

Mystical 261

Chapter 261: Totem Skill 1

As he observed the leader, the two alongside Garen were ushered out of the scene by the paramedics who had rushed over, and onto a white carriage.

Lying on the stretcher, Garen's sights fell on the chivalry leader's direction unknowingly, and he felt an unexpected chill.

The other party also looked back at him, his seemed cold and deep.

"We'll talk in a moment."

A voice echoed by Garen's ears.

Garen was shocked, He looked around, but there was clearly nobody who was talking to him. He realized that the chivalry leader seemed to nod at him, and turned away.

On the carriage, A team of people were guiding the carriage to a small hospital in White Garcia. A male doctor wearing glasses performed a brief check-up on Garen. There are no injuries, so he gave a prescription to calm his nerves, and also asked Garen to buy some simple medicine for external wounds and disinfectants. He was promptly released after paying for his services.

After Garen left the pharmacy, he found himself at the hospital corridor, and he saw the chivalry leader waiting for him.

Both men stood at the white corridor, looking at each other.

The chivalry leader's expressionless face forced out a smile, and he reached out his hands.

"Eisenhart, the local leader of the chivalry unit, patrol unit guard and security officer."

"Garen, Garen Lombard." Garen held his hand and shook it, then released them. "Let's find a quieter spot."

"Okay." Leader Eisenhart nodded, "Follow me."

He turned around and walked into a small ward, Garren followed suit, hanging up the "Do not disturb" sign and locking the door from the inside.

The ward was a simple affair; beds, tables and chairs, and a vase which carried a dried yellow flower.

The window was opened, and the white curtain waved along with the wind.

Leader Eisenhart walked to the window, turned around and looked at Garen silently.

"Be honest, are those people here for you?"

Garen lowered his gaze and nodded.

"I honestly don't know, but it is possible."

"The totem users in Lush Forest are a already messy enough affair as it is, why are you poking your nose in here? Don't you know we are in the midst of unrest here? So many people have died just a few days ago, yet you still don't have the sense to avoid this place?" The chivalry leader opted to save the niceties and lit himself a cigarette, taking a long puff.

He looked at Garen sideways, his eyes full of deep hatred and fatigue.

"The Lush Forest is in a situation where we find two or more totem users dead every day, it doesn't matter which side are you from, this is still not the right time to come."

"I actually don't know anything...." Garen frowned, "I'm just a normal person who just graduated. My house is here, I just want to go home. And this unrest you spoke of, what's up with that? What's a totem user? I only know of Luminarists..."

The chivalry leader took another deep puff, the cigarette head lit up with embers.

"A normal person who'd just graduated?" He took a sharp stare at Garen, like an eagle who had locked onto its target.

His thoughts churned for a while, before extending his right arm.

Pa!

He snapped his finger.

In that instant, a circle of silver patterns formed from his fingertip.

The pattern rippled in waves, and it spreaded out to every corner of the ward. At the same time, it swept onto Garen's body too.

The chivalry leader stared at Garen, as if he was looking for some reaction, but unfortunately came up empty.

At that point, the chivalry leader had a face full of expressions. It seemed like that he had relaxed. He violently squashed the cigarette butt, and threw it onto the ashtray on the table.

"Very well, very well, it seems that I have misunderstood you, you are indeed a newbie." The chivalry leader's stern face turned warm. "Alright, have a seat, you're a Luminarist? A traditional one?"

Garen looked at him confusedly. "Aren't you?"

"No, not that. I'm a Luminarist, of course, but I belong to the totem user inside. Don't tell me even this is beyond your knowledge?" Chivalry leader Eisenhart looked shocked. "Did your teacher not tell you?"

Garen shook his head. The other party looked even more weirded out.

"Alright." He pulled a chair over for Garen, signaling him to sit down. "It's been a while since I saw a newbie so innocent. Call me Eisen, familiar people call me that anyway."

"Alright, Mr Eisen." Garen recollected his thoughts. "I would like to ask, what are totem users? And what's the situation with the Lush Forest?"

"I can answer those two questions." Eisen held his hands together. "In essence, Luminarists are a complex topic and covers a lot of research and application. But human intelligence and energy is limited, so we have each specialize on our own fields. Luminarists have three core roles, Luminarists, Forgers and Totem Users. Luminarists fill the traditional role; where they forge and use their own totems. Forgers specializes in forging totems, selling totems that are not activated to totem users to earn massive profits. Whereas totem users specialize in combat using totems."

"And they differ in specialization." Garen nodded.

"Yes, division of labor." Eisen nodded agreeably. "This answers the first question. Now for the second question: the situation within Lush Forest. At this point, I can only tell you briefly, The Lush Forest is in unrest the moment. Are you aware about the situation at White Rose?"

"Is it about the unrest at White Rose City?" Garen's heart shivered.

"The nature of the situation is similar" Eisen nodded reluctantly. "It happened last night. The outbreak had caused multiple casualties, with ten-over injuries. So, we locked down the entire territory throughout the night, disallowing any entries. We just didn't expect that you'd still come, let alone get assaulted."

"Then what about Trejons' Territory, what's happened there?!" Garen continued asking.

"Trejons' Territory had a good base defense, plus there were three totem users stationed there. The territory owner himself is a Forger, and he's got wide connections too, there shouldn't be any issues in the immediate future. Why? Your house is in the Trejons' Territory?" Risen observed his anxiety, hence the question.

"Yes, I came back this time to check it out. But I don't know...." Garen sighed "Right, Mr Eisen, you are not local, are you?"

"Good hearing you have. I just transferred from Hann District." Eisen nodded. "Alright, I have answered whatever is necessary, you should get going. Look for a place to hide in other districts. Going in now, a novice like you would be exterminated by any totem users."

Garen laughed helplessly.

"I have offended the Mercenary's Guild,, I'm afraid I would be in trouble wherever I go."

"Mercenary Guild huh... now that's a bummer." Eisen frowned. "A Luminarist without a totem like you, you're basically a goner in one strike."

He stood up, and walked a few rounds in the ward.

"So, like this, you'll be urgently looking to create your own core totem right? He asked after standing still.

"I have trained in some martial arts, so I could defend myself..." Garen couldn't help but to interrupt.

"Self-defense?" Eisen couldn't help but to shake his head. "You still don't understand the difference between the totem user and a mortal."

He raised his right arm, the green ring on his middle finger shined a bright green.

"I'm only responsible for Lush Forest's small area for patrol, and I'm only using 10% of my ability. You should be careful."

Garen concentrated his focus. As the environment stayed still, his aura slowly spread out, covering the entire room.

The form he used to kill the two people just now was recreated. Even though his body did not expand, but he was at least 80% of his power just now.

The reason he refuted was because he wanted to understand the actual difference between him and a Luminarist. After all this while, he had not actually clashed against a Luminarist. This was a golden opportunity.

The platinum aura not normally visible by the naked eye swirled in the room.

Fuuu...

A breeze blew in through the window, raising the curtains and blocking Eisen for a moment.

"It's over." Garen suddenly felt goosebumps behind his nape, Eisen's voice was near him, standing behind him and a dagger in his hand was pointed towards his back.

Garen could feel it, the tip of the dagger had a terrifying power that was inexplicably sharp.

As he looked at where Eisen had been, the curtain fell to reveal that he had been long gone.

"When did you..." Garen felt that his throat was dry, the goosebumps rose behind him all over his skin. Obviously, this was a natural reaction towards threat. That dagger definitely had the power to break through his defenses.

"It's not that I'm quick, you're just too slow." Eisen kept his dagger, walked towards the side of the bed and sat down. "My totem's ability is delaying, if you had a core totem, then you would be able to

mitigate some part of the influence of my skill. But too bad you don't. At least, for now. Therefore my ability could be utilized to its maximum: the hundred-fold slowdown skill had been fully utilized. When the wind blew, in that instant I just had to walk over to your back, pull out a dagger and point it at you. All it would take is a simple push. Chik!"

He imitated the sound a dagger would make as it pierced into a body. Only then Garen did lower his head, his expression calm, but with a hint of heaviness in his eyes.

"This is 10 percent of my ability. You, who does not have a core totem, are no different compared to a mortal.

Garen's heart sunk deeper.

Just now, he had maximized his alertness to the peak, yet he could not react to Eisen at all. If he had really wanted to kill him, even with his maximum use of the Body Hardening Technique he would only last slightly longer.

"Alright, alright, you should leave, go anywhere you want, just not here." Eisen seemed to have lost interest, he lied on his bed and waved at Garen, signaling to him to leave lazily.

"Last question."

"Shoot."

Garen stopped for a moment.

"Among the totem users, are you considered strong?"

"Strong?" Eisen laughed in a baffled manner. "Brat." He sat up with a speechless face and looked at Garen. "Totem users are ranked based on the evolution form of their totem. My totem is at its second form. There's still a third form, some secretive big organization even has a unique fourth form, there are even some that could mutate based on the user's talents to form the ultimate talent creature. With my little power, I am nothing but a small ripple..."

"I understand..." Garen finally got a brief idea on how each forms' ability cap goes. The common knowledge that Teacher Emin gave him is too old and outdated...

"There is a night market nearby, you should go take a look. There's no use in me telling you, you need to go and experience it yourself." Eisen gave advice like an old man. He waved at Garen again, not speaking another word.

"Thank you" Garen bowed slightly to him.

He could have obviously chosen not to care, but he was patient enough to explain so much to him.

Garen exited the ward, and closes the door.

"Be careful on the road, if you see totem users fight, do not interfere." Eisen's voice from inside was sent directly to Garen's ears.

He left the hospital.

Garen bought some clothes in Garcia to be changed, and then reclaimed the briefcase that was badly burnt from the police station after taking some notes. The police officers seemed satisfied, so they did not prolong his stay and allowed him to leave.

Garen found a motel to stay in. White Garcia was a small forest township with only three streets and about a hundred houses, but there was quite a number of motels, more than 10 in fact. A classic tourism township.

After paying two days' worth of lodging fees, Garen brought his briefcase up to his own room.

Chapter 262: Totem Skill 2

Ka-chak.

He shut the door tightly and latched the chain.

Inside the dimly lit room, Garen drew the curtains, lit the oil lamp and dragged the trunk over to where he was sitting on the bed.

Click.

He opened the leather suitcase gently. The items inside included a book, consisting almost entirely of icons and some rumb coins he had brought along. There was also a change of clothes.

"Good thing they didn't get burnt,"

Garen let out a sigh of relief. This book had been given to him by Teacher Emin. Even if he had finished reading it, the book would still hold sentimental value to him. The coins were of equal importance as well. At this moment, not much remained of the money he had on hand.

He stuck a hand into his pocket and dug around, fished out a grey purse, and threw it on the bed. Next, he took all of the money out of the trunk and piled everything together. Then, he began to count everything carefully.

Several moments later.

"2457 silver rums... 56 copper rums... And a handful of spare change copper pieces... I don't have much money left,"

One silver rumb would be equivalent to ten bronze rums, which was equal to 100 copper pieces. The buying power of one silver rumb was slightly higher than one American dollar on Earth.

Garen furrowed his brows.

"This would definitely be enough for daily use, but... If I wanted to buy something else that would be... Whatever. I'd better go take a look first and decide later,"

He took a little map out of the suitcase, opened it, and began to look for something in the Lush Forest District. Almost immediately, his index finger landed on a specific dot on the map.

There was an annotation symbol next to the little dot on the map. Garen looked for the source of the symbol and found some additional information.

'Palasi Night Market. Business begins at 5 o'clock in the morning and ends at 8. Management fee: 100 rums. Scale: Small.'

"The manor is temporarily off-limits for now, so I might as well go here. I might be able to find an opportunity while I'm at it. I'll have a look at the night market early tomorrow morning. I should get a better understanding of the situation before making any moves," Garen planned everything out thoroughly and left the hotel lobby. He drank some mushroom soup and ate a few egg rolls before returning to his room to rest.

The sky started to brighten as rays of light penetrated the darkness of dawn.

At the perimeter of Lush Forest district's vast forest, a barren piece of land stood out from the rest of the green surroundings.

A large white disc-like region had been embedded in the middle of the sea of grass, like a white spot on a green carpet.

Looking into the disc, crowds of people could be seen bustling to and fro.

There were four paths for people to enter and exit the area; each point was connected to the outside by four slim, white coloured roads.

Near the exits and entrances, guards in grey robes stood watch and collected money from those who entered.

People who visited this place came dressed in various types of clothing. Some of them were slovenly dressed in dirty garments, while others came fitted in nothing but the finest robes. Some came with their faces painted in the most exquisite makeup, others just arrived in humble, simple attire.

At the entry point to the South, two young men who looked like brothers paid the fee and entered, followed by another young man in a grey robe.

The young man wore a hood over his head, save for the few strands of soft golden hair that were already exposed. He was fair skinned and had a boyishly pretty face. His slim body was slightly muscled, but well-proportioned.

