

Mystical 271

Chapter 271: Investigation 1

"I knew it..." The investigative quest related to the wild and dangerous creatures' nest was hanging up there. The name was "Nest Investigation". This was the important quest where Goth would explode the Obscuro Society's nest.

This investigative quest would require one to investigate this so called dangerous creature's nest. However, it was actually the Obscuro Society's Totem Battlefield Processing Plant.

As the three of them were accepting the quest, Garen took a step back and scanned his surroundings.

These totem users were spiritually drained, tired, and most of them were injured. However, they did a good job in covering up. The head count was slightly less than before.

Garen overheard the lady who announced the quest that there was not enough people lately, and no one was willing to take the beginner level quests. On the other hand, commissioning quests had been stacking up day after day.

Dang dang... Dang dang... Dang dang...

Garen walked to the wall and looked to the distance through the window.

The tallest bell tower was ringing at the center of the Iron Tank City, which was white and circular.

With Garen's superhuman vision, he could faintly see a lot of high level people in white robes with silver sleeves climbing up to the top of the tower beside the bell tower via the spiral staircase.

There were like termites climbing up trees.

"Meeting at the Spiral Tower, the highest level meeting of the Iron Tank City... I wonder what's happened." Garen tried to suppress his curiosity.

"What's wrong?" Andy patted Garen's shoulder. "We have accepted the quest. Let's go. The location is quite far away this time, since it's located at Hllkan. It would take us four days to travel back and forth and we can't take a carriage there. Fortunately the rewards are quite decent. Everyone will be getting five thousand and a transportation fee of two thousand."

"Sounds good." Garen smiled. "However Hilkan is rather far. Oh right, what's the name of the quest?"

"Nest Investigation." Andy said casually.

"Andy, Are you guys going for the Nest Investigation as well?"

Suddenly a group of people came from behind them. The one who was leading the group was a youngster in a brown armor asked as he smiled.

Andy turned his head around and his facial expression dropped all of the sudden. "Are you doing this quest as well Cayduran?"

Cayduran, who was in the brown armor smiled.

A short haired macho man appeared behind him as he was putting away his silver dagger looked at Cayduran. "Friends of yours?"

Cayduran nodded.

"Sir Johnson, I will be staying back for a bit to have a chat with my friends."

"Sure, we will chat when we're free." The short haired muscular guy nodded his head and brought a group of people passed Garen.

At the entrance of the main hall, Andy with his three team mates and Cayduran with his two other teammates gave some space to let the rest enter or exit the main hall.

However, these two had a healthy rivalry between them and they would never cross the line.

Cayduran pointed at the two teammates and said as he smiled.

"These two are the supports I have hired. My team has lost two people recently. Cana and Valerie are totem users from the Kovitan Empire."

One of these two, Valerie, was a man with a golden ponytail. This self proclaimed Valerie looked arrogant and ignorant. He only nodded to the rest he was being introduced.

The other girl was called Cana, who looked at Andy's team members. She immediately ignored Jessica due to her mediocre figure and face, who graduated from school and kept training herself. Along the road on her training, she had seen most sides of human beings.

Her sight stopped for a moment as it landed on Andy and Goth, and soon set her sight onto the handsome Garen.

"What a coincidence. Garen here is from Kovitan as well." Andy smiled.

"You're from Kovitan?" Cana's interested peaked as she looked at Garen.

This woman had both butt and bosom, and had an above average look. Her purple hair was at shoulder height and there were free strands hanging on her chests as well, which made her bosoms looked even more filling.

Garen answered by nodding and smiling politely.

"Which part of Kovitan are you from? Perhaps we are from the same hometown." Cana felt that among this group, Garen had a passable facial figure and looked sexy due to his good fitness as well. In addition to these, he was a totem user and this made him even slightly more interesting.

Among the totem users in Kovitan, there are a lot of disciples voluntarily travelled around the world to train themselves but accepting quests. There were a lot of them doing this everywhere.

Although she was from just a merchant household, her siblings who were in a similar social status had changed for the better when they became the significant other of these disciples. What they currently eat was of a different class, as if their lifestyle had completely changed.

They, who came from the merchant household were naturally not competent against the aristocrats. These sisters had become the center of everyone's attention when they went for a gathering. The foods they ate and the clothes they wore everyday were something only an aristocrat could get hold of, and the places they went to could not be accessed by any typical person.

Even totem users could not simply get into the circle of the aristocrats. The totem users with an aristocratic background, on the other hand, were who she had been looking for.

Perhaps this fellow was an aristocrat who had come out to train himself?

Cana assessed Garen carefully. She had seen a lot of people along the journey but she had never met someone who was as handsome as Garen. Most importantly, this person's skin was almost as smooth as hers. She couldn't help herself but to fall for him the moment she saw him.

"I am from the lush green area." Garen smiled as he replied

"Oh, lush green. I have been there for a vacation. It's a nice place with good air quality and the environment is very beautiful. My sisters and I had only been to the Ivy Park and the environment there was superb. The squirrels there are not afraid of humans and they even asked food from us." Cana smiled.

Garen had never heard of Ivy Park, but he went along with it and smiled as he listened to Cana's conversation regarding her time in the park.

On one end, the atmosphere between Cayduran and Andy was not enjoyable. On the other hand, Garen and Cana seemed to be enjoying their time talking casually.

Jessica, Goth and Valerie started to talk as they had nothing better to do.

Valerie felt unease and frowned as he noticed Cana's warming attitude towards Garen.

Cana and Valerie came from the same sect, and they went on a journey together as well. He always had some feelings for her and he couldn't help to feel jealous when he saw Cana having a great time with Garen.

As he was chatting with Jessica, he always kept a constant eye on Garen and Cana.

Garen noticed it and he didn't want to cause any trouble. However, the current situation was that Cana initiated the conversation with her. As a beautiful and well figured lady who came and initiate a conversation with him, he could only listen and look, even if he didn't have the intention of having a conversation with her. He couldn't just push the person away as it would offend her as well..

After a few exchanges of words, Andy and Cayduran felt irritated towards one another. However, they kept the conversation going as all of them were of the same rank. The current situation outside was rather dire, so both of them had some intention of working together since they were all form 1 totem users.

After a few words, both teams decided to work together.

They rented a few horses from the stable, brought along the survival tools and tent and separated into two groups.

These two teams merged together and soon exited the suburbs and entered the the highway.

The distance between Hilkan and Iron Tank City was very far. The road during the beginning of the journey was rather easy, but its difficulty increased as they approached their destination. The map they bought recommended using a horse as their main transportation, not carriages.

Everyone had their own horses, as they sprinted forward along the highway.

Along the journey, Cana would intentionally get closer to Garen and occasionally crack a joke or two. Two of them slowly got to know each other better.

Valerie's expression got worse along the journey as he looked at Garen with jealousy.

He understood well that totem users who came out to train themselves were mostly members from their local sects. Although the numbers of a noble totem users weren't little, they were considered the minority.

If Garen was a noble, he would be totally different from the merchants as most of the totem evolving techniques were in the hands of the aristocrats. There was a huge difference between a typical totem users and a noble totem user. A typical totem users might spend a few decades to become form 2 totem users, which was considered very strong. On the other hand, the nobles had the opportunity to attain the third form. Furthermore, both parties had different amount of resources, as the nobles would have more Tactics compared to the typical totem users in terms of support and attacks. The typical totem users and noble totem users had a different starting point from the very beginning.

He would not want to mess with Garen if he really were a noble.

Along the road, Goth and Jessica were at the back, Andy and Cayduran were at the front with Garen, Valerie and Cana in the middle.

After a few hours on the road, two teams stopped for a rest to eat some dry food and water. They also took this opportunity to separate their work clearly. Although Andy and Cayduran didn't get along very well, they do know each other very well since they grew up together. They would rather work together than to work with other people because they at least knew each other's personality.

After they came to an agreement in terms of splitting the rewards, they continued on their journey.

As the night approached, the group started to set up the tent between the river and the road.

As Garen wasn't experienced in setting up the tent, Cana came and gave him a hand and nailed the wood onto the ground to stabilize the tent.

"Have you not slept inside a tent before?" Cana asked as she helped out.

"Yeah, I have never done this before." Garen shook his head. This world's tents were very detailed and sturdy, and would require every foundation to be set up straight in order to work. He indeed had never done this before.

As Cana heard his answer, she was even surer of her assumption. Every totem user should know how to set up this tent, as it was one of the must-bring equipment when one went outside. Since Garen didn't know how to use it, it was obvious that someone had been helping him to set it up.

Her smile became sweeter as she thought of this. If she could get a hold of a noble disciple, she would be able to obtain the evolving techniques and the remaining resources in the future. Her chances of becoming a form 2 totem user would greatly increase as well.

"I have a self inflating tent. I will give you one later, it's the latest product." Cana smiled as she said.

"It's alright. This tent is decent enough."

"It's alright, it's just a tent anyway." Cana turned around and came back in a short while. Before Garen could even open his mouth, she placed some sort of a black stick towards Garen's arms. "I still have a lot of these so don't worry about it. Take it as a token of our newly formed friendship." Although she said that on the surface, her heart couldn't help but ache as she passed it to him. These inflating tent made use of chemicals to inflate and deflate at will and its price wasn't cheap. However, she believed it's a must to ensure the foundation of this friendship needed to be firm and sturdy.

Chapter 272: Investigation 2

Two days later.

Evening.

On the wide grassy plains, behind a little hill, there were two yellow bonfires within close proximity of each other, emitting two yellow halos of light.

The two groups of people surrounded each bonfire, each doing their own preparations.

"Garen, you're in charge of tonight's recon, we'll be counting on you for the night," Andy said to Garen softly.

"You guys can go ahead and sleep, relax." Garen nodded, and stood.

Reconnaissance was mostly up to him and Valerie, because both of them used flying type totems. Valerie's was a small bluebird, which flew at high speeds and could be used as a messenger.

After delegating their work these past two days, they had started getting more familiar with one another.

Cana and Valerie sat beside their captain, baking by the bonfire. When they saw Garen stand, Cana finally couldn't help but ask,

"Cayduran, what on earth is Garen's core totem? Why have I only seen him using the neon butterfly as his totem this few days? That's a very unpopular kind of totem, isn't it, I don't think anyone's even researched how to further improve on it."

Cayduran was stoking the bonfire, and raised his head when she said that, looking at her in surprise.

"I'm telling you to stay away from him, his core totem? You're the closest to him, and you still don't know?"

"Know what?" Cana asked, frowning.

"This Garen doesn't have a core totem, he only does recon in his team." Cayduran looked at Cana curiously. "If you think he's some rich noble kid, you're wrong. That Garen was working at a totem repair shop by the nightmarket back there, and Andy only pulled him into the team later. Even if he's nobility, he'd only be washed-out nobility. That's why I advised you to get all your facts straight before you make any plans. I thought you knew."

Cana was rather stunned.

She never guessed that the answer she was looking for all this time would be that simple.

But she still had more faith in her own judgment. This Garen had an aura she just couldn't see through, in other words he was really weird. There was no way he was just a normal totem user.

"Stop fantasizing, nobles always take their own safety very seriously. Without even a core totem, he can't even guarantee his safety on a mission like this." Valerie couldn't help but speak, "That guy is actually the weakest in our team." He had long since been unhappy with Garen. Every time he saw Cana initiate a conversation with Garen and get a cold shoulder in return, sparks flew in his heart.

"Let's wait and see..." Cana frowned and said softly, but her passion had also been doused. She was beginning to doubt her own theory.

Early the next morning

Garen kept away his neon butterfly, preparing to mount his horse and rest for a moment by taking a nap. The horse would be led forward by the connecting ropes anyway.

He soon realized that Cana, who would usually approach him for a chat, had gotten a lot colder, riding her own horse as she chatted with Valerie.

It was a rare moment of peace for him, so he slowed down his horse and created a little distance between them. He began to check his current condition.

After hunting down so many missions for the War Guild, he was also beginning to understand some things about Luminarists.

