the three Ancient Rank masters from the Giteron Dynasty." The leader of the Holy Knight replied. His voice shook as he was still enduring the pain.

"Can you elaborate more in detail?"

The Holy Knight explained what happened, all the details. The fact that Tang Shaoyang also had the fallen angel on his side and the three Ancient Rank masters that pretended to be part of the federation.

"Angel and dragon tribe? And when you use detection skills, it only shows that they are affiliated with the heathen?" Saintess Marisha squinted her eyes. "So that's why he was so confident not joining the alliance?"

"You can rest for now. I will try to break the ice with Holy Energy later, but get some rest for now." Saintess Marisha dismissed the ten Holy Knights. This time they did not have to walk with their wounded feet as the other knights carried them over.

"The fallen angel and the dragon tribe are truly unexpected. What do you think, Captain Ruben?" The Saintess asked the man who stood next to her. "Do you think we can kill that dragon tribe and the fallen angel?"

"I am not sure myself unless I see them with my own eyes, Saintess." Captain Ruben did not give a definite answer, yet he had a confident tone in his reply, signifying he was not afraid if he had to fight the dragon tribe.

"I think I can understand a little bit why The Almighty Lord wants to get rid of this Tang Shaoyang." Saintess Marisha nodded by herself. "But we have an issue with the Giteron Dynasty. They want to set us against the federation. They are quite nasty, huh? Should we warn them what we are capable of, Captain Ruben?"

"I agree with that, Saintess. I think annihilating a squad of their knights should be enough warning for them that they should not mess up with the Divine Church." Captain Ruben replied resolutely, as he did not like the Giteron Dynasty's little scheme.

"Then I will leave that in your hand, Captain Ruben. I need to return to give my report. It seems we need a stronger squad to kill the heathen. I don't want us to lose too much force before the real thing begins." Saintess Marisha got up from her seat and left the hall.

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Augusto Thamsen looked at the three people in front of him before turning his eyes toward his son. "Am I not clear enough that we don't want to fight the Tang Empire? Our focus is the tower and finding the boss to reach the next floor. Is that not clear enough?"

Reinar Thamsen nodded. "I understand, Father. I did not order them to fight Tang Shaoyang but tailed the Divine Church, who seemed to be hunting Tang Shaoyang. I sent them to watch and gather information. I figured out that we need to find out how strong Tang Shaoyang is, in case we have to fight them in the future."

"Then what happened to these three?"

Three Ancient Rank masters were crippled on the first day. That was a disastrous result for the first day, which was supposed to be no casualty. On top of that, the ice was not something that could be easily healed. They needed a special resource to regrow the missing part.

"That's what I want to hear too, Father. Shall we listen to what they have to say first?" Reinar showed no emotion to his emotional father. He maintained his calm and collected mind.

The three Ancient Rank masters reported everything they encountered, but they missed something. They did not report that Tang Shaoyang tried to pit them against the Divine Church and also did not report that they pretended to be the federation. They left out those details, thinking it was not that important compared to Tang Shaoyang's dragon tribe and angel ally.

"Tang Shaoyang knew that he was being followed?" Reinar furrowed his brows. The fact that Tang Shaoyang not just discovered the Divine Church but also his men was a surprise.

"It seems the dragon tribe girl is watching the surroundings for him..." Reinar paused as he found something fishy. "But where does this dragon tribe girl come from? We don't see her at the gate." The angel and the dragon tribe were too eye-catching to be missed out.

Augusto rubbed his chin, assessing the current situation. One for sure, they needed stronger forces to kill Tang Shaoyang, and it was not worth the time. The purpose of the dimensional tower was not to slaughter each other. Authority level was for sure nice, but not worth it to spend all the force to annihilate one single faction.

"Since he did not kill you, we will drop the issue." Augusto made his decision. He planned to meet with Tang Shaoyang about what happened, but then he decided to drop the issue. Since Tang Shaoyang did not kill his three subordinates, that meant Tang Shaoyang did not want to go to a full war against them.

"Isn't this good, Father? We exchange three elixirs for this information." Reinar took the thing from the positive side.

Reinar received a glare from his father. While it was important to investigate their rivals from the same city, he felt like his son was doing unnecessary things. Eventually, Tang Shaoyang would show his real power, and they did not need to lose three elixirs for that.

"Warn Arnor not to pursue the matter with the Tang Empire anymore." Augusto massaged the space between his eyes. "We are under pressure and need to find the mithril mine soon. If we have the correct information, there are supposed to be at least two mithril mines between the eleventh floor and the fifteenth floor. Focus on our search!"

"Yes, Father." Reinar bowed his head.

"You take care of the rest, Reinar. I need to go back and get the elixir. It seems the one we have is not working on them." Augusto shook his head and left the hall.

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"Too weak!" Avyn's frustrated yell rang in the air.

The dragon girl was holding the freezing giant green cat. The beast was twice bigger than Avyn's human form and had green fur with brown dots. The interesting part was that the giant cat had curved blades on its four limbs and also a blade-like horn on the forehead. It was the first Epic Rank monster they discovered after three hours of looking around in the forest. However, the Epic Rank beast was easily frozen by the dragon girl, and she complained about them being too weak.

"Why don't you return first? I will summon you out when I find at least a Myth Rank beast?" Tang Shaoyang took the giant cat and stored it in his inventory. He kept the dead bodies in his inventory, a pair for each new beast he found, in case he needed them for something.

"That's for the best, I guess." Avyn looked quite dejected. She had been lonely for the longest time, so she was quite excited to fight. However, it had not been fun because it was like she pinched the helpless ants on the ground. All of them died in a single hit, and she got bored pretty fast. Also she was also aware that Tang Shaoyang used a lot of mana to keep her. She decided to return after the fruitless three-hour adventure.

As for Zara, she had returned earlier. She despised fighting a much weaker opponent than herself. With Avyn returned, Tang Shaoyang was left alone again.

"Where should I go now?" He looked in the four directions, making sure he remembered where he had come from. "Hmm, let's go straight for today."

Tang Shaoyang found more green cats and took out his barely recognizable paper with worm-like writing on it. He frowned at the sight of his unique writing. Scratching his eyebrow for a moment before writing Brown-Spotted Saber. It was the name of the giant green cat.

"I don't remember that my writing is this ugly...." He did not remember the last time he held a pen, so it had been like years since the last time he wrote on paper. He put back the pen and the paper to the inventory, then he heard a roar and also a cry.

Tang Shaoyang looked ahead, and there was no hesitation for him to rush forward. His ears barely picked up the roar and the cry, so it must be far. The three thousand meters [Spirit Eyes] could not find the source of the cry. That meant the cry was further than three thousand meters.

After five minutes of rushing, he finally spotted the source. A ten meters bear, blazing in fire, stood before two people. The bear roared at the two people, a woman with a basket on her back and a six or seven years old boy. The boy was crying while the woman shielded the boy from the bear while screaming for help.

[Burning Urside — Epic Rank]

Tang Shaoyang took out the battle-ax and used [Blink]. He arrived between the bear and the woman, swinging the battle-ax toward the bear's belly. To his surprise, the bear reacted to his surprise attack. The bear smashed the battle-ax downward with its paw before jerking away from Tang Shaoyang.

Ding!

The claw and the battle-ax sparked in flame as the two clashed. Burning Urside observed Tang Shaoyang from a distance with its burning eyes. Meanwhile, Tang Shaoyang looked at the smoked battle-ax. He noticed that his battle-ax melted at the spot where the bear hit. An Epic Rank beast damaged his battle-ax was a surprise for him.

