

731 IS YOUR LIFE MORE IMPORTANT OR IS MONEY MORE IMPORTANT

Not only were the Kunlun Mountains mountains the origin of many myths, it was also a heaven for explorers. It cut through Beijiang and Nancang. Qingzhou was in the east. It was 2500 kilometers long, and the average elevation was 5500 to 6000 meters. It was 130 to 200 kilometers wide. Its total surface area was over 500 thousand square kilometers.

Many small countries were not even as large as this mountain. It was very magnificent.

At first, explorers preferred exploring Lop Nur. Later, everyone realized that the Kunlun Mountains was the most dangerous place to mankind. Some even tried to cross Death Valley.

Lu Shu sat in the train and looked up information on Death Valley. He wanted to see whether anyone had successfully crossed the valley. It was fine even if it was before the dawn of the magically rich era.

732 COUNTERATTACK

Most people would experience altitude sickness when they came to Sacheng. Most people would be fine after eating medicine to counter the pain. But those who were hiking could only endure as their bodies would grow dependent on the medicine. In the future, it would be difficult for them to tackle higher altitudes.

But the explorers here had the strongest spirit of adventure among all of humanity, no matter whether they were here to earn money, to experience the thrill, or because of their beliefs. Even before the dawn of the magically rich era, they had to take huge risks while hiking.

Lu Shu walked out of the station. He did not experience altitude sickness. The greatest strength of Practitioners was not simply their strong physique, but also their ability to adapt to different environments.

733 ENTER THE KUNLUN MOUNTAINS

After a round of drinking, everyone realized that this young man was not as easy to bully as they had thought. Lu Shu was not drunk at all. On the other hand, Zhang Yanfeng and the rest were about to vomit...

A few well-known backpackers, including Zhang Yanfeng, pasted a few brochures regarding the Death Valley route on the board outside the inn. They explicitly stated that they had a Class D secret practitioner in the lead. In just two days, they had gathered 12 people.

Out of the five new members, there were four men and one woman. There was a couple among the new members.

Everyone seemed to be very well-prepared. Even the lady seemed to be very experienced, as if she was a seasoned backpacker.

734 DEMON KING WHO SPOILS THE MOOD

On their first day in the Kunlun Mountains, Lu Shu and the rest encountered a wild yak. This was their first time encountering an animal that attacked humans.

Yaks were usually herd animals that did not attack other species. But wild yaks were different. Hikers were most afraid of encountering them in the wild. The yaks were merciless.

Lu Shu stood far away. He had no intention of making a move. This yak was a Class F, which was higher than that of the mutated animals in the city. But Wang Zhe was a

Class D. Lu Shu wanted to see if the magical stone he had stolen had any effect.

But Lu Shu was disappointed. Wang Zhe had no decent weapons. A German spade was his best weapon. Earlier, Zhang Yanfeng and the rest had boasted that they carried hunting guns, but Lu Shu saw nothing of the like...

How disappointing...

Wang Zhe easily killed the wild yak. As the group was about to advance, Lu Shu said he needed the toilet. He went back to where the wild yak was and tossed its corpse into the Seal of Lands.

After all, he was still a species research student. Although he had come here to humiliate Nie Ting, it was not like Lu Shu to come back empty-handed.

Furthermore, all the students in the specialization depended on one another. He could not discount everyone of their techniques.

A group of uncles were in the wilderness, but had not encountered any danger. They were willing to show their gentlemanliness.

Being able to drink a bowl of porridge in a place like this was heavenly. Her husband even carried a small bag of rice around.

Zhang Yanfeng and the rest were slightly envious. Except Lu Shu...

That afternoon, the lady called Wang Yan cooked a small pot of porridge. Lu Shu took out two pears from his bag. They were big and juicy. One bite and the juice almost flowed down Lu Shu's chin.

"From Zhang Yanfeng's distress, +166..."

"From Wang Yan's..."

All of them looked as Lu Shu ate a pear in this weather. They almost drooled. They could not believe that he had brought so many fruits here!

Lu Shu had just given away two apples. Everyone suspected that Lu Shu had lived in comfort all his life, thus he had no common sense.

Wang Yan pursed her lips as she cooked her porridge. She was treated the best out of all the members in the group. Everyone envied how much her husband doted on her. But no matter how delicious the porridge was, nothing could beat eating fruits here.

"Go and ask him whether he's selling the fruits." Wang Yan poked her husband's waist using her elbow.

Her husband walked towards Lu Shu. Before he could open his mouth, Lu Shu spoke. "One for 5000 dollars."

"From Wang Yan's distress, +666!"

"From..."

Zhang Yanfeng was dumbfounded. He was not here to hike. He was here to sell fruits!

Wang Zhe furrowed her eyebrows. "He's not going to disappear after selling all his fruits, is he?"

"I also suspect that he might do so..."

In the end, Wang Yan did not buy Lu Shu's pears. Who would be so dumb? After this conflict, all the more did they not want to talk to Lu Shu.

Someone whispered, "With so many fruits, he definitely doesn't have enough rations. Ha ha, I have never heard of anyone who has been able to carry so many fruits and finish the hike. Let him suffer."

At night, Lu Shu took out another two pears...

This was his first time discovering that he could earn distress points just by eating fruits...

In the afternoon, they countered many skeletons of wild animals on the way. This was normal. But encountering a pack of wolves and footprints of a bear near water sources made them slightly scared.

Zhang Yanfeng and the rest were experienced. Lu Shu did not expect them to have brought fishing nets.