Most totems were divided into two types, Seraph Lights and Phantom Lights. There were fewer Phantom Lights, but each of these were extremely strong. The scar on Garen's neck was left by a Phantom Light.

He was aware that he didn't have a core totem yet, so his abilities plus his secret techniques only added up to the level of a Form 1 Phantom Light, equal to a peak Form 1 totem user. But if he was to go against a Form 2 totem user face to face, then he would be way out of league.

In the two small teams present here, only Andy and Cayduran were slightly stronger. When it came to controlling totems and the strength of their Totem Light, the two of them were the strongest, and that made them the main fighting force in head-on confrontations. The others were all rookies, at the same level as the general average. They were all relying on their totem's attack type, and determining their strength by the strength of their totems.

As a thought occurred to him, he saw that in front of him, Cayduran was whispering something into Valerie's ear. Cayduran nodded, and turned around to look at Garen.

"Garen, we need to check that small patch of forest ahead on the left, we'll have to rely on your butterfly for a bit."

Garen nodded, and pulled out his silver-colored short staff to release the neon butterfly. He then let it patrol around the small forest ahead on the right.

Finding nothing, the neon butterfly returned, and the team continued forward.

Not long later, just as Garen was getting ready to rest, he heard another call from ahead.

"Garen, don't sleep yet, something seems to have come up behind us, go send the neon butterfly to take a look," Valerie said loudly.

Garen had stood guard all night last night, and was just growing sleepy. He planned to rest, and recover a bit. Upon hearing that, he opened his eyes and frowned.

"Valerie, your totem is a flying type too, why are you always making Big Brother Garen do the work?" Jessica asked, slightly unhappily.

"He's the weakest, so he should work more," Valerie said smoothly with a pout.

"Forget it, it's fine." Garen didn't want to pick a bone with this team either. This assignment was extremely important to him, he didn't want to influence the path of history too much.

Releasing the neon butterfly, he let it take a round behind them, chasing away a few young deer. Only then did it return to rest on Garen's shoulder.

They slowed down their horses, proceeding at a speed that was neither fast nor slow. The group decided they might as well settle their food and drink on horseback. It was only in the afternoon that they stopped to let the horses rest and drink.

In the afternoon.

Cana hesitated for a while, but still came over to chat a bit with Garen. Valerie was instantly put off. From what the captain said, he finally understood that Garen wasn't any noble at all. Even if he was, he'd just be a washed-out one, and so he posed no threat at all. Seeing Cana approach Garen even now, the discomfort in his heart got even stronger.

"Garen, I'm a little tired, so I'll take a nap now. I'll leave patrolling to you." Valerie walked up to Garen and said loudly.

"What do you mean by that?" Beside him, Andy frowned and stood up. "You're supposed to patrol during the daytime, right?"

"It's okay, it's okay." Garen didn't say anything more. His endurance was out of this world, he trained in the secret techniques, and his spiritual power was brimming, so this little bit was nothing to him. This

assignment was related to Goth's explosion, and it affected the variables that might appear after he joined the team. He didn't want to completely fall out with Cayduran's side over such a small matter. After all, in the images in his memoriesm Cayduran and the others had gone into the caves together too.

Seeing that Garen himself wasn't bothered about it, Andy and Goth, who was just about to stand up, couldn't interfere much either. Both of them sat back down.

As requested, Garen began to patrol the surroundings immediately.

When he stood up, however, Valerie said to him in a soft voice,

"This is just a little lesson for you. If you understand, then you'd better leave Cana alone, otherwise it won't be this easy next time."

Garen almost wanted to laugh.

This brat actually dared to threaten him. This mother-suckling brat, without a whiff of blood on him, actually dared to stand directly in front and threaten him, face to face.

If he weren't so scared of causing too many changes, creating too many variables in this mission, he would have long ago given this kid a tight slap.

After one round of patrolling, he returned to the temporary camp. Garen approached Goth and sat down next to him. Seeing the way Goth ate half a baguette in one bite, gorging himself like a pig, Garen suddenly felt especially hungry. He picked up the rock-hard baguette, dipped it into ketchup, and enjoyed it more than he thought he would.

"Garen, go fetch some water from around here." Valerie's voice sounded again.

"Hey, what's the matter with you?" Goth got to his feet in an instant. "You got legs and hands, can't you get it yourself?"

Valerie stood as well, laughing coldly. "Someone who doesn't even have a core totem would be a burden anyway, why should we give him a portion of the money if he doesn't do a little something? Anyone on this team can contribute to the team, and fight for the team. He's the only exception, not only is his totem so weak, it's not even a core totem. He can only be a burden for the team."

"Alright, Valerie, isn't that enough?" Cana finally had enough, standing up as she said coldly, "Don't make me look down on you!"

"Alright, alright, no more fighting." Andy and Cayduran both got up. Cayduran glanced at Garen, frowning, "This matter ends here."

Valerie glared at Garen. Since he was scolded by Cana just now, he was even more pissed off than before.

The two teams suddenly stopped talking to each other and sat separately on two sides.

After getting enough rest, they continued on their journey.

Although Cana now knew that Garen wasn't any nobleman like she had hoped, but she still couldn't act like how Valerie did. She didn't want the two teams to split over something like this. So she still sought Garen out and personally apologized, followed by a short chat.

Unfortunately, when Valerie, who was just rather annoyed, saw that Cana still insisted on sucking up to Garen, he got even angrier.

Looking at his dark expression, it was clear that he had begun to hate Garen.

A full four days passed.

The two teams began to slowly enter the wilderness. The surrounding cottages and hunting houses grew sparser and sparser, and eventually disappeared altogether.

There were more and more weeds on the road, almost enough to cover the surface of the road entirely. And this was covered by a lot of loose pebbles.

The two captains gathered together, holding the map and tracing the route. Soon enough, they left the road for cars and horses, following a narrow dirt road, turning into some other unknown territory.

Everywhere around them, there were endlessly vast expanses of grassy green fields, and almost no trace of humanity whatsoever. The spattering of woods also grew fewer, as they had evidently arrived at the dirt plains.

The team continued pushing forth, eventually finding the little mound that looked like a pitchfork.¹ The whole team stopped.

"This is where we start." Andy held up the map to compare.

"There's blood here!" Cayduran crouched behind the little mound and said loudly, "The assignment description said that a few people disappeared here, leaving behind traces of blood and fighting. Seems like we got the right place."

The others quickly hurried to look, and saw that there were some clots of dried red-black blood on the grass. The soil underneath had also been dyed dark red, making it very obvious to the eye.

"Thank goodness it didn't rain these few days, so the blood stains weren't completely washed away," Cayduran said in a low voice. "Check the map, how should we go from here? If I wasn't wrong, there should be a bandits' nest nearby."

"The assignment mentioned that regular city guards came here to check a couple times, but the never found anything. That's why they handed the assignment over to the Guild. But I bet they're just slightly more cunning normal people, it shouldn't be much of a problem." Andy walked over and spread open the map as he said, "If we search right from here, we should be able to an underground cave. The last time the city guards went in, five days before we received the mission, it was too dark inside, and they couldn't advance because there were too many traps and switches. After a few of them got hurt, the city guards came back out, but mentioned it on the assignment."

"C'mon, let's go in and look." Cayduran stood up.

Chapter 273: Entrance 1

The group walked along the mound, and entered a small patch of woods to their right.

In the midst of the forest, a pitch black pit gaped open at a slant on the grassy ground. It was surrounded by vines and grass, and they could only vaguely feel the cold draft rushing out from between the cracks.

Andy went forth, using his hunting knife to cut apart some of the wild growth, revealing the entire cave.

He lowered his head, and immediately saw a row of faint footprints on the ground. Some grass had been flattened underfoot, and had yet to bounce back up completely.

"It's here." Andy pointed ahead, and a black shadow darted out from behind him, leaping into the cave with a whoosh. "I sent Black Panther ahead, please wait for a moment, guys."

The group scattered and stood apart, constantly aware of the surrounding situation.

A black wolf appeared by Cayduran's feet, white smoke bubbling from its mouth. It was evidently a Fire Wolf that had been raised to a very high level, almost approaching Form 2.

His hand moved slightly, and the Black Wolf immediately stood up, and began to walk casual circles around the surrounding forests.

Everyone was on alert. This was a bandits' cave, and they needed to be constantly aware of any movements around them. After all, several batches of city guards had already perished here. The other side would surely anticipate stronger reinforcements to follow.

Garen stood beside Goth, the neon butterfly perched on his shoulder.

He knew very well that there weren't just any normal bandits in this cave, but an extremely powerful Luminarist.

The Totem Light would only demonstrate its own defensive power when similarly attacked by Totem Light.

With his current Neon Butterfly's defensive power, even twice of that wouldn't be anything in front of regular totems. Even a Black Wolf would be able to break through his defense easily. Garen was mainly relying on his own Divine Statue Technique for defense. Due to the difference in quality, the Divine Statue Technique's Body Hardening Technique couldn't be all that powerful against the Totem Light either.

Garen compared himself, and after adding the two together, he decided he was more or less equal to Andy's Black Panther.

"Cayduran, your Black Wolf is almost Form 2, isn't it?" Jessica started talking to Cayduran quietly. The two of them grew up together, and although Jessica's older brother didn't get along with Cayduran, Jessica herself was pretty friendly with him.

"There's still a long way yet. Although I managed to find some ways to raise it, there's still some distance to go before it reaches Fire Wolf level." Cayduran shook his head. "The later part of evolution is an upgrade in total quality, too many people get stuck here."

Jessica found some questions about evolution and start chatting idly with Cayduran, as a way to kill time.

Cana had her hands tied with Valerie, but no one knew what they were talking about.

Garen released his Neon Butterfly to make patrols in the sky over his head, paying close attention to anything that might happen.

Goth, on the other hand, released that ink-colored Blackfield Bird. It was just a wooden bird, that couldn't do anything but move its eyes.

By then, Andy had also more or less completed his scouting. Frowning, he turned around and said, "There's a fork in the road ahead. Two roads, do you want to go on?"

Cayduran hesitated.

"It shouldn't be too big a problem, they're just bandits. I myself cleaned up a lot on my own before, and that was totally fine."

"What if we're sealed inside?" Jessica began to hesitate.

"It's fine, I know penetration tactics, I can open up a tunnel in a second. As long as there isn't Totem Light in the way, we don't have to worry about any other materials," Cayduran replied with a smile.

"I'll be the one to lead my sister, I don't need your crap." Andy gave him an angry glance.

"Would it kill you to keep your mouth clean!" Cayduran was mad too. "Forget it, we'll go in first. When we reach the fork, we'll each take one side, just read the signals when we get there. Let's go."

He led the Black Wolf down into the tunnel, followed closely by Cana. And then Valerie glared at Garen with disdain, chasing behind Cana.

"We'll go too." Andy waved his hand, and was the first to enter. He held a small white ball in his hand, but Garen didn't know what it was. Judging by the expression of wariness on his face, it evidently wasn't any normal item.

Goth went second, Jessica third, and Garen was the very last.

It was pitch black in the tunnel, and all they could hear was the smattering of Andy's footsteps from ahead.

Garen followed behind the three of them, feeling the air grow colder and colder, and the tunnel grew wider. Cayduran and the others, who had gone ahead, were gone without a trace.

"Be careful, don't get left behind," Andy's voice came from the furthest front.

"I know." "Relax."

The three of them replied in turn. In these pitch black surroundings, the four of them couldn't see very well with their eyes, so they had to follow behind Andy's Black Panther to advance. The Black Panther's brilliant green eyes shone slightly luminescent in the darkness, like two oval emeralds.

After walking another distance, Andy suddenly stopped.

"We've reached the fork. They took the left side, we'll do the right."

The group continued advancing down the right side, and quickly came across yet another fork in the road.

"Wait!" Andy's voice suddenly held a hint of anxiety.

He walked a little further forward, to the front of the Black Panther, and took out two flints from his pocket

Hiss!

The spark lit and died in the darkness, followed by the soft rustle of burning. The small torch Andy had prepared was instantly lit up, and it lit up the rest of the cave as well.