He brought out a stack of silver rums and placed them in the guard's big donation box to his left. Next, he took a number plate from the other man's hand, and clasped it around his wrist.

This young man was Garen, who had arrived here by following the map the entire way.

Once he had entered the disc, his eyes began scanning the whole area.

Inside the white disc, there were about ten little white stone houses. Wooden signs with different names hung at the corners of each house.

There was a repair shop, an equipment shop, a totem shop, and a raw materials shop, among others.

The stone houses were the size of regular shops, with doorways above a constant stream of people going in and coming out.

Garen observed the people around him and noticed out of ten people, two here were emitting Luminescent breath from their bodies.

He furrowed his brows and kept his guard up, before walking towards one of the stone houses. A sign that read 'totem shop' was attached to the front, but it was a simple and crude sign, and obviously only temporary.

The interior layout of the shop consisted of crystal glass cabinets arranged in a large square, with a smaller square within it. The cabinets were filled with different types of totems.

All of the totems were silver, making it obvious that none of them had been activated yet.

Three beautiful young women dressed in short white dresses smiled sweetly as they tried to sell the totems to visitors of the shop.

There weren't many people in the shop, only four or five others, and all of them appeared similar to Garen in one aspect: they were very young.

The instant Garen entered the shop, he noticed a young lady in a short skirt walking towards him.

"Good day, sir. May I know what kind of totem you require?"

"I'm just here to look," Garen replied with the first excuse that came to mind.

"Alright. Please take your time. If you require any assistance, do not hesitate to call me," the young lady replied gently and smiled as she bowed, before she walking away to attend to another customer.

Garen took a walk around the counter.

All of the totems were small-sized support totems that consisted of rat, cat, canine, various types of birds, and serpent type totems.

He took a look at an eagle totem with a marked price tag that read 250,000 silver rums. His heart dropped instantly, as he knew that all of the money he had right now was not even equivalent to 10,000 silver rums.

Once he had calmed down, Garen exited the totem shop and ventured into the other stores in the vicinity. Both the repair shop and equipment shops charged exorbitant prices; the raw materials shop was the only one that had slightly cheaper prices.

Garen went inside and bought a book titled "Totems Made Easy" and also bought a few commonly used standard encryption passwords. After that, he was left with only 120 silver rums.

He returned to the totem store to ask a few questions about core totems. It was known that core totems could only be made to order, and were only sold in larger night markets. They had to regulate them based on their series or types. The price range of a core totem was also significantly higher, and the young lady in charge told him right away that bespoke totems required 200,000 silver rums to be paid upfront as deposit. Furthermore, they would need to know the requirements of the personalized totem, as more complicated requests would also result in a higher price.

Garen calculated everything in his head carefully. He needed to know how much it would cost to order a white bear core totem.

And if his calculations were right, he would need at least 10,000,000 silver rums!

It finally dawned on Garen how much Teacher Emin had invested in him.

Nearby Trejons Manor

In the burnt forest beside Black Swan lake.

Vanderman and two old men in white robes stood together. Their surroundings were in a state of utter disorder. In certain parts of the woods had tree trunks had frozen over, while others were up in flames.

"It's them again! Nought a care for life or death!" One of the old men in white robes muttered angrily. "Did they think this was some backwards little country like White Rose?"

"I'm leaving this to the both of you," Vanderman said respectfully to the two old men. "The Obscuro Society is becoming more chaotic as the days go by, and now there have even been cases of second-form totem users appearing. Don't tell me that the upper echelon really has no response to this?"

The two old men turned to look at Vanderman, and saw the agitated expression in his eyes.

"Believe in the organization. The imperial family would never sit back and watch the Obscuro Society sack and plunder as they please. The only thing we should do right now is wait."

"Understood," nodded Vanderman.

"Don't worry. Second-formers may be slightly more troublesome, but it's a problem we can handle." said one of the old men as he patted Vanderman's shoulder.

Vanderman nodded again, but this time his eyes were downcast. He was not the type of person to leave his own safety in the hands of others.

Inside the guest room

Garen sat up in bed next to the oil lamp while turning through the pages of "Totems Made Easy".

It was a quiet night, with nothing but the sound of pages being flipped. It wasn't long before he had reached the most important section of the book.

'Types of totems: Animal series, Plant series, and the theoretical Elementary series.'

'The animal series is the most common type of totem used and understood by Luminarists. It is also regarded as the most ubiquitous totem type. Various types of dangerous beasts can be evolved into powerful mythical creatures. Obviously, the level of difficulty increases when evolving to the next level.'

The plant series belongs to a field which is on the cutting edge of research by high-level Luminarists. It also possesses great power, and can be used for self-healing purposes. It is the most sought after totem skill. According to previous accounts, this totem type has been seen a few times throughout history, but quickly disappeared from the scene thereafter.

The elementary series, a type of totem that was worshipped by the Phantom Light users, was regarded as the most highly prized totem type. However, this series is still difficult to understand. If we were to say plant totem types still had traces for us to follow, elementary totems would be a myth that we knew nothing about. Thus, the elementary series remains theoretical, as there has been no proof that anyone has been able to create it.'

"Three series, huh?" Garen wrinkled his brow, and continued to turn the pages.

'The animal series is the weakest, but also the most widely used. The first stage of the plant series is similar to the second form of the animal series. However, the level of difficulty is ten times harder than the animal series, regardless of creation or lighting up, restrained or manipulated. Therefore, Luminarists still mainly use the animal series.'

'The animal series is divided into three main groups: ground, air, and aquatic. The types that are currently most popular include wolf, leopard, and hawk. Various schools of thought, associations, and workshops have done extensive research in those areas. These well-loved totem types were popularized on the market by the very first Heath school of thought that listed the top three most important composition theories, referred to as the Heath theory. This theory integrated various totem types, and finally concluded that the creation, manipulation and restoration of the wolf, leopard, and hawk totems were the simplest. The evolution of these totem types were also significantly easier than the rest. Therefore, this resulted in an increase in the sightings of these totems. Below is a list of well-known totems from different locations, as well as the places where they are produced, to provide further information to the reader.'

Garen's gaze remained fixated on the page, before he noticed a little square diagram chart packed with information about various totem names and their categories.

He landed on the top part of the page where he had read about the Tashura school of thought, with its accompanying black wolf totem.

He let out a surprised gasp, and continued on to the next page.

'Each country has its own national animal. Moreover, a large majority also have their own important imperial totems. For example: Bateman Empire, White Bat. Vandermantia, White Swan...'

Garen found the Kovitan Empire almost immediately.

'Kovitan Empire, Red Wolf.'

Garen was about to continue reading the next page, when a sudden burst of red light flashed in his field of vision.

He was frozen in shock for a moment.

In the skill pane at the bottom of his field of vision, the three-dimensional image of a butterfly had appeared, proving that he had finally managed to complete this skill!

He took a deep breath, and subsided the surging emotions bubbling inside himself. A few minutes later, he finally opened his eyes and looked towards the skill pane.

'Neon butterfly: First stage totem, upgrade available. Evolution success rate: 21%. Potential points to be consumed: 500%.

Ability: Poison dust attack (Releases poisonous butterfly dust, can be released up to three times a day. Effects: Paralysis, may cause death.)'

Garen noticed that the entire neon butterfly had become a new skill.

"Does this mean... I could just use my potential points to evolve my totems?"

He checked the amount of potential points he had left: 1272%.

"I guess these are my two most crucial problems right now. The first would be to determine the core totem, and the second would be to find new resources that can be used to gain potential points. A 21% success rate is way too low. My current amount of potential points is definitely still lacking..."

Garen thought back to the period of the emergence of the Three Heroes. They had overcome great catastrophes and powerful adversaries. Among those techniques the style that suited him the most was...

"Looks like I'd better hurry up and get to Iron Tank City..."

Chapter 263: Getting Acquainted 2

Before Grand Duke Goth ascended to his current position as the duke, he once spent a period of time in an expedition camp, where he was occasionally allowed to travel for pleasure. He was the third son in his family, but after the war broke out, his father and two older brothers died in battle one after another. He took over their responsibilities and carried on their fight, which led to the sudden discovery of new powers of frighteningly gigantic proportions. After that, he faced a series of betrayals and unrest, making his heart grow more like steel in the process.

But before this, Goth himself was a straightforward and friendly average young man.

Garen still remembered that before the war, Grand Duke Goth had already been a first-rate genius with hidden innate talents. He was also backed by his family's thousand year-old collection of books and totems. However, due to the lack of attention he was given in his family and the sad reality that no one fawned over him, coupled with the fact that nobody knew about his concealed talents, everything took time to slowly and finally come together.

Among the people surrounding him, only a few cross paths with him occasionally. As for the two people that went on adventures with him, they quickly earned a place in his heart, and from that day until their last, became his only intimate companions.

"In other words, the current Goth would still be at his lowest point in life. He's someone who knows clearly who to show gratitude towards and who he should resent. If I were to befriend him at this moment, it might be easier for me to gain his trust," Garen narrowed his eyes and thought carefully.

"An innocent and kind-hearted individual, though not someone I'd usually look up to., However, I can't deny that he's the type of person that everyone would want to befriend. It wouldn't be necessary to constantly take precautions against this type of ally."

He took out the map and began to look for the location of Iron Tank City carefully.

After exiting the Kovitan Empire, he needed to take a steam train and pass through three other cities, before finally arriving at the main city of the Lavis Empire, Iron Tank City.

He estimated the distance, concluding that it would be a four day journey at least, assuming that they would be going at full speed without any stops.

"The current Goth, because of his undiscovered talents, would still be lowly ranked and unnoticed by the people around him. However, to get near him without making it seem deliberate would need some careful planning..."

Garen kept the map and counted the rums he had on hand again. Instantly, the expression on his face darkened.

"My money might not be enough anymore... I'd have enough for the journey there, but not much would be left for daily use after that... I need to think of a way to get more money."

He furrowed his brows slightly and pondered deeply for a few moments.

"Before Goth took over his responsibilities as the duke, he was a hired totem user. I can't even defeat a regular totem user right now, so I shouldn't even be thinking about that. However, totems do need to be repaired... Maybe I could try my hand at something like that instead. On one hand I could get some practice and sharpen my skills, while using my new position to get closer to Goth at the same time."

He decided that he would do that. After packing up his thoughts, he immediately lay down and extinguished the lamp before going to sleep.

On the second morning, Garen woke up early and went to the repair shop in the market. He went in and asked some questions about the fees for specific maintenance costs. As expected, totem maintenance required a great sum of money, and was even a frequently necessity at times. The scope of repairs was also an important factor, as well as the extent of damage to be repaired. Sometimes the maintenance cost was even higher than the price of the totem itself.

But the unfortunate truth was that totem repairs also required unit factories, and so far Garen did not have one. He was also at a loss towards the common types of totems available in the market. Not to mention the fact that he couldn't tell one from another.

Without any other choice, Garen decided to leave the market for the time being.

Once he had bought his train ticket, Garen decided that it would be better for him to leave immediately, and ponder his maintenance techniques while he was on the road.

After leaving White Garcia, he travelled for two days straight and switched trains countless times, before finally leaving the Lush Forest district and entering into the Hanna district. Without further delay, he bought a train ticket from the capital of Hanna district that would take him to Gravel City. -----

Gravel City was nearby the edge of Iron Tank City, and was also a sprawling trade city. It was also one of the port cities of the Lavis Empire and was extremely technologically advanced.

It would take two to three day's journey by train.

Garen purchased a bed for his train car, bought something to eat and drink. He then realised that he was only left with a little more than ten rums in his pocket, and decided that he had spent enough.

Two days and five hours later, he arrived in Gravel City, where it was already past nine o'clock at night.

He switched trains in Gravel City, and by the time he had reached Iron Tank City, it was almost dawn.

During this period of time, Garen finally understood what he had to do to evolve his totem. If he planned to use his potential points to strengthen his totem, there were two criteria that he had to meet.

Number 1: He wasn't sure about other series, but for basic totems, he knew that the amount of potential points required to upgrade each totem would increase based on their size. The neon butterfly totem needed five potential points to evolve, but other than that, he didn't know what else was required.

Number 2: Potential evolution required a specific amount of time for the totem to change. It wasn't a goal that could be reached in one step or something that could happen instantly. It would be like the time when he first started using this totem; he needed time to slowly get used to it.

Garen didn't evolve his neon butterfly immediately. Since he had yet to find a new source of potential points, he was afraid to use them carelessly. Following the increase in his power level, his current potential points usage had also gotten significantly higher. Once he had used up this potential, he would lose an opportunity to evolve.

Daylight filtered into the window of the Silver Line loft, and tiny specs of dust floated in the golden rays of light.

On the second floor of the loft, a handsome harpist performed an amusing song about a clown while a crowd of onlookers sat around him laughing loudly.

