

Mystical 291

Chapter 291: Materials 1

The middle aged man behind the counter handed out a roll of yellowed paper.

After receiving it, Garen unrolled the paper and brought it aside to have a long look at it.

" The Iron Tank City Army emergency goods deployment list:

Spear of Agas x 5

Full body armor x 7

Battle horse armor x 7

Military crossbow x 15

Inactivated totems:

Red Dragonhawk x 3

White Dragonhawk x 3

White bear x 5. Brown bear x 5, Black wolf x 5. Snow sculpture x 33. Fanged hound x 33. Black eagle x 10.
Northern snow lion x 1. Cape Verdean Wolf x 15.

Black striped white tiger x 1. Ground drilling rhino x 1, Giant rattlesnake x 1."

Garen straightened out the paper with a few light shakes, and knitted his brows together. He then waited for another man to finish up his business at the counter before heading over again.

"These totems at the top, the last three are new to me. What is the price?"

The middle aged man took a quick glance at him. "Since you are an official member of the guild, we offer a special price for insiders. 1 million per totem. I shall warn you beforehand, the last one was listed separately, which means it does not have a legacy. The absence of a legacy means that it will be incapable of evolving. Although it has a strong foundation, you must bear this in mind."

"Noted." Garen was absolutely clear.

Ground drilling rhino and Giant rattlesnake still had a sliver of hope when it came to evolving, as results of prior research done by other people point towards that, or so he had heard. Only the ways of raising a Black striped white tiger remained a mystery, as no researcher has managed to figure that out. This breed of genetically mutated tigers is extremely ferocious. Although there is only one type, its speed, strength and lethality is comparable to that of a Dragonhawk – minus the possibility of evolution. Various academies have tried, failed, and given up.

Not only that, the remaining numbers are but a few; would have never thought of actually seeing one here.

"How much money do I have left in the treasury?" Garen presented his medal.

It was passed over the counter and inquiries were according to the serial number.

"870,000. You still need a little more. Do you want to accept a few quests?" The middle aged man asked. He currently has a huge pile of unattended quests.

"It's alright, I will come over in a bit. Remember to hold on to it for me." Garen covertly handed over a few one hundred silver sheets. The man quietly accepted it.

"Don't worry, I will keep it for you for two days. Anyways, this is an item that many would not want to purchase, even if they could afford it. Who would want to spend a million on a totem that is incapable of evolving?"

"Thanks, I intend to have it as a secondary totem." Garen took a totem introduction leaflet that was handed to him over the counter and turned away to leave.

He only had a couple of tens of thousands on him at the moment, which was definitely not enough. However, the resources he had stashed up previously would be put in good use.

"This timing is just right, if I would have waited a little more, all the good items could have been used up and taken. Not only that, I still have to fork out another sum to purchase war shackles and war halls."

He decided to obtain the black striped white tiger first, as he was planning to use it as his core totem anyways. The information on the black striped white tiger was fairly brief, Garen found the line describing the black striped white tiger from the information on the totem introduction leaflet.

"Black striped white tiger: A type of basic totem, possesses extreme speed and lethality, its 6 centimeter sharp teeth can easily bite through any known defense a totem has. Originated 600 years ago from a remote academy called Taja Cannes. Power: Tail whip, Puncturing Crunch."

Leaving the guild, Garen boarded a horse carriage, heading straight towards the young grain storehouse that he bought.

Seated on the horse carriage, he looked out the carriage window – 5 out of 10 people on the streets were holding a gourd shaped container, lining up at the rice store, common goods store and bakery to purchase items. Several fruit and vegetable stalls were sold out and closed for the day.

A few wholesale stores that were of a larger scale placed signs that signify a limited stock supply, barely sustaining themselves.

From time to time, ox carts dragging along goods would pass by. The area of Iron Tank City was seemingly vacant of the noblemen and businessmen that were usually clothed luxuriously.

Garen estimated that the items he had stored up prior to this could be sold at a higher price, therefore a total sale of 3 million should not be a problem. Although so, the most cost effective way seemed to be setting aside a portion of basic living expenses while using the rest in exchange for expendable battle items.

If an exchange was done instead, he would be dealing with the guild directly, which means it is likely that he will only need half of his item storage in exchange for the Black striped white tiger. Garen believed that the guild had good taste, and was pretty sure he will be able to recognize the advantage of hoarding rare items for enormous profit.

If only he wasn't in such dire need to evolve his core totem, Garen would have never thought of selling his items off so early.

The other half can be used to feed himself and occasionally purchase other items.

In no time, the horse carriage arrived at the area in Iron Tank where storehouses were specifically built.

Garen came down from the carriage, paid, and headed towards the deepest area on the left.

His storehouse was built at a secluded left corner.

He did not go far before realizing with a startle that something was wrong. Several grey ox carts were continuously dragging along young grains from the deeper part of the area, the cart drivers were servants clothed in grey cloth.

"The man in front, please halt!"

A short distance away a group of armed men on patrol rushed over.

"What are you doing? The area in front is a private property! You are not allowed to trespass." The leader of the group was a man with a mustache, and he was staring at Garen with stern gaze.

"Private property?" Garen's face dropped. From the gaps in between the storehouses he could see the entrance of his storehouse, and ox carts were dragging young grains from inside.

He had completed so many quests, gone through life and death situations with Goth and the others, suffered heavy injuries just to have a small amount savings. The young grains he had purchased is now being towed away from his storehouse by one ox cart after another.

"Whose men are you?!" Garen's face darkened. "This is my storehouse, and the young grains you are towing away happens to be mine!"

Moustache man frowned. "This is the private property of Quartermaster Griffith, if there are any issues please speak to our boss."

Garen's face darkened again, forcefully pushing away one of the men who was blocking him, and walked towards his storehouse in huge strides.

"You stand right there!! Do you hear me!" The moustached man was furious. He chased up to Garen's footsteps and grabbed his shoulders. His hands grabbed nothing but the air though, as Garen's was much faster than he had imagined.