A large fishing net was propped up by hiking poles around the camping ground, surrounding the entire camping ground. Zhang Yanfeng sighed and smiled. "This way, wild animals will not attack the camping ground. This is a tried and tested method. There is no need to set the fishing net too high. Around waist height will do. This will make wolves and bears retreat."

"I have never seen this before. The groups before this have never done this," Wang

Yan praised.

Zhang Yanfeng was extremely proud. "Relax. I collect money, but no one has died in my hands. I will always bring everyone back safely."

Lu Shu looked at Zhang Yanfeng and was suddenly dumbfounded. Even he, an unimportant person, had his pride. In these two days, Lu Shu had realized that in the past, Zhang Yanfeng had led hiking groups. But after the dawn of the magically rich era, wild animals were becoming hard to deal with. Thus, he depended on Wang Zhe.

Although Zhang Yanfeng was greedy for money, he did not take the lives of others lightly.

Of course, Lu Shu felt that even though he could read their expressions, he would never truly know their intentions. He would still have to observe him throughout their journey. After the trip to the Death Valley, everyone would go their separate ways and never gather again.

Humans are highly adaptable creatures who were good at using their brains. This was the reason why humans could dominate the earth. But Lu Shu suddenly thought. If creatures became more intelligent, would they be able to come up with methods like this?

In this kind of place, they would only be able to see the wilderness and wild animals for some time. Humans would grow lonely.

Every night after lighting up the bonfire, team building was very important. Everyone gathered and shared their stories, jokes, or took turns singing.

This was to make everyone feel like they belonged in the team, and were not rejected.

This was like a sea of sand. There were red plants everywhere on the ground. When they looked up, they saw a vast sky, but they were filled with loneliness.

All of them took turns singing, sharing stories or telling jokes. Of course, the uncles would share dirty jokes. Wang Yan acted shy as she listened to them speak.

The atmosphere was very harmonious. When it came to Lu Shu, Lu Shu paused before saying, "Xiaoming was kept in the dark by his parents for a long time. In the end, he died of suffocation."

Zhang Yanfeng was speechless.

Wang Zhe was silent.

Suddenly, there was an awkward silence...

Lu Shu was not done. He continued, "Xiaoming had just blown out the candle flame. Before he could make a wish, he was chased out of the mourning hall..."

"Ahem." Zhang Yanfeng stood up. "It's late. Everyone, deal with the blisters on your feet and go to sleep..."

Lu Shu was sad as he saw everyone else retreat for the night. Why did they not let him finish his story?

735 APPROACHING THE CENTRAL AREA

It was the second morning in the Kunlun Mountains now. Lu Shu walked out of his tent, fully rejuvenated, after a song of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. Problems like

blisters would bother the commoners, but not him...

For some reason, Lu Shu felt that his Twinkle Twinkle training was more effective here.

That day, they continued to move forward along the desert. They saw countless wild camels, horses and donkeys that had mutated but were not aggressive towards them. There were trails of animal footprints along the cliff, and humans could walk there too.

Generally speaking, Lu Shu would capture a few mutated creatures and stuffed them into his Seal of Lands as long as he had the opportunity to do so. In any case, those samples were of significant value for the Species Research of Luo Shen Cultivation College...

On the fifth day in Kunlun Mountains, there was a drastic decrease in altitude. Conversely, plants gradually increased in height. Lu Shu even encountered a bush as tall as a person.

By then, Lu Shu's personality had become well established in the team - anti-social, not gullible at all, yet surprisingly he was one of the strongest members of the team despite his fragile-looking appearance.

By the fifth day, most people were suffering from cracking lips. Furthermore, they more or less showed signs of fatigue when marching under the sun. But Lu Shu seemed perfectly fine...

Besides, he could still survive on one fruit per day for supply of water and vitamins...

Zhang Yanfeng was a tad confused. It appeared that Lu Shu would never yield in front of the hardships although he looked rather weak.

Usually, the following types of people were the least-welcomed in walking expeditions, the latecomers, the defiant, the weak and the arrogant who expected the leader to serve him.

But when it came to Lu Shu, Zhang Yanfeng had to swallow all of Lu Shu's unpleasant traits just for the money.

It seemed viable to rob him straightaway, but most people did not dare to breach the law as they were not felonious robbers anyway.

After they climbed over a sand hill, Wang Zhe, who was leading the team, suddenly lowered his body and motioned everyone to silence. When everyone obeyed, he craned his neck and looked towards the other side of the hill.

"Why?"

Wang Zhe almost jolted in shock. Then, he turned to see Lu Shu's face beside him...

Lu Shu craned his head to see a gigantic bear, almost as big as two bulls. There were no such monstrous creatures in the commoner's world. No wonder Wang Zhe was scared.

To Lu Shu's consternation, the energy waves from the bear was at least those of Class E. Yet, it was found just two days' walk away from Death Valley. So what on Earth was inside the Valley?

Lu Shu glimpsed at Zhang Yanfeng in contempt. The Heavenly Network had given him information regarding mutated bears. In Northern China, bears were caged and kept for their gallbladder. A tube was cruelly inserted into their gallbladder through their mouth.

Then, in the magical era, bears mutated. Moreover, their ascension was rather rapid. In no time, the bears slaughtered all the workers of the gallbladder factory.

And this bear they were facing was even stronger. It was a Class E. In the team, no one else, except Lu Shu himself and Wang Zhe, had a winning chance against the bear.

"Let's hide here, behind the hill," said Wang Zhe, "Hopefully it will get attracted away by other animals."