"There's some trouble..." Under the bright red firelight, Andy's complexion changed slightly.

The other three quickly hurried up to him.

"What's the matter?" Goth approached him.

"Ah!" Jessica suddenly clapped her hand to her mouth and took one step back.

Garen saw it too. In front of Andy, there was the naked corpse of a man hanging upside down.

The corpse had brown hair and deathly pale skin. A large hole had been dug out of his abdomen, with swarms of maggots and black ants crawling around within.

The man's eyes were opened wide, as though he had encountered something especially painful.

With a whoosh, the Black Panther leapt up and cut the rope suspending the body with one wipe of its paw.

The corpse fell to the ground with a whumpf, landing next to Andy. He crouched down to examine it closely.

"He's been dead for four or five days, but he doesn't stink at all... This damned bandits!" He turned the corpse, and pulled a short black arrow from his back. Andy looked at the color of the arrow tip carefully, and his expression changed.

"Garen, you don't have an automatically activating Totem Light, so you stand guard at the cave entrance. The others, come with me and don't get left behind, we'll have to speed up. These damned bandits! Jessica, you're okay?" Andy glanced at his younger sister.

"It's nothing, I'm perfectly fine." Jessica's chest was heaving non-stop, but she still forced herself to keep her emotions steady.

"Goth, you protect Jessica. Although your Blackfield Bird can't move, its skin is very hard, and its feathers can deflect impacts. Your job is to defend Jessica from any Totem Light attacks nearby. Garen, you stay outside. This place is too dangerous for you, your Totem Light can't activate automatically, and you have to control it yourself, so it's likely you can't block hidden poisonous arrows attacks." Andy started delegating jobs one by one.

"That's why we need you to stealthily protect the cave entrance. Only then can we make use of your strengths, is that alright?"

Garen nodded solemnly.

"Leave it to me." He had long since made plans of his own, so naturally he would agree at this point.

"Then we'll leave it at that, let's head out!" Andy barked the order, and the Black Panther led the way as the three of them quickly ran ahead.

Garen started retreating to the back. At first his speed was average, but once there weren't any footsteps or firelight ahead of him, he began to speed up. The lightless surroundings had no effect on him whatsoever.

His highly capable physical attributes made his five senses extra powerful, so naturally his eyes and ears could clearly replicate the conditions he just saw before.

Soon enough, he had returned to the first fork in the road.

"Eh?"

Suddenly he paused for a moment. He realized that the tunnel ahead that led back to the entrance had somehow vanished completely, replaced by a stone wall that was exactly like the surroundings.

If he didn't have extraordinary memory, and memorized the traits of this exact spot, he would have probably assumed he took a wrong turn.

The Y-shaped tunnel had suddenly become V-shaped, the path back was gone.

Garen reached out his hand to touch the stone wall, it was very hard rock.

"As expected, we've been discovered." He hesitated, and then ran faster down the corridors Cayduran and co had taken. The Neon Butterfly rested on his shoulder, emitting a gentle, pale blue light, so he could clearly see the things around him.

In no time at all, there was another fork in front him. He crouched down to look at the footsteps on the ground, they led to the left.

He stood up and dashed down the right.

After taking a few more turn, running about a few kilometers of distance, he vaguely saw firelight ahead.

"Who's there!!" A piercing woman's voice came from ahead. A short-haired woman walked out from the tunnels ahead, still putting on her clothes. She was in her early twenties and had a decent figure, a thin waist, a delicate chest, her unbuttoned collar revealing a white lace bra.

There was a dent in the wall on the woman's left. Inside, there was a candle on a wooden trunk, and the candlelight also illuminated a semicircular bed.

After waiting so long without a reply, the woman's rather plain face looked confused.

"Is it Ada? Stop joking around."

And still no one replied.

The woman picked up a dagger that was lying on the wooden crate and arched her body like a female panther, as she slowly began to move.

Whoosh!

Suddenly there was a gush of cold wind, lightly stinging the woman's widened eyes. She instantly blinked them.

She couldn't help but rub her eyes, but there wasn't anything out of place at all in the tunnel.

"Did I hear wrong?" she murmured, straightened up, and returned to sitting on her bed. Then she took her clothes, bra, and underwear, then actually pulled up the covers and went to sleep naked.

Garen stood on the other end quietly. In the instant where the wind blew just now, he had already darted past this woman in the blink of an eye, reaching the other side.

This guard woman was only a Soldier-level who had done a bit of training, there was no way she could notice his peak Master-level speed.

After getting past this patrol point, Garen continued running ahead soundlessly.

His speed was exceedingly fast, like a gust of wind.

With a smack, his leather breeches stepped past the ground. Before the underground spikes of the trap could even snap up, he had already gone past the trap and was several meters away.

As he flitted past, poison arrows shot out from the walls on both sides, and rope nooses appeared suddenly on the ground, ready to hang someone upside down at any moment. The further ahead he went, the more traps there were.

Some higher difficulty compound traps also started appearing, with many things like poisonous liquids or powders.

There were even two Form 1 venomous wasp totems resting in two dents on either side of the tunnel.

Relying on his speed, Garen dashed past the Wasps in an instant, but he had barely taken a few steps before several black bats flew down from the ceiling ahead.

Chapter 274: Entrance 2

Squawk!

The bats screeched as they pounced at Garen. There was actually the pale black glow of Totem Light on their bodies.

Garen hurriedly avoided them, retreating backwards to avoid the bats' attack.

"Someone came in! Don't you know this area is restricted!"

A man's deep voice came from the tunnel ahead.

It was a skinhead who wore a black robe and had four red stripes on his collar who suddenly appeared in the tunnel ahead. A male lion with a black mane crouched next to him, and a black bat perched on his shoulder.

As soon as he came out, the skinhead saw Garen, who was avoiding the bats.

"Intruder!!" He instantly roared, pointing a finger at Garen.

Brrr!!

The bat on his shoulder, as well as the two black bats in the air, opened their mouths and emitted shapeless soundwaves at the same time.

The soundwaves fanned opened, completely enveloping Garen who was trying to avoid them. They came in waves, like seawaves breaking over the rocks.

The soundwaves had just touched Garen when they broke past the Neon Butterfly's Totem Light in an instant, directly entering his body.

Suddenly there was a tight and dull on his chest, and Garen felt his head vaguely aching.

His vision was a blurry mess, as though something was pressing down on his eyelids, so he couldn't see anything clearly at all.

His ears were also constantly echoing with a ringing sound, so he couldn't hear a thing. His heartbeat accelerated, growing faster and faster, and that dull nausea kept rising from his chest and into his throat.

He suddenly tasted something like iron in his throat.

"Shit!! Form 2 totem!" Garen immediately understood his opponent's level. Before he could think too much about it, he somersaulted backwards, his feet desperately tapping the ground, and he disappeared into the darkness within a few leaps.

The bats chased him for quite a distance, but still couldn't catch up to him in the slightest.

The skinhead called back his three bat totems coldly, caressing the black lion's head beside him.

"Suicidal. A tiny Form 1 totem user who didn't self-implode after taking a hit from my Triple Ultrasound Waves, consider yourself lucky." The other guy escaped, but he didn't mind in the slightest. Anyone who got hit by Triple Ultrasound Waves basically wouldn't live for more than five minutes.

He fixed his collar, and raised his hand to look at the time on his watch.

"I should go check on Phillip, there have been little bugs getting in here all the time now, and now they've almost entered the restricted zone. Looks like we oughta move this position soon."

He strode into the pitch black tunnel, the bats and black lion following closely behind him.

Garen panted heavily, trying to get air into his lungs. The Neon Butterfly was perched on his shoulder motionlessly, its light dimming, its body wrinkled and dry. It had obviously taken damage in that soundwave attack from before.

Not only was the Neon Butterfly damaged, tiny red dots were also blossoming all over Garen's whole body, as countless blood capillaries erupted at the seams.

He leaned heavily one of the tunnel's stone walls. His whole body, inside and out, felt like it was swelling up as though someone was inflating him with air, making him liable to explode at any moment.

His blood and qi were boiling intensely like never before. Garen tried his hardest, did everything to press it down, desperately using the Divine Statue Technique's methods to control and adjust it.

It took a full ten minutes for there to be some sort of effect.

He stretched out his hands, and saw that there was blood leaking out all around his fingernails.

"What a strong effect!!" he murmured softly.

All the blood in his body was trembling from the soundwave attack, roiling over like waves. His peak-level Body Hardening Technique, that had completely merged with his body, actually started to waver.

All this time, ever since he came to this world, he had confidence based on his highest achievements from the world of secret techniques. Even when he witnessed his teacher Emin's battle against an opponent, he didn't think he was too far away from them. It was just a difference in their strongest outputs.

And now, a regular unknown Form 2 totem user from out of nowhere, nearly injured him grievously at just first glance. It was like pouring a bucket of cold water over Garen's head.

Although he did know inside that he couldn't match a Form 2 totem user, he was still not that afraid or worried about his opponent, because the other person would find it hard to hurt him as well. Especially

after he ambushed and killed a Form 2 totem user recently, this line of thinking had been reinforced even further.

To think that he would suddenly stumble into that skinhead totem user in this tunnel, and that guy had a total of three bat support totems. And his main totem, the black lion, hadn't even attacked, but it was already enough to injure Garen to this level.

Only then did Garen understand more about Form 2 totems.

"Three support totems, and one core totem... He's definitely one of the higher-ups here! A Form 2 totem user like that can't possibly be a no-name character!" he hazarded a guess. At the same time, he kept stabilizing the situation inside his body.

Right now, his blood and qi were unstable. The impact had caused internal bleeding, and if he were to fight with anyone now, his abilities would be drastically reduced. At the most, he would have half of what he did before.

Faced with the soundwave attack that also carried Totem Light, the Divine Statue Technique could only resist a little better than normal people. Other than that, he had no other advantage.

After resting for a while, Garen knew that this was the key period. In his memories, he knew that as long as he found the core area in here, he shouldn't be able to get a rare totem. This was Obscuro Society's main factory, after all. If he could obtain the Obscuro Society's totem and bring it out of here, it would be surely stronger than regular totems.

"I must be patient now, and wait for Goth's side to trigger his power. It will disrupt the entire underground headquarters and factory, then I'll have my chance to move in the chaos!" Garen's heart slowly started to calm down. He began to dig stones, bit by bit out of the cave wall he was at.

Curling his hands into claws, he could paw out a large rock with each swipe, Soon enough he had dug a trench out of the stone wall, and darted into it.

He then squeezed all the rocks and shards he had dug out into very fine black sand, scattering them on the ground around him. This way it was very hard for anyone to notice him.

Shrinking quietly in the stone wall, Garen used the clothes on his body to hide the trench. It was hard to see in the darkness anyway, so it had a very strong camouflaging effect.

He shrunk into the stone wall, listening silently to the disturbances in front and behind him in the tunnel.

The reason he rejected using his teacher Emin's White Bear as a core totem was because he knew that no matter how strong the White Bear totem got, it couldn't defeat special animal totems without evolving to the very peak. And these special animal totems could barely go against Terraflor's plant totems, not to mention the strongest ones, Obscuro's element totems.

He didn't have over-powered talent, so if even his basics were one step behind everyone else, it would be hard for him to advance.

Acacia's talent could support two totems at most, and that was also because the Neon Butterfly was very weak. If it was the White Bear, he would only be able to support one at most.

He didn't know how long he waited, but Garen -- hiding in the stone wall-- suddenly felt footsteps coming from the tunnel outside.

A large group of people were running past this tunnel, their footsteps hasty.

"Hurry! Hurry!" Voices came from outside.

Boom!!

An intense tremor came from the distance, jolting Garen, who was inside the stone wall, into getting a face-full of sand.

"It's begun!! Goth and the others must have engaged the enemy! I have to hurry!" After the footsteps had passed, Garen quickly darted out of the wall, put on his clothes, and hurriedly dashed deeper into the tunnel.

After that moment's reprieve, he had recovered most of his speed.