"Take him down!!" Moustache man shouted all of a sudden.

An army of men rushed up, those who had swords bore swords, those who were meant to obstruct his way, did so.

The ground underneath Garen's feet shook, and a shapeless energy immediately threw the men off their feet, and they flew, hitting the ground with intensity.

Nearby, an ox cart moving goods was disturbed. The ox that was pulling the cart let out a series distressed moos, anxious to escape from the place.

The old man sitting in front of the storehouse that was tasked with administration felt things going horribly wrong, and sent out a blue messenger bird. He fell into his seat, face pale, plagued with fear as he stared at Garen.

"I am Quartermaster Griffith's house keeper! You can't touch me! You can't touch me!" He muttered the last phrase repeatedly, the fear seemed to have paralyzed his senses.

"Quartermaster?" Garen narrowed his eyes, a spark of an idea brewing in his heart.

His hand reached out to grab the old man's collar, lifting him towards himself.

"Just because he is a Quartermaster he is allowed to carelessly snatch away someone else's private property? It seems like he got bored of living and wants a taste of death..."

"Master...I have nothing to do with this master!" The old man was sniveling with tears pouring out of his eyes, his whole body was shaking like a leaf, cold sweat plastering the hair near the temples of his face.

Garen hurled him aside carelessly and waited where he was. The blue bird the old man had sent earlier should have reached the Quartermaster, whatever or whoever that is; he should be here any minute now.

Without waiting for long, a black luxury car was driven into the storehouse area, and stopped a short distance away from the storehouse he was at.

Two sizeable men clothed in black military uniforms came down from the car and walked down.

The man who was walking slightly ahead had a nasty expression on his face, with traces of anger caused by humiliation and a slight urgency.

The other man's face was immensely calm. His hands were mindlessly fiddling with a silver pocket watch, while his middle finger was embellished with a black gemstone ring.

" Type 2 totem user?" Garen's gaze locked onto the man holding the pocket watch.

"I am Griffith , who dares to cause trouble here?!"The man who was ahead roared loudly, his eyes quickly fixed on Garen who was standing in front of the storehouse. " It is you I presume? Seems like after a long time of refraining myself, no one in the city knows the name of Griffith anymore."

" Griffith, is it? Who are you to carelessly invade and occupy the private property of citizens?" Garen faced both of them, raised his voice and spoke coldly. "I have previously purchased the young grains here as well as other items, now all of a sudden you own them. Do you not have the intention of giving an explanation?"

"You are the previous owner of this storehouse?" Griffith sneered, "Are you sure you are not mistaken about something? These young grains are items that the other shop owners and I have transported over earlier on – I have a contract with these shop owners as proof. Deeming others' property as your own... from what I see, you are the one invading other people's property!"

While speaking he thrusts out a stack of paperwork that he had obviously prepared, and waved it around at Garen. He had a mischievous look plastered on his face.

Garen frowned. To be honest, this was his biggest fear. Being a lone ranger without a background, to have a business that involved buying and selling as per what he was doing, encountering these types of trickery was what he was most afraid of. After all, the buying and selling business was not supported by the government, and you could only conduct it underground. Once a lack of power is realized by others, it was highly possible that one must absorb the bitter consequences.

The other party he guessed, had done a background check on him, which explained their unscrupulous behavior.

" Alright, now that everything is clear, we should figure out the compensation for injuring my guards. I am known to be ever so generous, all you need to pay is a small amount, and I won't investigate the matter any further." Griffith said with a smile on his face.

He had already known the identity of the man in front of him. If it were not for the fact that he had entered the battle guild and was a member, he would have gotten his bodyguards to capture him.

But it is different now than it was then, for the war guild is the front line of the entire combat team of Iron Tank City. If he were to be caught, the guild will definitely conduct some questioning, and if it were to be blown out of proportion, sensitive issues such as invading one's property was likely to bring about bad consequences, which might bring huge losses to both parties in an immense impact.

Which is why it is important to have a good control of the scale of the issue – to let the other party undergo a small loss while keeping the matter down low at the same time.

"Alright. We will leave the matter as so. As you are a member of the war guild, I will not look into the damage you have caused my soldiers." Griffith said with a smile.

Chapter 292: Materials 2

Garen squinted his eyes slightly, momentarily looking at the person in front of him.

"Fine...Excellent. Griffith, I'll remember this name." It was impossible for him to act now due to the city being under heightened martial law. Anyone who challenged the military during this high tension period may be strongly repressed.

Regardless of reason, attacking an army official would be considered treason. Regardless of sufficient reasoning, the outcome is being hunted down by totem users all over the city. A serious offence might even bring you the wrath of the Governor's Dragon Guard. The Dragon Guard was a squadron with terrifying strength, formed entirely by second form white dragonhawk totem users. Anyone one of them could take down a totem user of the same level.

Garen assessed himself. In his current, the most he could handle was a common second form totem user. Moreover, as he hasn't tested it in battle, extra caution was needed. Although he was confident in his abilities, his confidence was built on the evolved deep swamp croc. As his wildcard, it wasn't to be revealed easily.

Even by revealing it, whether it could deal with enemy second form totem users was a serious question of its own.

In actual fact, silver totems were still not on the level of original totems. Hence, it is very possible that the deep swamp croc would be slightly weaker than original second form totems.

Garen's mind was overwhelmed with thoughts. Without saying a word, he tossed a stack of silver Rumb, then turned to leave the warehouse.

Behind him, Griffith and his men were so pleased that they burst into laughter instantly.

Garen suppressed the discontentment in his heart. If the enemy did not have a second form totem user in their midst, he might have took action.

As long as he did it cleanly, people may not notice anyway. They at most would have thought it would be the doings of the monsters outside of the city.