However, at this very moment, Wang Yan, her husband and three other young members of the group had already fled downhill. In the flurry, Wang Yan was tripped by a broken branch on the ground. Her scream was sharp and loud!

The grizzly bear turned towards the sand hill and stared into Wang Zhe's eyes. The latter did not dare to move at all. As a result, the two seemed to be gazing at each other with deep emotions.

Beside Wang Zhe, Lu Shu looked at him and the giant bear. After a short pause, he asked, "Is the bear a friend of yours?"

"From Wang Zhe's distress, +999!"

Drops of sweat slid down Wang Zhe's cheeks. He could not understand what was in

this fellow's mind. Why the lame joke when their lives were at risk!

Despite being praised all day, Wang Zhe was not a reckless man. He immediately turned and ran.

Lu Shu was disappointed. What a coward!

Meanwhile, the giant bear instantly accelerated towards them. Its fur and blubber trembled violently due to its running motion, and a trail of deep holes was left on the ground under its immense weight.

Nonetheless, Lu Shu was surprised to see Zhang Yanfeng stay. He drew a dagger from his bag and shouted, "Run! I'll cover you!"

In this situation, humans could never outrun the bear. More deaths were inevitable if no one stood out to sacrifice himself. Lu Shu could not understand Zhang Yanfeng's intentions of this act. Was he not merely a greedy gangster?

Immediately Lu Shu ran downhill, pulling Zhang Yanfeng along by his collar. As Wang Zhe prepared to run, he was tripped by Lu Shu's leg as the latter seemingly unintentionally extended his leg before he took to his heels. Wang Zhe must show more effort since he had pocketed Lu Shu's money! Moreover, Lu Shu had yet to reason with him regarding the problem of that magical stone.

In fact, Lu Shu did not have to make him an enemy over just one magical stone. But in order to live a good life, he would not give up on even half a stone.

Then, Lu Shu was reminded that he was an audit student... Screw you, Nie Ting.

In any case, Lu Shu was not that cold-hearted. Two strands of Sparrow Shade were sent skimming the ground surface towards the chest of the grizzly. In the next instant, the Class E giant bear was stabbed. Although invisible to the onlookers, the cardio-respiratory system of the bear had already started failing.

Left without a choice, Wang Zhe jumped to his feet and attacked the bear. He had no way to escape when the bear had darted to right in front of him. But this guy was not equipped with any combat skills. He simply rolled on the ground to dodge the slap and attacked back with his German spade occasionally when he got the chance.

Wang Zhe looked pathetic amidst the flying sand. Even a light slap of the bear's paw could result in a long, gaping wound on Wang Zhe's body.

At this moment of life and death, Wang Zhe mustered all his courage to fight. He knew that he would be dead if he did not risk his life against the bear!

Then, he threw his spade towards the bear with all his strength. In the next second, the bear was dead, even though there were no fatal wounds...

It died?! Wang Zhe collapsed to the floor absent-mindedly. Why was it such an easy kill...

Nevertheless, he had survived anyway. Suddenly he let out a wild laugh, his face covered in dirt. "I'm unbeatable!"

The rest turned back and were shocked to see the bear dead. At that moment, the five young members of the team thought that their money had been well spent.

Practitioners were indeed powerful!

736 FACES OF THE LIVING BEINGS

The crisis changed people's attitude. Zhang Yanfeng suddenly went quiet, while Wang Yan and her husband were having a heated argument because her husband had actually abandoned her during the escape. Only Lu Shu was calm as usual.

Their marriage seemed perfect in the past. But no one would have expected that a caring man, who had carried a pack of rice for making porridge even during the walking expedition, would leave his wife behind when her life was in danger. Wang Yan found the contrast hard to accept. She yelled, "All men are devils!"

Meanwhile, Wang Zhe was still immersed in his inflated ego...

The team settled down where they were. It was a relatively safe campsite as wolf packs would not enter the territory of the Class E giant bear. The smell of the bear's feces was enough as deterrence.

As Zhang Yanfeng set up the tent, he spoke to Lu Shu softly, "Thank you. I will pay back your favor."

As the saying went, people's true nature would be exposed in a crisis. Never had Zhang Yanfeng expected that the seemingly invisible young man would defend him at that critical moment. Moreover, the man's strength was incredible, and he remained calm while others had a fit of nerves for survival. Thus, Zhang Yanfeng had deduced that this young man was a powerful figure in disguise.

In fact, he had the best view of what happened at that time. He clearly saw Lu Shu trip Wang Zhe seemingly unintentionally, and then dragged him downhill.

Wang Zhe was an expert whom he had taken great effort to find. Despite his Class D abilities, he showed his undisguised cowardliness and tried to abandon the entire

team.

In the magical era, many rose to glory, and many fell from it too. Zhang Yanfeng belonged to the latter.

He used to be a wolf-slaughterer, but wild creatures following Spirit Qi regeneration were way stronger than humans. Thus, as the team leader, he had no choice but to seek more powerful secret practitioners.

Lu Shu looked at him with a smile. "There's no need to thank me."

Zhang Yanfeng looked down. "I have to..."

Lu Shu interrupted him, "I mean, it's useless to say those things. Where's my gold bar..."

"From Zhang Yanfeng's distress, +666!"

Zhang Yanfeng dug out the gold bar from the inside of his wide leather belt and stuffed it in Lu Shu's waiting hands. Lu Shu grinned. "There is neither fairness nor justice in this world. You are the only one you can depend on."