The mostly empty second floor had black wood covering the floors, and various totem patterns and oil paintings hung on the walls. Behind the counter, an old man with a white beard dexterously wiped the dust off the counter before placing a bottle of an alcohol-like beverage on top.

In the corner of the second floor, a few patrons who disliked noise sat quietly in their seats and ate their breakfast leisurely.

Garen was among them.

He was dressed in a long black robe that, at first glance, made him resemble a monk. He sat quietly in his seat, eating his set meal of cheesecake and coffee.

The Silver Line loft was located on one of the lanes outside Iron Tank city, and was one the favourite leisure spots for many hired totem users. It was also a favourite hangout spot of the future Grand Duke Goth.

The first time Goth and his two friends met, it was in this very spot, on the second floor of the loft. Their meeting was an accident. A quarrel had occurred between patrons from two different tables, and when two people stepped forward to intervene, they were injured instead. Goth had also gotten himself involved, and then a huge fight broke out. People began kicking and punching each other, but nobody used their totems. This moment had become an important turning point, and the two people who attempted to mediate the quarrel became acquainted with Goth, and decided to invite him to join their task squad. Thus, that was how the formation of three future companions happened.

Garen had been here for more than half a month already. His leftover money was quickly running out. Out of desperation, he went to a totem repair shop in the market and found a job assembling units. His Master-level precision map-making helped him excel in one aspect of unit assembly. Although he wasn't able to gain full exposure, his effectiveness gained him the admiration of the shop owner.

However, his wages were only released at the end of the month, leaving him dirt poor at this very moment.

He vaguely remembered that this was where the Goth trio had gotten acquainted. Goth, Andy, and Jessica. The three of them would not have properly met yet right now, but they would be meeting soon enough.

Garen chose to rush over to Iron Tank city, because picking the right moment to intervene was also of utmost importance. If any of the other two heroes arrived too early or too late, the timing would become unsuitable. Only Goth was currently in the vicinity.

But the current situation merely showed that he had been keeping watch at the Silver Line loft for at least half a month, and nothing had been amiss. Panic began to rise up in his heart.

Currently for Garen, time was already insufficient at this very moment.

There was only a month or more left before the war would break out. When that happened, the fury of war would spread to every corner of this world. Hired totem users would also increase, and Goth's power would advance by leaps and bounds during that period of time. His relationships and friendships would also become much deeper.

"It couldn't have resulted in a change of location because of the butterfly effect right..." Garen lifted his coffee cup to his mouth and sipped carefully, attempting to quash the anxiety in his heart.

Everyday he would come to keep watch, but to no avail. There were no leads in his quest to find a new source of potential points either. The period of danger was coming closer and time was running out. It didn't matter that this was Garen, at this moment there was no way he could remain as calm as he was in the beginning.

Thump thump thump...

Suddenly a group of muscular men in bizarre clothing came up the stairway. At first glance they looked like speakers or ruffians because of their long robes, but the silver four-pointed star on their shoulders clearly stated that they were hired totem users.

This group of people sat not far from where Garen was seated. They ordered some cheese bread noisily, as well as a large jug of fermented goat's milk. They began to eat and drink heartily once their food had arrived,

A while later, a young woman in a white robe entered. She wore a white veil and had a voluptuous figure. Her skin seemed somewhat rough, but it couldn't hide the youthful curves of her body including her full bosom and her perfectly round buttocks.

Instantly, the men, who had already drunk some alcohol by now, began to whistle.

The woman in the white robe sat in the corner and ignored the noise around her. She merely ordered a cup of coffee and drank it quietly once it had arrived.

Seconds later, a group men and women in white robes arrived. The young man who led the group had an air of superiority around him, and wrinkled his brow at this scene.

"What's with the whistling? You're just a bunch of uneducated country bumpkins!"

Bang!

One of the ruffian totem users stood up in a rage.

"Fuck you! Care to say that shit one more time?!"

"Fools!" Unconcerned, the man with the arrogant face rolled his eyes. "No wonder you become horny at the mere sight of a woman. Looks like all of you know nothing but shameful behaviour. Tch tch."

"Fuck!" "He's asking for it!"

The sound of yelling echoed throughout the place, and the ruffian totem users became furious and started charging towards the group in white robes.

Those in white robes were also unwilling to show signs of weakness, and began to flash silver light, before spreading out and advancing forward as well.

"I'm gonna beat you til your own parents won't even recognize you!" "Kill them all! If anything happens I'll take full responsibility!" "How dare you disrespect Miss Angela!"

Those in white robes seemed like fish in water. They were obviously seasoned fighters, as they rolled up their sleeves and rushed forward.

Both sides consisted of totem users, thus this scuffle would determine which side had stronger defense totems. When they collided, a normal person would be unable to tell if anything was amiss, but a Luminarist would know right away which side remained stronger after the collision.

Garen sat in the corner as his heart beat wildly at the scene before him.

The city guard would be patrolling nearby. Luminarists weren't allowed to use their totem powers for no reason, and doing so would be a violation of the law. These were iron rules, and were not meant for anyone to go against. Therefore, these totem users were fighting with their bare fists instead of using their totems, in order to keep their wrongdoings to a bare minimum.

The two groups of people began to fight and merged into a chaotic mess, making it difficult to differentiate between both sides.

"Stop fighting, please stop fighting..." The old man yelled at them and tried to chastise both sides from behind the counter. However, no one paid him any mind.

Between these two groups of people, it was obvious that one group comprised of aristocrats and nobles, while the other group consisted of travelling totem users. Neither group was afraid of a fight. The place was wrecked into a state of disorder, and tables and chairs were broken and strewn into one big mess.

The singing harpist and some of the scared customers ran downstairs quickly.

Chapter 264: Getting Acquainted 2

"I said, stop fighting! Both sides should just take a step back, okay? If anyone has any issues they should just talk it out properly," At this moment, two young people appeared in the corner suddenly. There stood a man and a woman. The man chastised the group loudly and stood forward, trying to separate a pair of brawling totem users not far away.

The woman furrowed her brows. She was at a loss on what to do.

Bang!

The man received a punch to his lower jaw, causing him to stagger a few steps backwards.

"Get the hell out! You're in the way!" One of the ruffian totem users had taken a blow at him, and was now resuming his scuffle with his opponent again.

"Why are you hitting people for no reason?!" Another voice echoed from the stairway. This time it came from a tall, strong, and honest-looking young man. "He only tried to stop the fight. Why did you have to hit him?"

"I already did, so why the heck do you care so much?!" One of the men in white robes rushed over to take a swing at him.

Bang!

The young man was dumbfounded. He had suffered a blow to his face, and was now in a daze and unsure of what had happened.

"This dumbass!" He wasn't sure of the culprit, but someone had kicked him sharply in the crotch.

"Ahh!!!"

A loud cry of agony pierced through the room.

The well-built young man held his crotch area and hopped away, looking like a fish that had been thrown out of water.

"You're gonna be dead! All of you! Do you know who I am? How dare you kick me in the crotch!" The young man raised his head suddenly and let out another great shout, before rushing into the group and joining their scuffle.

Bang bang bang! Thump thump! Crash! Clank clank!

The fight escalated into a messy and chaotic affair, and the young man found himself in the middle of both groups. Even the two people who had tried to stop the fight earlier had now been dragged into it.

Garen sat on the sidelines and sipped his coffee slowly, furrowing his brow as he looked at this group of people.

The muscular young man who had unexpectedly rushed into the quarrel was fighting viciously amongst the two groups and although he didn't have a specific fighting style, his large built and great strength ensured that every hit he landed would result in an opponent being pushed back. But the totem users were not here for fun and games. Being forced backwards meant nothing to them, and they remained fine enough to continue surging forward to deliver more hits.

As for the male and female mediators from before, they were currently backed up against the wall, barely able to protect themselves from the oncoming onslaught.

Garen fixed his gaze on the young man. "Is this the fight I was waiting for?" He had some doubts about this because it was common for fights to break out here in times like this. He tried to clear his head and put everything into perspective.

Crash!

A ruffian that had been sent flying crashed into the foot of Garen's table.

Clank!

The metal coffee pot on the table fell to the floor. Garen's coffee spilled everywhere.

"How dare you spill that all over my face?!" The man's face was a sticky, coffee-coloured mess. He couldn't see properly, but immediately shot his arm out towards Garen's body.

Bang!

The ruffian was given a hard kick that landed him quite a distance away. He collided with another table, causing yet another great mess.

"Get them!"

Someone yelled loudly, and another two ruffians pushed their opponents aside, picked up some nearby objects and pounded towards Garen.

Hmph!

Garen tapped the back of his waist gently, and a blue light began to flash. His body began to emit a thin membrane of blue light that blinked continuously

He took a big step and rushed forward into the group in front of him.

A minute later...

The ground was littered with totem users who were exhausted to the point where they had to crawl.

"Just you wait!" Both the white robed and ruffian totem users responded with the same threat, enraged like a pair of fighting cockerels. They left soon after, limping along as they went.

Garen's clothes were in a state of disarray. He stood with the three others, and noticed that the muscular young man was badly beaten up, with a badly bruised face and swollen head. The man and woman who had attempted to stop the fight were in slightly better condition. Unlike the other man, they were only bleeding from gashes in the corners of their mouths and their black eyes.

The four of them were innocent bystanders who had been swept up in the fight. They turned to look at each other.

The young man pointed at Garen's dumbfounded face.

"What's up with that stupid expression? Did you get raped?"

"Could say the same about you," Garen replied mean spiritedly.

Both of them burst into laughter after that.

After cleaning up, the owner walked towards the damaged cashier counter and pointed at the wreckage sadly. Fortunately, the two groups from earlier had the decency to leave two stacks of money on the floor nearby, as a form of compensation.

This made it easier for the four people who had helped to clean up turn the other cheek and forgive them for their transgressions slightly.

Once they had finally finished cleaning, Garen and the other three people went downstairs and stood in front of the Silver Line loft.

"Seems like the both of you are pretty good fighters. I'm sure that means your totems are not the usual kind, right? Why don't you join us? We've accepted a good task, it's quite a decent offer, not too taxing and a good way to earn some money. It's just that we don't have enough people," said the man who had tried to stop the fight earlier. "We forgot to introduce ourselves. My name is Andy, and this is my little sister Jessica."

This man looked like a young teacher, and he spoke in a gentle manner. He had an earnest expression, and one look could tell that he was an honest man.

His little sister Jessica was a woman of few words, and had an air of learned sophistication about her. The only downside was that she lacked beauty, and was somewhat plump.

Garen listened, and suddenly felt his a jolt in his mind.

'Goth's two lifelong companions, their names were Jessica and Andy. In this case...' His gaze unconsciously found its way towards the muscular young man.

This man was wearing a pair of red overalls over a plaid shirt. He had a taut, well built body. His nose was bruised black and blue and his face was swollen...

He patted his chest.

"My name is Goth. All of you are good people, and if you ever need help in a fight, look for me! Call me and I will come!"

"My name is Garen, and I'm different from the rest of you. I'm not a hired totem user," Garen shook his head and said. "I work in the repair shop in the market nearby. If you ever need something to be repaired, you are welcomed to look for me."

"Fixing totems, eh? That's wonderful!" Goth chuckled happily. "You don't have a core totem yet you're incredible in your own way. To think that you're skilled enough to fix totems!"

"Without a unit factory, the only thing I can do is to work for others," Garen shrugged his shoulders in frustration.

"Unit factory... that would indeed be difficult to obtain... Too expensive," Goth said as he stroked his chin and nodded.

"Say, why don't you guys join us then? We could form our own little squad, and then completing the task would be a piece of cake," Andy stood on the side and said cheerfully.

"You're not worried that we would slow you down? This guy doesn't even have a core totem, and I don't have money to repair mine. It would be only too easy for it to break," Goth quipped honestly.

"Not to worry, whether or not we actually succeed is another matter. Anyway, I like you guys already! There were so many people sitting upstairs, but only both of you took the initiative to stop the fight with your own hands. You guys are definitely good people!" Andy replied instantly.

"My brother is right," said Jessica softly while she remained on the sidelines.

"As long as you're not afraid that we'll slow you down," Goth said as he rubbed his nose, still feeling like he was burdensome in some way.

Garen also felt that he was getting in the way slightly.

"Are you sure we're not taking advantage of you?"

"It's no big deal, no big deal!" Andy waved their worries aside. "That's settled. Let's go. We'll help Garen get the silver seal for hired totem users, and then we'll split the tasks, before finally beginning our journey together!"

The hired totem users association was built in a silver mansion-like building. After speaking to the receptionist, Andy produced his own totem license, and registered his squad. He listed down the number of members as well as their important members. Next, he had a license made for Garen, and spent a few hundred silver rums.

"Think of it as a loan," Andy noticed that Garen was about to open his mouth, but stopped him from speaking immediately.

Once the four of them had completed the necessary formalities, they found a small table and sat there. Andy took a goat's skin map out of his bundle, opened it carefully, and spread it out on the table.