Griffith grinned and as he was about to reply, he suddenly felt something was off. It was as if he was the only person who heard a sound, while the second form totem users beside him did not feel anything at all.

Griffith's laughter abruptly stopped. He unknowingly felt a faint shudder in his heart. Swiftly, he turned to look in the direction Garen left and he could not even see his shadow although merely a few seconds had passed.

"What's going on?" Mecca, a second form totem user who was beside him asked.

"Didn't you hear the sound?" There was a trace of uneasiness on Griffith's face.

"Sound? What Sound?" Mecca frowned. The few soldiers beside looked at each other, feeling confused as well.

Griffith instantly panicked. For the first time, he secretly regretted finding fault with that guy.

"My heart still feels there is something wrong.." He wondered if he was hallucinating a moment ago.

Feeling unappeased, Garen left the warehouse and headed towards the Mercenary Guild. In both his past life and current life, as a martial artist and a fighter, he was always a ruthless person. Meeting someone as reckless as this yet not being able to annihilate him, he got more and more disgruntled by the minute.

"Patience...Patience...I will get my chance soon.."He knew in his heart that a multitude of monsters will soon be laying siege to the city. In the face of overwhelming disaster, no one would notice the death of one or two quartermasters.

Looking at the progression outside, the large-scale siege would be happening soon.

At this moment, it is imperative that he gathered enough money to obtain the black-striped white tiger.

Once he reached the Mercenary Guild, he entered and sat in the corner of the hall, waiting for a few others to arrive.

He had lunch at the guild, and about 1pm, Andy and his sister entered the guild. With one glance, they noticed the bald Garen sitting in a corner. Both of them, in the usual grey robes, walked directly towards Garen and sat across him.

"Haven't seen you for a few days. What have you been up to? How was the vacation?" Andy took off his robe as he sat in.

"I'm doing okay. Only a minor setback." Garen answered lightly. "At the end of the day, I shouldn't take any chances."

"What happened? Spill it." Jessica murmured, "Maybe my brother can lend you a hand."

"Forget it, I'll handle it myself." Garen grinned. "Let's not talk about these. Thank God you guys are alright. There are hordes of monsters out there. If we didn't just quit, I reckon we would be in big trouble."

At the mention of monsters, Andy and Jessica's countenance sunk.

Andy quietly produced a folded piece of paper from his arms and passed it to Garen.

"What's this?" Garen unfolded the paper. It was a newspaper extract.

The headlines were clearly printed with: Terrorist organization Obscuro Society claims, fighting to create a new, better world.

The details were stated below.

The Obscuro Society claims responsibility for the multiple uprisings. At the same time, they issued an ultimatum to the Royal Alliance.

"This newspaper was from two days before the creatures appeared." Andy whispered, "We can now be sure that the Obscuro Society is the culprit."

Soon, Goth made his entrance. He was wearing a brand new dungarees, looking fresh and energetic with his new crew cut. He sat down beside Garen, took up the pot of coffee and directly poured it into his mouth.

He gulped down the coffee, put the pot down heavily, and burped.

"What should we do now? Let's take a vote!?"

"Chill. Help me guys, lend me some money." Garen mumbled. He initially wanted to borrow from Angel, but borrowing from the few people in front of him would be the same. With his eight hundred and twenty thousand, he only needed a hundred and eighty thousand to obtain the black-striped white tiger. It wasn't much.

"Just say the amount you need. But let me clear, don't mention anything about three hundred thousand." Andy generously waved his hand.

"Lend me a hundred and eighty thousand."

"No problem." Andy frankly replied, "Luckily you did not mention three hundred thousand. That is all that i have."

"Didn't you say that you've finished your money?" Jessica whispered.

"Do I seem like that kind of person?" Andy laughed heartily.

"Jessica, I saw a nice scarf just now and I bought it for you as a gift." Goth took out a piece of folded cloth and passed it to Jessica. By his expression, even a fool could discern his intention.

Jessica's cheeks turned red. She bowed her head sheepishly.

Andy and Garen stood up simultaneously and went to the Mercenary Guild's counter. They withdrew a hundred and eighty million Rumb and packed it in a black pouch. Garen rushed off with the money, planning to obtain the black-striped white tiger as soon as possible. Otherwise, the price might have increased after a while.

After making a few turns in the alleys, he very quickly he arrived at the War Guild. The crowd was sparse, seemingly much quieter than before.

After entering the hall, Garen headed straight towards the counter and handed over the money to the middle-aged man.

"That fast?" The man, who was gobbling down a plate of pasta, was caught in disbelief.

"Please." Garen nodded.

"Follow me then." The middle-aged man stopped speaking, stood up and pulled open a side-door. Both of them entered a small room at the back.

Like the last time, they went across the room, crossing an alley and quickly arrived at a row of wooden doors.

The middle-aged man took out a key and unlocked the first door.

"Wait here." He went in for a moment and returned with a black box.

"This is what you've requested, the only one in Iron Tank City." He passed the black box to Garen.

Holding the black box in his hand, Garen gave it a pinch. The box was light, like a small jewellery box.

He flipped open the box. Between the black velvet was a black crystal ring. The activation spell was carved on the cover of the box.

He retrieved the ring and tried it on. In the end, it could only fit on his left ring finger.

"Check it out." The middle-aged man shut the door, leaned on it while staring at him.

Garen nodded and raised his left hand. He murmured the spell according to the words on the box.

"Gomola, ehado, cyatin.." A series of unusual words left Garen's mouth. This was a phonic interpretation of the ancient language. He did not understand it, but uttered it according to the phonics.

He made some gestures with his index finger in the air, drawing the totem activation symbol.

With a bang, the ring's crystal emitted a black ray of light. As the ray of light hit the floor, it expanded into a ball of light. Once the light dissipated, a black-striped, white-skinned tiger strolled to Garen's side. It smacked its lips, revealing a tongue filled with hooks which could easily sever flesh.

Owww...

The white tiger let out a low howl as it crouched beside Garen.