The tunnel ahead of him kept turning and twisting.

Soon enough, he returned to where he had been injured earlier. That skinhead in black robes was no longer there.

Garen didn't wait for even a moment, and directly ran past this area.

The path ahead was suddenly illuminated. It was a wide tunnel with torches on both sides of the wall.

There were a few corpses scattered over the floor, each of them with their necks snapped and their eyes wide.

There was a light splatter of blood on the walls, leaving a smell of iron in the air.

On the right there were two white stone doors, one tightly shut and one half open.

In the distance ahead, he could faintly hear the sounds of intense battle. The two fighting sides had evidently just left here, and hadn't gone far. They could be back at any time.

Garen walked up to the half-open stone door, and quickly peeped inside.

There were also corpses strewn about inside, blood flowing into a little stream from the corner of the walls to the door, dying the black stone floor a sticky dark red.

This stone room was probably a place for recreation and meetings. He could still see the bar counter, beer bottles and sofa inside.

Garen quickly walked up to the second stone door, and pushed it slightly. It didn't budge at all, meaning it was locked.

It was a boost to his spirits. Garen aimed his right palm for the keyhole, and hit it abruptly.

Hiss!

A hole instantly appeared where the keyhole to the stone door had been.

He pushed open the large door, and quietly but quickly pulled it to a close behind him.

This room was wide, and had many long white rectangular shelves inside. There were like so many bookshelves, neatly arranged.

There was a hint of pale red mist in the air.

At the furthest right, by the corner of the wall, there was a silver unit factory on a large table. A pile of intricate instruments made of silver were continuously spitting out silver, cubed units from a black exit hole.

There was a mess on the assembly table next to it, and the chairs by the table had also fallen askew. It was evident that the people here had left in a hurry.

Garen didn't hesitate, and struck out a palm at the silver shelves.

Whoosh!

A strong gust of wind blew past, but did not trigger any movement.

He relaxed slightly, and quickly walked to the first shelf on the left.

The shelf was stuffed full of drawers, he pulled out the first one with a clatter.

Inside, there was a silver bat neatly arranged.

Although the bat had strong soundwaves, it was still an animal type, and so wasn't what Garen wanted.

He pulled open the second, the third, the fourth.

They were all bats.

Everything in the first shelf were created bats.

He quickly walked up to the second shelf.

This shelf was full of silver poison wasps, each of them as big as a fist, and the poison needle on its end as long as half a finger.

The third shelf was half empty. In the larger doors towards the bottom, there were many wolf-shaped totems, all silver and unactivated.

The fourth shelf, the fifth shelf.

Garen casually took some of the smaller totems, so he could sell them outside as revenue. But that wasn't what he wanted most just now.

In front of the sixth and final shelf.

This shelf only had a dozen long doors, dividing the shelf into a dozen long compartments.

Garen pulled out the first long door, and the thing inside gave him a slight shock.

It was a pitch black large metal ball, about as big as a person's head.

The ball was covered in tiny, cramped and seemingly random white carvings, like a toy ball made out of voodoo parts.

Even more strangely, this black ball was suspended in mid air.

Just as he was taken aback, a clear woman's voice came from within the black ball.

"Please insert the password." The voice repeated in several different languages, and then fell silent.

Chapter 275: Injured 1

Password?!

What's that?

Garen went over to pull out the rest of the shelf doors. The others were all either empty or similarly contained this strange black ball. All of them made the same woman's voice, asking for a password.

But even then, only four out of the dozen doors had this black ball.

"Password?" Garen frowned deeply, knowing that he had hit the jackpot.

Originally, everything in this base should have been totally destroyed. After Goth exploded that time, he fought with the mastermind of the Obscuro Society, and ignited the base's kinetic furnace. In the large explosion that ensued, the entire base was destroyed to the ground. Nothing remained.

And so Obscuro raged, sending assassins after Goth.

Garen was only thinking that since these things were going to be destroyed in the explosion anyway, he might as well use them himself. The one he felt would be the biggest waste was the unit factory. It'd be great if only he could take it away, but unfortunately...

And the black ball in front of him looked mysterious, so it was very probably one of the most important items in this base.

"Password, Obscuro." Garen attempted to reply.

"Incorrect. You still have two chances. Incorrect answers will cause total lockdown." The female voices from the four balls replied at once.

"Password, Phantom Light."

"Incorrect. You still have one chance. An incorrect answer will cause total lockdown."

Garen narrowed his eyes and scanned his surroundings continuously, but unfortunately, there wasn't anything for him to refer to.

This black ball's password was probably decided by the higher-ups, so its user required a password from the higher-ups. They then had to come to the base for the actual thing, and the two together were needed for them to use the black ball. So the password and the black ball should be totally separate.

Garen's mind moved at high speeds, as he thought non-stop about the possible password. He could tell at one glance that this sort of thing was mass manufactured, and besides, the security and secrecy around it was so thick. It was probably used by the higher-ups only, and they would probably use a common password known to all the higher-ups.

"I'll just wing it!" Garen knew, that the black ball in front of him was most likely the most precious thing here.

"Password, Hellgate!" Hellgate, the true name of the Obscuro Society's mastermind.

"Incorrect. Password error, commencing lockdown."

Sma-ack!

There was a crisp sound.

Garen's blood ran cold, and he knew it was all over. Once it was locked down, these things would be excruciatingly hard to unlock.

The continuous smacking sounds also stopped then. Garen suddenly noticed that only three of the black balls were locked down, while the third one in the center didn't move or reply.

"Password correct." After a pause, a cold woman's voice came from this black ball.

Garen was instantly overjoyed, rushing up to this black ball and watching its changes carefully.

Suddenly, the center of the black ball fell apart like countless puzzle pieces, slowly opening to both sides to form a medium-sized round hole. It revealed yet another black ball inside.

Another hole also opened up in the black ball inside, once more revealing another layer and another black ball.

The third layer of the black ball split apart again, revealing a fist-sized red crystal ball inside.

The crystal ball was propped up by a milky-white pillar like a champagne glass, glowing with a faint silver and red light.

"Ampera no.7, Derivator, for your perusal." The woman's voice came from the black ball again, informing Garen.

"Derivator?" Garen was rather surprised, and then quickly took the black ball out, stuffing it into the pocket of his long robes.

No matter what, this was good stuff. With prize in hand, Garen grabbed a few more smaller, unactivated totems, and was just about to leave.

Wooo...!!

Suddenly there was a piercing wail from the shelf. It sounded like an alarm.

"There's someone in the totem room! Hacca, you stall him!"

"Dammit! It was the brat I met just now! The Triple Soundwaves just now didn't kill him! Siva, you stop him from the other side! Don't let the brat escape!"

From a corridor far away outside, there was the sound of angry shouting.

Garen's blood ran cold, and he quickly rushed out of the stone door, dashing down the way he had come.

Just now that one skinhead was already more than he could deal with, forget the other guy that sounded like he'd be at the same level.

Turning into the dark tunnel ahead, Garen used all his speed to dash madly down the corridor.

"Judging from the voices just now, it's highly likely that they can see footage of the totem storeroom, so I need to leave as fast as possible!"

In the pitch black tunnel, Garen's whole body nearly morphed into a black shadow, quickly dashing down the way he had come.

"Over here!!"

Suddenly there was a deep man's voice calling out from up ahead.

Garen could vaguely hear the low roars and howls of beasts ahead. His heart gave a jolt.

Whoosh!!

Two red fireballs came flying suddenly down the corridor that had been dark just a while ago. They were as big as soccer balls and came spinning, drawing out two tracks of fiery red after-images, coming straight at Garen.

In the path of the fireballs, they lit every part of the passage bright red. Some of the mosses and grass were instantly charred and smoking.

With two loud smacking sounds, two stones shot out from Garen's hands. They actually went directly through the fireball, becoming transparent red stones. They did nothing at all to hinder the advance of the fireball.

He leapt up, his feet gaining momentum by stepping onto the walls, and then his whole person shot out with a pop. He went right through the gap between the two fireballs.

Boom!!

The two fireballs basically exploded at once, the intensely high heat enveloping Garen in an instant. They simply became a ball of fire in mid-air, and burst.

With a pop, a charred black body fell down from mid-air, and moved no more.

"Hmph!" There was a cold snort from far away. Followed by the sound of hurried footsteps hastening away.

A dozen seconds after the footsteps faded, the charred black body finally moved a little. He opened his blue eyes, and glanced around warily.

Garen slowly crawled up from the ground. His whole body had been burnt, and not a single spot didn't sting and hurt from the heat. His blood and qi was continuously roiling, having been nearly scattered by that hit just now, and only regathering now.

His face, his neck, his arm, were all blistering, like so many flesh-colored grapes, round and filled with pus.

His previously fair skin was not red, but charred black. In some of the more grievously injured areas, his stomach and forearms had even started to carbonize and harden.

He gritted his teeth against the pain, and quietly but quickly moved forward.

A guardpost soon appeared in front of him. It was a dent in the wall, with a small bed, a few large wooden crates and barrels, and a few half-melted candles burning on top of those barrels. This type of candle lamp was created by putting candles in a glass bottle. The dim yellow light shone through the blurry glass, making it seem even dimmer.

Going past the guardpost, and after progressing for a certain distance, he somehow entered a large empty space. It was as big as a football field, and he could vaguely hear the sound of flowing water.

Barroom!!

It was yet another dull sound, as though something exploded.

Garen knew that this was Goth's battle with the leader here after his explosion.

He considered his surroundings, and vaguely felt as though this was no longer part of the underground base. It was obviously an underground cave.

He had been following the previous path back this whole time, but despite it being the same path, this time he reached not the exit, but such a cave as this.

Garen slowly moved to the other end, following the walls of the cave. There were large rocks arranged close to each other on the ground, and water flowed through the cracks to make the splashing sound.

He advanced for a while, feeling his lungs struggle more and more for breath. The more he moved, the faster his blood and chi flowed, and the more the burns on his body hurt.

He pushed himself for a while, working up a huge sweat. The salt-tinged sweat flowed past his burned skin, stinging so much he couldn't help but groan.

"Who!?"

Suddenly, a wary voice came from the other entrance stretching out from the cave ahead.

A tall and thin figure walked out from the entrance, leaping from one large rock to another as he entered the cave.

His gaze swept about the surroundings, on high alert.

"Come out! I already saw you. Hehe, did you think I wouldn't discover you hiding behind the rocks?" The man laughed coldly.

He waited for a pause, but there were still no movements. Only then did he relax, and slowly ran towards the entrance into the underground base.

By then, Garen had already quietly moved to a spot by the wall on the opposite of the cave. He found a gap behind a large rock and sat down.

Right now, his whole body was scalded and his blood qi was a mess. It practically had to be adjusted and activated again from the start after being shattered apart. The Divine Statue Technique had extremely

strong healing powers, and was continuously cleaning up the heat toxins in his organs and on the surface of his skin.

But even so, he was basically partially paralyzed now, and couldn't move at all. His physical qualities had dropped drastically, and he was being haunted by powerful Totem Light, so he temporarily couldn't heal.

This was a special type of fire, that seemed to have some polluting properties. It completely polluted and destroyed most of the Garen's cells that had been scalded in the high heat within an instant. This pollution also contained heat toxins, infiltrating his organs and notoriously hard to deal with. Plus, it was constantly worsening.

If it was a regular person, they would have probably breathed their last as soon as the flames exploded, killed instantly by this polluting power.

"I need to increase recovery speed!"

Garen glanced at the Attribute Pane at the bottom of his vision. He clenched his teeth, and added a potential point to his Vitality attribute, that hadn't healed completely yet.

His Vitality instantly rose from 2.5 to 2.76, the highest point his body achieved in the previous life.

Exactly as the value changed, an ice cold current flowed out of his brain into every other part of his body. His organs, his skin, his bones, anywhere that was hurt were all soaked into that current.

In that moment, cold and heat weaved together, creating a pain several times more intense that shot into Garen's brain. It was followed by waves of extreme itchiness. Every inch of his skin that was burned began to itch mysteriously.