Then, he took out a little booklet in which he had noted the goals and requirements of the task.

"The task that we have accepted is: to investigate the disturbance caused by robbers nearby Gravel City," Andy said softly. "This task suits us perfectly, because my totem is extremely suitable for scouting activities. With the help of my sister, this could be completed without much hassle.

"Then what do we have to do?" Goth asked quietly.

"You need to ensure the safety of both of us. Speaking of which, what do your totems do?" asked Andy curiously.

Goth's face flushed red. He extended his right arm and placed something on the table.

A little bird hung from his right arm. The bird resembled a woodpecker, with its beak hanging from the crook of Goth's arm. Its beady eyes stared at the other three, as the bird continued to hang quietly from its spot.

"This is my totem, the black bird. But it's still in its heavily injured stage. Except for its eyes, the other parts of it are unable to move..." Goth shook his head regretfully.

Andy and his sister remained speechless, as their gaze turned to Garen instead.

Garen hadn't expected Goth to be so badly beaten up.

He took out a short silver stick in his right hand, and tapped the table lightly.

The tip of the stick began secreting some blue-coloured liquid mercury, and the tabletop immediately solidified into a big blue butterfly.

The butterfly flapped its wings and flew upwards gently, flying circles around the four of them. It was an unusually beautiful sight.

Garen tapped the stick again, and the butterfly turned into a ray of blue light, which entered the stick and disappeared from sight.

"This is my support totem, the neon butterfly."

"Hmm... This would be sufficient as a core totem actually. Even though it's just a support totem, it's core is big enough!" Andy nodded approvingly. "Most totem users only have one main totem. You, on the other hand, already have plans for a second one. Do you really have that much money? One totem is already requires plenty of care to raise."

"That was my plan from the beginning. Even if I regret my decision now there's nothing I can do about it..." answered Garen impatiently.

"What's its ability?"

"Poisonous powder."

"This is useful!" The siblings let out a sigh of relief. Finally there was something they could use.

"What use is poison powder? A gust of wind would easily blow it away," said Goth with a look of pity present on his face.

"Fool, that's only a problem when people know about it. What if they don't?" Jessica replied. It was one of the rare moments where she spoke.

"How did you know I was a fool?" Goth turned to Jessica with a shocked look.

The three of them stopped speaking immediately.

"My totem is the black panther, while Jessica's is the snow wolf. Their main focus is direct confrontation. Garen, your totem can be used for pre-planned ambushes, and when it flies it can be used for reconnaissance. Goth, you'll be in charge of protecting Jessica. She tends to get distracted when controlling her totem, so make sure to keep an eye on her."

Andy began to arrange tasks for everyone.

"Below is the arrangement of our tasks."

After some careful planning, the four of them began to keep their belongings. They also made sure that they understood the plan properly. Garen and Goth had officially joined the sibling's squad, which they now found out was named the Black Panther squad.

Garen separated from the other three, and once he had confirmed their meeting location, he finally let out a sigh of relief.

He was now one hundred percent sure that Goth was the future Grand Duke Goth. Although his current demeanor was still somewhat shocking to Garen, there was no doubt that he was the one of the future Three Great Heroes.

The creation of his core totem rested on this young man's shoulders now. Not long after, Goth would awaken his true hidden talents. His perseverance and trust in his black bird totem would also give him unimaginable returns in the near future. This was the story of a man who had pressed on and continued on the same road for ten over years, whose hard work and determination finally bore the fruits of his labour in the end.

Goth's innate gift was an invisible kind of gift. After a certain period of time, it was gone without a trace. Only someone as simple-minded as himself had the patience to persevere for more than ten long years without giving up on the first totem that he had ever chosen.

This kind of perseverance, coupled with the realisation of his inborn talents and the hardships faced during the war, allowed him to fully maximise his strength levels and unleash them fully in order to become one of the Three Great Heroes.

Garen knew that if everything went according to plan, Goth would soon arrive at the point where his strength would be heightened greatly. According to history, his two friends Andy and Jessica would be the ones who gave him the strength and motivation to grow, and were also a huge source of support.

It was somewhat unfair for him to use this opportunity as a stepping stone, but Garen was certain that this was the best time to get close to Goth.

He was different from Xianfulan, anytime there was an opportunity, Garen would never let it go to waste.

His goal wasn't Goth's black bird, neither was it the Grand Duke family's White Dragon Hawk. He wanted to wait for the moment Goth was busy with a task, so he could wipe out the abundant resources owned by the rebel robbers.

It was important to note that this period of turmoil was not a simple, straightforward kind of turmoil...

As Garen picked up his suitcase and walked out of the inn, he looked upwards at the clear blue sky, and felt his emotions fade into a peaceful serenity.

Chapter 265: Bandits 1

Amidst the continuous stretch of burnt yellow mountains, the horse carriage lanes seemed like grey cotton threads winding their way around the rocky hills. Clusters of little green trees were scattered sporadically across the area, making it seem as if someone had accidentally splattered green ink on a yellow canvas.

The afternoon sun shone on the yellowish mountains, and was especially bright on the rocky peaks.

Four youngsters in khaki coloured hunting clothes lay beneath the shade of a fruit tree and nibbled on round red fruit while looking below intently.

There was a grey-white lane at the bottom of the hill, located in the narrow space between two cliffs.

The four of them climbed onto one side of the hill and stared attentively at the center of the lane in the crevice.

This quintet consisted of three men and a woman, who seemed like some sort of group.

"Garen, make your butterfly fly a little further towards the east. Try and see if there's anything there?" said one of the friendly-looking men in a soft voice. "We've been waiting here for such a long time, yet we haven't managed to find anything yet. Wasn't this area supposed to be a hotspot for bandits?"

"I'll try and see," said a handsome, golden-haired youth sat against the bottom of the tree trunk. The youth was Garen, who had just arrived from Iron Tank City. "My neon butterfly would be too conspicuous in this area. Besides, my maximum control range cannot exceed three kilometers."

"Right now the only thing we can do is wait like here like a bunch of fools," Goth said as he lay on his back. He took a large bite out of the fruit in his hand. There was already a pile of five or six fruit stones beside him.

"Be patient," Jessica replied softly.

Crunch.

Goth bit down hard on the red fruit. A look of utter boredom was plastered on his face.

Time continued to tick away. In a blink of an eye, half an hour had passed.

"I've found something!" Garen stood up suddenly. "I've found the bandits!"

"What's their specific location?" I'll send the black panther over!" Andy rose to his feet as well.

Garen knitted his eyebrows tightly.

"The bandits just left. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that we were a few steps too late,"

"Doesn't matter. Let's just hurry over and then we'll talk."

The four of them got up quickly, and raced towards the direction that Garen had pointed towards.

Following the burnt yellow and grey rocky slope, the four people rushed down the mountain, and climbed up the slope of a different rocky hill.

Just as they reached the other side of the slope, they froze in their steps when they noticed the scene before them.

Two white ox carts had been toppled to the ground, and the black ox that had been pulling the cart earlier now lay in a pool of its own blood. At the same time, a swarm of green-headed flies circled its lifeless body.

On the football field-sized perimeter, corpses were strewn everywhere. The smell of rotting blood hung in the air, causing the onlookers to feel a sense of tightness forming inside their chests.

The dead bodies spanned a continuous distance of thirty-four meters. From the left to the right corner of the lane, not one living body could be seen.

The Black Panther squad had only been standing there for a few moments, but Jessica could not help but muffle her mouth as she began to retch.

Andy took a deep breath, and furrowed his brows at the sight that was laid out before him. "This is terrible... We should start looking for survivors for now."

Goth patted Jessica's shoulders.

"Are you alright?" Although his own face was beginning to turn pale as a sign that he was also having a hard time, it was obvious that Goth's patience was stronger than Jessica's.

"I'm fine."

Garen, however, still had the same expression on his face. The only difference was that his brows were wrinkled now.

"I've seen worse places before. Now isn't the time for chit chat. Go check at once if you can find any survivors. The bandits just left. If they decide to turn back now it'll spell nothing but trouble for us."

Goth grunted.

"It'd be better if they came back here. This type of scum should all be sentenced to death!"

"I'm afraid we don't have the power to decide that..." Andy walked towards the pile of dead bodies, and began to check them carefully.

The more he investigated, the darker his expression turned.

"At least three totem users were present! And it's obvious that one of them possesses second form attack abilities!"

"Second form..." Goth was left speechless. "A second form totem user would never be this desperate for money in the first place! Why would he resort to becoming a bandit?"

No one replied him. This was a reason that everyone else wanted to find out as well.

Garen might have thought of an answer, but he kept it to himself.

The four of them continued to look for survivors in the corpse pile. They began their search in the middle and spread out in two separate directions.

Not long after, a cry of surprise was heard in Jessica's direction.

"I've found one! Everyone come here quickly!"

Garen turned his head in that direction and saw Jessica pulling open the wooden section of a carriage. From there, she lifted out a bundle in white swaddling clothes.

"This baby is still alive!" Jessica yelled happily.

The four of them gathered together quickly, and formed a circle around Jessica.

They could see that the baby was still sound asleep in his wrappings, and did not wake up even as Jessica rocked him a few times. It looked as if the baby was in deep sleep. But they noticed the wet tear stains in the corners of the baby's eyes, indicating that he had been crying for a while.

Andy reached a hand out to touch the baby's forehead and nostrils.

"That's good. He isn't sick, and his breathing is also normal. I've also sent the black panther to notify the nearby marshall squad already. Someone should be arriving here soon to take care of this situation."

Garen stood at the side and looked at the other three people who were gathered around the baby. He attempted to access the old images and look into the memories of this period of time. Unfortunately, the images did not contain everything, and only the most important events were usually documented. A normal circumstance like this would not have been recorded.

He lifted his head, and looked at the blue neon butterfly flying circles in the sky. Suddenly, his expression changed.

"Watch out! Someone's coming! It's the bandits!"

"How many?" Andy asked calmly.

"Five of them!" The look on Garen's face began to change again. "And three of them are carrying totems!"

"Scatter quickly!"

"There isn't enough time! Hurry up and hide. They're coming on to us really quickly! Bend down! Watch your breathing!" Garen hurriedly lay flat on the ground near in a recess near some rocks.

Andy and Jessica also climbed in quickly and crouched down, making sure that the baby was by their sides.

Only Goth reacted slowly, and couldn't figure out what to do.

Garen yanked him aside roughly and pulled him downwards in one go, before pushing him into the rock pit.

"Hey! You..."

"Shh..."

Garen jabbed a finger at his mouth immediately.

At the furthest right corner of the murder scene, near the bend of the carriage lane, a group of silhouettes in black robes appeared almost instantly.

The sky was bright outside, yet all of them were dressed from head to toe in fully black robes. Even their heads were fully covered.

There were five of them in this black-robed group. The one leading the group stood all the way in front, wearing a black robe with white embroidery on the edges. The most eye-catching part of him was the black python wrapped around his shoulders.

On first glance, the black python looked like a thick black line that hung around the black-robed man's right shoulder. This snake seemed like an average serpent, except for the third eye that had grown in the middle of its forehead that looked like a light green pupil.

The three pale green eyes stared coldly at its surroundings as the snake poked its scarlet forked tongue out of its mouth from time to time.

"It's the three-eyed black python! Damn it! It really is form two!" cursed Andy softly. "How could a form two totem user resort to something as useless as stealing!"

"Shh..." Garen felt like pinching him.

Andy kept his voice down immediately. His voice was soft, but their enemy seemed to have heard something and was looking in their direction now. There was a sense of uncertainty in his gaze.

The four youngsters felt a chill down their spines, and quickly crouched down even lower. They were too scared to even look up now.

Garen like he could hear his heart threatening to beat out of his chest.

Form two referred to a totem user or Luminarist who had evolved their totem to the second form. He had witnessed a battle of a form two totem user with his own eyes before.

His own Teacher Emin once fought with a form two totem user and suffered serious injuries from two losses. He had almost lost his life, and was now in the process of recovering slowly. In the previous world, a Luminarist of this power-level would definitely be higher than B-level. If someone had enraged them, they had the capacity to become human nuclear bombs, except that the range of destruction would not be as vast as that of a real nuclear bomb.

Garen had realised now, that within the Luminarists, a large majority of form one totem users who had the opportunity to evolve to form two totem users, could only do so because of the support they received from specific organizations.

Judging from the luminescence of his current neon butterfly, there was no point in talking about form two Luminarists, or even form one Luminarists or totem users, when he couldn't even shatter their luminescence.

This was the most troublesome part.

Garen himself was already very clear on this matter. He already had a Secret Technique and knowledge in combining a totem and martial arts, and would definitely be able to defeat a regular person. But when faced with a Luminarist, his skills seemed clumsy in comparison. Assuming that a form one Luminarist would just stand there and allow themselves to be attacked, it would still take him at least ten to twenty minutes just to break through their defense.