His body was about four metres long, with black spots from the head to the tail. Its thick tail was like a curled bat.

Garen patted the white tiger on its head, while browsing the skill pane below his vision.

Unsurprisingly, the black-striped white tiger's icon was already present.

"Black-striped white tiger: First form totem, can be upgraded. Success Rate: 11%. Potential Points Consumption: 700%.

Abilities: Tail whip, Puncturing Crunch."

"11% success rate..." Garen's scalp went numb. Even the neon butterfly had a 21% success rate, but this black-striped white tiger's was 11%. Considering this fact, he had to try 10 times to success once. One try would use up 7 potential points.

Since he had decided on it, there was no other option. Besides the neon butterfly, he could only have one more totem with low success rate. This was the limit. His mediocre talent determined that he could only control two totems.

As he left the guild, Garen withdrew the white tiger. He then arrived at a remote alley.

Ruthlessly, Garen gestured in the air and drew a complicated, oval symbol.

The symbol shrunk instantly into the size of a fist, then into the size of a fingernail. It then flew into the black crystal ring.

Very soon, he felt a sensation that was totally different compared to common totems. It felt like the black-striped white tiger was more intimate than others. The vague distance between them shrank a fair bit.

He looked at the black-striped white tiger's icon below his vision.

Suddenly, it overtook all the other totems on the list and was positioned first. There was a note which popped out on the side: Core.

His body illuminated with a layer of white light that stuck to his skin.

"Core totem, finally!"

Garen heaved a sigh of relief.

"I should rendezvous with Goth and the gang, then examine the tactics that Angel obtained. I must get ready to take on Griffith."

If his calculations were accurate, within these few days, Iron Tank City would face its first siege. That would be an opportunity for him to act.

There was a flash of ferocity in his eyes. Whoever snatched his belongings must have had a deathwish!

Chapter 293: Payback 1

Minggg~~~~

The white dragonhawks circling the sky let out an attack warcry.

Among the crowd, Garen looked up, focusing on one particular white dragonhawk in the air.

He tugged at his grey hoodie as he squeezed through the crowd, bowing his head to hide his face.

He pulled out a piece of cloth from his right sleeve. There was a round tactic drawn in red ink. It seem unrefined, with traces of red ink on its side.

A tactic was like an ancient spell, with a faint mystical sense.

As he rolled the cloth, Garen hastened his steps. He quickly entered a narrow alley along the street and walked through it. In front of him was another clean and luxurious street, where there was a row of gorgeous bungalows across it. All of them had white-golden roofs, but they were all empty, without a trace of population.

Garen swept his gaze from left to right. His eyes eventually fixated on the third bungalow.

Yesterday, he made an appointment with Goth and the gang to complete missions together these couple of days, but the war has sounded. The real war was finally beginning.

Iron Tank City's dragon stood no chance in resisting the countless unihorn lizards.

At this point, all he had to do was wait, until Iron Tank City mobilizes the resources they have accumulated over the years. Then in the midst of chaos, he would first take down that annoying quartermaster.

Through Garen's investigation, he found out that Quartermaster Griffith controlled a third of the warehouses in the city. All of the items stored in the warehouses were recorded. Other than himself, the private belongings of around ten other victims were confiscated in the name of military usage.

Garen knew from a familiar contact in the war guild, that other than himself, there were others waiting to find fault with the quartermaster. But the guy never leaves the side of Mecca, the second form totem master. There was completely no chance.

People from the War Guild and Assassin's Guild also could not find a chance because of this.

Garen stood at the alley in his grey robe and hoodie. He was dressed alike with the majority of the hoodie wearers.

He abruptly stepping back, as if his sixth sense was telling him to hide in the shadows of the alley.

Suddenly, a blur flashed from the bungalow's shade.

"Assassin's guild..?" Garen raised his eyebrows, holding his breath as he fixated his eyes on the shady region of the bungalow.

There was a quick blur, flashing among the shades and people's blindspots, like a butterfly in the dark.

The man, who was athletically built, clenched a dagger in his mouth. He was actually a pale faced young man, seemingly not over 18 years of age.

"Interesting. Trying to assassinate Griffith with his own skills when he isn't even a totem master." Garen stood still, merely lifting his head to stare at the sky.

The sky was outcast. The clusters of grey clouds signalling a downpour was coming anytime.

Ming ~~~~!

It was another desolate horn cry.

Instantly, with the sound of the horn, throughout the whole Iron Tank City centre, surrounding the Rowen Tower, an enormous flock of white-golden hawks soared into the sky.

Hummm!!!

The howls of countless white dragonhawks came down from the sky. It was as if voices had weight.

Garen could not help but bow his body, feeling shaken by the sound. His face revealed an expression of dismay.

"Iron Tank! Iron Tank! Iron Tank!"

As the clashing sound between metallic armor and weapons came from the distance, battalions of soldiers marched orderly towards the city gates. Their loud, orderly march cries could even be heard in the city where Garen was standing.

"It has begun..." Garen sighed as he turned back to look at the city gates.

He thought for a moment, pressed both his palms lightly on the sides of the wall and crawled up the wall like a lizard. With a light somersaulted, he landed on the roof of a third level building on the right side.

As he stood in the wall, he gazed in the direction of the sound.

In the dark grey sky, countless of white dragonhawks surrounded the white-golden hawks as they flew out of the city, like a big cluster of clouds.

The dragonhawk riders were dressed in silver armor, armed with two to three metres long spears. The white-golden dragonhawk riders were clad in full golden body armor, even the hawks' body were protected with golden armor.

In the horizon, black ink-like, dark clouds were spreading over here.

As the dark clouds drew closer, the countless strange, rattling sounds could be heard clearer and clearer.

The black giant lizards, equipped with black wings and fang like horns on their heads, were swaying their long tails as they headed directly towards Iron Tank City.

