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[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 3: Comprehending The Way by the Pond Chapter 7: Blacktooth Tribe

On the desolate grasslands, three black beasts were galloping at high speed. Ning and the others had looks of irrepressible joy on their faces. No matter what, they were finally coming home from the border region of Eastmount Marsh. They drew closer and closer to West Prefecture city.

“Young Master.” Autumn Leaf called out.

“Hm?” Ji Ning looked towards her.

Autumn Leaf hurriedly said, “On this trip to Serpentwing Lake, we’ll pass by Spring Grass’ Blacktooth Tribe. How about let’s go visit her at the Blacktooth Tribe? It has been a long time since I’ve seen her. I miss her very much.”

“Spring Grass?” Ning was startled, and in his heart, a surge of longing arose as well. Autumn Leaf and Spring Grass had accompanied him ever since he was young. They were like sisters to him. Originally, despite being unwilling to part from her, he didn’t want to cause Spring Grass to feel sorrow, which was why he permitted her to be with her father again. Now that Spring Grass was suddenly mentioned, Ning couldn’t help but feel a hint of excitement as well as anticipation. “Alright. Let’s go pay a visit on the way.”

“Thank you, young master.” Autumn Leaf hurriedly said with gratitude.

“I want to go as well.” Ning smiled, and as he did, he slapped the black beast on its head, ordering it to change directions slightly.

Although in theory they were paying a visit to the Blacktooth Tribe ‘enroute’ to Serpentwing Lake, in truth, it was still something of a long detour.

In a rather open mountain cave below a mountain wall, with many large wooden fences nearby. There were some armors hung up in the mouth of the cave, while there were also some long-furred beasts strung up on the trees. Some powerfully built men, their upper bodies bare, were casually chatting while seated, roasting the flesh of a beast.

At the cave entrance, ten black armored guards were on watch.

“Someone is coming.” One of the black armored guards called out loudly, and those men who were eating turned to look. One of them, a bare-chested man, stood up and walked over, frowning slightly as he looked over.

Three figures made their way over at high speed from within the mountain forests. Seeing that it was three people riding black beasts, they immediately relaxed.

The bare-chested man’s face immediately changed, and he hurriedly called out, “The young master has arrived, so why haven’t you paid your respects yet? Quick quick quick, all of you, rise!” After speaking,

he immediately rushed forward, coming down to one knee at the entrance. Very respectfully, he called out, "Young master!"

Both the armored men as well as the men with bared chests all came over and knelt down while calling out, "Young master."

"Rise." With a flip, Ning descended from the black beast, laughing at the leader of these black armored guards. "You've met me before?" He had been preparing to take out his insignia just now.

"I, Wuzhan, was lucky in the past." The heroic figure had a scarred face, and his body was powerfully built. "Young master, in the past, when you sparred with Ninefang Warriors, I once sparred with you, young master. Thus, I was instantly able to recognize you, young master. Behind you should be that Miss Autumn Leaf, your maidservant, young master. I recognize her as well."

Ning laughed.

So that was the reason why. In the past, he often sparred with Ninefang Warriors, and many of the Ninefang Warriors of the black armored guards had sparred with him. It wasn't strange for him to meet one of them stationed outside.

"I need to ask you about something." Ning said. "It has to do with Serpentwing Lake. Come. Let's talk inside."

"Yes." This Captain Wuzhan immediately said. "Young master, please come with me."

Wuzhan guided Ning inside, towards a spacious stone room.

"A while ago, Serpentwing ran amok not too far from us. Even we suffered some repercussions." Wuzhan let out a laughing breath. At this time, another black armored guard came over with a plate of fruits. Ning casually picked up a fruit and took two bites. "He even came to your place?"

"No. If he had, we'd have been dead for sure." Wuzhan shook his head. "However, at the time, we were all terrified. In the face of Serpentwing, we black armored guards wouldn't be able to fight back at all. Although we managed to avoid that calamity, many tribes suffered disasters. I can only use the word 'miserable' to describe what happened to them! At that time, we were hoping that Serpentwing would be executed by our Ji clan, but unfortunately..."

Ning nodded.

In the end, Poisonsdove Ridge had interceded and engaged in negotiations with the Ji clan, with the result being that Serpentwing only had to be confined within Serpentwing Lake for a century.

"Has Serpentwing been in Serpentwing Lake the entire time?" Ning asked. "Also, is he at the bottom of Serpentwing Lake, or in the central island?"

"The bottom of the lake, of course." Wuzhan said hurriedly. "How could he dare to stay on the island? He is afraid that our Ji clan will act against him."

"Bottom of the lake?" Ning seemed to have thought of something.

It seemed that it wouldn't be so easy for him to kill Serpentwing.

“Wuzhan.” Ning asked. “Do you know of a tribe known as the Blacktooth Tribe?”

“Blacktooth Tribe?” Wuzhan nodded. “I know them, of course I know them. The leader of the Blacktooth Tribe is a very skillful man. He was able to found a new tribe. No ordinary person is capable of founding a new tribe. Unfortunately, the many tribes which Serpentwing harmed had the Blacktooth Tribe amongst their number.”

“What!” Ning’s face changed dramatically. His heart shuddered.

Could it be...

Based on what he knew, originally, even before Serpentwing attacked him, Serpentwing had destroyed a small tribe. Everyone in the tribe had died. In the end, it was only through the examination of the corpses of those poor victims that it was determined that Serpentwing was the killer.

“Does the Blacktooth Tribe still exist?” Ning asked hurriedly.