"Let's see whose fire is stronger, shall we?" Tang Shaoyang set himself on fire, but his fire was black, while the bear fire was crimson. He used [Blink] once more, arriving in front of the bear the next moment. He put the battle-ax back and fought the bear with his fist. It was the same repeat, but this time his fist was met with the bear's paw.

The fire flared out as their first met, but this time, the gap between the two was visible. Burning Urside was pushed a few steps back as the black fire tried to engulf the crimson fire at the same time. He then launched himself into the air toward the bear's head. The black fire swirled in his right knee, and he brought the right knee toward the bear's face.

Boom!

It exploded, and the bear was pushed further back. The giant body swayed to the right and left as it tried to stabilize itself. Tang Shaoyang did not give a chance as he maintained his body floating above the head. This time, the black flame gathered in his right foot, then he stepped right on the bear's face. He brought the bear down to the ground, pushing the head down to the ground as the black fire exploded once more.

This time, Tang Shaoyang remained standing above the bear's body, letting his black fire do the rest. It was a battle between two different fires, but the black fire was clearly in the upper hand. It took merely thirty seconds before the black fire devoured the crimson fire. At the same time, the Burning Urside stopped moving.

It was an Epic Rank beast, a good material for a sacrifice. He stored the dead body and returned it to the woman and boy. "Are you guys okay?"

The woman's long hair shriveled from the previous struggle, but she calmed down after Tang Shaoyang appeared. The boy was still crying in her embrace, covering his face with the woman's body, not daring to look in the bear's direction.

The woman's green eyes locked on Tang Shaoyang, observing the man who saved her and her brother.

Tang Shaoyang scratched his head. "Does she not understand me? Is it a system error?" The system usually translated everything he spoke. Since the woman did not respond to him, he thought the translation did not work.

"We are fine. Thank you for saving us." The woman finally responded.

Tang Shaoyang was pleased that it was not a system error. "No problem." He then looked around. "No one accompanied you two? Do you want me to escort you back to your home?"

That was why he did not hesitate to save the pair. He wanted them to lead him to the settlement. It would be best if he had a native that could help him, the native who knew very well about the terrain.

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Rene was the big sister, and Rona was the little brother. The little guy fell asleep on the way back to their village after crying non-stop. The big sister was carrying a half-full basket filled with green plants. That was how the big sister got the money to feed her little brother and also why they were in the wild, being chased by a bear in flames.

There were so few herbs around the village, so she took the risk to go further for the research until they entered Burning Urside's territory. The big sister was quite tenacious. She did not allow Tang Shaoyang to help her to carry her little brother even though she looked quite exhausted after the run and chase with the bear. She did not look frightened after the near-death experience.

"Do you want to take a rest? I don't want you to collapse before we arrive in your village." Tang Shaoyang started to hear her breathing, an indication that she was out of breath.

Rene paused and glanced toward Tang Shaoyang. "Mnnn." She nodded and walked to the nearest tree. She sat on the ground and leaned her back against the tree; as she was about to close her eyes to get some rest, the man offered her a bottle.

Rene looked up instead of taking the water; hesitation was apparent in her eyes. However, Tang Shaoyang reached her hand and put the bottle in her hand. "It's just a bottle of water. I won't ask you for money for a bottle of water."

She took the bottle, but instead of opening it, she stared at the tip of the bottle. She was for sure thirsty, but she tried to figure out how to open the bottle. Instead of twisting the bottle cap, she tried to pull the cap by force. The bottle made a noise as she held the bottle too hard. Startling, she let the bottle go.

Tang Shaoyang was amused with what he watched. He took the bottle and showed her how to open the bottle. "You twist the cap, not pull it. I don't know that a plastic bottle does not exist in another world."

"Thank you." Rene reached for the bottle and drank the water. Her voice was so low, like a mosquito. Even though she looked so exhausted and thirsty, she only drank the water in two gulps.

"You can drink more. I have more water in my inventory." Tang Shaoyang could tell how thirsty she was by how exhausted she looked. If he was in her position, he could drink like two bottles of water, not two gulps. "You don't need to worry about running out of water."

Rene did not hesitate to drink the whole bottle of water. After finishing the water, she returned the bottle, and she handled the fragile bottle carefully. Hearing the noise of the bottle when he used some force was enough to scare her.

"Thank you for the water, Sir." Her voice was a little, just a little louder this time.

Tang Shaoyang nodded and sat a few meters away from Rene. He did not want to sit too close, as Rene seemed too tense when she was around him. No one spoke, and Tang Shaoyang closed his eyes. He was not in a hurry to reach the village, taking his time since he had shaken off his pursuers as well. Of course, he also kept watching the surroundings with his Spirit Eyes.

"Hmmm... Sir." Rene called Tang Shaoyang hesitantly.

"Yes? Do you need more water?"

Rene shook her head. "There's something I want to ask... Can I?"

"Ask away, don't be too tense. I don't eat humans." He tried to joke, but it did not work. The girl still had a tense expression.

"Are you perhaps coming from outside the tower?" The hesitation was very clear in her tone, making Tang Shaoyang wonder what made her this cautious around him. He recalled everything; not just he saved her, but he had not done anything that scared her.

"This is tricky. It seems the natives are aware of the world outside the tower. Things would be hard with the native if they knew about the world outside.' That was his experience from the last three floors: the eighth floor, the ninth floor, and the tenth floor. He considered lying to Rene.

"I am. Do you perhaps know something about us?" Tang Shaoyang decided to be frank and answered honestly. He felt like there was nothing that Rene could do to him to know his origin.

"Mmmnnn...." Rene shook her head. She seemed to have something to say, but she was scared to say it.

"It's fine. Just say it if you have something. If you want to know what the world outside is like, I can tell you that." Tang Shaoyang encouraged her to speak. It made him curious about what caused her to be scared around him.

After some hesitation, Rene spoke out. "I heard from my mom about the people from the outside world that they will come one day, and she warned me to stay away or hide from the outsiders. She said that the people from the outside world are bad and will kill us who live inside the tower. But it seems my mother is wrong. Not only did you not kill me, but you also saved me from the beast."

Tang Shaoyang was not surprised to hear such a story from Rene. Her mother was not wrong; some factions maybe would hunt the natives for Authority level. Maybe that was much easier than completing the quest. "I don't think your mother is wrong, Rene."

The girl was shocked to hear that from Tang Shaoyang, and she jerked back. Of course, Tang Shaoyang did not mean to frighten the girl. He wanted her to be cautious. "Of course, I don't want to kill you or the others. However, there might be a group or a few groups of people that may try to kill you and the others who live inside the tower. You have to be cautious if other outsiders approach you."

Rene looked at him suspiciously, but Tang Shaoyang continued. "It's the same with the others who live in the tower, no? There are bad people, and there are good people. It's the same for the outsiders." Only then the girl lowered her guard a little, nodding her head. The explanation made sense.

"Then, can you tell me what the world outside looks like, Sir Tang?" After a while, Rene asked the second question. She seemed to be less tense after their first conversation, yet her voice was still low as before. Seemed to be afraid of raising her voice.

"There's not much difference, actually. In fact, the beast in my world is much weaker than the beasts here. You can hardly find that fire bear...." Tang Shaoyang told her more about his world, the world before the game and after the game. He even shared how the system worked, the earth's technology, and much more. That was how he tried to get Rene to trust him, thinking that Rene could put some good words for him to the people in the village.

Rene's eyes shone as she heard the story. She even had the yearned gaze when she heard that the beasts and monsters on earth were much weaker.

"My mom said that we are punished by the System because our ancestors did something the system deemed unacceptable. My mom never said what our ancestors did, but we are put around strong monsters. We can't level up because we can't kill any beasts or monsters. I am still level, and only a few people in the village have a level. The only way to level up is by killing the newborn beasts, but it's still hard because the parents are guarding their baby." Rene shared the situation in her village.