In the area of Luminarists, only form two totems were considered legitimate Luminarist totems. Beginning from form two, totems would then have the ability to access various evolutions. Furthermore, they would then be able to possess special capabilities.

The only problem was that the resources and knowledge required for a form two totem belonged to a range that would leave most people dumbfounded and in shock.

Crouching inside the pit, Garen noticed the paleness of his three companions faces.

"The three-eyed black python is the black python's form two totem. I've seen its abilities," whispered Andy in an extremely soft voice. He sounded like he had been out of breath for a while. "Garen, don't come out. The three-eyed black python's third eye can will release a green coloured light that corrodes. You don't have a core totem, so you won't be able to block it."

Garen felt his heart beat quicker in his chest. He nodded obediently.

After staying downwards for a while, the four of them held their breath, still afraid to come out. They could hear the endless sound of footsteps approaching closer, but did not dare to look up and peek.

The sound of footsteps grew louder as they came nearer, before stopping abruptly at a certain location.

"Gaduma, anjisiladinghute." They heard the words being said in a young woman's voice, but could not understand the meaning at all.

Garen furrowed his eyebrows, and looked to the rest of his companions. Andy shook his head, signalling that he too could not understand. Goth had a blank expression on his face. Only Jessica seemed to have an idea about what was happening.

Jessica met the trio's eyes and begin to translate what she had heard into the Kovitan language. She mouthed the words one by one and made sure the others were watching.

Iron Tank City was one of the Kovitan Empire's vassal states. The feudal lords of these territories were still involved in the imperial affairs of the Kovitan Empire, and still spoke a native variation of the Kovitan language.

But the language spoken by the woman in the black robe sounded more like a local dialect from the South, and sounded almost like a tongue-twister.

Jessica began to translate the sentences one by one for her other three friends.

The young woman said: "Captain, my totem had definitely sensed the presence of others in this area just now."

"How many of them were there?" This was probably said by the man in the black robe. His voice sounded low and full of self-control, giving people a sense of restraint.

"Four of them," replied the woman.

"What do they look like?"

"They were dressed in yellow clothes."

"Then they're definitely not the marshall squad," replied the captain in a low voice. "Let's go. They were probably just passersby going down the road. The marshall squad will be arriving soon though."

"Yes, sir."

The sound of footsteps began to move further away.

The four people hidden in the rock pit finally breathed a sigh of relief.

"Hey! This part was moved by someone!" The woman's voice rang loudly once again. "There's a hidden section here, something must be hidden inside!"

The footsteps stopped suddenly.

The heart beats of the four people began to speed up.

"Seems like there may still be survivors... Hmm... Interesting. Calania, continue investigating this area. See if there are any survivors left." The captain's voice echoed throughout the area.

"Yes," replied a woman's voice.

Suddenly, the sharp noise of bird's cry could be heard.

Caw!

The shrill noise only sounded for a moment, and stopped right after that.

"There are no survivors inside the carriage," replied the woman's voice once again.

"Alright then. Move out," replied the captain indifferently.

Chapter 266: Bandits 2

Inside the rock pit.

Garen felt Andy patting him. When he raised his head, he noticed Andy tapping the other two of them as well. Next, he mouthed the things he was trying to say.

"Wait for them to leave, and then spread out immediately! Don't stop! The people from the marshall squad should be arriving soon. My black panther is leading them here."

"Understood," Garen nodded. The other two nodded silently as well.

The footsteps began to leave slowly.

Suddenly.

Waa... Waa...!

No one knew when the baby by Jessica's side had woken up, and now he was crying loudly with his mouth wide open. Even though Jessica rushed to muffle his mouth, the noise had already escaped.

The sound of the footsteps stopped again.

Garen's heart rose to the back of his throat. He saw Andy instructing him with his gaze: Spread out and run. He understood, the current black panther squad was still not as strong as it would be in the future. Two form one totem users, one disabled totem and his own support totem were up against at least three legitimate totem users, with one of them being a form two as well.

The difference in strength was far too large.

It was like a community policeman going up against a fully armoured special forces soldier. Not to mention that a form two totem user would possess specialized abilities, making the difference even greater.

"This is bad..." Garen could sense that the black robes had probably realised that they were hiding here.

"The noise from earlier probably came from here," said the black robed woman in a low voice.

The footsteps began to move towards the direction of the four youngsters.

Andy and Jessica's faces were pale as ghosts, while Goth was grinding his teeth and balling his hands into tight fists, looking as if he was ready to burst out at any moment.

Garen's heart began to sink.

"Found them! There really were people hiding here!" The woman in the black robe exclaimed loudly out of the blue.

"Run!" Andy roared loudly.

Garen grabbed a fistful of small stones and leaped out of the pit.

Tch tch tch!

The stones flew towards the sky and fell back down towards the black robes, unearthing a heap of soil and dust in the process.

On top of a nearby slope.

Seven to eight White Horsemen followed a blank panther, rushing in the direction of the Black Panther squad.

The man leading the group was a White Horseman in black leather pants who wore a round brimmed woven straw hat, looking out of place. He had a scruffy beard growing on his chin, making him look quite different from the usual portrayal of the White Horsemen.

"Hurry up, everyone! Head to the small hill up in front!"

A woman in a similar straw hat followed closely behind him, furrowing her brows as she said: "Captain Jefferson, is there really any need for us marshalls to be called over for this? It's just some bandits. Even if there were totem users they'd just be one or two stage one totems. It seems to me like someone's making a big deal out of nothing."

"Just follow your orders, no need to question them," said the middle-aged leader impatiently. He kept his eyes fixated on what lay in front of him. "Everything would be easy if only it was so straightforward... Everyone, prepare to fight!"

At that moment, out of the seven or eight White Horsemen, five of them released their totems, illuminating their silver luminescence.

Jefferson put on a leather glove and stroked it gently as a ray of black light flew out of his palm and fell on his shoulder. Instantly, a black hawk with a red cockscomb on its head appeared.

The black hawk opened its beak, showing off its sharp saw-like black teeth.

Jefferson noticed that the black panther had begun to growl softly in a worried manner.

"Pick up the speed!" He roared loudly. His right hand pointed towards the sky as he yelled: "Go!"

The black hawk let out a soft whistle-like 'caw' as it spread its powerful wings and raced towards the sky.

"Ahnuxida!"

The black robed woman's voice rang loudly in the air. Without Jessica here to translate, Garen couldn't understand a word she was saying.

He leaped upwards and ran down the S-shaped road behind him.

Turning around to look back, he saw that the black robes had dispersed into a few groups to chase after Andy and Goth, while Jessica was holding the baby and hiding in another crack between some rocks.

The stones from earlier had barely scratched the black robes. When the stones crashed onto the surface of their clothes, they disintegrated into specs of beige coloured dust immediately,

A lot of the dust had been scattered everywhere by the wind, obstructing their vision.

Garen noticed that the leader of the black robes was now unconsciously moving towards Jessica's location.

He narrowed his eyes and kicked a large rock.

Whoosh!

The rock flew towards the black robed man and hit his head, before turning into a pile of powder. The leader of the black robes let out a cold scream and spun around before laying his eyes on Garen. Meanwhile, the black python on his shoulder stuck its tongue out and hissed.

Garen trusted that Jessica had already seen what he was trying to do, so he turned around and ran.

"Jessica, the woman that Goth will end up falling in love with in the future. I've saved you once. This good deed will definitely be very valuable in the future." He continued to concentrate on the task at hand, and willed his legs to speed up as he dashed towards the slope behind him.

Suddenly, a bone-chilling sensation began to crawl up his body.

Garen spared no time before falling onto the floor and rolling down the slope. A ray of green light began travelling downwards from the top of his head.

The green light was like a thread. It shot straight in front onto a large rock. The white rock was immediately dyed into a large green mess, as the rock began to release a sizzling like sound of corrosion. The hard rock then began to melt into a sticky green puddle that flowed towards the ground.

Garen felt a gush of cold air emitting from his forehead, and dared not to conceal his power any longer. He stomped the ground with all his might and dashed forward, looking as if he was a white shadow racing down the slope in front.

"Gadate!" The sound of the black robed leader's voice echoed behind him. The sizzling noise could be heard once again, as two rays of green light shot towards the slopes behind Garen, corroding the earth and stones nearby into a puddle of green, sticky liquid.

Garen refrained from turning his head but continued running down the slope instead. He covered his right elbow with his left hand, as his elbow had been slightly grazed by the green light earlier. There was a hole in his pale blue luminescence and his clothes were already starting to corrode. The cloth that had corroded turned into dots of green liquid that dripped on his skin, making him feel a searing pain as it touched his flesh.

Garen tore off his shirt and noticed that the milky skin on his elbow was now turning green. A little wound of rotting flesh had also appeared there.

This terrifying rotting ability, if it had happened to a normal person, their whole elbow would have rotted off by now. Garen toughened his heart before hooking a finger into the wound and digging out the rotting flesh.

At the bottom of the hill was a vast field. Not far away was a forest with patches of yellow and green-leaved coniferous trees. There were also lakes of various sizes that looked like mirrors, except that they were grey and seemed abnormally gloomy.

There were two little dots on the slope, one yellow and the other grey, that were going down the slope and rushing towards the field.

The yellow dot was moving at a rapid speed, and rushing down in an S-shaped path.

The black dot was much slower, and in front of it was a black python as thick as a fist, spanning the length of seven to eight meters, slithering forward. The black python lifted its head up suddenly, and shot a green light out of the third eye between its brows, straight ahead at Garen.

But not once did the green light manage to hit its target.

"Wandaxi, kashura!" The black robed man shouted angrily as he lunged forward and chased his opponent. He held a short black stick in his hand and kept pointing it at the yellow dot in front.

Both of them dashed forward, one in front and the other behind, before finally landing in the vast field.

Garen dived into the coniferous forest. After turning a few times, he jumped and braced himself against the tree trunk and somersaulted into the foliage. After that, he noticed the little lake in front and jumped down into the water. His whole body was submerged in the muddy water as he continued to swim deeper, holding his breath as he went.

The water in the lake was muddy and filled with soil and dust. However it was quite shallow, maybe only seven or eight meters deep. The bottom of the lake was mostly black mud.

Garen's body shook slightly as he gently fell unto the mud, but it wasn't a great fall as most of the mud remained in its original position. He lay face up with his body against the bottom of the lake and moved his shoulders carefully, unearthing some of the mud in the process and using it to cover himself.

A rustling noise emerged from the grass, as a large cluster of weeds were pushed aside.

The leader of the black robes rushed over angrily as his eyes scanned the entire area.

"Nuwataman!" He roared furiously.

The three-eyed black python was curled around his shoulders once again, and raised its head and made hissing noises.

It bowed its head slightly as its third eye suddenly shot out a ray of green light.

Tch!

The light shot onto the water in front, as well as the wild grass around the lake. The grass, soil, and stones all turned into a green sticky mess after being corroded by the green light.

The man in the black robe surveyed the area with his black python and walked around the lake for good measure, before running off to the area in front to continue his search there.

It was obvious that he was using the footprints on the ground as clues. Garen had jumped down directly from the tree, ensuring that not all of his footprints would be on the ground. The man was convinced that something wasn't right, and decided to continue his search by crawling military-style instead.

The black robed man spent some time investigating the forest but failed to find anything. Suddenly, he raised his head and looked upwards.

Chirp!

There was a black hawk circling the sky and calling out in a ear piercing voice. The black hawk looked abnormal, because it had a red cockscomb growing out of the top of its head.

Garen continued to hide at the bottom of the lake, making sure to stay as still as possible. His aura could sense movements within a radius of slightly over two hundred meters in this area, and he could now feel the current location of the black robed man.

Bang!

Suddenly, a strong quake-like sensation shook the ground down to the bottom of the lake.

It seemed like a battle was going on outside. The sound of a hawk's cry could also be heard vaguely.

A few minutes passed before the ground finally stopped moving again.

Jefferson held the cockscomb black hawk in his right hand, as his eyes bore into the surrounding forest.

Some dark blood stains had seeped into the ground, and strips of black cloth were strewn all over.

In the fight just now, the leader of the black robes had been chased by him, and was heavily wounded. At this moment he was hiding somewhere and had left without a trace.

"Consider yourself lucky!" He said coldly, as he turned to leave.

The black robed man leaned against a tree trunk and panted heavily. His whole body was covered in a yellow-green sheen, the perfect camouflage colour.

He retrieved some medicine from his lap and hurriedly applied it on his shoulders. His forehead was filled with sweat droplets.

In an opening in the undergrowth nearby, he noticed that Jefferson could not find him, and had finally retreated, and was now walking away in a faraway direction. He assumed that the man was probably going to reunite with his other squad members.

The man in the black robe sighed in relief, and wiped the beads of sweat off his forehead. Only when Jefferson had finally disappeared did he turn around and walk in the opposite direction. The sound of his footsteps were abnormally quiet, and he staggered when he walked, implying that he had suffered serious injuries.