He wanted to scratch, but he kept himself in check. He didn't want to move, and couldn't move. His whole body went limp, his back leaning closely on the stone wall to prevent himself from falling.

The polluting power of the Totem Light that invaded his body kept crossing swords with the cool current from his special power, mixing vigorously inside Garen and making him sweat waterfalls. His sweat dripped onto the scalded wounds, bringing a fresh wave of even more intense pain.

Pain and itchiness wove together. Garen was completely and totally stiff, the blisters scalded onto his body popping one by one. The pale red pus drenched his nearly charcoaled clothes, emitting an unbearable stench.

Chapter 276: Injury 2

Right now, he had practically no resistance at all to anything. He didn't know how long the conflict would last, and the intense pain inside his body made him unable to even think clearly. He clenched his teeth and forced himself not to make any sound.

At first he could force himself to move at high speed, but to think that after activating his regeneration skill, it backfired instead and resulted in his whole body going stiff, rendering him immobile. If he knew that earlier, he wouldn't have activated his regeneration skill here!

Now any totem user, or even a non-totem user, any normal person who was just a little stronger than average, would be able to easily end him.

Listening as the steps slowly moved away, Garen, however, heaved a sigh of relief. Thank goodness that guy just now had left already.

Splloosh!

Suddenly he heard the sound of something heavy dropping into the water beside him.

Garen's whole body stiffened.

He tried his hardest to turn his head, looking at the totem he had kept in his pocket. It had actually fallen out, sliding into the water beyond an edge nearby.

His clothes had been burnt away by the flames, and his front had been more or less carbonized. A large hole had been burned into the side pocket, and that was how the totem fell out.

"Who!!"

A man's voice abruptly stopped.

The voice sounded rather familiar, actually.

Garen's heart skipped a beat, and then he suddenly remembered, it was that Valerie's voice.

"What's he doing here!?" He resisted the pain and tried to analyze the situation, but the pain came in waves, making him unable to concentrate.

Valerie carefully glanced around the whole cave, there seemed to be some movement amidst the splashing of the water just now. He was slightly uncertain.

It wasn't easy for him to escape that damned base. Thank goodness for Goth's explosion, which blocked the totem users on the chase. The two sides were now embroiled in battle.

Upon discovering what this situation in this hideout, Valerie connected all the scenes and decorations he had seen along the way, thinking he had seen something similar in his teacher's notes.

After thinking about it carefully, he suddenly remembered, this was very likely the secret base of some Phantom Light totem users.

After Goth started fighting the enemy leader, the others were in shock but all Valerie could think of wasn't how amazing Goth's abilities were, but what treasures might be hidden in this base!

The main powers were being distracted by Goth, so the back must be even more empty and unguarded.

While everyone was distracted, he quietly left from behind, ducking into another branch in the tunnel, attempting to go around behind the totem users.

After proceeding quickly down this tunnel for some time, he realized he was right when no one stopped him. Ecstatic, he increased his speed, and soon entered this cave.

But there seemed to be someone here.

Valerie's heart sank.

He was worried there would be someone here! If he were to be discovered and the alarm raised, they would come from both sides, and he would be immediately surrounded. When that happened, he would be dead before he even knew what was happening.

The voice seemed to come from over there.

Valerie's gaze was aimed at the direction where the sound came from, and his feet moved over there quietly. At the same time, he flipped his hand, and a blue bird flew out, flying towards that place.

"Pierce!!"

He steeled his heart, and the Bluebird became a sharp blue arrow, piercing towards the rock where the sound came from with a hiss.

Hiss!

The Bluebird directly pierced through the stone, emerging from the back, and making a few circles around it. Just like a steel nail going through tofu, it was effortless.

"Nobody?"

He frowned, could it be a fish?

Somewhat hesitantly, he called back the Bluebird, turned, and left.

Garen slowly emerged from the water beneath the stone cracks. In his urgency just now, he had ducked into the water. That was the only way he could avoid the Bluebird's attack, otherwise that pierce would have made a hole through his chest.

Putting aside his condition now, even at his peak, he would not dare to go directly against a totem user's attack.

Phew... Garen released a long breath. The piercing cold stream water soaked his body, and mixed even more with the two other stimuli in his body. His condition right now was unprecedentedly troublesome.

He used both his hands and legs to climb out of the water, lying on his back on top of the stone and panting deeply.

"So it was you... Garen?"

Valerie's voice suddenly came from above.

Garen jolted slightly, and turned his head with difficulty.

Garen didn't know when he got there, but Valerie was already standing on the stone that had been pierced through, a hint of amusement on his face.

"Not bad... It's actually just as I thought." Valerie's gaze fell on the hole in Garen's pocket, where the silver glow of a totem was peeking out.

Seeing that it was an inactivated totem, his gaze instantly became passionate.

"You came out from inside too, didn't you? A punk who doesn't even have a core totem, could actually bring out so many totems from inside? Tsk-tsk... it sure makes me envious." Valerie licked his lips.

Garen's heart sank. Judging from his actions just now, he could tell that this Valerie fellow was an extraordinarily cunning character.

"Hehe... did you think... I could escape from there... without some tricks up my sleeve...?" Garen smiled with difficulty. It was just that his appearance, covered with boils, was rather terrifying.

That was what Valerie was worried about. Since his attack just now didn't hit, he was starting to feel doubt.

And now, seeing that Garen wasn't dead despite looking like this, and could even smile, he was starting to feel the hairs rise on his skin.

"You're already like this, I'll just send you out for treatment." He acted as though coming over to help Garen up, but his gaze was unreadable.

Suddenly he froze, seeing the round object protruding from under Garen's charred-black clothes.

"If you come here, we'll all die together!" Garen grinned horrifically. "I still have a totem bomb here. Come over if you don't want to die."

"Listen to what you're saying. We're teammates, you know, why would I possibly hurt you!?" Valerie's gaze went a full circle, and suddenly he was all smiles. "But are you sure you don't need me to help you? Look at how serious your injuries are..."

"You don't need to worry about that." Garen tried to withstand the pain, looking at how Valerie still stood there and refused to leave, it was obvious that he was plotting something. "You're still not gonna leave?"

Valerie chuckled, but didn't say anything, his greedy gaze fixed on the totem peeping out of Garen's pocket.

The Bluebird beside him kept flying rounds around him, its intention very clear. It would be easy for him to put some distance between them and let the Bluebird attack Garen from a long distance. At the most, he would just lose one totem.

Seeing this, Garen's eyes shone with despair.

He clenched his teeth, his whole body shaking, his chest rising and falling fast.

"Fine, fine, fine!! I'll give you the totem!" Furious, Garen managed to bring out the bat totem, the poisonous wasp totem, and a few beetle totems. Wrapping them up in the remains of his clothes, he tossed them over.

Smack.

Valerie controlled the Bluebird to grab the package of totems in its beak, and bringing them over for him to check. The smile on his face grew even deeper.

"Are you really sure you don't need me to help?"

"Scram!!" Garen's eyes turned red, panting as he roared.

Boom!!

There was yet another explosion. A large tremor shook even the cave ceiling.

Both of their expression's changed.

Valerie glanced at Garen, and knew that he wouldn't have to get away if he didn't leave now. He clenched his teeth, turned around, and strode towards the entrance into the hideout.

Hiss!

A flash of blue pierced Garen's body mercilessly, going right through his right arm while he could only move slowly.

Garen cried out loudly, and fell into the water. In an instant, there was no trace left of him.

Valerie was somewhat confused. Although the Bluebird did seem to find its target, it hadn't seemed to hit the vitals.

"With such serious injuries and heavy blood loss, he should be dead for sure."

His expression had a hint of cruelty.

"If you have to blame someone, blame yourself for bumping into me."

He ducked into the tunnel, the Bluebird flowing closely behind him as they disappeared into the darkness.

Inside the hideout,

The skinhead totem user and a white-haired totem user were riding on two black male lions, advancing rapidly down the tunnel. Many black bats squawked around their heads, following behind them.

The skinhead was holding up a round crystal mirror, with a bright red dot blinking on it. He would occasionally glance down at the red dot on the mirror, a sardonic smile on his face.

"Did you think our Obscuro's totems were that easy to acquire? You idiot. To think you could resist so well, you're not dead despite taking two hits."

The white-haired man beside advanced in tandem with him.

"Is that side not settled yet? Why is Debicci stalling so long even for a small fry like that?"

"I don't know, he probably wants to play. That guy loves nothing more than to torture his opponent. The more stubborn the opponent, the more excited he gets." The skinhead licked his lips and laughed. Suddenly he looked at the round mirror in his hand, surprised.

"What's the matter? This guy didn't run out, but dared to return?!"

"What?" The white-haired man looked over from the side, and saw that the little red dot on the round mirror was actually running towards them.

"Does this guy think that our Obscuro Society is a free treasure vault?" The skinhead was getting slightly angry.

"Maybe he thinks we haven't discovered him? But this kid definitely wouldn't know that we installed tags on all our totems. Of all things, to think he dared to take an inactivated totem..." The white-haired man couldn't help but chuckle. "This kid's pretty quick, we can't let him escape now. Send more people to block the exit."

"Leave it to me." The skinhead grinned. "I missed once, but I won't miss again. This time, he's truly pissed me off!" He revealed his creepy white teeth.

The two of them dashed ahead and turned the corner, then stopped abruptly.

A tall and thin man was standing in the opposite tunnel, a bluebird perched on his shoulder. It was Valerie.

Valerie stopped dead in his tracks, staring blankly at the two totem users, the skinhead and the white-haired man.

"Fuck...!!!"

He was instantly covered in cold sweat, his whole body freezing cold to the bone.

"This was... this was the back tunnel...? How??"

"Hehe, kid, did you think I wouldn't recognize you after you changed your appearance?" The skinhead's expression was vicious. "After stealing our stuff, you dare to come again for seconds?"

Valerie stumbled two steps back, terror making his whole body tremble.

He could feel the horror of the two men facing him. The bats flying in circles over their heads were actually all Form 2 totems, and there were six of them!

Besides, there were the black lions they rode on, the saliva dripping from the lions' mouths actually corroding many large holes in the ground.

"Finish him!!" The skinhead pointed at Valerie, and the bats above his head instantly pounced over madly.

"No!!!!!"

Valerie's scream kept on echoing through the tunnels, going very, very far.

Just then, he suddenly remembered Garen's expression back then. That looked like fury, but it seemed to hide a trace of faint mocking.

It was only then that he realized just how brutal that man called Garen secretly was inside. This was all his own fault!

Chapter 277: Empower 1

Wishh.

Garen's head popped over the water surface

He shook his head, allowing the ice-cold water flow through his face down his cheeks, his right arm holding the wound on his left arm tightly. He shivered as he looked at the direction where Valerie left

He suddenly recalled, as he was in the totem storage chamber, his heart felt uneasy as he felt that as though Baldy was observing him in real time. That he will kill Garen when he leaves.

As he had guessed, Garen felt a lot better after he dumped all the totems to Valerie.

As his secret technique was trained to the pinnacle, his five senses have been honed to react to imminently dangerous situations. This was an effect of his innate extreme agility. It is also an ability that the Luminarists would never achieve, as this would require the senses of the body to be extremely sharp.

Even though the secret arts are not as powerful as a totem, it does have many benefits that the totems do not possess.

"Not running after taking the things, yet you still ran in to take more advantage, it would be baffling if you don't die." Garen sarcastically said as he got out of the water. Without stopping, barely being able to get up, he ran towards the tunnel that would lead him out.

The aura of the ability almost finally mitigated the poisonous flame from the totem's power. His body had also started recovering, but the ability's aura had also proportionately been exhausted. Recovery became extremely sluggish.

Garen looked at the attributes beneath his vision.

The Potential points used to kill the Totem used were already been at 16 points, now it fell yet another point, becoming 15 points again.

At a critical time like this, if he were to depend only on himself to recover, it would require at least a week's time. The injury this time was worse than the wounds received from Sylphalan in the previous world.

His body is a mess, internally and externally, his Qi was also unstable at a time like this.