Garen stood on the rooftop. Like the countless of citizens in the city, he was staring at the two opposing clouds of forces closing on each other.

Bang!!

The white and dark cloud completely clashed into each other. In a split second, a large number of dark clouds fell from the sky.

The soldiers and citizens below let out a loud cheer.

"This is a war between totem users." Garen stared at the ground below, where soldiers were shooting with bows and guns in futile.

A huge array of arrows and bullets could only barely take down single digits of the unicorn lizards. Only a few totem users protected by soldiers, were summoning creatures to protect the safety of the commoners around.

Several lizards who were shot down rolled a few times on the floor, got back on their feet with only minor injuries. One of them picked up a swordsman beside with it's jaw and gobbled him up. With a casual fling of its paw, it tore several armored soldiers into pieces.

Human weapons were completely ineffective towards the lizards. Very soon, fear was like an epidemic, swiftly spreading amongst the crowd. As the soldiers collapse, more and more unihorn lizards pounce at the ground below, intending to annihilate the humans on the ground. The totem users in the city rose up to defend, barely forming a formation as the retreated to a corner.

Bang!!

A unihorn lizard leapt into the bungalow that Garen was in. In a split second, explosive noises and the roars of a lion could be heard from within.

In the following moments, the second, third and more unihorns descended quickly. They shrunk into balls like black meteorites, then spreading their wings as they landed and instantly started their killing.

Ahhh!!

From the bungalow came a scream, followed by the panicky cries of a girl. The door swung open with a bang, a middle-aged woman drenched in blood ran out, trying to escape. She only managed to crawl for a short distance, then could no longer move. Her lower body was snapped into two earlier, and she was only crawling on the ground with her upper body, leaving a blood trail behind.

Garen turned his gaze towards Griffith's bungalow.

There was a unihorn lizard that landed there, but very quickly became silent.

"Looks like this situation does not pose much of a threat to them.." Garen blinked his eyes.

The sound of the screams and shouts seemed to be going further away, signaling that the main resistance was moving further and further away.

Griffith's bungalow stayed completely silent and still.

Bang!

A unihorn lizard landed on the roof behind Garen, rapidly spreading its body from from the ball.

It open its jaw filled with sharp teeth, rushed towards Garen with a roar.

Sheesh!!

Garen frowned, gently shaking the black crystal ring on his right hand. A ray of black light shot out, and in the ray of light, leapt out the black-striped white tiger, colliding with the unihorn lizard. The two large creatures rolled in the ball, biting and slashing at each other.

Garen stood at the side, quietly watching without assisting.

"It's a good opportunity to see the black-striped white tiger's overall strength."

The black-striped white tiger was swift indeed. After swiping at the lizard, it could evade the lizards counterattack, then pushing away it's head, appearing to be very agile. Moreover, every time it opened it's jaw, a bite from it would tear out a big piece of flesh.

After just three simple swipes, the black-striped white tiger launched forward, mercilessly pressing down the lizard. It bit into the lizard's throat, gulping down the fresh blood.

Shriekkkk!

The lizard's head was torn apart by the white tiger.

Awww!!!

The white tiger let out a howl, stood up in it's blood-stained body and started to feed on the lizard's corpse. It was only lightly scratched.

"No wonder there are people who are willing to choose this kind of totem even though it cannot be evolved. Those that can be passed down until today surely are not simple characters." Garen nodded his head in satisfaction. Suddenly, three black dots soared over his head. He quickly withdrew the white tiger, and jumped down the roof. After constantly prancing in the shadows with all his might, he disappeared into a blur and entered Griffith's bungalow.

As he silently entered the bungalow, he heard the sound of an impatient argument going on from within. The sounds came and go with the wind.

".....ours....out, left....who is responsible...."

"Stay here....who....don't leave..."

Garen sped up, silently approaching the three-story bungalow from the garden. As he quickly arrived at a Lily bush, he stopped abruptly and stared at the ground.

There was a circle or silver arcs on the ground, faintly shimmering in silver light.

The arcs stretched from two sides, like a setting surrounding the whole bungalow.

"Warning line?" Garen remembered from teacher Emin's teachings. Only a luminarist with a complete heritage could perform such an act.

He followed the silver warning line to the back of the bungalow. The voices became clearer by the moment. There were two men voices debating about something and it was evident one of them was Griffith's voice.

"...no confidence to hold Iron Tank City. They thought I couldn't see it if they kept it from me! If it wasn't for my men in the information department, I would have foolishly followed into battle. Now! Right now! We have to leave immediately! The unihorn lizards will increase, more and more!!" Griffith seemed very emotional and agitated.

The other male voice was abnormally calm. "Do not worry Griffith, the Grand Duke has took numerous elites to exterminate the lizard's nest. As long the breeding nest is destroyed, at most the creatures can only cause minor damage."

"How many times do I have to say before you understand!" The sound of someone pacing back-and-forth heavily came from within. "Alright alright.. Mecca, we are brothers who grew up together. Let me tell you the truth. The situation now is dire, the creatures out there..." He lowered his voice.

A normal human probably couldn't even hear a single sound, worse if the other side lowered their voice. But Garen, with his abnormally clear senses, could easily hear Griffith's whisper.

"...there are at least 10 million of the creatures...This is the statistic calculated by the information department. My informant had just sent me a message. Even if the Grand Duke and his party could destroy the nests, this is not a number we can defend against!" Garen murmured.

Mecca, the second form totem user instantly ran out of words to say, breathing heavily.

"Who!!" Mecca roared loudly of a sudden.

Dang!!

The high-pitched sound of weapons clashing.

"Looking for death!!" Mecca coldly hummed.

From the bungalow came the sound of a man's bored humming.

Very quickly, the peace resumed within.

Chapter 294: Payback 2

"Stop chasing! We currently don't have the time to settle these things!" Griffith said loudly.

"There are still people outside!" Mecca said coldly. "Let's go out and take a look!"