"My parents tried to hunt the baby, but they failed and were killed by beasts...."

After that, Rene remained silent as the story brought back her bad memories. Tang Shaoyang understood by not asking anything from the girl afterward. After ten minutes of resting, Rene stood up. "I think I have recovered, Sir."

Even though Rene opened up a little bit, she was still stubborn. She kept carrying her little brother even though Tang Shaoyang offered a hand. It was an hour of walking, and they arrived at the village where Rene lived. The village was surrounded by a wooden fence. It was quite big for a village as he counted there were eighty-one houses in the village. If a pair lived in one building, there were at least a hundred and sixty-two people living in the village.

Two guards with wooden spears stood at the gate. They raised their wooden spear when they spotted Rene and Tang Shaoyang. After hearing Rene's story, it made him curious about the level of the guard. He used [Detection] on them.

[??? — Level 7] [??? — Level 5]

'What is this? Does the system encourage us to slaughter the natives?' Tang Shaoyang could not help but think so after he discovered the two guards' level. He recalled that this was their punishment, and maybe the death penalty was the punishment. There was no way that no one would be tempted to slaughter these people to gain Authority level. There were two fates awaiting them with such low levels. They either would be a slave or be killed.

"Who is he, Rene!?" The level 7 guard yelled at Rene.

"He is Sir Tang Shaoyang, Sir. Don't worry; he is not a bad person. He saved my brother and me from Burning Urside." Rene quickly explained as she did not want there to be a misunderstanding between Tang Shaoyang and the guards.

Chapter 1035

Tang Shaoyang was not expecting how the villagers would react to him. Not just to him but also to the siblings. He sensed the annoyance of the guard toward the siblings when they arrived at the village. Rene seemed to be fearful of the guards as well instead of feeling safe.

"Wait there! We will attack if you come closer!" Despite Rene's testimony, the guard kept their spear on Tang Shaoyang. The second guard ran inside the village. He most likely called more people or maybe the village chief.

Rene was panicking while the brother woke up from the yell. He looked around before starting to cry once more. Rene wanted to explain the situation to Tang Shaoyang, but she wanted to calm her little brother first.

"Just take your time." Tang Shaoyang took a bottle of water and handed it to Rene. The little brother calmed down after getting the water. The guard who left earlier came back with more people. At least twenty people armed with the same wooden spear came out.

"You cause trouble again, Rene!" A young man who led the people from the village yelled out, pointing his finger at Rene and her little brother. The little brother hid behind his sister while Rene lowered her head.

Looking at how scared Rene was, Tang Shaoyang stood before her, facing the young man and the villagers. "She is not to blame. I am just escorting them back to the village."

"I don't speak to you, stranger! This is our village's affair. You don't say anything when I speak!" The young man pointed his finger angrily at Tang Shaoyang.

Tang Shaoyang did not expect such a development. He wanted to use these villagers to be his guide, getting to know more about the terrain of the eleventh floor or at least this area. If they were hostile toward him, then he could not ask them to be his guide. Of course, there was another way to make them his guide. He could use his force, forcing them to listen to his request.

'Wait. The guard was level 7 and cautious when they saw me, but this young man was different. There must be something that makes him confident.' Tang Shaoyang used [Detection] on the young man.

[??? — Level 127]

'I see.... That's what makes him arrogant, huh?' He checked the other villagers and found out that their level was between level 32 to level 61. Without a doubt, these people must be the strongest group in the village. The guard earlier was nothing compared to these people, but they were nothing compared to him. 'Do they not have detection skills?'

"But this matter is related to me. They are just following my request, yet you are being harsh on them." Tang Shaoyang tried to play it nice.

"We have rules, and one of the rules is not to bring people to our village. The siblings have broken the rule, and they deserve to be punished! You are not part of our village; you better keep your mouth shut and leave! Leave before I make you regret coming here!" The young man clearly did not want to talk it out with Tang Shaoyang, but he did not recklessly attack Tang Shaoyang too.

Tang Shaoyang was about to respond, but he felt someone tugging at his coat. Rene was the one who pulled his coat, shaking her head. "It's okay, Sir Tang. You can leave. Thank you for saving my life and my brother's."

He furrowed his brow and squatted down. "What's the punishment?" There was no way he would leave after knowing the sibling would get punished. Rene did not want to speak and shook her head.

Even though she did not answer him, he could tell how harsh the punishment was for not daring to speak about it. From the look of it, it seemed this was not the first time Rene had received the punishment.

"They will bring my sister to an empty building, and she will not return until the next morning," Rona replied in a very low voice, but Tang Shaoyang heard everything clearly with his sharp hearing. He frowned when he heard the suspicious punishment. "Did your sister bleed? Or hurt somewhere?"

"Rona!" Rene tried to stop her brother, but the little brother did not listen to his sister. "No, but she will walk limping and return with swollen eyes. She will usually sleep all day after getting punished."

Tang Shaoyang's frown deepened, and he looked at Rene. The girl's height was at his chest or even shorter, then he looked at her face; Rene was, at most, fourteen years. "You..." Before he could say anything, tears started to fall from her eyes. He was angry deep inside, but he held himself pretty well not to burst out.

"Do you want to leave the village with me?" That was the first thing coming to his mind, taking her and her little brother out of the village. There was no way he would leave the sibling after knowing what would happen to her.

"They will hurt you—" Rene could not finish her words as the young man yelled once more. "Come here immediately if you still want to stay in the village, Rene!"

Tang Shaoyang smiled. "Do you think they can hurt me? Just answer me, do you want to leave with me or do you want to stay in the village?"

"I want to leave the village. The other kids and adults keep bullying us. I don't want to stay in this village." Rona replied while shaking his head.

Tang Shaoyang rubbed Rano's hair and stood up. He turned around. "It seems Rene will not be staying in this village anymore. I will bring her little brother and her with me."

Ptiii!

The young man spat and raised his finger once more. "I kindly tell you to leave, yet you keep intervening with my village's affairs. Leave the village without Rene, or you will never leave the village. Make your choice!"

Tang Shaoyang shook his head, letting out a chuckle. "What about the third choice?" He no longer entertained the young man after saying that. His figure blurred and appeared in front of the young man. He grabbed the young man's neck and raised him into the air. "The third choice is you die!"

The young man's face turned red. He could not breathe. He hit Tang Shaoyang's arm, hitting as hard as he could, but he failed to break free. The young man tried to open the grab, but it was also futile. His feet were kicking the air as he could no longer breathe. Just as he thought he would die, the grab on his neck loosened. He fell to the ground, holding his neck as he tried to breathe in air as much as possible, coughing very hard in the process.

Tang Shaoyang squatted in front of the young man and pulled his hair up, pulling the young man's face closer to his face. "What about the fourth choice? You stay here obediently, and I will leave with Rene and Rona, okay?"

The young man pulled his sword from his waist and swung the sword toward Tang Shaoyang's head. "What about the fifth choice! You die h—" His voice stopped abruptly as he saw the sword stop one inch away from Tang Shaoyang's cheek. He felt like his sword hit something hard, something like a boulder. Realizing he was in a dire situation, he opened his mouth and yelled. "What are you guys doing? Kill him!"

Before the villagers could do anything toward Tang Shaoyang, they saw a giant fireball shoot upward. The black fireball was twice bigger than their body, and it was shot toward the sky. The black fireball exploded in the sky as the heatwave hit everyone on the ground. They realized that Tang Shaoyang was far scarier than the beasts around their village. Everyone froze on the spot and did not dare to make a single move.

Even the young man now was terrified, realizing he f*cked up. The man right before him was a monster in human skin.