At nightfall, the campsite was all set up. This time, Zhang Yanfeng did not set up the fishing net, as it would prove useless in this situation.

Wang Yan was still arguing with her husband regarding their divorce. But Lu Shu thought it would be an unwise idea because all her food supply was still with her husband. She should at least claim it back before talking about divorce!

Lu Shu shook his head and replied, "All the food has gone bad."

"Fruits then," said Wang Yan, "I have money."

Lu Shu shook his head again. "Fruits too."

"Why has everything gone bad?" Wang Yan asked, about to cry.

After a short pause, Lu Shu replied, "It's because all men are devils, I suppose."

"From Wang Yan's distress, +666!"

Zhang Yanfeng was dumbstruck, his jaw dropped. Now he realized how mean this young man was!

At this instant, at the end of the undulating sand hills, brightness shone from the dark horizon of the Kunlun Mountains. Yet, the light was blue, like a blue fire.

Everyone stood up and gazed towards the direction of Death Valley. Stunned, Zhang Yanfeng murmured, "It's Death Valley! The Gate of Hell is open!"

Lu Shu's expression was stern and serious. As expected, there was something strange about Death Valley, which explained the retreat order from the Heavenly Network.

However, Wang Zhe shouted excitedly, "To hell with the Gate of Hell! Why aren't we seeing any monsters if it really is? It's the birth of the Treasure of Heaven and Earth!"

His ego had inflated after killing the bear. Thus, he had chosen this route to try his luck in the Kunlun Mountains. As the first Holy Mountain of ancient mythology, the

mountain range harbored countless mysteries.

It was almost certain that the treasure of the Gods was inside the Kunlun Mountains if it really existed!

Wang Zhe packed up his tent and backpack. Wang Yan asked nervously, "What are you doing?"

"I'm entering the mountains before sunrise!" replied Wang Zhe, barely concealing his excitement.

"Then what about us?" someone asked. They would not be able to defeat a wolf pack on this land ridden with mutated wild animals.

Wang Zhe let out a cold laugh. "I don't care. The wolves can catch you, not me."

Then, he strode towards the Death Valley. He was confident that he would have outrun the giant bear earlier in the afternoon had he not been tripped. Hence, he decided to keep these people here in case they would compete for the Treasure of Gods with him in the future.

Lu Shu did not stop him. According to the reliable information from the Heavenly Network, even Class C's had vanished in the Valley mysteriously, let alone a Class D secret practitioner like him.

Gazing at Wang Zhe's receding figure, Zhang Yanfeng asked Lu Shu, "So what now?"

"I will walk further inside. You can choose whether to stay or leave," Lu Shu said. He had decided to reveal his true self. "Don't worry. I will come back once I have a look

at Death Valley. So you all can wait here until I return."

Meanwhile, the rest had also noticed that Zhang Yanfeng was asking this unpopular boy for advice. And there was a certain strength in his words.

"I'm going with you," Zhang Yanfeng said firmly, "I will be of some help, though I'm not a Practitioner."

"Payment?" Lu Shu asked.

Zhang Yanfeng hesitated. "... No need."

He did not want the boy to leave directly without him if he asked for money. What the...

Wang Yan suddenly asked, "You said you are not a Practitioner. Isn't he the same as you? Or is he one?"

Neither Lu Shu nor Zhang Yanfeng answered. They packed up and walked out. This made the rest of the team worried. Without Zhang Yanfeng, who dared to stay at the campsite? Although Lu Shu had promised that he would return, but what if he could not?

After no more than 20km, Lu Shu discovered the abandoned investigation base of the Heavenly Network. This was the entry point to the mountains, the closest place to Death Valley.

Lu Shu opened the small, dusty door of the temporary building. There were no signs of fighting, except for a few scratches on the outside walls. They seemed to belong to

wild animals.

Then, he saw a group photo of the base staff. There was Luo Nan, his current form teacher. Everyone's work pass was hung there too.

In the next second, Lu Shu was stunned. Back then, Luo Nan claimed that he had come to check on the situation after their loss of contact from the base. But judging from now, it was not the case because Luo Nan himself was a worker here. Following this vein... it was possible that he was the only Class C guard of the place.

737 THE MYSTERY OF LUO NAN

"What's wrong?" Zhang Yanfeng saw that Lu Shu was slightly absent-minded. He did not know Lu Shu's identity, thus he also did not know just how surprised Lu Shu was when he walked into the base and saw Luo Nan's photo.

The base was made up of three temporary buildings arranged in a triangle. There was a heater that ran on fuel. One of the empty spaces were filled with neatly arranged boxes of canned food.

Lu Shu shook his head. "You are very experienced. Can you determine how long this place has been abandoned for?"

"It's impossible," said Zhang Yanfeng. "Normal, familiar places are much easier. Just see how much dust there is and you will be able to determine how long the place has been deserted. But this is also my first time coming here, thus I have no information that can help us."

"Hm. Wait for me," said Lu Shu. He walked into the temporary building.

"Aren't you afraid that Wang Zhe will go ahead first?" Zhang Yanfeng was uncertain.

"He is sending us to our deaths," said Lu Shu calmly.

Zhang Yanfeng was surprised. At first, when Lu Shu had just joined the group, he knew that Lu Shu wanted to go to Death Valley. If he was just an ordinary person, Zhang Yanfeng would not think too much of it. But Lu Shu was evidently not normal. His target was Death Valley. He definitely knew more than Zhang Yanfeng.

Something must have happened here for a strange young man like Lu Shu to come here.