“It does.” Wuzhan nodded. “This time, Serpentwing caused disaster everywhere. He’d go to a tribe, engage in some slaughter, then leave! It didn’t try to wipe out everyone! After all, to exterminate an entire tribe would take more time and make it easier for our Ji clan’s Xiantian lifeforms to catch up. But although the Blacktooth Tribe wasn’t wiped out, more than half of its tribesmen died. It really is terrible.”

“Over half?” Ning’s heart began to clench.

“Do you know Spring Grass?” Ning hurriedly asked. “My maidservant, Spring Grass. Is she still alive?”

“Spring Grass?” Wuzhan said questioningly. “I know Spring Grass. You have two maidservants, young master. Can it be that Spring Grass is no longer following you, young master?”

Ning had released Spring Grass to her freedom, but very few people knew this.

“No. I granted her freedom. She is the daughter of the chief of the Blacktooth Tribe.” Ning said hurriedly.

“I don’t know about this.” Wuzhan shook his head. “Although I’ve seen Blacktooth, I don’t know anything about his daughter.”

Ning took a deep breath.

Worry!

Concern!

More than half the people of the Blacktooth Tribe had died. Too many had died. Perhaps Spring Grass was amongst them.

“Definitely, she definitely has to be alright.” Ning ground his teeth, then immediately left the stone room.

Outside, Autumn Leaf and Mowu were currently seated in a circle with the black armored guards, enjoying some roast meat.

“Young master.” Autumn Leaf and Mowu both turned to look.

“Let’s go.” Ning hurriedly shouted.

Autumn Leaf and Mowu’s gazes were filled with puzzlement. Why were they leaving in such a hurry? However, they didn’t dare ask too much. They hurriedly rose, no longer eating as they headed towards their black beasts.

“To the Blacktooth Tribe.” Ning’s face was gloomy. Kicking the waist of the black beast, he immediately sent it bounding forward.

The three black beasts quickly charged into the distant mountain forests.

“Captain, what happened?” The other black armored guards were extremely puzzled. As for Wuzhan, as he walked out of the stone room, he too frowned as he stared into the distance. “Spring Grass? The daughter of the chief of the Blacktooth Tribe?”

Ning’s heart was blazing with worry. Autumn Leaf and Spring Grass, although nominally his servants, were in truth like big sisters to him. He still remembered how when he was young, he would point at the words on the books and stammer out questions. At that time, Spring Grass and Autumn Leaf, despite being ‘tormented’ by their young master, could only obediently reply.

“No way.”

“No way she’s dead.” Ning was extremely worried.

“Young master.” Autumn Leaf asked with concern. “What’s wrong?” She could tell that her young master’s face was exceedingly ugly right now. She rarely saw her young master look so furious.

Ning shouted, “The Blacktooth Tribe suffered an attack by Serpentwing. More than half its tribesmen died.”

“Ah?!” Autumn Leaf was instantly shocked. “Then Spring Grass...”

“We’ll know once we get there.” Ning shouted back coldly.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The three black beasts moved at high speed. By the time the sun was beginning to set, the three black beasts arrived at a sparsely covered mountain forest. From the distance, they could faintly see a tribe.

“Halt.” Ning shouted.

The three beasts quickly came to a halt.

“Young master?” Autumn Leaf’s face was red with worry as well.

“Go over there.” Ning pointed into the distance. From the distance, dozens of fur-clad men were currently chopping down trees using hatchets. They were most likely collecting firewood.

“They should be the clansmen of the Blacktooth Tribe. If we ask them, we’ll know.” Ning immediately rode his black beast over, with Autumn Leaf and Mowu following from behind.

Soon.

Ning arrived in front of those dozens of fur-clad woodcutters. These men all raised their spears and sabers, carefully watching them approach.

“I have a question for you.” With a flip of his hand, Ning immediately brought out his insignia, which had a single character on it; ‘Ji’.

“Ji clan?”

These tribesmen were all shocked.

“Does your tribe had a person named Spring Grass? She is the daughter of your chief.” Ning barked.

“The chief’s daughter?” A one-eyed man hurriedly said. “Our Blacktooth Tribe doesn’t have anyone known as Spring Grass. Our chief’s daughter is named Miwa!”

Ning was startled, then he hurriedly said, “Right, her name is Miwa. Is she still alive?”

“Dead.”

“Miwa’s dead.” The tribesmen all said.

Ning’s face changed dramatically, and the face of the nearby Autumn Leaf turned utterly white. Her body swayed, and then she collapsed from her black beast. Mowu hurriedly leapt off of his own black beast and caught Autumn Leaf. Autumn Leaf’s face was pale and utterly without color. Her tears had already begun to flow down uncontrollably.

“How did she die?” Ning shouted. “Was it Serpentwing who killed her?”

“Serpentwing killed many of the tribesmen of our tribe. Even one of the chief’s son died.” The one-eyed man said. “Many of our tribesmen died right away, while a few others suffered from shrapnel from exploding rocks which smashed into their body, or were frozen...they didn’t die right away, but they were injured. Afterwards, their wounds festered, while others became extremely ill. All of them held on, but eventually died. Many badly injured tribesmen died like that. Miwa, as well, died of illness afterwards.”

“Spring Grass!” Autumn Leaf wailed.

Ning’s face became all the more terrible, and the mental waves generated by his violent thoughts caused the nearby trees to begin to shake and vibrate.

“Serpentwing!” Ning ground his teeth and howled, “I, Ji Ning, so swear that I will definitely kill you! I will definitely kill you!!!”