Tang Shaoyang pushed the young man to the ground, and he stepped on the young man's crotch. He heard the crack noise before it was followed by the young man's agony scream. The young man held his bloody crotch, rolling around on the ground.

However, Tang Shaoyang did not kill the young man. He killed no one even though he could farm level for his Authority. He did not want the sibling to see that, though the sister seemed to have gone through far more traumatizing experiences than this. It was not good for her to experience another traumatizing event, so he left these people. "It's so satisfying to crack some nuts."

Tang Shaoyang returned to the siblings. "Come with me, Rona. Your sister must be tired after carrying you all day." The little boy was obedient this time. He did not resist Tang Shaoyang, but the sister seemed to be in a daze, looking at the villagers and getting frightened. He picked up the sister with his right hand and walked back, carrying the brother on his left and the sister on his right.

Chapter 1036

Tang Shaoyang scratched his head and looked at the two sleeping on his chest after an hour of walking. He did not immediately bring the two to the city as he was concerned about how the other factions would react to the two natives. He was afraid that siblings would become an item that the other factions wanted. A native that would be able to guide them in a certain area was valuable for sure.

Tang Shaoyang did not immediately return as he thought of how to sneak them into the city without being noticed. He did not have Shadow Element as Lu An did. After what the girl had experienced, he did not want Rene to be an item contested by the other factions.

Rene was twelve years old, and the boy was nine years old. It was unbelievable that the villagers would force themselves onto her, especially the young man. The most infuriating was that no one stopped the young man, the Chief of the village. The chief looked so young while, in fact, he was forty-five years old.

Knowing Rene's age erased his guilt for messing up with the village. Tang Shaoyang launched the fireball into the sky not just to intimidate the villagers but also to attract the beast. The explosion should be enough to lure the beasts to the village.

Tang Shaoyang stopped near the tree, sitting there while thinking about how to bring the sibling. He could bring them inside openly, but he could never bring them out again if he wanted the siblings to be free from the other factions' claws. However, he wanted the siblings to be his guide to exploring this area.

"The only choice is to let them guide me to the Wolf Mine and Masmatic Valley before I bring them back to the city." He muttered in a low voice.

The siblings told him about the Wolf Mine and Masmatic Valley. The former was a place with ore, while the latter was the most poisonous place around this area, but rare herbs grew in that valley. The villagers did not dare to enter that valley. Since no one dared to explore the valley, no one had the chance to take what was inside, a fully unexplored area.

As for the Wolf Mine, it was named after the monsters that occupied the mine. The monsters had the torso and head of the wolf but a humanoid lower part and also a pair of hands. The villagers avoided the mine; that was why they only used the wooden spear instead of the metal product.

'Taking the mine is far easier since we just need to clear the wolf. I need Yu to investigate the poison in the valley first. However, the greater issue is how to defend the mine if we take it over. Once the other factions know about the mine, they will come for me for sure.'

Tang Shaoyang sat there for two hours until he sensed movement from the little brother. He rubbed his eyes, looking at Tang Shaoyang. The boy wanted to say something, but he hesitated.

"Do you need something, Rona? Do you want water?" Tang Shaoyang took another bottle of water, and the boy nodded, taking the bottle. After taking two gulps, the boy handed the bottle back to Tang Shaoyang. The boy kept staring at him, and the stare was pretty obvious that the boy wanted something from him.

'Ah, he's hungry. This Dragon Sense is surely convenient.' He found it ridiculous that use the sense of a dragon to find what the kids wanted. He opened the inventory, checking the available food in his inventory.

Elin, the renowned chef in the empire, was known for her bread, and she expanded his knowledge. She learned more recipes from the others, starting to make donuts and other stuff. Tang Shaoyang liked her donut more than anything else, and he always had her donuts in his inventory. It was a snack in his free time, and he did not mind sharing the sweet with the little boy instead of giving him the cooked steak.

Tang Shaoyang took out the donut with chocolate glazing and gave it to Rona. "You can have this for now until we eat dinner together with your sister." He whispered to the little boy. "Don't tell your sister that you have a snack before dinner."

Rona nodded his head furiously and took the donut. At the first bite, Rona's eyes shone, fascinated by the first bite. The little boy then looked at Tang Shaoyang's face and the bitten donut in his hand, back and forth. Even though the little boy did not say anything, Tang Shaoyang could tell how happy the little boy was after tasting the donut. To his surprise, the little boy was shaken by the taste of the donut.

To Tang Shaoyang's surprise, the little boy did not take the second bite. Rona lowered the donut and said in a small voice. "I want to save half for my sister...."

Tang Shaoyang was surprised that Rona could hold back from finishing the remaining donut and was willing to share half of it with his sister. "You can finish the donut. Your sister has her own share."

It was quite satisfying watching Rona finish the donut. That was a weird feeling, for sure, since they were not related. 'Maybe this is how parents feel when they watch their kids eat what they like.'

Not long after Rona finished the donut, the big sister woke up. They had dinner together and camped in the wild. Another item he never forgot to bring when he ventured outside a bed. The inventory made it easier to bring a bed anywhere, so why not? It was not like the bed would take up that much space. The three sat on the bed as he explained the situation.

"Listen to me. I can't bring you two back to the city yet because...." Tang Shaoyang truthfully explained why he could not bring them back to the city.

"Does that mean we can get out of the city once we enter the city?" The sister asked.

"It's not that you can't, but it will be dangerous. The other outsiders will try to take you from me if you go outside, but if you are inside the city, they can't do anything to you. That's the rule of the city. However, I think you two can go out once more in one or two years." Tang Shaoyang nodded. "So tomorrow morning, you will guide me to the Wolf Mine and Masmatic Valley first. After that, I will bring you to the city. You will be safe from the beasts in the city, and you don't need to worry about food anymore."

To Tang Shaoyang's surprise, the sister did not immediately agree to his proposal. Rene lowered her head and contemplated, seeming to think of something else. It was as if his proposal was not interesting enough for her.

"Do you want to listen to my proposal, Sir Tang Shaoyang? This is not a personal request but a trade." Rene raised her head after a while, with her eyes filled with determination.

"A deal, huh? Alright, I will listen to your proposal. We have all night to speak."

"I don't want to rely on you forever, Sir Tang Shaoyang. I also want to protect myself from danger, so can you train me? Can you train me so I can be as strong as you? In exchange, I will dedicate myself to helping you. I will do anything; fight your enemies, fight the beasts for you!" The girl poured out what was in her heart.

Tang Shaoyang looked into the girl's eyes, firm gaze with no hesitation. There was no fear despite knowing how strong the beast she had to fight.

"Hmmm." Tang Shaoyang squinted his eyes. "There's no need for us to make a deal. Why don't you join my empire instead? You can get what you want by joining the Tang Empire. And if you join Tarrior, you will be trained to be a strong soldier. Or you can join the other divisions, and you can earn money by healing others. There are many things you can do once you join the Tang Empire. The first step, you just need to join my empire. If you haven't changed your mind by then, you can join Tarrior, where the strong people from my empire gather."

Rene looked down; she seemed disappointed by his answer. "Does that mean you will not train me personally?"

Tang Shaoyang finally understood why the girl was disappointed. "I can't possibly do that, Rene. I am a leader of hundreds of thousands of people. There are many things I need to do to ensure my people's safety and prosperity. And you are still too young to follow my path." He smiled at the girl and rubbed her hair. "However, if you decide to join the Tarrior, I will be checking your progress from time to time."

"Go sleep tonight. We will leave for Wolf Mine and Masmatic Valley tomorrow morning, and I will bring you two to the city afterward."

Chapter 1037

A bed in the middle of nowhere with two people sleeping on it. A man stood next to the bed, watching the siblings from the side. The light snore came from the boy, falling asleep soundly even though he slept in the middle of nowhere, an open area. The fact that the siblings could sleep just showed their trust in Tang Shaoyang.