Lu Shu opened every drawer in the temporary building, hoping to find some clues. He found a survey journal, but its contents were unimportant. It was as if the people in this base did not receive orders to enter Death Valley. Instead, they observed the mutation of animals here.

Lu Shu looked at the dates. The latest entry was written four months ago.

After that, everyone here disappeared, except for Luo Nan.

Lu Shu thought about it and said, "Let's take a rest here. There's something I need to settle."

In the distance, the blue light above the Kunlun Mountains was still flickering. The black mountains were like an abyss.

At first, Lu Shu had wanted to enter the mountains at night to see what had happened. But he scrapped this idea because of Luo Nan. He wanted to see what was going on here first.

Lu Shu could not find Luo Nan's employment pass here. The picture was a group picture with over 20 people there. To be honest, Lu Shu had no way of confirming whether Luo Nan was the Class C expert assigned to protect this base. If he had worked in the wilderness like everyone else, it would make sense for him to be in the same picture as everyone else. Lu Shu shoved the picture into the Seal of Lands to ensure that no one else would see it.

Snow started to pile up on the Kunlun Mountains. Suddenly, snow started to fall outside.

The temperature in the temporary building slowly rose. This small base was like a warm house. Everyone felt slightly relieved.

Lu Shu stood at the door of the temporary building. He stared blankly at the Kunlun Mountains. The others started to take out their coats. Wang Yan's husband kept apologizing to Wang Yan, but she had no intention of accepting his apology. After all, being left behind in a life-or-death situation was a very traumatizing experience.

Zhang Yanfeng boiled a kettle of water on the heater. At high elevations, the boiling point of water was very low, but under normal circumstances, heating water to 70 degrees Celsius was enough to kill most bacteria. One had to boil water for 20 minutes before being able to kill bacteria that were more resistant to heat, but they did not care much about this in the wilderness.

Zhang Yanfeng passed a cup of hot water to Lu Shu. He saw the blue light shining down on the wilderness and sighed. "How beautiful. The first time I went hiking, I followed a friend. Back then, I saw the vast night sky and the wilderness, and knew that I belonged here. You can't see snow in June in other places. How nice it would be, if we had brought alcohol. Isn't there a poem? Night is falling and snow is

approaching. Friend, will you share a cup with me... what's the next line?"

Lu Shu paused for two seconds. "Alcohol for the driver, tears for the family?"

"From Zhang Yanfeng's distress, +666!"

Zhang Yanfeng choked. He suddenly asked, "Why do you always pause for two seconds?"

"I have to use my skills within two seconds," said Lu Shu as he looked into the distance without turning back. His face was lonely and cold like snow.

"From Zhang Yanfeng's distress, +66!"

Zhang Yanfeng felt very uncomfortable. So humiliating people is your skill?!

Lu Shu suddenly turned around and said to Zhang Yanfeng, "You should have a satellite phone, right?"

Frequent hikers definitely had a satellite phone. Zhang Yanfeng took out a satellite phone from his travelling bag and passed it to Lu Shu. Lu Shu walked to one side and made a call.

Zhang Yanfeng cooperated with Lu Shu as after encountering the giant bear, he found that Lu Shu was very mysterious. An enigmatic young man like him was worth investing in.

But he was not sure where exactly this young man came from.

Lu Shu came back and returned the satellite phone to Zhang Yanfeng. "We will rest here for two days to wait for my team mates."

Zhang Yanfeng was dumbfounded. "Are your teammates nearby?"

"No, they are at the provincial capital of Qingzhou," said Lu Shu.

"Then they will probably take five or six days to reach here." Zhang Yanfeng calculated the distance. They had walked through the Kumukili Desert for four days, and took five days to reach this place. Even if Lu Shu's team mates were Practitioners, they would probably take five or six days.

"No, two days are enough," said Lu Shu with confidence. It was as if he was not in the slightest bit worried that his teammates would not be able to reach here in two days.

Just how strong were they?

Zhang Yanfeng, who had always thought that Lu Shu was enigmatic, suddenly realized that he might have underestimated Lu Shu's strength!

Suddenly, someone walked out and asked, "What are we doing after this?"

"We will rest here for three days. There is canned food here. I looked at the canned food and the expiry dates are still far away. We have enough fuel for electricity as well," said Zhang Yanfeng.

"Why don't we take the same route back? Why are we staying here for nothing?" Wang Yan stood at the door and suddenly chipped in.

"You can go back by yourselves," said Lu Shu peacefully. "No one's stopping you."

He then walked towards the Kunlun Mountains. Before he left, he said to Zhang Yanfeng, "I'm going to take a walk. Don't follow me. It's not a place that you can go."

738 FRENZIED

"He's purposely making a mystery out of a simple thing," Wang Yan whispered. She did not dare to speak loudly, lest Lu Shu hear her. But everyone else heard her. Wang Zhe had left. The rest did not dare to go back by themselves. They could only rely on this mysterious young man for now. They dared to complain and grumble angrily in private, but they did not dare to question him directly.

They were slightly puzzled. Why did Zhang Yanfeng suddenly follow this young man's lead? Even if the secret practitioner disappeared, he was just a Class D. Did Lu Shu not also run away back then when they encountered the bear?

At least the facilities in the base were rather complete. Heavy snow was falling outside, but it was very warm inside. Everyone could only wait.

Lu Shu went out to patrol everyday, but he never found Wang Zhe. It was as if after that night, even Wang Zhe had vanished into thin air.

On the third day after they reached the base, Zhang Yanfeng woke up and stared in the direction they had come from. For some reason, he was silently expecting something.