He clenched his teeth and looked at the Body pane.

The potential point nudged, but it did not add onto the Body section.

He shook his head in disappointment. Enduring the pain inflicted by the wounds, he walked out of the cave, going into the tunnel leading to outside.

Suddenly he heard a vague scream of terror. As he paid attention, it was indeed Valarie's voice.

Garen stopped for a while and smirked.

"This Idiot."

He had to leave as soon as possible, after the explosion at Goth's side, who knows how long he had before the next kinetic furnace would explode. If one decided to stay, it would not matter that he were a totem user, when a huge explosion occurs, and he'd be buried deep underground, gravely injured, if not dead.

The kinetic furnace was no ordinary thing, it was specifically used to refine a special silver ingot used in the forging totems.

The reason Obscuro Society was so strong \was because they owned too many cutting edge techniques

Among them were totem raw materials, the core silver ingot, which was much stronger than the rest.

Garen held the red, round crystal sphere in his arms, and was sure that it was something valuable, even though he had no idea what it was. However, for it to be so heavily guarded, it had to be valuable.

He had a hunch that he had picked up treasure.

Enduring the pain, Garen picked up his pace and rushed out towards the exit.

Even though he was covered in injuries, he had to find a way to rendezvous with Goth and the rest. As to how he got injured, he did not plan to hide it.

As he walked along the tunnel, what he had originally already possessed had all been robbed by Valeria. This issue could be pushed to Valerie completely.

Soon, the light that shined from beyond the exit was visible. Even though the tunnel was not guarded by anyone, nor was it within the area of the lair, but Garen felt that it was best to get out of the underground and onto the surface.

He rushed out of the cave and he staggered onto the plains for a while.

As the sun shined upon him, the boils on his body burst, which invited another wave of intense pain.

He looked up to the sun, and the sun rays blinded him. His vision became blurry for a moment.

"I can't take it anymore; the potential points have been used up... If I did not have the potential points to enhance my body in the moment for recovery, I would probably be finished by now. " On retrospect, he picked up his pace and ran towards the shade of a tree, sitting down on the grass, his back against the tree trunk, panting for air.

This shade was facing directly towards the exit of the cave. From the exit to Garen's location was a trail of yellow puss forming a line, emitting a gross smell under the sunlight.

Garen quietly sat under the shade, trying hard not to let himself faint.

But his consciousness was being attacked by the waves of intense pain, his vision still blurry.

"What a huge loss!" He was angry inside. In the realm of secret techniques, I was unbeatable, even the final direct clash with Sylphalan only ended in a tie.

But when he is here, he's been wounded all over by something as ridiculous as totem's power. Secret techniques have close to no power to resist.

"I have to find a way to fight against the polluting nature of a totem's power. The reason the totem's power is this strong, is primarily due to its polluting nature. Aside from that, a totems' damage and power are not too different from a normal situation.

Garen tried hard to stay conscious

He'd rather move to the other side of the tree; now with his back facing the cave exit, he could hide himself.

A breeze blew, rustling the leaves in its path. An oval-shaped leaf fell and touched Garen's body; causing immense pain on top of what he was already experiencing now.

He slowly took out the crystal ball, resting it on his palm

As he focused his vision on the top, the crystal ball emitted a dim red light for a while. A few rows of words showed on the ball.

"Thank you for using the Enpaler Derivator, please select your operating language."

Beneath it are rows upon rows of different languages; Canbria Language; Kovitan Language, Ender Language....

Canbria, Kovitan, Ender, are the three strongest empires among the hundreds of kingdoms within the East Continent, of which Canbria and Kovitan allied themselves to fight against a superempire in the West Continent. Although Ender is considered a strong country, its sphere of influence was significantly worse than the two before it, furthermore, it is a vassal of the Kovitan empire, while being much stronger than other countries. But due to its small size, it can only be a strong country; not a big country.

Garen only recognized these three languages, the rest of the countries seemed foreign to him. From top to bottom just seemed like a bundle of unknown words.

Garen's thoughts sidetracked, and went back into focus onto the crystal ball

"Is this a touch interface?"

His index finger reached out, clicked onto "Kovitan Language" shown on the crystal ball.

The words disappeared, and reappeared with a simple interface

"Functional introduction: You are now using the General-Level specialized Derivator, dear esteemed General, please input your full name via voice, the derivator will use your voice pattern as an encryption."

"General-Level?"

Garen's heart skipped a beat, he indeed found a treasure.

"Garen" He tried to calm his voice as he answered.

"Sir Garen, below are the functions of the derivator.

Function 1: This derivator will provide up to 10 totem control systems, you can use the derivator to control up to any 10 Silver totems, and cause no toll on the body.

Function 2: The derivator controls the totem's nature, but only for empowering totems. The derivator is able to use a living creature's core to be converted into a semi-living totem's ability. Cannot control pure Silver totems. Please proceed with caution.

Silver totem: Using a living creature's core to be converted into a controllable empowered creature totem. Be aware, the Silver totem itself will not be guided or controlled during evolution, it is completely dependent on the influence of the creature's genes. Please choose the creatures to be empowered wisely. – functionality abnormal, please proceed to the fourth Obscuro maintenance center for a checkup.

Garen meticulously rearranged the messages shown on the crystal ball, using the up-down swipe motion of his fingers, he could browse through the content of the crystal ball, it is almost as convenient as an electronic touchscreen.

"This thing is indeed extraordinary..." Garen looked at the functions' introduction, he suddenly understood something. "to be able to research a way to turn living creatures into semi-totems, Obscuro Society is indeed strong. No wonder, at the later point of the war, they dared to pick a war against the entire world., the reason behind it was this. One of these objects could control 10 totems, and those are additional totems that do not burden the user at all. Not accounting the user's own core totem, one person can control more than ten totems, if these totems are form 2, or form 3 ultimate form..." Garen felt his body numbing as these thoughts run through his mind,

That is practically a single-man mechanized army, one totem user fighting against a Mech user.

He looked upon the crystal ball, he suddenly thought, everything on Earth had a barcode. He wondered if there is a barcode on this.

"Show derivator code" He tried using the voice enquiry function.

The crystal ball indeed showed a tiny row of numbers

‘Code: 0032gcr, your derivator is the 32nd piece in East Continent, There are a total of 10 derivators placed in the Kovitan Empire, please exercise caution regarding the functions.

Garen was shocked, there were actually ten of these in Koviten.

Keeping the crystal ball away, his heart had a brief idea. The derivator was a futuristic invention from the Obscuro Society, being able to additionally control the remaining totems, even though it would have been converted from living creatures. They were probably not as strong as real totems, but this would suffice, as quantity would make up for quality.

However, this thing is not a real totem... what he really needed, was a core totem. After fumbling for so long, having one would indeed increase his own abilities, but there was still no core totem...

He felt slightly helpless. He reached into his pockets and fumbled for a while, all of the totems have been dumped over to Valerie, those things should have a tracking signal, so he couldn't have brought any out.

If he did not correctly guess the encryption correctly and unlocked the ball, he guessed the derivator would have a tracking unit on it, and it would have been stronger too.

"Only core totems can defend me 24 hours continuously without deactivating. Fuuuh..." He exhaled, the breath had a hint of blood's. Suddenly his gaze was laid upon a bush.

"Perhaps I can experiment on the derivator's empowerment ability..."

As he focused onto the bush, there was some rustling sound.

Swiftly, a greyish white rabbit came running out of the bush. This wild rabbit had cute drooping ears. Its butt bounced as it jumped out of the bush, it looked at Garen with curiosity.

"Come here, little one, come to brother." Garen let out a laugh "hehe", as he quietly picked up a piece of pebble

Pap!

The pebble was shot out in an instant, it hit the little rabbit's head, its power is just nice, just enough to knock it out.

Garen endured the pain as he walked towards the rabbit, picked it up, and walked back to the tree.

He took the crystal ball from the pocket in his clothes, and put it next to the rabbit.

"Do you want to empower the raw material?" The ball showed a row of words asked.

"Yes"

Garen replied surely.

Chapter 278: Empower 2

Suddenly, the red crystal ball slowly turned luminescent, just like a metal ball diffusing a ray of silver light.

At the core of the ball, a silver light shot out, and hit the rabbit's head

In about 5 seconds later, the silver light dissipated, the crystal ball returned to its red color.

"Empowerment completed, Creature sample saved. Creature transferring... please do not move." The ball then shot a red light towards Garen

Garen only felt warm and fuzzy on the spot where the light illuminated on him, he felt comfortable.

Under the Skill Pane at the bottom of his sight, suddenly popped up an additional 3D icon of the totem, the icon is the indeed the rabbit who had fainted.

"Iron Rabbit: first form Living Totem, upgradeable. Evolution success rate: 81% (the weaker the original creature, the higher the success rate). Cost on potential points: 200%.

Ability: Knockback, Grass feeding."

Garen looked at the second ability speechlessly.

"grass feeding counts as an ability?" as he glanced the wild rabbit that just recovered, this little guy seemed to be stunned, being barely able to get up, shook its ears, then looked at Garen.

It jumped a round, then running to Garen, snuggling up to Garen's legs to rest in a very friendly manner.

"so, this is the half living totem, creature totem, silver totem?" Garen held the rabbit up by its ears, and took a better look at it.

"I could probably evolve it, just to check out how it looks like after."

Finding a new source of potential points, Garen had laxed his usage of potential points.

In the war guild, he continuously took up so many missions, and so long as he had enough strength, he could then sneakily gain some potential points. Otherwise, its completion would have been extremely difficult., even to the point of possibly aborting the missions. Which was the reason why he still had zero potential point gain after so many missions,

He saw his current potential: 1594%.

After so many missions; some that had succeeded some that hadn't, killed 3 form 1 totem users, which allowed him to rush to 94% progress.

"Only by being strong can you earn more potential points... let's try it out."

He started focusing onto the Iron rabbit's icon for three seconds.

The iron rabbit's icon started getting blurry, the description behind the icon have also gone blurry.

Garen puts down the rabbit in his hand onto the grass, quietly observing its changes.

Tsssss...

Suddenly, the rabbit stood upright, its entire body started showing serious signs of expansion and twisting. Its body started bulging with tough muscles.

Woo!!

The rabbit is suddenly howled like a wolf, from the size of a palm, rapidly growing into half a man's height.

Its eyes are blood red, with green veins popping under the skin, protruding its fur up. All of its four limbs grew longer. As it stood on all fours it was as big as a horse.

Chii!

It exhaled loudly from its nose, like the neigh of a horse. Its tongue protruded like a dog gasping for air. It squeezed around Garen in a friendly manner.

Miiii!!~~

This rabbit pampered for a while, then it lifted its head and howled again.

Garen's face twitched as he looked at the rabbit, he then looked at the skill pane, at the clear new totem icon.

"Howling Wererabbit, second evolutionary form of Iron Rabbit, second form creature totem. Can be evolved, evolution success rate at 54%. Potential point use: 300%.

Abilities: Exploding kick, plant extermination (extremely able to eat)."

Looking at this ability, Garen wanted to laugh, but was unable to due to the pain on his body.

The Iron Rabbit suddenly turned into a creature that's half a man's height, dog-like, wolf-like, and even more like a horse. Looking like a wolf in a rabbit's skin.

However, during the evolution on the howling wereabbit, Garen realized that the totem's light in his body is now much thicker. A layer of glass-like transparent totem's light had been naturally covering his entire body.

"Luckily, totem's light is still effective." Garen extended his arm to feel the totem's light on his body, he nodded in satisfaction forcibly.

He had a thought, then the howling wereabbit sprinted towards the forest in a distance, quickly entering the forest.

Boom!!

There was a sudden quake in the forest, Garen was caught off guard and almost fell.

A huge shockwave emanated along the ground, much like an earthquake. He could vaguely feel, as if there was something exploding from beneath the ground.

Garen immediately turned back and looked at the direction of the cave exit.