Tang Shaoyang scratched his head. "What should I do now?" He had free time the whole night. Sitting at the edge of the bed, he opened the status and checked the other stuff.

[Authority 0 (57/1000)]

"Huh!?" He discovered Authority's points increased from zero to fifty-seven. It came out of nowhere because he did not remember killing the natives on the eleventh floor. In order to increase the Authority's level, the factions needed to kill the natives or kill the other players or complete the quest. He was certain that he did not kill the natives and players, let alone take a quest. "Wait, does the beast count as the native?"

Avyn killed a lot of beasts to relieve the dragon tribe's boredom. That was the only explanation for why his Authority was at fifty-seven points.

"There's only one way to confirm that." Tang Shaoyang summoned Maldros, the Black Storm Dragonewt. "Hunt one beast for me and return!" He would find out whether the beast counted as the natives or not soon.

The dragonewt bowed his head and flew to a giant tree. The Grade S+ Spirit searched for his prey by jumping from one tree to another tree. Meanwhile, Tang Shaoyang kept his eyes on the screen in front of him. If the point increased by one, then it confirmed that the beast counted as the native. If that was the case, then it would be easier to increase the Authority level than he thought.

In a few minutes, he noticed the number had changed from fifty-seven to fifty-eight. Even though Maldros had not returned yet, he confirmed that the beasts counted as the native of the tower. He smiled at the new information he had discovered.

'I don't need to worry about the quest or killing people. We can just hunt the beast to raise the level.' Not long after the Authority point changed, Maldros returned. "I have hunted the beast, Your Majesty."

The Black Storm Dragonewt brought back the dead body of the Burning Urside and put the dead body in front of Tang Shaoyang.

"Then go hunt more for me and return in five hours." Tang Shaoyang gave a new order to Maldros. "Don't forget to bring back the bodies." The beast and monster on the eleventh floor were quite high-leveled. They were good materials for summoning.

The Grade S+ Spirit did not question the order. He bowed his head and turned around to hunt more beasts. After Maldros left, he continued to summon more spirits. This time he summoned the septuplets troll, the same Grade S+ Spirit and gave them the same order.

After the septuplets troll, then he summoned the quadruplets cyclops and gave the same orders. He summoned most of his Grade S+ Spirits and ordered them to hunt the beasts.

A few minutes after his spirits left, the Authority point increased steadily. It reached a hundred after a few minutes. At the same time, the spirits returned with more dead bodies. Of course, he told them to put the dead bodies a bit far from the bed. He did not want the smell to affect the siblings.

Another ten minutes passed, and the Authority point was at two hundred points. "This is far easier than I thought. We will get to level 1 Authority in eighty minutes if they can keep the pace." Getting the Authority to level 1 made him excited. He wanted to know what he could get from level 1 Authority.

It did not take the spirits eighty minutes to hunt the thousandth beast but sixty minutes. Tang Shaoyang saw his authority leveled up to level 1 authority. Different from his level, there was no notification from the system that the authority had reached level 1.

[Authority 1 (0/10.000)]

"Ten thousand for level 2 Authority?" Tang Shaoyang was not expecting that number. He thought it would be two thousand or three thousand at most for the next level. The tenth time point for the next level was quite absurd.

[Don't forget that the Authority level will remain at the same level even if you climb up to the twelfth floor. You can take your time to increase your Authority while you climb up.] Avyn spoke in Tang Shaoyang's head.

"Is that so? I thought there would be a new thing on the twelfth floor." Tang Shaoyang thought the floor would work the same as the first tenth floor. He needed to fight the boss and then gain access to the next floor. It was the same mechanic, so he thought he would encounter the new twenty-four worlds on the next floor.

[It seems you misunderstood how the tower worked. You are racing with the other twenty-four worlds to climb the tower. You are fighting against the same twenty-four worlds on the twelfth floor and above.] Avyn gave a further explanation.

Then Tang Shaoyang realized that he had a spirit with more knowledge than himself about the system or the game. Avyn inherited her ancestor's memories, so she should know more about the tower.

"You have the knowledge of the tower, but why do you only tell me now?" He could not help but question the dragon tribe. Avyn was special even for a spirit. She was not an individual who was dead, but a living being that got isolated because her worlds were cut to the others. The system gave her a chance to move between worlds by becoming a spirit in a name.

[The System is not stupid as you think. It put a restriction on me, though the restriction is more loose compared to the other spirits of yours; I can't tell you about future events. I can speak more about the tower because you are in the tower now. And I can only tell you this just because we are on the eleventh floor now, or else I can't tell you anything about the tower.]

"Then do you have more things to tell me about the eleventh floor?"

[Not much. Again, the system will not allow me to give you the crucial information for the Dimensional Tower. However, I have some advice for you. Instead of killing the people, you should take them to your side instead. Expand your force with the natives and use them to fight the other factions!]

That was a good idea, but there was an issue with that. "I don't think the beast will listen to me, and the people here are weak. You have seen them." Tang Shaoyang shook his head. "What I need is a force that is ready to fight. I don't think I want to waste my time training these people."

[I don't know you are this stupid. You have a Legendary Rank beast in your hand, Kirin. And you have me, the God Rank Dragon. They may not listen to you, but I can make them listen to me, or Kirin can do that. Beasts are not different from humans. They will listen and follow the stronger beast, just like you humans.]

Tang Shaoyang's eyes shone when he heard that. He, indeed, never thought of using Avyn or Kalliyan to subdue the wild beast. This method would work not just in the tower but also on Earth. There are a lot of mutated beasts after the game, and if he could subdue them using Kalliyan, then it would be just a matter of time before his force expanded to the biggest force on Earth. By that time, he did not worry about the other factions rivaling his faction in numbers.

[Focus up! Our focus is the dimensional tower. While I advise you to subdue the beast, but not the beast on this floor. Your target should be finding the boss of the eleventh floor and climbing to the twelfth tower. The beasts on the twelfth floor should be stronger than the ones here. After taking over the Wolf Mine and the Poisonous Valley, your focus is to find the boss! You can give the remaining resources on the eleventh floor to the other factions. Let them fight each other.]

"That's actually a brilliant idea." Tang Shaoyang muttered in a low voice. "If you are saying that I should focus on the boss, does that mean I can defeat the boss with my current strength?"

[What are you talking about? Have you become dumber? Of course, you have enough power to defeat the boss. You have me, and that's enough to beat the boss. In fact, you are the strongest individual on this floor.]

Tang Shaoyang was caught off guard by Kankara'Xeo's arrogance, but then he could not deny the fact that Avyn was indeed strong, even stronger than himself. He could only let out a chuckle when he heard that. "This will be easier than I thought. But what if the other factions bring their Demi-God Rank or God Rank into this tower? I think the Federation of Allurion or the Divine Church should have someone at that rank, no?"

[That's indeed an issue if this is Heaven and Hell Rank Dimensional Tower. However, you don't need to worry about that since this is a Sky Level Dimensional Tower. Demi-God and God Rank can't enter Ancient Rank Tower and lower.]

Tang Shaoyang furrowed his brow. "You never told me about this?"

[That's because you never ask.]

Chapter 1038

Tang Shaoyang watched the number increase for five hours, and it was quite satisfying to watch. However, it seemed there were not that many beasts or monsters in the forest; at least, it was not enough for Authority to reach the next level.

[Authority 1 (7589/10000)]

That was what his spirits got from hunting for five hours. Tang Shaoyang had the urge to let the spirits keep hunting more beasts until Authority 2, but he decided not to do it. He expected to reach Authority 2 in the Wolf Mine and Masmatic Valley.