Lu Shu said that his team mates would arrive today. Zhang Yanfeng wanted to know whether Lu Shu was boasting. If they really arrived today, he would be able to have a definite idea of Lu Shu's strength.

Wang Yan and the rest had been stuck here for three days. They had no phone signal, and could not advance. They had found a deck of poker cards here, but more than ten cards were missing. How could they play cards?

They wanted to use pieces of paper to replace the missing cards, but they could not play this way. Everyone would know what cards they were. After one day, they decided to just play. It was better than nothing... but they realized that there was not even a single piece of paper in the entire base!

"Hey, when will we be able to go back?" Someone complained, "I'm going crazy!"

Lu Shu thought about it. "Do you want me to tell you a story?"

"No need, no need..." Someone quickly stopped Lu Shu.

Lu Shu looked at everyone and paused for two seconds. He then took out poker cards from his pocket. "These are the cards you are missing. Do you want to buy them? One for 100 dollars."

"From Zhang Yanfeng's distress, +666!"

"From Wang Yan's distress, +666!"

"From Li Kang's..."

Everyone was puzzled. Earlier, Lu Shu was the first person to discover this base. But the problem was, why did you not take the entire stack of poker cards away when you discovered them? Why did you have to take out a few cards before putting the rest back?

What were you doing?! Was it even humanly possible to come up with such a crazy method to earn money?!

Everyone haggled with Lu Shu for a long time. Finally, they bought back the remaining cards for 88 dollars per piece. Lu Shu shoved the money in his pocket and said to Zhang Yanfeng, "I'm going on patrol."

Back then, Wang Zhe had taken away one of the Venerable's magical stones. He used the magical stone as capital and brought in training resources from overseas to reach his current strength. But he did not dare to go back to the mainland.

According to Wang Zhe, the Venerable seemed very amiable, he was a good thief. His harsh words also often pissed people off.

Zhang Yanfeng suddenly thought, why was this young man so similar to the Venerable?

Lu Shu walked off. Zhang Yanfeng tidied up the canned food by the door. This hiking trip was different from those in the past. He had to gather and arrange the resources that they could use.

At that moment, Zhang Yanfeng saw a few black dots approaching them at high speed from far away. At first, Zhang Yanfeng thought that wild animals had come to attack them, but this was not the case.

The black dots were humans. They wore black raincoats and ran towards the base. Zhang Yanfeng had seen these raincoats before. They were part of the standard attire of the Heavenly Network!

Zhang Yanfeng was dumbfounded. Lu Shu's team mates had arrived on time. Zhang Yanfeng felt that he knew who Lu Shu was. To be honest, he had guessed in the past, but rejected the idea.

The Heavenly Network was of a high standing within the local realm of cultivation. Zhang Yanfeng had never thought that he would be able to travel with experts from the Heavenly Network.

Lu Xiaoyu and the rest ran over. They kicked up the snow with their fast movements. It was like a scene in the movies.

The people in the base also walked out to witness this scene. The moment they stepped out, Lu Xiaoyu and the rest had already reached the door of the base.

Cao Qingci calmly observed her surroundings. Her hand was hidden under her raincoat. If Lu Shu was here, he would be able to see that Nie Ting had a similar habit. The hand hidden in her raincoat was definitely holding a knife.

Cao Qingci had officially taken Nie Ting as her teacher.

Wang Yan suddenly asked, "You are..."

There was the logo of the Heavenly Network on their raincoats, but they were not quite certain.

Cheng Qiuqiao and Chen Zuan did not speak. They looked at Lu Xiaoyu. To everyone's surprise, the youngest member was speaking on behalf of the team. Even Luo Nan did not interrupt her.

Lu Xiaoyu coldly asked, "Auntie, where is Lu Shu?"

"From Wang Yan's distress, +888!"

Zhang Yanfeng said, "Are you his team mates? He went to the Gate to Hell to check the situation. He should return in two hours."

Suddenly, Cao Qingci said, "A pack of wolves is approaching."

Everyone looked around. Wolves? They did not see any.

The mounds around the base had been covered by the heavy snow. Everything was white. After one minute, someone saw a pack of wild wolves in the southeast. They were slowly approaching the base.

Wang Yan and the rest were frightened. They hurriedly ran back into the temporary building. Zhang Yanfeng took out his knife and was ready to fight.

"42 of them," said Cao Qingci.

The pack of wolves slowly surrounded them. It was as if they were already certain of victory. The people in the temporary building looked out of the window and saw the wolves approach them. But Lu Xiaoyu and the rest had no signs of movement.

The wolves came within ten meters of the base. They looked like they had been frightened and wanted to run away. Suddenly, they silently looked in Lu Xiaoyu's direction and lay down on their stomachs.

Lu Xiaoyu was very calm. She could control Naughty Pig, Big Cat and Little Fury. These wild wolves, who had not even reached Class D, were nothing to her.

739 THE ANOMALY IN SPECIES RESEARCH

In the dangerous wilderness, even an experienced leader like Zhang Yanfeng could not afford to let his guard down, let alone the younger ones of Wang Yan's kind.

Before the magical era, humans already feared wolves, bears and venomous animals. Sometimes wolves were incredibly persistent. Zhang Yanfeng once encountered four wolves following closely behind them for 12 days straight, causing everyone to tremble in fear the entire time. To make matters worse, these animals would not attack unsolicitedly. Instead, they simply followed you, keeping you on your toes all the time.