Garen felt it as well. Numerous men clothed in black had already reached the villa's entrance.

"No one dares to steal my cousin's property! Griffith, you are dead meat!" On the left, one of those clothed in black remarked darkly.

"Just a puny Quartermaster..." The leader of the black clad men had a harsh look plastered on his face, his body vaguely emitting a killer's aura; it was pretty obvious that he often walked on the edge of life or death situations, a ruthless character.

A Unihorn lizard swooped down from above and landed on the ground, making plans to bite the men clad in black robe.

Shoooooh!

Right next to the men in black, a dark shadow loomed forward abruptly, bit off the Unihorn lizard's head in moments and left the now headless lizard crashing into the ground.

"Wilde!! The moment Mecca walked out and saw the men in black, he was momentarily stunned. Across his eyes flashed fear and horror.

Griffith came out a moment later and heard the name being called out. Immediately his pupils dilated. His face paled ever so slightly.

"Damn the information we received! Didn't they say everything was checked and cleared? How is it that Wilde is involved now?"He muttered angrily.

Two men dressed in red officer uniforms, donning white curly wigs fancied by noblemen were surrounded with nothing but the absence of the people who were once there. Obviously, the people earlier were forced to disband.

"Wilde, our sides have never went against each other...What do you mean by this? I don't think we stole anything of yours?"Mecca calmed down, lowering his voice while making solid eye contact.

The scar on Wilde's chin gave a sinister touch to his smile.

"I changed my name and filled up a couple of hundred storehouses full with goodies, it was under one of my aliases. Who would have thought that in the area of Iron Tank City, there existed someone who had the guts to mess around with my property? Griffith ...tsk tsk, I heard that you have a pretty fine looking cousin sister...it has been some time since I wanted to do things to her."

"I warn you! If you dare lay a single hand on my cousin, I will seek the death of your entire family!!" Griffith jumped up abruptly, like a tiger who just got provoked. "More than a hundred storehouses! I obtained all of them and the numbers barely even surpasses forty!"

"Wilde, this is considered blackmail, you have to think this through carefully. Blackmailing a Quartermaster will mean persecution by the Dragon Guards." Mecca stood in front of Griffith, blocking him while speaking in a low voice.

"Blackmail? That is absolutely what I intend to do!!"

The black shadow flashed.

Bang!!!

Mecca regressed two steps, in front of him a giant green furred wolf whimpered. All of a sudden the giant wolf could not open its eyes; the rim of his eyes continually spilled blood.

"You are letting the Dragon Guards after me? Oh no I am so afraid, so so afraid!!" Wilde mocked a frightened expression, "Oh beloved Dragon Guard! I have committed blackmail, come after me quick!"

"How is that? Why isn't there anyone after me?"

Shooh!

Again, the black shadow flashed. A Giant lizard who intended to ambush the three was beheaded once again, headless body tumbling unto the ground with a loud crash.

Even his cousin brother and another man distanced themselves from Wilde in mild fear.

Mecca and Griffith's face turned ugly.

Wilde gave a terrifying and hideous laugh, turning back to normal. His gaze turned towards the right side of villa's garden.

"Friend, if you are not going to appear I will finish it myself eh?"

"We each get half."

A deep voice traveled from the garden. A bald and eyebrow-less man stepped out, quietly standing beside the flower bed. It was Garen who was hiding.

"A little more than forty storehouses, I want the ones valued most."

Wilde looked around, flipped the back of his hand towards his back and lightly sprinkled some silver powder. The silver powder disappeared as it touched the ground.

"Friend, isn't your appetite a little large?" He chuckled deeply. "The ones valued the most? That would be Wilde's property, an infringement of private property is a crime, the beloved Dragon Guards will come and catch you~~"

"There's less manpower on my side, I can't carry much, which is why I only chose what I was capable of bringing along with me." Garen replied emotionlessly. "Of course, you are free to reject." His voice was laced with a hint of menace.

"Yo!" Wilde stared at Garen and paused for a moment, his playful gaze turned serious. It seems like he was unable to get the effect he intended for.

"This fella here is about to kick the butts of your entire family!"

With a loud bang, the dark shadow flashed and sent Griffith flying into the wood of the door.

"Griffith, did you think that making a few less enemies could kill you? You caused me to split such a huge part of my property! The hell, do you know this is a violation of the security of my private property!!

HUH?!" He appeared in front of Griffith in the split of a second, grabbing a dazed Griffith by the collar and thundered loudly.

In another split of a second, Wilde disappeared from where he was, returning to his previous position.

"Wilde! Are you not afraid of Lord Cepha pursuing this matter!!" Mecca was completely unable to react at all; his good friend was beaten up right in front of his eyes. His whole face was ashen, ghastly pale. He hurries to protect his good friend who was behind him.

Wilde didn't even cast a look at him. Instead, he focused his field of vision towards Garen who was by the flower beds. He was the only one among the hidden ones that he could never truly understand. From his body oozed the smell of blood, which only stuck on to the bodies of ruthless killers who had killed too many. This unique aura could only be faintly differentiated by those who were similar in nature, such as himself.

Not only that, the poison powder from earlier on did nothing. He was left completely puzzled.

Garen narrowed his eyes slightly, his face never revealing a hint of change. He was clear, this was Wilde's way of showcasing what he was capable of.

His gaze briefly swept across the bloodied body of Griffith who was holding a piece scarf tightly against his forehead, silenced by the pounding he had earlier received.

"If you have no other opinion, we should get moving as soon as possible."

Wilde looked deeply into Garen's eyes.

"I do not have any. Should we start on everything?"

"Yep." Garen answered, void of any emotion.

Their gazes centered upon Mecca.

"To hell with this! Let's go!" Mecca's face changed; he violently grabbed Griffith and leaped, a giant green wolf held on to them by their backs and flew into the building quickly, in effort to escape.