There was a mix of hurried footsteps, fast approaching, soon three silhouettes came rushing out from the cave. It was Jessica, Andy and Goth. The trio were covered in wounds; Jessica's left cheek had a long

gash, making her look scary as she ran. Andy's left arm was twisted and fractured, his forehead is full of sweat, but he bit his lips and endured it.

Goth was the last to come out, his face paled. He was even stumbling as he walked, sometimes he needing Jessica's support to move forward.

As the trio walked out, they saw Garen, who was standing under the shade

"Garen! Let's go!" Andy shouted in a rushed tone.

Garen did not hesitate, followed up to the trio, running in the opposite directions from the entrance, showing no signs of stopping.

Before exceeding 100 meters, it suddenly felt like the surrounding grass had all turned white. A strong light ray was shot from behind.

The three turned back as they were running.

At the entrance of the tunnel, and its surroundings within a 50-meter radius, was engulfed in a pillar of light shot from the ground, shooting up to the sky.

A deafening ring was heard, severely vibrating the trio's eardrums. The surface of the ground had also been vibrating severely due to the vibrations. The soles of their feet were starting to numb.

The white light pillar had a diameter of several tens of meters, piercing the group, tearing the sky, illuminating everything around it in a bright white ray,

The soil, boulders, trees, creatures, all had disintegrated in the white light, as though it was completely broken down.

The trio continued continued running for several hundred meters, only then did they dare slow down, and slowly come to a halt.

For a while, they looked at the light pillar piercing the sky, and found themselves speechless. Only feelings of shock and dumbfounded-ness were interlaced, not knowing what to say.

Goth sat on a patch of yellow-green grassland, pressing his hand against his chest as he gazed blankly at the direction of the white pillar. His thoughts were unknown.

Andy patted Garen's shoulders, placed his backpack and sat down. He also seemed not to be in the mood to talk.

Garen's whole body was charred black. A set of torn clothes were all that remained on him. He took out a set of clothes from Andy's backpack and put it on.

"What happened to you guys? How did you guys become like this?" he asked in a low tone.

"That wasn't a bandit's lair at all. It is a totem user's base!" Andy replied in a low-spirited tone, "we ran into the totem users inside, then... if it weren't for Goth, I'm afraid nobody would have survived."

Jessica nodded silently at the side, looking at Goth, his eyes seemed to be complicated by something.

Garen realized this, and understood that something must have happened between this trio that is hard to explain, there's finally some development between Jessica and Goth.

"What bout you? How did you turn out this way? It's as though you were burnt by fire." Andy looked at Garen.

The light pillar then dimmed, slowly become thinner, and then completely extinguished. The golden sun rays shone once again, covering the white light that engulfed the sky and earth.

At the location where the the white light was, a crater of several tens of meters was left behind. It was pitch black, with green smoke around the edges.

Garen looked at the crater, and exhaled in relief. He could feel that the howling wereabbit was fine, obviously it had also run to safety. He suddenly felt that the wererabbit had an urge to eat. It actually got hungry, letting it feed on grass in its surrounding, while keeping itself in hiding. Only Garen got back into focus, and answered Andy's question.

"I was hit by a fireball casted by a totem user... I don't know what flame that was, but thankfully the temperature wasn't high, otherwise I would have been dead..." Garen forced a laugh.

"I'm guessing it's that black lion's fireballs, it can spew two kinds of fireballs; a red one, which he could shoot as many as it wished, and a green one which had a long interval between attacks. Its destructive power is much greater, and has some corrosive effect." Andy explained, "Goth withstood about a hundred of those."

Garen was shocked and looked at Goth, who was sitting on the ground.

This young man, who is wearing a red bib, had a sad looking face as he sat on the ground. His pose had a seductive, sexy vibe, as he crossed his legs, showing a slender, beautiful curve.

Ugh...

Garen and Andy turned away, trying hard to resist the urge to puke.

"Goth, can you close your legs and slant them... you're not Jessica, thanks." Garen can't help but to say.

"But my legs are injured." Goth lifted his head with puppy eyes.

"Even if you're injured, don't put up this gross pose!" Andy choked Goth's neck and shook it.

"I'm warning you! Don't choke me! I hate people choking me the most!" Goth shouted as he struggled.

"Like I care! Argh!! Fuck! Don't grab me **!! You bitch! Grab me!! Grab me!!"

The two rolling into a lump, Jessica stood on the side, red faced, turning her head away from them.

Garen squatted, gazing blankly at the direction of the light pillar

"What was that, just now?"

"Kinetic furnace, it is something created by an organization called the Obscuro Society."

Jessica answered quietly.

"Goth finally exploded the furnace, then everything, everything exploded."

Garen quieted for a while, and then asked.

"What happened to Goth's body?:

"His talent erupted, Black Continental Bird could suddenly move.... And transformed into a huge bird!" Jessica talked as she recalled, "then... then... he stood in front of us..." She did not continue speaking, but she looked at Goth who was brawling, her lips revealed a hint of gentleness.

"Perhaps all of us were wrong." Garen also looked at Goth. "He is not some sort of garbage, but a real genius."

"You have also discovered my uniqueness, hahaha." Goth happily laughed, "Do not idolize me too much! I'm born to be the legendary hero! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

This brat's bib strap fell off, with one hand on his pants, another pointing towards the sky with a finger.

On the ground was Andy who was howling in pain from the fractured arm.

Four of them had their head lifted towards the sky.

A few blue birds flew past quickly, slapping their wings, into the clouds and against the strong wind.

On each blue bird's feet, was a white paper scroll tied onto it. On one of the scrolls, had a little bit of blood stain on it.

Chapter 279: Reward 1

The Black Panther's small squad of four had returned to Iron Tank City. Under the help of the close connection to the castle border guards belonging to Andy's father, all of them were admitted to the hospital under the wing of Chialunar Academy.

This was the best hospital in the entire Iron Tank City, and had the best doctors.

In the ward.

Garen laid down on the bed, feeling bored.

Up, down, left, right, the floor, everything was white. On the bedside counter was a vase filled with lilies, and among them, some petals had slightly withered.

On the right side of the bed was a metal rack, on top of which was a bottle of medicated drip. The medicine flowed into Garen's vein drop by drop through a thin pipe.

He could clearly feel the cold medicine seeping in through his wrist. The room was pin-drop silent, only some echoing footsteps could be heard from the corridor outside the ward.

Garen was lying alone in the middle of the ward bed. From his angle tilting his head and looking out, he could still see the trees outside that had blossomed into many white flowers. The noon sunlight beamed down, through the leaves, forming mottled golden geometries, rustling as the wind blew.

Gacha.

The door was opened slowly, a chubby nurse dressed in white walked in. She was pushing a medicinal cart, and when she reached the side of the bed, she tapped the medication that was finishing soon, taking it down and changing it with a fresh bottle of drip.

"Pretty good body." This middle-aged lady looked at Garen, "such a large surface burn could heal this quickly."

"I have had a good body since young." Garen laughed. "Right, may I know how are the few friends that were admitted together with me?"

"I don't know." The nurse simply answered. "I am not in charge of them, you can try asking the doctor."

"Then it's fine, I will rest a little bit more and then try looking for them." Garen said, and remained silent thereafter.

The nurse left immediately after changing the drips, closing the door as she left.

Garen turned on his side, his body having felt stiff from the inactivity and staying in bed all day.

Soon, the door squeaked once again, and a fairly young, 14 or 15-year-old girl walked in. She was also wearing a nurse's uniform, and on her hands was a large plate, which had a lot of white lunch boxes on it.

"Lunch is here, sorry to keep you waiting."

The girl placed the plate on the bedside counter, took one lunchbox from the plate and placed it on the countertop.

"The menu for lunch is carrot and potato.... Potato stewed with pork skin, white bread..... unlimited. Please enjoy your meal."

The girl looked pure. As you looked at her you'd notice some naivety; she dared not make eye contact with Garen, who was on the bed, and she stuttered some as she spoke.

"May I know your name?" Garen looked at the girl funnily, suddenly thinking of Ying Er, his younger sister in the previous world. His eyes showed gentleness. "Can you do me a favor?"

"My... My name is Wei Xi. What do you need?" The girl seemed more comfortable, but she still dare not look at Garen.

Wei Xi is a student who worked at the hospital, she had just entered the Chialunar Academy this year, the best medical academy in the city. Although it was renowned in the suburbs only, it was considered to be a good place to be already.

Unexpectedly, among all the nurses that were interning, she's the only one who was chosen to the advanced care area due to her nice appearance. Especially to care for rich patients.

Inside the advanced care area, if it weren't nurses with a lot of experience, would be nurses like this; who had very attractive appearances and bodies. To the patients here, the experienced nurses are in charge of practical tasks, while attractive nurses served to soothe the heart and emotions.

Before Wei Xi came, she already heard from others that the patients here are either rich or noblemen; she could easily bump into anyone and meet someone with an immense background.

As she thought of this, she cannot help but feel anxious.

Would he request for something inappropriate from me?

Even though she was thinking that way, but the helpless romantic teen in her couldn't help but to fantasize that perhaps she could meet a nobleman's young master. Handsome, charismatic, gentle, compassionate, or he may just like someone like her type, who knows.

At times where she was in a tight spot, he would stand out, shielding her with a tall stature, beating some villains from somewhere, then turned back to gently lift her chin...

The girl was stunned, her face blushing red, occasionally smiling like an idiot.

"Could you help me check on the situation in room 235 and 257? My friends are staying in those wards."

Garen speechlessly sat there as the girl smiled like an idiot, he lightly used his finger to push the girl's arm.

"Hey, hey, you alright?"

"No... Nothing!" The girl snapped back into focus, "I will immediately check on it for you." Her face blushed red, taking a peek at Garen on his bed, she was shocked and lowered her head again.

"Am I that scary?" Garen picked up the lunchbox, he touched his face with confusion.

Lunch was great, the meat was stewed tender and the soup was very thick, very fragrant.

After hurriedly finishing the lunch, he placed the lunchbox aside.

Garen wiped his mouth, lying against the bedframe, both his arms thickly rolled by rounds upon rounds of bandages, much like a white baseball bat. Only his fingers could move freely

"Was I that scary?"

He was confused, so he picked up a small mirror from a drawer in the bedside countertop, to take a good look at himself.

Looking into the mirror, was a bald head, no hair, no brows, no beard, nothing.

What was a handsome, good-looking appearance, had indeed become appalling under these transformations.

Garen touched his smooth bald head. His hair had been shaved off during the treatment; beard and brows as well. As the flame's high temperature had burnt off the follicles, rather than a black patch stuck onto the face, they might as well have just shaven it all off.

He touched his own brows, he felt like an alien in an Earthling movie., except he had white skin and facial features.

Not having any eyebrows did make him look slightly fierce. No wonder that little girl would be so afraid.

Over ten minutes later, the girl called Wei Xi knocked on the door and came in again.

"Sir, the two patients in those wards are fine, their situation is under control. The sir called Andy asked you not to worry."

The little girl stood by the door, fearing to approach.

"Do me another favor, I will appreciate it." Garen tries to let himself smile more warmly, so that he doesn't scare this little kid. "I am feeling bored; can you grab me some of the latest Global Weeklies?"

"Global Weeklies? Su.... Sure!" Wei Xi, hurriedly agreed. "There's some in the reading room, I will take it for you immediately."

There were actually free magazines inside the ward, but not the latest ones

Garen didn't have to wait too long before Wei Xi came back with a stack of newspapers, passing it to him.

"Here's your newspaper."

This little girl's smooth brown hair was tied in a ponytail, her pubescent figure had become apparent, as she breathed heavily from all the running to and fro Garen's bedside. She carried the mild, refreshing fragrance of a teen.

Garen's warm tone seemed to have worked, Wei Xi are also not as afraid as before, her guts seemed have grown too.

"Anything else that you would like?"

That's it for now, thank you, cute little one." Garen smiled as he flipped the newspaper.

As he flipped, his first glance landed on a surprising headline.

"Ender's Ambassador: Orlando's Diplomat killed."