In such cases, the best shot to survive was to study the weaknesses of those beasts. In fact, their greatest weakness was fatal injuries. Without medication such as antibiotics, infected wounds could be lethal for wolves. Therefore, they valued every chance of attack.

Nonetheless, the healing abilities of wild animals had also improved after the regeneration of Spirit Qi. They had learned this via their newly acquired intelligence. Thus, they became even more violent and aggressive towards humans. Moreover, given their enhanced strength and speed, commoners were no match for them.

Unexpectedly, though, Lu Shu's teammates had actually covered nine days' of walk in three days, or two and a half, to be more precise.

The pack of wolves knelt down on the ground, facing Lu Xiaoyu, who stood tall like the Wolf Queen accepting the worship of the wolves. When looking through the window at this scene, Wang Yan and the rest were in disbelief.

In contrast, Lu Shu's teammates could not be more composed.

Upon retrospection, the greatest impression those people left on Zhang Yanfeng's mind was calmness, as though they were afraid of nothing. Be it Chen Zuan, Cheng Qiuqiao or Cao Qingci, none of them appeared to have considered wolves a threat since the start.

Lu Xiaoyu shot Chen Zuan a glimpse. "Do it. Quick."

"Sure," replied Chen Zuan. Then, together with Cheng Qiuqiao, he slaughtered the wolves one by one and passed them to Cao Qingci, who then packed the dead bodies in her invisible storage equipment.

It was not their first time to witness Lu Xiaoyu's exceptional control of the beasts. However, they had only seen her use it on lone yaks or meek camels.

In the Salt Lake remains, Lu Xiaoyu once called herself the Animal Whisperer. It was also then when Lu Xiaoyu discovered her special talent.

Back then, surrounded by a huge pack of beasts, Lu Xiaoyu was riding Naughty Pig as she exited from the remains. That looked pretty impressive.

Furthermore, this ability of hers had become increasingly more powerful as her strength grew. At the moment, she could control at least ten Class C beasts effortlessly.

In fact, this was not a gift, but a true special power. Even Lu Xiaoyu herself had no idea when she had awoken to it.

The commoners, including Wang Yan, sat in the temporary building and stared in shock as Chen Zuan and Cheng Qiuqiao slaughtered the wolves quickly and decisively. Suddenly, Chen Zuan looked up and glanced over at the building with a hearty laugh, which immediately scared Wang Yan away from the window.

Were they the young man's teammates? They were so strong and it was unlikely that all Heavenly Network members were as powerful as them!

After some hesitation, Zhang Yanfeng asked Lu Xiaoyu, "Are you the team leader?"

To him, Lu Xiaoyu's ability to tame the wolves was truly unbelievable. Moreover, despite her young age, the entire team would always go to her for advice. Hence, it only seemed logical that she was the leader.

That explained Lu Shu's insistence on waiting for his team, which included his leader and other strong support.

Lu Xiaoyu cast him a glimpse and replied, "It's Lu Shu, not me. Speaking of which, where is he?"

That took Zhang Yanfeng, Wang Yan and the rest by surprise. Lu Shu was actually the leader of this incredibly powerful team! Then how strong must he be?! It seemed that they had still underestimated the boy's ability.

Meanwhile, Lu Xiaoyu and Cao Qingci looked over towards the direction of the Gate to Hell at the same time. They saw Lu Shu running over against the windy snow, which had avoided Lu Shu as though by an invisible force.

Lu Shu smiled at Lu Xiaoyu and the rest. "Caught a few mutated creatures over there. They can last our Species Research for quite a while."

Zhang Yanfeng and the others were stunned. What? What was Species Research? They had seen the term amidst the heated discussion following the opening of the school term in cultivation colleges. But they found it unbelievable that these teenagers were all cultivation college students.

What the... Besides, the Species Research was said to be the worst subject, admitting only the least talented students. Why did it not seem the case in reality?

All of a sudden, Zhang Yanfeng sensed a change in atmosphere. Led by Lu Shu, Cheng Qiuqiao, Chen Zuan, Cao Qingci and Lu Xiaoyu slowly encircled Luo Nan.

Lu Shu gestured Zhang Yanfeng to stand aside. Then, he took out the photo and asked calmly, "Mr Luo, you said that you were an investigation personnel in the periphery of the Kunlun Mountains and that you had noticed the sudden loss of contact with this surveying base. Afterwards, everyone, including a Class C, had vanished from here overnight. Then, I found this photo in the base. Therefore... you were the Class C at the base, weren't you?"

Those hiding in the building were stunned. Why was there an internal conflict among members of the Heavenly Network?

However, the first part of what Lu Shu said had already sent chills down their bones. All the staff at the base had once vanished from there, yet they had stayed inside for more than two days! How dangerous!

Lu Shu and the rest patiently waited for a reply. Between Luo Nan and Lu Shu, all of

them would trust the latter unconditionally.

A slight trace of astonishment crossed Luo Nan's face. Then, he smiled. "Ah, regarding this... The man in the photo was not me. Otherwise, why would I refuse to collaborate with the investigators if I were the only survivor at the surveying base?"

Lu Shu was stunned too. "Then who was he? Photos don't lie."

740 THE POWER OF REVEALING THE REAL NAME

Luo Nan? Luo Bei?

What a casual name! Honestly speaking, Lu Shu did not believe in such coincidence at all. As if having read his mind, Luo Nan took out his wallet and retrieved a photo. "Here. This is our photo."

Defensively, Lu Shu took a look at the photo. It was taken in a park and the two young "Luo Nan's" were posing with their fingers showing the number "two".