Suddenly, behind Wilde and Garen a dark shadow sprang out, effortlessly catching up to Mecca, Griffith and the Wolf.

Sheeeh!

Two shadows retracted in a moment, one of them turned into a Black lion right behind Wilde, while the other one behind Garen turned into a Giant croc.

Two of the giant monsters stood tall at around 5 to 6 feet near their masters, their gazes intertwined with fury, letting out threatening growls. Below each of their paws is a Giant green wolf.

"Secondary Totem!?" Wilde and Gren both recognized the level of their totems at the same time.

Black Lion and Giant Croc were both Form 2 Totems. What both of them did not expect was, both of these totems were their secondary totems and not their core totems.

Wilde immediately pegged his opposition as a master of the same level. Even his secondary totem was a ruthless Form 2 totem; his core would definitely far surpass the norm. He himself was developing a similar style of thought.

At the same time, he could somewhat feel as if the opponent had a totem hidden secretly. The thought of that filled him with dread.

"You choose first, friend." All of sudden he plastered a harmonious smile unto his face.

"Thanks." Garen nodded and walked into the Villa boldly.

The scene welcoming them was of two men lying on the ground in the hall.

Mecca held on to Griffith, both bloodied and battered, squatting near the fireplace.

Beside Mecca was a green wolf far larger than the ones before, but both sides of its body had chunks of flesh bitten off, leaving gaping wounds that looked as if it were sliced open with a sharp blade.

Garen briefly took a look; the left side was a deep wound created by the Giant Deep Swamp Croc, and it was evident that the wound was lighter than that of the one Wilde's totem had inflicted.

One of the many powers of the Deep Swamp Croc: Explosive strike, the power it has is still incomparable to the power of the opposition's Form 2 totem.

"I remember you." Mecca stared at Garen's face, recalling the scene that unfolded in front of the storehouses earlier on. His eyes were so bright it was practically blinding.

"Any other last words?" Garen walked to stand in front of him.

"Lord Cepha will avenge me." Mecca said in a low voice.

Whoop!

Behind Garen a huge mouth shot out, breaking Mecca into two with just one bite.

Click – Blood splattered all over the ground as a result of the impact.

Garen just nonchalantly dodged a few times, and was able to avoid the blood completely; there was no trace of splattered blood on his body.

On the other hand, Griffith was scared silly. He was left sitting on the ground blankly.

Seeing him this way, Garen lost the desire of torturing him any further.

With a wave of a hand, he turned around and headed up towards the second floor. Downstairs, came the roar of Wilde's lion; followed by a short distressed scream.

Garen looked down from the second floor – The lion was savoring Griffith's head. As its tongue licked from time to time, bloodied pieces of flesh from the face were scraped off.

"This is so unhygienic." Garen pulled a hand towel over his nose. The body was back to its peak; unlike his previous life, it seemed more difficult to adapt to unpleasant smells.

"There are guys outside who want to take advantage of the situation. Half each, what do you think? Wilde gave a huge grin in the direction of Garen.

"We'll kill as we see them, too lazy to specifically hunt them down." Garen answered emotionlessly, "Right, who on earth is this Ceph?"

"Someone from the Dragon Guards. However, I think he should focus on taking care of himself first, hehehe..." Wilde laughed in glee.

Behind him, Garen and the Deep Swamp Croc were searching each room one by one.

Although so, he was always on high alert. At this point, any sign of abnormal activities should never be detected by Wilde, or the consequences would be dire.

When it came to a form 2 totem users like Mecca, escape was an option if worse came to worse. However, when it came to an explosive totem user such as Wilde, it was not a good idea to cross him as his core totem is definitely not of the norm.

Truthfully when it came to Mecca's death, if it were not for the cooperation of Wilde, it would have been nearly impossible to heavily wound the Giant Wolf totem in such a short span of time. Mecca had already given up resistance from the start, and chose to run away.

It was too bad he completely made the wrong decision.

The difference between them was, Wilde's attack was just a random blow, whereas Garen's Deep Swamp Croc attacked at full capacity, and even used its ability: Explosive strike. The difference was pretty significant.

If Mecca had decided to break through the mini barricade by attacking Garen, he would have found out that Garen was just posing as a strong user, strong in appearance but weak in reality. He was absolutely not of the same par as Wilde.

Garen had succeeded in using his tough demeanor, gained through large amounts of manslaughter in his previous life, in addition to his pre-preparation of a glowing disc and blue back lizard poison to counter the opponent's poison. These 3 points had helped erected a image of an opponent with the same skill level in Wilde's heart.

Lastly, Deep Swamp Croc had used its ability the moment it pounced and tore flesh apart. It was comparatively a little weaker than the damage Wilde caused. This was when he was fully aware the difference in ability was not a baseless presumption.

Garen knows, at this moment he needed to present a tough exterior, as any sign of weakness would add him to the list of Wilde's many hunting targets.

Chapter 295: Resources 1

Slow steps were made on the corridor of the second floor.

Garen continuously pushed open all of the room doors he passed by, his gaze swept across each of them, never stepping in personally.

Very quickly, he reached the end where there was a room on the left –the doors were already open. From the gap through the door he could see many book shelves.

Garen pushed open the door and walked in; there were two steaming cups of black tea placed on the coffee table. The windowpanes were covered with a layer of dense mist.

He glanced around, his gaze eventually settling on a black leather box placed at the corner of the study.

Walking towards the box and squatting down, he lightly pinched –the place where the keyhole was immediately turned into fine powder. He opened the box.

Inside divided two sections, right and left.

On the left were stacks of notes and books, all of them covered in red hard covers. Garen picked them up and flipped them open – precise blueprint, detailed surgical procedures, as well as some illegible records of experiments. At the bottom of it all was a poetry compilation by Isaiah.

He placed the book back in and started looking at the section on the right.

The right side of the box were some silver bank notes, some broken diamond pieces and a silver brick. At the top was a stack of cheques weighed down by a silver brick.