He continued to turn back and check behind him as he walked. Suddenly, he heard a soft splash coming from the direction in front of him.

The black robed man felt his whole body stiffen, as his head turned around sharply to face the front.

Garen was standing in front of him with an expressionless look on his face.

"May the Gods become one, and may their divine punishment rain down on you!" He took a deep breath, as all the muscles on his body enlarged and expanded in an exaggerated manner.

Phoo!

A gust of wind blew over, and Garen's physical body instantly leapt a few meters upwards. His palm came into direct contact with the middle of the man in the black robe's forehead.

In a blink of an eye, everything quietened down.

His palm and the other man's forehead were in direct equilibrium, and all noise ceased. In that moment, it seemed like everything in the world had become silent.

Bang!

The ground began to shake violently.

The platinum aura swept everything up, causing the blue light to explode in the middle of the black robed man's eyes.

"Ahhhhhhhh!!!!"

The black robed man's whole body began to emit black light, as his face distorted with every scream that escaped his mouth. After he was forced backwards, his eyes and mouth began to spurt out fresh blood unceasingly.

The spot where Garen had targeted was the wound where the man's white luminescence had spilled out and had yet to heal.

Without any hesitation, Garen leapt upwards as his body emitted light and caused fragmented shadows to form. He shot as far as over ten meters away.

Rumble!

A thunderous noise sounded behind him, and a semi-circle shaped green light rippled in the distance and enlarged rapidly into an expanse of over a hundred meters. All of the areas within this vicinity became corroded into a puddle of sticky, green liquid.

Chapter 267: Gap 1

Boom!!!

A green shockwave burst outward on the soil in the yellowishgreen forest.

Garen used his aura to direct himself to the ground from the air. He gained his momentum and got out of the green shockwave's area of effect and landed beside a small puddle. He took a few steps back as he landed, and he turned around to look at the green shockwave that had spread across the area as he stabilized his footing.

He raised his hand and looked at his right palm. It was glowing faintly in green, and there was white smoke coming out of it, with the surrounding filled with a sour and foul odor.

"What strong toxicity!"

He placed his palms down and gave them a gentle jitter. The green colored skin at the center of his palm unexpectedly came off like green old cloth from the vibrations. The skin landed on the ground and immediately rotted the stones and soil into a greenish, viscous substance.

Garen's right palm was instantly filled with blood, but a layer of dried blood formed and stopped bleeding in no time. He had presented that he had absolute control over his body.

This huge commotion would definitely grab someone's attention.

He then saw that the plants that had instantly decayed the moment they came contact with the green shockwave.

"Damnit!" Garen's expression changed as he cursed fiercely yet quietly. "Is every second form totem user this troublesome! They can even self destruct before they die!"

He was using his aura to stay aware of the battle between the Marshall squad and the man in the black robe. So why did he come out and ambush them at the end? It was because he wanted to obtain the intel and knowledge of the core totem from the man in black robe. Even if he didn't manage to obtain the information he wanted, he could at the very least obtain some precious resources, right?

He didn't expect him to self destruct at the end, and he couldn't obtain anything any longer.

Without any hesitation, Garen left the place with great haste. Although he wanted to check out the place, he didn't dare to enter as the core was so toxic that the air surrounding it was filled with its strong poison.

As he took a few steps, he stopped and turned around with a huge grin on his face. With a happy look on his face, he sped off into the distance and soon disappeared at the other end of the slope of forest.

Garen slowed down as he reached the shades in the forest. He then activated the neon butterflies and let them patrol around his head as he slowly went towards the place where the four people separated.

At the same time, he closed his eyes as he set his sights upon the attribute pane.

'Strength 2.3, Agility 2.1, Vitality 2.5, Intelligence 2.1, Potential 1493%. Possess the qualification to become a Luminarist.'

His strength, vitality and intelligence had increased by an average of 0.1 and his potential points had increased from 12 to 14, and would become 15 fairly soon!

Garen started to think hard after feeling happy about it.

"It's perfectly normal for the physical attributes to recover before it reached its peaks. However, my potential points have unexpectedly increased as well... Was it because I killed a Luminarist? I have just

checked it yesterday, and there were no changes, and then there was a change the moment I had killed a Luminarist. If killing the Luminarist is not the cause of it, it will still definitely be linked to it!"

He was very sure of his assumption. His worry over the source of obtaining potential points had finally reduced slightly.

"Should I try to evolve neon butterfly now?" He immediately scratched off the thought; if he were to evolve the neon butterfly without any inherited knowledge, besides the extremely low success rate, the evolved neon butterfly would be impossible to hide. If that were to occur, how was he going to explain the evolution of the neon butterfly without any inherited knowledge to the others?

"Forget about it, I should find another core totem first."

After discovering a clue to obtaining potential points, Garen was determined to follow his original plan, which was to become the best Luminarist. As the risk and rewards were directly proportional to each other, he had to take a huge amount of risk to obtain a huge amount reward.

"This way, I just need to get through the crisis that will occur next year, and I can think of changing my totem afterwards. The second world war is going to last for years..." Garen had a plan in mind. With his eyes filled with determination, he sprinted off and he went forward.

As he went over the hill, he soon returned to where he parted with Goth and the others.

There were already a few people in the Marshall Squad's white vests standing by the grey road. The middle aged team leader seemed to be discussing something softly with Jessica. There were no traces of anybody else.

Jessica burst into tears and rushed towards Garen as she saw Garen return.

"Garen! You're okay!?" He ran towards him and held Garen's hand tightly. "I thought you were..." Her tears almost went down her cheeks.

"I'm alright. I won't die so easily, since I trained my body a bit back in the day." Garen patted himself on the chest. "Where is your brother, Goth and the others?"

"There's still no news yet..." Jessica quickly wiped off her tears as she said sadly.

"Don't worry. It will be fine since the one going after them is not the strongest." Garen comforted. "We will definitely earn a huge amount after this, since this mission's difficulty is very high. The one who went after me was a second form totem user. If not for my speed as I jumped into the pond, I would have definitely not been able to return."

"So you were hiding in the pond." The middle aged man came forward as he showed him his white badge. "Jefferson, leader of the Marshall Squad. So you're Garen? What a brave man for a fellow without a core totem to kite the second form totem user away. You deserve praise!" He commended Garen as he patted his shoulder. "Rest assured. You guys have done more than necessary for this mission. Naturally your reward will increase as well."

"Thank you team leader Jefferson." Garen acted flush as he wanted to get a closer relationship with him. After all, his age was much younger than this man. "I wonder how my two partners are doing?"

"Don't worry. They will be fine. They were only kiting away the first form totem user. They should return before you know it." Jefferson smiled as he looked at the sky, in which there was a black eagle flying in circles.

"Alright, it's time to cover up the influence. You know the rules right?" Jefferson whispered. "We will minimise the rumors of the battles between the totem users from the general public."

"Are we still able to cover this?" Garen whispered.

Jefferson frowned. "We'll do what we can..."

He continued questioning Garen relating to the details of the leader of the men in black robes. He turned around and left as he gave his subordinates the orders after he was satisfied with the intel. Garen managed to convince him that he was able to escape from the pursuit due to his speed. After all,

it was not surprising to see a totem user practice martial arts to make up for their lack of physical attributes.

After ten minutes of waiting, Andy, who was leaning on Goth appeared in Garen and Jessica's sights.

"Are you two alright?"

Jessica and Garen quickly went up to welcome them.

"Andy injured his hips." Goth shook his head as he replied. "We would have return earlier if I carried him, but he insisted on walking on his own."

Andy had a miserable expression and felt like committing suicide at the thought of being princess-carried by Goth.

Jessica couldn't help but burst into laughter when she saw goth's hopeless face, and her brother's embarrassment when they came back safely.

For some reason the term 'hips' was supposed to sound very normal. However, it became rather funny when the word came out of Goth's mouth.

Even Garen couldn't help but to reveal a hint of a smile.

"I'm glad you're okay. Team leader Jefferson had said that he would increase our more rewards for this mission."

"I was just about to ask this!" Goth gave Garen a big thumbs up, whereas Andy gave a sigh of relief as he smile wryly.

"Okay. We need to take a good rest after this mission. What do you guys plan on doing now?" Andy voiced out. "I will talk about Jessica and my plan. We are currently living in the inner city's Air Wing region and our address is No. 109 Vine Street. You should visit us when you're free."

"Have you forgotten, brother? Father is sure to scold you when you go back with this injury..." Jessica softly added.

"Eh..." Andy started sweating cold sweat on his forehead.

Goth curled his lips as he scratched his chest with his hand.

"I live in Kovitan's Main Street Region, the bread shop above the red wolf statue is opened by my mother. You can find me when you have any needs, and please let me in on any good missions as well. However, I think I will get scolded when I go back as well. My mum doesn't like me being hired as a Luminarist..."

Garen started laughing as himself as the other three had finished their sentences.

"I am currently considered as a free man since my parents are overseas at the moment. I plan to travel around for a bit. I'm staying in a hotel at the moment. Let's leave this place while we talk since all of us are planning to go back."

"Fine." "Alright."

The four of them wanted a stamp on their mission list as a personal validification from the Marshall Squad's leader Jefferson. After that, they quickly went back to the Luminarist's hiring guild in Iron Tank City.

Under the effect of Jefferson's stamp, the mission was reevaluated to an active mission, which was a grade higher than the investigative mission that was originally given. They had obtained a total of fifty thousand silver rums.

They split the reward into five portions. Since Garen had managed to lure away a second form totem user, the other three insisted on giving him two portions worth of the reward, which was twenty thousand.

After a little bit of dispute, Garen didn't argue any further and accepted the twenty thousand rums.

It was considered a huge sum for him currently.

It's way too easy to earn money as a capable Luminarist.

The four of them parted ways after dividing the money. Goth and the other two went home since they were locals, whereas Garen, as an outsider could only stay in a hotel.

He was travelling alone for a while at the outskirts of the city.

The current situation had started to become slightly chaotic.

In the past, Luminarists existed far away from the civilizations. However, due to the outburst of conflicts between the Luminarists among the commoners, rumors regarding the Luminarists had started to spread in the commoner's world.

The commoners had started to grow accustomed to the word Luminarist, or the specialised totem users.

The chaotic news kept spreading throughout the RAL via newspaper. The blue birds that were used to sent mails through the sky were consistently spread about in the sky. These types of blue pigeons possessed incredible speed and endurance. With its small and compact body, it could fly over ten thousand kilometers in a day. They were evolved from the falcon by the Luminarists via the second form support totem.

No matter how far away the recipient was, the news would definitely reach them within a week.

Garen bought a few pieces of newspaper on the street, and he noticed the news regarding the turmoil had started to gain traction. There were discussions regarding the duration, scope, degree and ultimate beneficiaries of the unrest everywhere.

As of now, no one had really realized the horror of this upcoming chaos.

After hanging around by the outskirts for some time, Garen started to enter the Iron Tank City.

The Iron Tank City was a big open style city. There were no walls covering the city and the buildings were densely packed from the inner perimeter to the outer circle. From a bird's eye view, the city looked like a giant grey circle.

The buildings inside were either white or grey in color. This was to reflect enough sunlight away from the city to reduce the amount of heat energy.

Garen entered the city via the famed, half open city wall which could be found everywhere. There were stores selling snacks and fruits at both sides of the city gate. Garen bought a small fruit that resembled the roxburgh rose fruit, and ate it while he walked around.

Chapter 268: Gap 2

The price of resources had naturally increased as war was near approaching.

No one expected that the unrest would be this serious and would last this long. As a result, everyone had started collecting all kinds of resources like stocks, and took it as a form as an investment.

Garen went to at least ten rice shops in the inner city. He eventually found a cheaper shop and used all of his hard earned twenty thousand rums to buy rice.

He knew that the moment a large scale battle occurred, society at large would not be able to harvest rice, and the price would ultimately inflate to an unbelievable amount.

These investments do not require him to wait for a long time, and he would be able to earn at least ten times more.

Garen rented a warehouse at the deserted part of the inner city and placed all the rice he had, called green rice there. This rice was extremely filling and had high vitality, which meant that it was very easy to reproduce them. This was the main reason why they were so cheap. When the war occurred, this green rice would be very popular among the citizens due to its high satiety. This meant that they could be sold off at a higher price than regular rice.

Garen felt much more relieved as he had found a lead in obtaining more potential points. He had decided to mingle around in Iron Tank City. Vanderman and the Trejons Household were protected by the RAL and survived the first world war. The Trejons' manor crisis would only surface during the second world war, when the Three Heroes were defeated and the RAL had collapsed.

There were still about a year before the crisis occurred and Garen decided to use this time to train himself.

There was still one month left before the war spreaded, and the Obscuro Society officially made a large-scale mobilization. Garen decided to use this month's time to come up with a good plan.