That was unexpected. What the hell was going on? The answer to his confusion could not possibly be so ridiculous!

"Hold on," Lu Shu said after some consideration, "I need to confirm this."

At this moment, the blue glow outside the Gate to Hell bloomed like a flower. The splendid light had seemingly transmitted everyone in the snow back to the base.

Strips of blue light swayed in the sky. Lu Shu cast a brief glimpse at it and called Nie Ting via his satellite phone. To his surprise, the call failed, and it was more like his phone was spoiled, not because of the bad signal.

Suddenly Lu Shu turned towards the blue-tinted sky. Then, he turned to Chen Zuan

and urged, "Give me your phone."

Confused, Chen Zuan dug out his phone and passed to Lu Shu. Lu Shu switched on his phone, whose screen immediately turned black once the power was on.

Lu Shu returned the phone to Chen Zuan, who stared at it in shock. "Brother Shu, why didn't you use your own phone?"

"My phone is not free," replied Lu Shu calmly.

"From Chen Zuan's distress, +666!"

What kind of excuse was that? Why did you purposely use other people's phones when you had already suspected that the sudden explosion of magical energy could destroy electronic devices?!

"My phone is not free either, Brother Shu!" the little fatty protested angrily.

"Never mind the details," replied Lu Shu.

"From Chen Zuan's distress, +747!"

At the moment, Lu Shu felt slightly disadvantaged that he could not confirm Luo Nan's claim, as all his deductions would have been wrong if Luo Nan was telling the truth.

But the thing was, Lu Shu could sense something fishy about this man. Hence, he could not afford to let his guard down.

Suddenly, he was reminded of a story about the Jade Cipher 1 he heard about last time. The incident had a simple beginning, a netizen published his bizarre encounter on a famous web forum under the username of "whisper218".

Then, another person called "snow_on_heart" commented below, "218, I will strangle you if you mention the Jade Cipher again."

After that, both people disappeared from the world.

As a result, the name "the Jade Cipher" made its first public appearance, which came along with many subsequent rumors and even a movie of the same name.

Back to the issue at hand, it would not have escaped the eyes of the Heavenly Network if the story about Luo Nan's twin brother was fake. Nonetheless, Lu Shu believed that this matter was unrelated to the Jade Cipher because the Heavenly Network was extremely cautious when handling such cases.

Anyway, Lu Shu and Lu Xiaoyu would not have joined the Heavenly Network either if they had not been sent to the orphanage when they were still babies.

Lu Shu was a meticulous man and he definitely did not want to make the wrong judgment regarding such a crucial matter. After some thinking, he ordered, "Return via the same route because I have to go back to confirm your identity."

Helplessly Luo Nan smiled. "I'm not lying. I really have a younger brother called Luo Bei. At first, I had already decided to withdraw from the Species Research team and I had even submitted my application to be transferred to the cultivation college. But how could I have expected that my brother would get himself into this trouble at this critical moment? Thus, I had no choice but to pick up where he left off."

After a short pause, Lu Shu commented, "Pick up? Any lines?"

"From Luo Bei's distress, +666!"

"From Lu Xiaoyu's distress, +177!"

"From..."

The entire group turned to Lu Shu in astonishment, while Lu Xiaoyu looked at him expressionlessly. "Wow. That was unexpected..."

But Lu Shu remained quiet. He was not trying to be lame, but to test his real name. For some reason, this guy had not produced any distress points even when Lu Shu and the rest questioned Luo Nan's identity, and this was why Lu Shu felt suspicious.

If he was truly Luo Nan, he would have produced at least 1 or 2 distress points when doubted. However, he did not, as if... he had seen it coming.

Back in the classroom where Lu Shu obtained Luo Nan's real name, he was still "Luo Nan". But now, this man was no longer Luo Nan!

What on Earth had happened inside the Gate to Hell? If Luo Bei had really entered, why could he return while the others had all vanished? Besides, why did he lie? What was his intention?

From the start, Lu Shu had always thought that he was only running errands for Nie Ting this time. But now it seemed not that simple. Could he have... misunderstood Nie Ting this time?

Based on the current situation, it was highly likely that they were lured there by Luo Nan and Luo Bei, not Nie Ting.

Nonetheless, Lu Shu insisted that he should not be blamed because it was easy to associate this matter with his identity as an audit student. It was simply too much of a coincidence!

Luo Bei said with a smile, "You may want to check the steel bar on the right side of the temporary building. A long time ago, all of the staff here carved their names on it when bored so that their future colleagues would know who had come before. My brother's name is there too."

Immediately Chen Zuan went to check. Then, he shouted over, "Brother Shu, there's really a name called 'Luo Bei' here."

Until then, Lu Shu could confirm that Luo Bei had survived for some reason while his team had disappeared together with the surveying base. But now, Luo Bei was trying to lead them into Death Valley.

Lu Shu grinned. "I see. I'm sorry for the misunderstanding. Please pardon me. After all, being careful is never wrong. Okay then, let's head to Death Valley."

Luo Bei replied, "Your suspicion is understandable. I won't take it too hard against you for this matter. Anyway, I would have done the same if I were you. In any case, the Heavenly Network needs meticulous people like you."

"Haha, glad to know that you don't mind," said Lu Shu. Then, he took the lead and walked towards the Death Valley. Before that, he glanced at Lu Xiaoyu, but the latter

remained silent.

At that moment, Lu Shu was also curious about what the mysteries hidden inside Death Valley were.

And where Luo Bei wanted to bring them to.