Tang Shaoyang recalled all the spirits back to the Spirit World, leaving only Maldros behind. "You stay here and protect them for me." He pointed at the two siblings on the bed. Even though most of the beasts were hunted already, it was just a measure to ensure their safety while he headed to where the spirits gathered the dead bodies.

It was a few minutes of walking to reach his destination. Tang Shaoyang reached an open area in the forest with a few piles of dead beasts. The dead bodies formed several mounds. If he had to estimate, there should be around eight thousand and five hundred worth of sacrifice.

"Should I use the dead bodies in my inventory too?" There were fifty-seven dead beasts in his inventory. Then he noticed that there were monsters with big horns and claws. "Or should I consult the dwarves first? I think they once said that they wanted materials from beasts too."

"I can give the fifty-seven beasts in my inventory to them if they want." Tang Shaoyang kept the fifty-seven beasts in his inventory. He raised his hand toward the piles of dead bodies and activated [Epic Summoning].

The green gas gushed out from below the mounds of dead bodies. The gas rose, enveloping the dead bodies, devouring the dead bodies. At the same time, gusts of wind blew stronger in the area. "It's been a while since I last summoned a new spirit. There's not that much effect, huh?"

There was so little phenomenon compared to his previous summonings. This was the generic summon phenomenon, but it did not affect the result.

The dead bodies disappeared within the green gas, and the wind swirled at the center. The wind was getting stronger and stronger, forming twenty minutes of a tornado. Soon, he saw a figure in the middle of the tornado. The figure was standing still until the tornado disappeared, revealing the figure.

It was an elf with a hunter outfit with a long bow on his back. The unique thing was that he had three quivers with three different colors of arrows; green, red, and blue. The elf spirit stared at Tang Shaoyang from the start, realizing who summoned him.

[You have summoned Grade S Spirit, Rotinga the Divine Hunter!]

"Grade S Spirit, huh? Not bad." Tang Shaoyang was quite disappointed with the result. He had a lot of Grade S+ Spirit, after all. Another Grade S Spirit did not upgrade his power entirely, but it could be said to be quite helpful for having another Grade S Spirit.

Tang Shaoyang came closer to the newly summoned spirit. "You have two choices. One, make a contract with me. Second, become a sacrifice."

Rotinga, the Divine Hunter, furrowed his brow as it was not the same as what the system told him. They were supposed to fight, to decide whether the one who summoned him deserved to be his master. "Aren't we supposed to have a fight first?"

"We can do that method as well, but you will have no more choice after that. If you lose, I am the one who decides whether I should make a contract with you or sacrifice you." Tang Shaoyang smiled while indirectly threatening the Divine Hunter. He wanted to cut the useless fighting and got the contract. "I have many Grade S+ Spirit already, so your presence really does not matter to me."

Rotinga's frown deepened, but he could not refute the human who summoned him. If he lost the fight, then his fate was in his summoner's hands. He could become a sacrifice or a contracted spirit if he lost the fight. The decision was on the human's hand, not himself. However, he found the choice unfair. The human was asking whether he wanted to become a contracted spirit without fighting or dying instead of sending him back to the void.

'What if this human is lying to me to avoid the fight?' Rotinga thought of another possibility. 'But it does not explain where the sacrifice comes from. This man needs a lot of sacrifices to summon me. So he must be that strong to be able to gather that many sacrifices.'

The elf struggled to make the decision, but he made the gamble. He knelt on the ground and lowered his head toward Tang Shaoyang. "I choose to make a contract with you, Master."

"A wise decision." Tang Shaoyang's forehead and the elf's forehead glowed green. After a while, the elf became a green wisp and entered Tang Shaoyang's forehead. "The method always works."

[You have established a contract with Grade S Spirit, Rotinga the Divine Hunter!]

Of course, he scammed the elf a little. Even though they fought, it was not a hundred percent sure that he would sacrifice the elf. It depended on how strong the elf was. If the elf was above the average of the Grade S Spirit, then he would make the contract. If the elf was generally weaker among the Grade S Spirit, then he would sacrifice the elf.

[This is....]

Tang Shaoyang heard Rotinga's surprised voice in his head. It seemed the elf did not realize that he had formed a connection with the master after establishing the contract. "It seems we have a new spirit, guys. Why don't you teach something about spirit stuff to him, Orlean?"

[Yes, Your Majesty]

What happened next was out of Tang Shaoyang's prediction. He did not expect the elf to be frightened.

[Demon! What a demon is doing here! Don't come closer to me, or I will shoot! No, it's my duty to hunt you demons! I will kill you!]

In the next moment, the Divine Hunter realized that he could not use his weapon in the Spirit World. Tang Shaoyang was the ruler of his own Spirit World, and he forbade the spirits from fighting with each other unless he agreed. There was a time that the spirit wanted to spar to prove who was stronger among them. He allowed them to fight if that was the case, but the spirits were not able to use their skills without his consent.

Tang Shaoyang returned to his camp while listening to the chaos inside his spirit world. It was quite entertaining that the newbie spirit was frightened, but after a quiet scruple, the elf was forced to accept that he had to live in the same environment as the demons. Orlean was not the only demon in the spirit world, after all.

"I am actually a third of demons also." Tang Shaoyang wanted to tell the Divine Hunter, but he decided not to tease the poor elf anymore. He shook his head, jumped off onto the tree, sat on the giant branch, and leaned his back to the tree. "I am going to take a nap, Maldros. You will stay and watch the night until the next morning. Wake me up once the sibling wakes up!"

The Black Storm Dragonewt bowed his head, indicating he was ready for the task.

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Tang Shaoyang expected the dragonewt to wake him up, but Rene's scream woke him up. He opened his eyes, seeing the frightened Rene hugging her brother from the dragonewt.

"Calm down, Young Lady. I am Your Majesty Tang Shaoyang's summon, and I am here to protect you and your brother." Maldros put his index finger on his lips. "Please don't scream; your Majesty is still taking a nap." The dragonewt pointed his index finger at where Tang Shaoyang was.

Even though Rene was frightened, she still listened to Maldros. She looked up at the tree and discovered Tang Shaoyang smiling and waving his hand toward her. Tang Shaoyang jumped down. "It's fine. This guy is my summon." He comforted the frightened siblings. "His name is Maldros, and he is quite gentle, actually."

The little brother stopped crying while the big sister relaxed but remained cautious. In their eyes, Maldros was a monster to them, so it would be hard for her not to be cautious. She would always have her guard against Maldros.

"This can't do. You have to get used to Maldros if you want to stay with me. My people are not just human but also beastmen. You must get used to living together with them." Tang Shaoyang held his chin. "Guess you will stay with us, Maldros. We need these two to get used to Maldros' presence."

The siblings nodded their heads, but both remained cautious, mostly staying behind Tang Shaoyang while secretly glancing at Maldros. The Black Storm Dragonewt smiled, but his smile showed his scary teeth, scaring the sibling.

"The sun is up. We will eat breakfast and depart once we are done." Tang Shaoyang took out the bread from his inventory and gave it to the siblings. In front of the food, the sister and brother forgot about Maldros' presence.

After breakfast, the group departed together. Maldros stayed closer to them on their journey, and it just took a while for them to accept Maldros. Rona was more courageous than his sister. He let Maldros carry him while he touched the black scale and the wing. The boy was quite curious about Maldros, asking a lot of questions about dragonewt. Meanwhile, the sister perked up her ears, making sure not to miss a single conversation between her little brother and Maldros.

It was supposed to be a long journey, but Tang Shaoyang shortened the journey to an hour. They arrived at the entrance of the Wolf Mine, and Rene pointed at the wolf creature that occupied the mine.