After he finished dealing with the green rice, Garen rested for two days, and took two solo investigative quests. Both were relatively safe and did not have a high reward. It was only two thousand rums, which was better than nothing.

Furthermore, he did not encounter any Luminarist during the quests. He did, however, encounter a few General-class commoners.

Bam.

The beer girl, who was as fat as a water bucket, placed a cup of beer, which was about the size of a water ladle, onto the table. The beer rocked about as a huge amount of foam bubbled to the top. A fully bearded customer picked it up and chugged it down without mercy.

Garen stopped looking at the adjacent table, instead choosing to quietly cut into his medium well steak with a small knife.

He sat at the quest hall that was filled with lights that resembled the sunset, surrounded by totem users and Beginner-level adepts. There were the high pitched sounds of beer bottles clashing into one another, people whispering among each other, drunkards shouting about and even people enquiring for information from the bouncer.

The air was filled with a mixture of the putrid smell of alcohol and vomit. It was horrendously nauseous.

The War Guild was completely different from the Luminarist Hiring Guild. It didn't matter to the War Guild whether one was a Luminarist or a commoner, they only cared about the completion rate of the quests. There would only be business here when there were wars and would be completely deserted if there's none.

The quests here were all high reward high risks quests. The lowest ranked quests that could be found here was the very risky quest of fighting against form 1 totem users. The relatively safe investigative quests were nowhere to be seen.

Garen had been here for the past few days, scouting for the quest that suited him the most. He had already completed three quests from the Luminarist Hiring Guild, and all of them were investigative quests. It was not challenging, and he didn't have the opportunity to go against a Luminarist.

Hence, he came here.

"This is your quest." The beer girl with the waist the size of a bucket walked over and slammed a slightly crumpled piece of black, thin paper from the edge of Garen's vision. She immediately left after placing down the piece of paper.

Garen picked it up, read it and quietly placed it inside his pocket.

The quest was very simple. It was to hunt a serial killer who had killed thirteen aristocrats from households in the inner city. The enemy was a form one totem user, and his totem was a leopard. He was also a rogue from the Obscuro Society's outer circles. The Royal Alliance had started to invest a lot of money in attacking, and the Obscuro Society's outer circle was one of the targets.

Garen wiped his lips with the handkerchief and stood up after he quietly ate the last piece of his steak.

"No. 25478 Has been revoked." A petite beer girl shouted from the quest counter as she wrote down the battle level and the latest quest onto the blackboard.

The battle level represented the highest level quest which the user had succeeded and it also represented the difficulty of this quest. The last quest was the quest where the numbered candidate failed. It was only when the death of the candidate was confirmed that the candidate's number could be revoked.

This way, people would know the risk of the quest that was previously overlooked and prevent any weaklings from taking such a highly risked quest.

"It's Lumba. I can't believe he's dead." "There's at least ten numbers that have been revoked in this month alone. Looks like the situation is getting worse."

The hall was filled with discussions.

Garen stood up and left the hall with the quest receipt.

He didn't have to do any investigation as the quest receipt contained the overall intel he needed in detail. The only thing he was required to do was to kill the target at the given time and location.

This was similar to an enforcer's task. In the eyes of the royal government, The War Guild itself was the enforcer of the underworld. The employer of the War Guild was called the Hound, as in the Hounds of the Royal Alliance of Luminarists.

A day later. 3.26pm in the afternoon.

Among the scorching golden sunlight, there was a small alley in the residential area of the outskirts of the city.

Garen silently stared at the man in white opposite him.

The opponent was in white long robes with a white scarf on top of his head. It was a classic arabian attire, which was also what a majority of the citizen's wore here. The light colored shirt and scarf could reflect more sunlight and prevent the body from overheating.

It was a brown man with blue eyes. He had very deep eye sockets, and a pair of eyes covered in blood vessels. He looked so tired, as if he hadn't rested for multiple days.

"Royal's lackey!!" He shouted as he stared at Garen. He felt comfortable as he saw Garen's weak totem light.

This Hound seemed to be a misfit. With such a weak totem light, he believed that Garen's attack wouldn't be very strong.

"Wayne Stain. Do you have any last words?" Garen whispered.

He gently threw a black compass-like item. As it landed on the floor, it immediately spread and covered the area of about 100m in diameter.

Within seconds, the noise and wind from the outside world stopped appearing. It was as if both of them were separated from the rest of the world.

"Speak? You people won't let me go even if I said anything." The opponent immediately replied. "You really are a Hound from the War Guild. You even brought along the War Prison. What else do you want me to say?"

"This thing can only separate us from the rest of the world for an hour. It's more than enough time for us to solve the problem." Garen shook his head. "Since you don't feel like saying anything, let's start."

"What a joke. With such a weak totem light you..." He didn't even had the chance to finish his sentence, before he was unable to speak further, his eyes wide open.

With ten of his fingers, Garen pressed at least 10 pressure points on the opponent's chest.

As he inhaled, the flow of air started to become turbulent and became a white gas surrounding his body, like a white ribbon. His body instantly expanded from 1.78 meters to at least 2 meters.

His usual thin body was instantly filled with muscles that were as strong as iron.

Huuuu....

The air that he gently exhaled became white, and blew away the pebbles as it flowed to the ground.

Under the golden light, a giant shadow was casted from Garen's body and completely engulfed the target.

"Let's start... Let's see how big of a difference there is between the totem light and a commoner..."

"You're not even going to use the totem light!!" The target had noticed that the blue light on Garen's body had disappeared and gave off a shocked expression on his face. "You asked for it! You asked for it! Haha!"

He swung his right arm and a golden spotted leopard slowly came out from behind him.

Roar!!

The golden leopard opened its mouth widely as it leaped towards Garen.

"Divine Martial Fusion!" Garen's body expanded once again and a circular faint white light was floating around his body. The glowing white light was a divine phenomena when the aura entered the body.

He clapped his hand and instantly disappeared.

Boom!!

A gigantic hand filled with blue veins landed onto Wayne Stain's head. However, the attack was blocked by a thin layer of yellow light filament. When the palm came in contact with the light, the sound of one hitting a wood could be heard.

Garen clearly felt that as he attacked, it was as if his attack had pierced through a very deep pond and its momentum kept going deeper and deeper but it wouldn't reach the end of the pond.

"Red Jade!" Both of his palms instantly became as red as jades and gave off an incredibly high temperature. The sizzling sound could be heard as he was holding onto Wayne Stain's head.

The layer of yellow light seemed to be burnt by the high temperature as well.

"Since it can be burnt, it means that it can be depleted." Garen said without changing his expression. His body instantly disappeared and appeared behind Wayne Stain and avoided the golden leopard that was attacking him from behind.

Boom Boom!

Another two palm attacks were released onto Wayne Stain's back.

"Thousand Mammoth Traction!!!"

Air flow and the scream of the elephant surrounded Garen as he attack Wayne's back with both of his palms.

Boom!

Strong wind blew from all directions and the deafening sound kept reverberating in the alley.

The yellow light finally started to vibrate and destabilize.

"You bastard!!" Before Wayne could even react, he was attacked by Garen four more times. His speed was so fast, even the golden leopard totem couldn't keep up with his speed. "A Master-level adept? How stupid! Do you think you're the only Master-level who are trying to go beyond the limits?!"

His yellow gemstone ring on his right hand lightened up and swiftly drew some sort of a symbol with both of his hands. A trail of yellow light followed his hand as he drew the symbol.

Without any hesitation, Garen avoided the attack at lightning speed. A trail of yellow light flashed past the position where Garen originally stood.

It was a basic support tactic; only the traditional Luminarist would combine their totem with such tactics. These kind of Luminarists were very rare and he didn't expect to meet one here.

Unfortunately, Garen came from the same background as well. Although he couldn't use any supportive tactics, he had knowledge in tactics as he learnt it from Emin.

The tactic Wayne was currently using was an attacking created by focusing the totem light. Its attack speed was incredibly fast, and its direction could be easily manipulated.

This skill was incredibly useful when used against the Master-levels of this world. However, its damage towards a Luminarist could be completely neglected.

Unfortunately, Garen wasn't afraid of such an attack, due to his aura and his knowledge in supportive tactics.

Without making any sound, Garen rushed up towards him with a very calm look.

Chapter 269: Roll 1

Boom!

Garen's fist once again landed onto the yellow totem light and at the same time, an incredible amount of pressure was consistently applied onto the yellow light filament.

The two of them were in the alley. Garen's tall and strong body kept revolving around the target, and every time he attacked, he would simultaneously avoid the attack from the golden leopard.

Within the alley of the white buildings, a grey figure was constantly moving around the man in white at high speed, and a dense knocking sound could be consistently heard.

Wayne started to panic as his tactics were ineffective against him and his leopard was not able to catch up to him.

"What do you want?!" He started to shout.

Garen didn't react and continue to gently place his palms onto him.

As the palms were in contact with the yellow layer of light, a huge bout of air was pushed away and the surrounding dust flew about in the air. Garen's shirt was flying behind as well.

He took a step back and twisted his hand.

Boom!

He attacked the same location of the layer of light.

"West Phoenix!"

Garen placed his hands together and pierced forward.

Chirp!!

Two enormous wings appeared from his sides. The wings were shapeless, transparent and kept producing a clear chirping noise as it followed Garen's hands as he strike forward.

Crack!

A small crack could finally be seen on the yellow totem light. The crack propagated throughout his body, and the yellow totem light was broken into pieces.

"No!! How is that possible??" Wayne was beyond horrified. He turned around and attempted to flee, but instead only saw garen.

As he fell to the ground, he stared at Garen with his big, bulging eyes.

"How dare you...!"

Screech!

The yellow totem light was shattered like glass into pieces and fell to the ground.

Like a raw egg, once the outer layer of shell cracked, the yellow light leaked out onto the ground like a liquid. In a matter of seconds, the liquid became transparent and completely disappeared.

Garen was lost in thought as he saw the scenario.

"No wonder my attacks were ineffective. You used a layer of shell to hold of the impacts, and then absorbed the energy by using the liquid.. A rather interesting structure. It reminds me of the structure of an egg."

"Don't kill me... Don't kill me!!" Wayne stood up in fear and attempted to ran out of the alley. The golden leopard was blocking Garen's path and growled at him in rage.

Garen didn't even look at the leopard and casually snapped his fingers.

Pew!

A stream of white gas fired from his fingers and pierced through Wayne's brain from the back, which resulted in the blood splattering about freely.

The golden leopard scattered and transformed into a pool of silver liquid.

"Thirteen hits." Garen muttered. "With my current strength, I would require thirteen hits to break the totem light of a form one totem user..."

His strength was slowly recovering back to its peak, and his strength would soon be the same as when he fought Sylphalan. With that amount of power, he could pierce through a tank with just a single punch, and would only suffer minor injuries from a shell. The only thing that could harm him was a highly explosive bomb.

However at this strength, he would need to hit a form 1 totem user thirteen times to break his defense. If not for his knowledge towards the tactic, it would be hard for him to avoid such a fool proof attacking tactic.

Garen estimated that he took about two to three minutes to win against this world's trash soldiers, which would not even be thought as trash in the future.

He suddenly thought of something and set his sight onto the attribute pane. The potential points have increased to 1512%, which was also 15 points. It was increased from 14 points, close to 15, and had now became 15 points.

"This means that I only gained 20 to 30% of potential by killing a form 1 totem user. Killing off a form 2 totem user gives so much more than this."

Garen frowned as he walked towards Wayne's corpse. He started to fumble about the corpse and found a black leather pouch and a small black note.

He opened the money pouch and saw thick stacks of rums mixed with a type of green banknote. These green notes were tai, and were this country's currency for small change.

Garen didn't even bother to look at the tai, and took out the crumbs and he counted them. There were about fifty to sixty thousands crumbs, and even a passbook at the very bottom. However, he couldn't withdraw the money as he did not have the password.

He placed the note and money into his bag and proceed to cut off Wayne's ear. He then drained the blood from it before placing it inside a black napkin. After that, he picked up the black compass which was on the ground and left the area.

As Garen left the alley, he soon heard a girl screaming from behind him. Someone must have found the corpse after the War Prison was deactivated.

Garen, who was very poor now, would even collect molten silver if the silver could be recycled.

He threw away the pouch that was in his hand and went straight to the War Guild.

Ten days later...

Garen was sitting quietly in the main hall of the War Guild, which was filled with the warm, yellow light.

He had a malt wine in his hand, and he would occasionally have a sip as he scanned his surroundings in the main hall.

In the past ten days, he had accepted another five hunting quests. Adding in the rewards he had obtained from killing Wayne, his total rewards added up to sixty four thousand rums, which was a fairly high amount.

All of his targets in all five quests were form 1 totem users.

Garen understood well the situation and position he was currently in. Due to his unique aura and secret martial arts, his strength had exceeded this world's Master-level, and was on par with the form 1 Luminarists.