He continued reading

"Orlando faced a large-scale terrorist attack on the 15th this month; Orlando's royal guards were defeated in a night, the Royal Family held hostage. This terrorist organization made a public announcement, claiming to be an organization called the Obscuro Society.

During this assault, Diplomat Quelia, who was in talks with the Prince Edinberg of the royal family, was killed.

The Ender Kingdom has issued an emergency press release. The death of Diplomat Quelia is a direct challenge to the integrity of the Ender Kingdom, which the kingdom will not forgive. At the time of the press release, Ender's third column General Veron has led the Third Military Division towards Orlando, to assist the local royalty in suppressing the terrorists. General Veron had made an announcement before leaving for Orlando, he views the current situation as...."

Garen put down the newspaper, exhaled slightly and did not continue reading.

"So it has begun..."

Even though the newspaper did not do a follow-up coverage, if he hadn't guessed wrongly, what happens next would be General Veron's team being completely annihilated. Three more small empires will continually be engulfed in unrest. Obscuro Society's warring locations will exponentially increase. Heading towards the East Continent's strongest territories; the three strongest empires.

Canbria, Kovitan, Ender; the three empires comprised the strongest alliance in the East Continent, and also served as the RAL's main congregation point of power. The strongest totem users were within the Three Departments of the three empires.

The Three Departments may seem like a tool used to iron out administrative or national issues, but it actually consisted of the Luminarists of the RAL.

He flipped through the Global Weeklies, and in the third publication there was a news piece that grabbed his attention.

"Appearance of horrid creatures assaulting humans in Canbria," Under the title was a piece of black and white photograph. This world already had technology similar to photography technology on earth, the research prowess of the Luminarists may not be any weaker than Earth's scientists.

On the image was a mouse carcass the size of a basin, being held by its tail by a strong man. The man held the mouse on one arm, and showcased the injuries caused by the mouse's bite on the other forearm.

The flesh on the forearm was bitten badly, the flesh looked mushy, completely red.

"Recently, Canbria had many sightings of strange creatures assaulting humans.. These animals have odd shapes and sizes, and are much more violent compared to normal animals. The Canbrian biological researcher, Eddier, believes that this is a rare reversion symptom, where these creatures will sometimes reverse due to an unknown cause, causing gigantification, and became more violent. According to research estimates, the most likely cause of this reversion is likely pollution.

At the time of the writing of this publication, the Canbrian environmental protection agency had launched spot checks on three separate provinces on the pollution index.

Garen realized that the mouse in the image had something shining in its iris. He squinted and suddenly thought of the howling wererabbit that has successfully evolved, having similar scary looking eyes.

He looked up to his surroundings; The girl called Wei Xi had gone out, and closed the doors behind her.

He got up, walked to the doors, hung up the "Do not disturb "sign, quietly locking the chain of the door.

He pulled up the curtains as well, then sitting on the bed. Garen took the clothes hanging on the rack, taking out a red crystal ball. The sphere was only the size of a fist, and looked like a crystal decoration.

Garen took the ball and lay on his bed.

Chapter 280: Reward 2

The crystal ball was held in his hand, and a dim red light was emitted from the ball.

Inside, just like liquid, a row of words appeared.

"Please enter your voice pattern to unlock."

"Garen."

"Unlock successful, Esteemed Sir Garen, your control mold's upper limit is 9. Empowered creatures are set as animals. The controlling rights have been changed."

Beneath it was an automatically generated data form.

"Main totem's light strength: Normal first form. (the current silver totem that was controlled by you will provide the same intensity as a regular totem user's totem's light. Note: this only calculates the Derivator's silver totem's light intensity, it does not factor in your personal totem's light's intensity/ In order to test it, please proceed to Third Obscuro to undergo a defense evaluation.)

(Detailed level analyses were done in comparison to the Obscuro Society's data center, the data center needs to be refreshed once every two years to ensure validity, logic, so that you can accurately determine each totem's positioning.)

Garen understood, that this normal first form, if it was evaluated by Obscuro society, should be rather accurate.

Normal first form, means, among form 1 totem users, the howling wererabbit will provide himself with additional totem light, with its defensive capabilities equivalent to a regular form 1 totems, perhaps there would be slight differences, but it would be generally the same.

"Howling wererabbits are form 2 totems, but it only gave me a form1 totem's light. Looks like it is caused by the rabbit itself. It is too weak. Perhaps I can choose a stronger creature to empower the next time."

He started planning.

"The burden to evolve a silver totem wouldn't be as burdensome as evolving one's own totems, but it needs to feed on excretions. Its actual combat power would also not be comparable to any actual totems." Garen looked closely at the differences between the silver totems and traditional totems.

"A rabbit's silver totem only needs two potential points to evolve into second form, but my neon butterfly needed 5 potential points, and its success rate is scarily low, with only 21%. By right, the neon butterfly should not be that much higher level than the rabbit. So I suppose it is the fundamental difference within the totems itself."

Garen exhaled in relaxation.

"When my body is fully recovered, I will go take a look at the market, see if there are any rare animals that I can buy to be used as silver totems. Since there are already appearances of reversion creatures, after my silver totem evolves, it can be disguised under the reversion phenomenon. There shouldn't be any problem, since Luminarists have already been evolving all kinds of creatures anyway."

Garen remembers that there was a large wild animals market in Iron Tank City, that specialized in selling multiple kinds of animals, either being sold as meat or as pets.

The iron tank was divided into five areas, the five-fan shaped areas formed perfect circle, which formed the entire Iron Tank City's area.

Noble's Area, Mercantile Area, Commoner's Area, Slum area and the largest Iron Tank Area.

The mercantile Area had two pet markets, which specialized in providing different kinds of pets to the merchants and nobles of the Noble's Area. There was also an illegal market within the Slums Area. Some hunters caught their own animals to sell, but that depended largely on luck.

Lastly was the Iron Tank Area, which housed the largest wild animals market. There was also a weekly beast fight show. Garen heard about this from the owner of the grain and oil that he had just gotten to know.

Iron Tank Area was messy; schools, hospitals, government institutions, factories, wholesale markets et cetera, you could virtually get everything in here. The entire Iron Tank Area takes about half the surface area of the city. Inside held the most luxurious dining restaurants to the poorest slums.

Compared to the expensive inactivated totems, these wild animals were much cheaper. Garen could definitely afford them with his current income.

As he set his mind, Garen started to closely research on the derivator on his hand.

This thing was like a touchscreen computer, new interesting functions kept popping up from time to time.

As he studied more about the derivator, Garen accidentally accessed some stored information within the derivator.

This Derivator was used by a General-level, according to the ball. Beneath that was a Field-level, which can control up to 5 silver totems.

Above the General-Level, was the Commander-level, which could control up to 20 silver totems.

He thought about how the imminent war was, how overwhelming the amounts of silver totems would be. Obviously, Field-level derivators were much more common compared to General-level or Commander-level ones. Plus, after the empowerment of the creatures, if the creatures died, it could immediately empower another creature, there were no restrictions on time.

Unlike traditional totems, in which you would need at least a five-year buffer period.

After staying in the hospital for a whole week, Garen was considered to be fully recovered.

The majority of the burns he suffered have healed, leaving behind a large scar, while Andy and Goth were not as fast as he was, needing to stay in the hospital for at least half a month.

Both sides of their family would sometimes come over to visit. Jessica's was not badly injured, but she always came by to take care of both of them. Goth's mother also came a few times, caring for Goth together with Jessica.

Before Garen was discharged, he had gotten along quite well with Goth's mother, as well as Andy's siblings and family.

However, this time, he was primarily standing on the sidelines, as the main force was still Goth and Andy. Comparatively, there were some barriers now.

Garen did not mind, either, so long as he was still in the squad, he will still get Goth's protection. In the future, the mission difficulties that he could execute would also rapidly rise.

Seeing that Garen got discharged earlier, Andy and Goth unanimously wanted Garen to submit the mission to the guild. The mission this time had appearance of a totem user, the grade will definitely rise a few levels.

Luminarist Hiring Guild

In the spacious and quiet hall, Garen stood near the mission submission counter, looking at the young lady employee behind the counter.

Garen took out the Andy's mission medal, and passed it over.

"Panther Group received the reconnaissance mission. Have the investigators for the post mortem team set off for the location? What is the rank of the mission at the moment?"

The female employee received the medal, flipped over the thick note book, She quickly found a record.

"Yes, Panther Group received a reconnaissance mission, to investigate a bandit's hideout, There are three other small squads who received. Due to the abnormal changes to the mission five days ago, the difficulty is now Hard level."

she lifted her head and looked at Garen.

"You are the representative of the Panther Group ?"

"Yes."

The female employee looked at the medal, took the pen and recorded something.

"Alright, follow me, your reward is behind."

Garen walked in through a small door to the side, following the employee into a small room inside.

Inside the room was a huge object, all of them were covered with a black cloth. He was unable to see what was inside

The employee walked as she spoke.

"This time, many missions had increased difficulties, so the rewards were added proportionately by the management. Your mission as well, many good items have been appended."

She took out a checklist, and gave it to Garen.

Garen took it and read. The appended items on top of the existing list did look good indeed.

Among those, were two inactivated White Dragonhawk totems that have attracted Garen's attention.

White Dragonhawk was the strongest totem in Iron Tank City. The market priced it at nine hundred thousand, yet it couldn't be purchased. It is the most ferocious bird totem among the animal types, and also a Grand Duke's family totem. Even outsiders could hardly nurture an evolution to its highest form, but if it could even reach form 2, it will be abnormally strong already.

With feathers as strong as steel, speed as fast as lightning, claws with unparalleled sharpness and immense special ability.

The Grand Duke's family had a form 2 White Dragonhawk, it had a special ability called the Tearing Roar.

Similar to the supersonic attacks of a bat, but much stronger. A normal form 1 totem cannot defend against it at all; this kind of roar was launched down from high above the sky, once reaching the ground, it can break a similarly-leveled form 2 totem user's totem light. The vibration would quake the user until he bled out to death. The power was commonly known among form 2 totem, and an extremely strong one.

This stemmed from its strong foundation.

Totem nurturing, in practice, had uncountable changes, just like the evolution of a creature. By satisfying different requirements, the evolution pathway would also be different. However, based on the foundation of the White Dragonhawk, no matter how the evolution went, it will not be any worse off.

It is one of the best foundational totems.

The White Dragonhawk does not normally appear in the market, this kind of top tier totem is an imitation of an already extinct creature called the Dragonhawk. Only Iron Tank City's ruler the Grand Duke's family has control over the production of the White Dragonhawk.

Now, it is obvious that the two White Dragonhawks were a special rewards from the Grand Duke's family..

Garen's heart got excited.

He's got the ability that can forcibly evolve a totem, and unlike the other totem users, the totem will not self-destruct if the evolution failed.

The failure of evolution via potential points will not harm the totem itself at all, this is clearly described by the symbol on top.

Once he got a totem as strong as a White Dragonhawk, he could then use potential points to force an evolution to form 2, completely unrestrained by the Grand Duke's family's knowledge on its evolutionary pathway.

"This White Dragonhawk totem is given by the Grand Duke's family right?" Garen spoke softly while pointing at them.

"Yes, those who got the White Dragonhawk totem, can spend money at the Duke's manor to purchase some basic nurturing knowledge. There are also some different educational materials, all can be bought at the Duke's manor." The female employee nodded as she answered. "This way please"

The two of them walked through the hall, taking a turn into a quiet wooden corridor, down the corridor and soon reached the entrance of a wooden door.

The employee took out a bunch of keys, looking for a corresponding number.

Garen was prepared to take the rewards, after distributing them, he would go to the wild animals' market to take a look. He should be able to get some interesting creatures to empower.

About the two White Dragonhawks, One of them would definitely go to Goth, but the other one, Garen was thinking if he can exchange something to trade it from Goth.

White Dragonhawk is highly demanded in the market, it could even be used to trade for a basic unit factory. To Garen, no matter if it was a core totem, or a unit factory, they were both indispensable treasures.

Goth's core totem is the Blackfield Bird, it is a totem that's even above the White Dragonhawk, he does not need this totem at all.