It was the same as what Rene told him. The only thing missed was that Rene did not say the creatures were armed. They had pauldrons on their shoulder, belt, and steel wrist. Of course, they also had a weapon, mainly a saber, and spears, with some of them also having shields.

Ten of the wolf creatures guarded the entrance into the mine; four of them had shields on their back. The one with a saber would have a round shield on their backs. Four of them stood on guard right at the entrance while the remaining six were sitting around the campfire.

[Kobold — Level 872] [Kobold — Level 861] [Kobold — Level 876] [Kobold — Level 882]

The wolf creature was a kobold, and this was Tang Shaoyang's first time encountering a Kobold. He thought the wolf creature was a lycanthrope since it was a wolf evolution creature.

"The people in the village say that their earring number indicates their status in the horde," Rene added while pointing at the big earring on the creature's ears.

If not for Rene telling him that, Tang Shaoyang would not notice the earring. He indeed found big earring in their ears, and all of them had the same number, two earrings on their right ear. He assumed there was a weaker group than the guard, which had one earring.

Tang Shaoyang nodded and took out the paper, which was supposed to be a map. He said it was a map, but he actually just created a line with his pen. He marked the path he took from the city to where he was currently. Then he drew a cave on the paper; at least, it was supposed to be a cave, but he just made a circle. Then he wrote "Wolf Mine." Satisfied with the writing, he put the paper back into his inventory.

"Do you want me to attack the mine, Your Majesty?" Maldros asked. Even though the Kobold might outnumber them, it should not be an issue for his Master to take over the mine by himself.

"No. They are too weak for me. Let the Tarrior take care of them." Tang Shaoyang shook his head. "Let's head to our next destination."

Masmatic Valley was quite far from the mine. It took them two hours of journey to reach the infamous valley.

"I don't expect the valley to look ominous like this." The valley was covered in green fog, and the green fog was a red flag. This one was out of his expectation for sure. He thought the valley was full of poisonous plants, not the valley itself was poisonous.

Tang Shaoyang took out his hand-made map and started to draw a line from the mine direction. Then he drew a skull symbol on the map and added, with the final touch, "Masmatic Valley." He was satisfied with the map while nodding, proud of himself for making a map.

"Let's head back to the city." He stayed overnight outside, but he received no communication call from his people. He assumed nothing happened in the starter city or to the group that went in his opposite direction. "I hope Lu An's team discovers something better than what I discovered."

Tang Shaoyang headed back to the city with the siblings, while Maldros returned once they got near the city. He thought it would be a while until the Divine Church or the Giteron Dynasty would bother him again. However, he was wrong about it, wrong about the Divine Church.

Ten people with black armor guarded the gate with another squadron of white-armored knights behind the ten black-armored knights. "Are you Tang Shaoyang of the Tang Empire?" The black-armored knight stopped and questioned him.

"I am not!" Tang Shaoyang lied straight to the knight.

"Don't lie! Answer truthfully!" The knight raised his voice.

"How do you know whether I am lying or not?"

"Because I know you are Tang Shaoyang!" The knight screamed back at him.

"Then why do you ask if you already know?"

Swoosh!

The knight sheathed his sword and slashed it down toward Tang Shaoyang without saying anything. Of course, the sword missed the target as Tang Shaoyang jumped backward the moment the knight's hand reached the sword. The sword hit the ground and split the ground.

Boom!

"You dare to mock the Executioner Knight of the Divine Church!"

"Tch, it seems the Divine Church does not bother to hide the fact they hunt me." Tang Shaoyang was quite annoyed. He was annoyed because he felt like the hate was undeserved. He did not know what he did to the church to earn their resentment like this. That was right; it annoyed him because he did not know the cause. "What do I expect from a bunch of fanatics? I should expect this from them. Should have killed them all from the start."

"It's my time to shine!" Avyn was quite excited that Tang Shaoyang summoned her. However, Tang Shaoyang had another job for her. "I will allow you to fight them, but you must deliver them inside safely first." He was talking about the terrified siblings in his embrace. The knights did not care about the children when they attacked him.

"What? Can't you do it yourself? I want to fight them! Look at those black knights. They were quite strong." Avyn strongly expressed that she wanted to fight.

"This is order, Avyn. I am being serious, not in the mood to joke around!" Tang Shaoyang frowned. "Do you think they will let me enter the city? No, they will use everything to stop me from entering the city. That will put the kids in danger! Get into the city and send them to my territory; then, you can join the fight!"

He then smiled at the kids. "She is Sister Avyn. You will go with her, and I will catch up later, okay? I need to punish some bad people." The siblings nodded. It was not the time for them to be picky, even though they would rather go with Maldros.

Avyn kept her mouth shut and did not talk back to Tang Shaoyang anymore. She received the kids from Tang Shaoyang and retreated to a safe distance. She would get into the city once Tang Shaoyang started to fight.

[??? — Primordial Rank] [??? — Primordial Rank] [??? — Myth Rank] [??? — Myth Rank] [???
— Myth Rank] [??? — Myth Rank] [??? — Myth Rank] [??? — Myth Rank] [??? — Myth Rank]
[??? — Myth Rank]

Two Primordial Ranks and eight Myth Ranks. Those were the black-armored knights, and Tang Shaoyang was quite surprised by force sent by the Divine Church. How strong these people were, showed how determined the Divine Church was to kill Tang Shaoyang.

'I need them to focus on me, so Avyn can sneak into the safety without fighting them. Let's open this shit with a big opening, no? Do you ready for some action, Zowen?'

Tang Shaoyang planned to use [Integration] with Zowen and opened the fight with a powerful magic attack. It had been a while since he integrated with the Lightning Grand Magus.

[Kuhuhuhu....] Zowen laughed [I am ready, and I have a move to teach you for this one move.]

"Surrender yourself, heretic!" The black-armored knight raised their sword toward Tang Shaoyang. "Surrender, and we will forgive your people!"

Tang Shaoyang answered the black knight with integration with Zowen. His eyes turned blue while his hair grew longer, and his body sparked in light as magical power surged out from Tang Shaoyang. At the same time, his body floated in the air as the sky suddenly turned dark. The sky was suddenly covered by a dark cloud, covering the sun as well.

The cloud suddenly made a rumbling noise. All the knights sheathed out their weapons and shields. They realized that Tang Shaoyang intended to fight them, something they also did not expect. At the same time, his body released lightning balls around him. The lightning ball was at the fist size, floating around Tang Shaoyang in the air. There were hundreds of them.

"Get ready, Avyn!" After saying that, Tang Shaoyang's motioned his hand to the dark cloud. He made a movement of pulling down, and at the same time, lightning struck down from the dark cloud. The lightning was aimed at the white-armored knight on the back. Tang Shaoyang pulled off dozens of lightning, striking down the Holy Knights.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

"It goes as you planned." Tang Shaoyang muttered when he saw the ten black knights rush toward him instead of protecting the Holy Knights. The ten black knights avoided the lightning ball, surrounding him from all directions.

"Since what you want is death, then we will grant your wish!" The black-armored knight who attacked Tang Shaoyang earlier kept blabbering.

"Kuhuhuhu! I don't think rank determines how smart you are. You just come at me without thinking." Tang Shaoyang grinned ear to ear as he made a welcome motion. "Welcome to my lightning domain!" After that, Tang Shaoyang clapped his hand once, and the lightning balls exploded.

The lightning burst out from the lightning balls. The area suddenly filled with lightning, as if there was no space without the lightning. The lightning explosion blinded everyone, with a sizzling and rumbling noise from the lightning.

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A flood of lightning was the exact words to explain what happened in front of the gate. As the lightning ball exploded, more lightning came out, flooding out the area. The sizzling sound and the

blinding light caught everyone off guard. Even the people inside the city's barrier subconsciously took a few steps back, fearing the stray lightning that came toward them.