He gently touched his scar that was on his left side of his neck. It was a scar left by his second target. The target knew how to use Tactics, and they had been very mysterious as it could be activated by a word syllable. At that time, Garen took a huge hit by this surprise attack.

However, The Divine Statue Technique seemed to activate its effect well. Garen wasn't split into half from that fierce attack, and only injured his neck. As the opponent was stunned by this feat, Garen managed to win this near-disastrous battle due to his speed.

Garen gently touched the scar on his neck. It was difficult to recover from the attack of a Tactics of the totem light. He required two days to fully recover, even with his Divine Statue Technique's recovery speed.

He had an epiphany after fighting so many form 1 totem users.

Among them were different tiers; he had tried to obtain intel from the other Hounds after he suffered.

A typical form 1 totem users could be separated into two types.

The first one was a normal totem user. This type of totem users knew nothing and could only rely their totems and some basic Tactics to battle. Their strengths were heavily determined by their strength of totem and their battle strategy.

The second type was the one Garen met yesterday. There were the specially gifted totem users.

A form 1 user called Judra had a typical White Headed Black Hawk as his totem. What's strange was that Judra seemed to have some of the totem abilities as well, which was superhuman vision.

He had already noticed Garen from afar and cunningly hid himself among the crowd.

These types of gifted totem users were very valuable and their strengths were beyond this world. This bastard Judra even had two Master-levels as his bodyguards who would protect him for 24 hours everyday.

At the same time, there were three other form 1 totem users approaching Garen as well.

Garen had no choice but to retreat and gave up on this mission.

He knew his limits as clear as day.

He could still manage if he were to go against one form 1 totem users. To fight against multiple at one go was too much for him.

The biggest threat to him was the totem user's ability to possess Tactics. Although not all totem users were able to use Tactics, the totem users from the Obscuro Society seemed to have many who could.

The Tactic that was completely ineffective towards the totem users, but was the ultimate weapon to fight against the Master-level commoner. This was the difference between using a normal attack and a totem light.

Garen knew his place, which was equivalent to the form 1 totem user.

"Fifty four thousand... With the addition from the previous battle it should be almost time... The potential points have reached to 16 points. At this phase, it's about time for Goth to explode."

Garen stood up and scanned his surroundings.

There were a lot of quests recently, and the originally cramped hall had become rather empty. Even the big bald man who was casually having a conversation with him was nowhere to be seen.

The Hounds duo that he obtained his intel from had their battle number written on the revoked blackboard. Clearly they had died on their previous mission.

The totem user who had partnered with Garen was also killed as well.

"The war is getting closer and closer... There are ten more days left before the movement spreads out, and the items that I have collected can be sold for a fortune. With the addition of rewards that I have collected during this time, I should be able to obtain some intel on the high level totems from the Obscuro Society. Naturally, everything starts after Goth moves out." Garen understood. "It's time to see Goth and the others."

Goth was one the traditional heroes who were hardworking and gifted. He was very stubborn and couldn't care less about other things except researching the Blackfield Birds. In addition to his gifted talent, his strength would eventually go beyond everyone's imagination.

Garen's objective was Goth's key battle during his explosion.

During the battle, they had exploded one of Obscuro Society's Totem Processing Associations. What was originally a simple investigative mission became a high risk confrontation mission.

What Garen wanted was the huge amount of totems that were yet to be activated from the Phantom Light totem light during this explosion. According to the images from his memories, the totems from the Phantom Light were just normal totems. However, there were still some high grade totems as well, and there was even a factory unit that was completely unaffected by the explosion.

If Garen could successfully obtain it, it would definitely result in a a huge leap and increment in strength.

He will then use the money and resources in his hands to fill in the intel that he lacked. He would then pick an outstanding core totem and evolve it using by his potential points. This was the plan that Garen had in mind a long time ago.

After sorting out his series of thoughts, Garen walked out of the main hall with a cheap grey robes which covered his scar on his neck.

Next, it's time for him to participate in this risky quest.

Chapter 270: Roll 2

The Kovitan Empire

Vallarta Defense Department.

Inside a triangular and compact room.

Vanderman was sitting opposite two men with a stern look.

"Is there no other way to avert the situation?" He asked in a deep tone.

"Unfortunately, Vanderman. You and I have been pals for many years, even my son was under your guidance back then. I will act if I can. However, this time..." The man in white robe had a hopeless look on his face. "You need to be more proactive, and hopefully there would be an opportunity for you to turnaround."

"It would be very difficult." The other man in white robe shook his head. "As of now, there are a lot of crimes currently pointing towards you. They were accusing you of researching for a forbidden totem. The trial have already frozen the Trejons Household official accounts. I believe that it's because you ignored the upper echelon and he decided to show no mercy and announce it to the public."

Vanderman was silent.

"That was years of my effort. They are forcing me to die..."

"They are still being considerate about you. Your teacher, Master Shylock had been trying to speak for you. You still have your influence so you don't have to worry that much. However..." The man in white robe sighed.

"Alright, I will take my leave, as I have matters to attend to." One of the man in white robe stood up, patted Vanderman's shoulder and left the room. As the door was closed, the footsteps became fainter and fainter.

Only Vanderman and one man in white robes were still inside the room.

"Perhaps there is still a chance." Vanderman's gaze was cold as ice. "Ola, you're involved in this experiment too. If this is exposed, neither of us will be able to escape. We need to think of something!"

The remaining man in white robe became cold and emotionless as he stood up to leave.

"Don't worry too much, I will do what I can from my side. Let's not panic, or we will fall into their hands."

"They are already at my doorstep!" Vanderman gritted his teeth. "A while ago there was a form 2 totem user that appeared near the manor! My son's whereabouts are currently unknown! They have crossed the line!"

Ola looked at him. "Stay calm. You should be fine as long as you send out more people. They won't lift their fingers since they're only here to probe." He stood up as well. "Remember to stay calm. I will send some people to deal with this incident since they cross the line."

Vanderman looked at Ola leaving in disappointment.

These people were trying to protect themselves by using him as a shield, and didn't even want to lift a finger at all. The situation was getting dire for the Trejons Household. Everyone wanted to take credit for his many years of effort.

"The special ultimate form... I will eventually succeed! Just you wait!" He had placed all his hope on his own research product, which was a biological weapon that was made and controlled from medicine and Tactics.

"If I succeed, There should be at least one out of the three biological weapons that can become the ultimate form..."

Vanderman stood up and left the room.

Outside, there was a beautiful woman with big bosom and brown hair waiting for him on his right.

"Master, do you have any solutions?" The woman asked softly.

Vanderman shook his head. "Go back. I have been forced by them!"

"Master, don't tell me you're planning to use it already?" The woman was slightly shocked.

"There is no other way. My bank account has been frozen and my son's whereabouts are unknown. The household is under a tremendous threat and there is no one else but myself to rely on." Vanderman was filled with rage. "It's time to show my results to the public."

"Call Maxilan and Edney to return at once. It can't be helped if they can't find him. I can only hope that Cia is unharmed. We have to prepare for battle! The Obscuro Society will never show mercy to us."

"Understood."

Lush Green District, Aquarius Manor.

At the white semi circular balcony, Aquarius, who was in a white dress, was holding the guard rail with both of her hands, her hair moving freely to the evening breeze.

The red evening light from the sun shone on one side of her body, revealing her seductive body curve.

"Is there any advancement from the Trejons Household?" Aquarius asked calmly.

Behind her was a beautiful girl in a yellow short skirt, kneeling down on one knee.

"The probing mission has been interrupted. There are a lot of totem users appearing in the Trejons manor, all of them are evolved form 2 totem users.

"Looks like the Trejons Household is plotting something big, and they seem to be hiding a lot of secrets." Aquarius started to laugh. "The Royal Alliance seem to not be willing to protect Vanderman anymore. That old man has been putting up with him for so long. Let's see if he can keep it up this time."

"We are not sure if any form 3 totem users will appear in the manor. If the ultimate form appears, we may require you to move out as well." The girl in yellow skirt said softly.

"Ignore them. Let's wait for a while more. We have more important things to do. When the time has come, we will deal with these eye sores." Aquarius waved her hand.

"Yes, Master." The girl in yellow skirt retreated.

Aquarius looked at the red sunset in the distance with a comfortable smile.

"Those two elders from the Royal Alliance, you're already dead."

Iron Tank City

Among the small district of white residential area, inside the three storey building located at the left side of the district.

Garen and the Andy brother and sister were sitting in the spacious living room on the first floor. Three of them were sitting in a row opposite the kind old man with white hair.

"Our home rarely has any visitors. I hadn't expected a totem user to visit us. What an honor."

"You're being polite, old man." Garen sat on the wooden sofa. "It's just that I have not seen Andy and his sister for a while, so I've decided to visit them."

The old man nodded his head. His name was Xihande and he was a retired security deputy of the Iron Tank City, which was similar to the deputy director of public security bureau. In addition, he was also once a reasonably strong totem user, although he had not been in action due to old age.

"The two youngsters in my house have created their own team. At their age, all they think about is running around. I heard about the quest, the outcome might have been dire if not for you."

"Andy and his sisters would be fine even without me. You worry too much." Garen immediately replied.

"They? Hmph." The old man gave a hateful sigh. "Whatever. This old man isn't going to be in the way of your conversation, so I will go up and read a book or two. You guys do whatever you want. Please take care of our guest you two, do you hear me?"

"Loud and clear!" The siblings immediately replied.

The old man Xihande slowly walked up towards the second floor. The siblings finally relaxed after the footsteps disappeared into the distance.

Garen looked at the two of them as he laughed.

"Is he that scary?"

"You have no idea... My father is a high level form 2 totem user and he was no ordinary character. He has been torturing us for the past few days..." Andy looked as if he had suffered a lot. "Oh right, how's Goth? We, the Panther Group haven't been on the move for a long time. Isn't it time to take on a quest? I don't have enough money to spend lately..." He glanced at his sister Jessica.

"I've spent all my money on books." Jessica whispered. "Let's listen to the old man and work in the security department." She was still traumatized by the previous incident. If it wasn't for Garen, she would have been in grave danger.

As she thought of this, she looked at Garen with gratitude, as she thought of when to return him this favor.

"You know nothing. Freedom is the most blissful thing! Once you have joined the security department it will be difficult for you to leave!" Andy sighed. "Let's find Goth and go pick up some quests."

"Whatever floats the boat." Garen shrugged his shoulder.

Under the lead of Andy, the trio left the building and went straight to Goth's address.

They did find the bread store Goth mentioned, that was above the giant wolf statue.

Goth, who was in all grey went into the shop with bags of flour.

He was stunned as he saw the trio entered the shop and immediately ran towards them after placing down the flour.

"Why are you guys here?"

"We are preparing to take on some quests ,since our hands are tight on money lately." Andy scanned the bread shop. "Aren't you a totem user? Why are you living off like this?"

"Shh... My mum doesn't know I'm a totem user." Goth shook his head. "Plus, I did nothing last time and I feel ashamed for that..."

"Is there a better human shield, other than you?" Andy patted on Goth's shoulder. "Let's go, there's nothing to think about."

"I don't think I should go..." Goth recoiled. "I heard there are a lot of people dying on the outskirts..."

"If you earn more money, maybe you can revive your Blackfield Bird." Jessica couldn't help but to butt in from the side.

Goth flinched, as if he was motivated by Jessica's words.

"We will find some safe and easy quest. Have you used up all of your money?" Andy whispered.

Goth nodded.

"My mum took it away..."

"... "..."

"Goth, how old are you this year?" Garen couldn't help but to ask.

"24." Goth answered sincerely. "Why do you ask?"

Garen was speechless. No matter how you looked at him, how could he become the Grand Duke of the future. Garen started to doubt if he had made a mistake.

The three of them tried to convince him, but eventually they dragged this guy as they moved out.

As the four of them left, a beautiful, gentle and long haired woman walked out of the bread store and looked at the back of the four of them leaving. Sigh.

As the four of them were in the city, they went to search for the latest newspaper at the bookstore Goth recommended.

The owner of the bookstore was a middle aged uncle who greeted Goth with laughter when he saw him. He allowed them to sit down and read the newspaper, free of charge. Judging from how familiar he treated Goth, it was obvious that this wasn't the first or second time he was here.

After understanding the overall situation, the four of them entered the totem repair shop which contained a variety of survival tools. The boss was a straightforward lady and gave the four of them 40% discount since Goth often helped her to carry stuff. She even helped everyone to maintain their totems.

Lastly, they went to a dry food shop. The owner was a kind old lady and was ecstatic when Goth called her grandma. She then stuffed everyone a big packet of biscuits and chocolate candies each.

After leaving the city, they went into the Luminarist Hiring Guild. The three of them were carrying packets of snacks as they looked at Goth with a questioning gaze. This guy seemed to be very popular.

Garen purposely followed from the back, and looked at the beginner quest that was hanging in front of them.

His gaze shrunk slightly .