The flood of lightning lasted for thirty seconds before it died down, but the spark was still there, on the ground. The ten Executioner Knights were still standing in the same spot before the lightning ball exploded. The remnant of the lightning spark was still on their armor, and the culprit of the lightning flood was also still in the same spot.

The Executioner Knight released the smoke from the impact. They instantly stopped their attack and focused on their defense against the lightning. They underestimated the Ancient Rank from the lower world. That was why they boldly charged forward and surrounded Tang Shaoyang without caring about the lightning balls.

After a while, two Executioner Knights fell to the ground. The two fell to the ground and passed out after defending against the lightning. Three of them fell on their knees and exhausted their mana to dispel the lightning. The remaining three Myth Rank Executioner Knight was exhausted even though they managed to hold on.

Five Executioner Knights remained standing, remaining cautious against the man in front of them. While the Myth Rank Executioner had a hard time facing the trap, not with the Primordial Rank. The two Primordial Rank Executioner Knights were still fine after the trap, but they were in a dilemma now. It was a dilemma whether to retreat or continue his duty to capture Tang Shaoyang.

They did not care about the Holy Knight, but the Executioner Knight was the force the Divine Church could not afford to lose. The time Divine Church to nurture one Executioner was so long; it was about the time, not the resources. They had enough resources to create thousands of Executioner Knights, but they did not have the time.

While the Primordial Rank Executioner Knights hesitated, Tang Shaoyang did not intend to let the Divine Church leave like before. This was a war declaration to him, to the Tang Empire. There was no need for him to hesitate.

He took out the Titan Blade, and his figure blurred. He appeared before the kneeling Executioner Knight.

Swoosh!

The blade went through the knight's neck. The head flew into the air as blood gushed out from the neck like a fountain. He did not stop there as he went for another knight. However, he failed to get his second prey as the Primordial Rank Executioner Knight reacted to his attack. The knight blocked the Titan Blade with his black shield.

Tang Shaoyang grinned ear to ear. "You seem to care a lot more about your real subordinates than those holy knights." He used his movement skill, [Mirage Stride]. His figure split into seven figures, and the seven figures went after seven different Executioner Knights. It caused confusion to the two Primordial Rank Executioner Knights who still could fight.

The two Primordial Rank knights thought Tang Shaoyang would go after the two unconscious Executioner Knights since the two were the easiest target. However, they misjudged the situation as Tang Shaoyang went after the Myth Rank knight who was still standing. The knight still could fight as they raised their shield toward the incoming Tang Shaoyang, but the knight could not defend against the incoming strike.

Tang Shaoyang used [Thousand Blast], sending a thousand blasts to the exhausted knight. The thousand booming sounds spread through the air while the ground shook from the impact. The dust rose from the ground, covering the fate of the knight.

"YOU COWARD! FIGHT ME!" The Primordial Rank Executioner Knight was angered, yelling at Tang Shaoyang.

Of course, Tang Shaoyang was not bothered with such a cheap provocation, not especially in a battle of life and death. There were two results in the battle, either die as a loser or live as the winner. There was no such a coward in the battle.

For the third, Tang Shaoyang used another different movement skill, [Blink]. This time he appeared behind the kneeling knight. He pushed the Titan Blade to the ground and reached the knight's neck. He lifted the knight, showing it to the knights, not just the knights from the Divine Church but also to the other two factions that watched the fight from the city.

Tang Shaoyang slammed the knight to the ground and pinned the knight with his knees. With a crazed smile, he pulled the knight's head with his two hands.

"GRARGGGGHHHH!!" He roared like a wild beast while pulling the head off from the body. Not only he pulled the head, but he also pulled the spine from the body. That was so brutal that even some people looked away from the battle.

Tang Shaoyang then kicked the head that was protected by the helmet toward the Primordial Rank knight. He was bathed in blood with a crazed smile on his face. "Are you angry? But why? If you want a fight, I'll give you one!"

The two Primordial Rank knights were furious. They were about to charge at Tang Shaoyang together, but they heard screams from behind. They turned their heads and saw the dragon tribe girl massacring the Holy Knight. Avyn dove down, landing between the hundreds of Holy Knights. As she landed on the ground, the ice spread out, catching the knights' feet. Following that, ice spikes formed out, piercing the knights that were trapped by the ice.

The ice tried to reach the city, but the barrier stopped the ice. However, the ice created an ice wall, blocking the city gate. That was Avyn's aim, cutting the way for a retreat. She did not really care about the Holy Knights; her gaze was on the two Primordial Rank knights. The last Kankara'Xeo walked slowly between the Holy Knights; none of them dared to stop her.

"You have your own fun; I want to have fun too." Avyn smiled; her gaze went straight to bloody Tang Shaoyang. She was asking her share to fight.

Tang Shaoyang stretched out. "It's been a while since I have a strong opponent, so let me have one, and you have the other one. Deal?"

"Tch." Avyn clicked her tongue, clearly unhappy with the share. "How about you have one, then I will have the remaining knights?" She was talking about the Myth Rank Executioner Knights who barely could fight.

Tang Shaoyang shrugged his shoulders. "You have the deal. I just want one worthy opponent, so I don't get rusty."

Both did not lower their voice, so everyone heard what they talked about. It was a humiliation for the Divine Church. They were supposed to be the hunter, and Tang Shaoyang was the prey. However, things changed so fast now; Tang Shaoyang and the dragon girl were the hunters.

'Time to swap. Thank you for sharing your new trap, Zowen.' Tang Shaoyang changed his spirit integration. Since it was a one vs. one fight, he wanted a close combat battle. He did not underestimate the knight as the replacement was Zara, The Angel of Death, Grade SSS Spirit.

His eyes turned black, the two of them, while his hair grew longer and changed color into white. It was followed by eight pairs of angel wings sprouting on his back. His stats broke the limit into Myth Rank even though he was just Ancient Rank.

"You are not the only one with transformation skills!" The Primordial Rank knight used transformation skills. Similar angel wings grew on their back, but they only had two pairs of wings, and all of them were white, while Tang Shaoyang had black left wings and white right wings. Their eyes turned golden brilliance as the holy light surrounded them. The knight thought Tang Shaoyang used a transformation skill.

Of course, there was an idle individual; that person was Avyn. She did not need not a transformation skill; she was born strong. While waiting for the knights to finish the transformation, she fought the Myth Rank Executioner Knights. It was not a fight, of course, but a one-sided massacre. The right word was harvest. By the time the Primordial Rank knight finished their transformation, Avyn was holding five decapitated heads.

"YOU!" The Primordial Rank Knight did not know what to say as he failed to protect his subordinates. He lost eight Executioner Knights just to hunt one person. The Divine Church suffered a massive loss, and if he failed to bring Tang Shaoyang, then there was only one fate waiting for him, an execution.

"Blame yourself for failing to protect your subordinates, and consider yourself lucky that I don't attack you while you use transformation," Avyn smirked as she threw the five heads into the air. "I waited for your transformation, so I hope you don't disappoint me."

Whoosh!

Her figure disappeared and appeared again in front of one of the Primordial Rank knights. She purposely punched the shield, pushing the knight with her into the forest. Avyn and the knight disappeared into the forest, but then a giant ice crystal popped out from the middle of the forest. The ice crystal was a little bit taller than the city's wall, which was around thirty meters tall.

Avyn brought her opponent somewhere else, leaving Tang Shaoyang alone with the remaining Executioner Knight.

"Shall we start?" Tang Shaoyang still had his crazed smile on his face, looking at his prey in front of him.

This angered the Executioner Knight. He was angered by everything that happened around him. The knight gathered the Holy Energy in his sword and charged toward Tang Shaoyang.