Garen took it out to have a look. On top, 10 pieces of bank deposit bills with an amount of one million written on each.

"This fella is pretty poor huh...he is worse off than angel."Garen shakes his head. "No wonder there was a desire to take over the storehouses."

Garen simply took up a book of precision blueprint and flipping around.

It was pretty obvious this was a version used by totem users, at the top were plenty of requests with a difficulty level below that of a luminarist's . Garen's master level precision blueprint can easily achieve the standard required at the top.

"A totem user, is so much less complex than being a luminarist..this item should be that book of Mecca's.

Totem users only needed to learn an entrance level precision blueprint, but when it came to technique and skill, they are so much more powerful than luminarists and forgers. Their types are highly skilled in the area of totem control and totem manipulation.

Totem users, forgers and luminarists; truth be told, have different preferences. Luminarists are to be considered moderate among them, and when it comes to strengths, totem users are skilled in technique while forgers have strengths in the area of forging and maintenance.

Garen flipped to the section where totem users needed to use activation tactics, and was momentarily stunned by how much more complicated activation tactics were in comparison to being a luminarist.

"Seems like no matter which type, there's no such thing as a shortcut...only the area of difficulty differs."

Totem user's precision blueprint required of a lower standard, but the price to pay was that its activation tactics were extremely difficult. Activation tactics included a lot of mathematical and physical knowledge; if it were not for Garen's prior experiences, he wouldn't have been able to grasp it so quickly.

Precision blueprints leaned towards the main attack's stability and precision, while activation tactic focuses on the basis of instantaneous force and physical principles. The first focuses on accumulation, while the latter on adaptability. This also signifies the different development lines luminarists and totem users have.

Luminarists get stronger as time accumulated increases; the more knowledge they have, the more they can accumulate their wealth and ascend themselves.

On the other hand, totem users rely on adaptability and instantaneous force. They start off strong, but as development progresses, are substantially weaker to that of a luminarist.

"Still have no idea when it comes to forgers, but they should be leaning towards the direction of luminarists. From their name, it can be assumed that they completely given up going in the direction of battle, focusing instead on scientific research, specifically totem forging.

Garen closed the box and stood up. He left the Deep swamp croc as a doorkeeper and proceeded to continue the search leisurely.

There wasn't anything else he could find, but Garen was not greedy – as he had found a box full of wealth, all of this had been worth it.

He simply took hold of the box with one hand and leaped off the window sill of the second floor.

Behind him, Wilde and the others were still searching the first floor, a few of the men obviously reaped some harvest. Wilde himself stood guard at the door of the entrance, in his mouth was a lit cigarette. Both of his eyes looked half open, as if he was on the verge of nodding off.

As he heard the leap, he opened his eyes to see Garen and grinned at him.

"Have a safe journey, I won't walk you." He glanced at the box in Garen's hands, not saying anything.

"I don't have enough manpower for the items in the storehouses, this box will be enough for me." Garen grinned. The value of this box, besides its physical wealth, would be the notes and books in regards to tactics; there would surely be an array of tactics used by this villa. Just this fact alone was able to compensate the storehouse of young grains stolen earlier on. Its value is definitely worth more than 10 million.

Garen took the box and accelerated towards the distance, Giant deep swamp croc shadowed closely behind. He felt unfamiliar gazes behind his back but they disappeared as the distance increased.

Only then did he breathe a sigh of relief. His movements became lighter and more agile, and sped into the alley. Sticking close to the shadows, he ran in the direction of the suburbs.

Wooo~~~!!!

The long sound of a horn reverberated throughout Iron Tank City.

Garen halted his steps abruptly; he noticed that the sound of the horn was grievous and bleak.

He stood in the shadows of the valley, lifted his head up and looked at the skies outside the city.

An army of Giant Unihorn lizards looking like a bunch of grey clouds, were encircling a group of white Dragonhawks, leaving a small group of white gold Dragonhawks to defend tirelessly. They left behind white gold lines as they circled the air, continuously battling a Giant lizard every few seconds, without the time to take a breather.

At the start they were able to send down a Giant lizard whenever they came into contact with one. Now, they could only bump them out of the way with great difficulty.

There were too many grey clouds.

Garen picked up speed, nearing the city walls.

The ground was filled with the bodies of Giant unihorn lizards; these bodies carried the characteristics of silver totems, and will not turn completely into puddles of liquid silver.

Besides the Giant lizard bodies, countless human bodies were also weaved in between them; some were complete while others were not. Everywhere you'd look, you'd see huge long guns that were broken in half, a mixture of liquid silver, blood and gore flowing along the earth slowly, coloring the ground with shades of scarlet and silver.

Garen took caution and retrieved his Giant deep swamp croc as well as his sword, carefully navigating his way by sticking close to the corners of the wall under the shadows.

As he was nearing the outskirts of the city, a large number of buildings had already been wrecked and destroyed, leaving behind pieces of rubble and broken walls.

Ssssssssss!!

A slightly red skinned Giant Unihorn lizard took alarmingly loud steps across the streets filled with bodies. Its thick tail was swinging back and forth, casually knocking away the pile of bodies around its circumference.

Garen tightened and crouched behind a triangular shaped ruin. He slowly spread his aura; in the sensory of his surroundings, small prickly dots that felt like hives pierced into his consciousness.

"At least a few hundred."Garen did a brief calculation in his heart, afraid to make any large moves.

He was fully aware that with the present situation, the only way to escape the first wave of chaos is to diffuse current strategies, hide away in various discreet areas and then start over from zero. It was during this crisis that Iron Tank City got rid of a few dysfunctional noble leaders, establishing a new and more efficient leadership team.

A more crucial point was, although Obscuro society had released these monsters as a main force of disruption in the world, realistically speaking, they remain incapable of controlling these failed living experiments. The only thing they could do is to prevent themselves from being attacked by these monsters.

In other words, these monsters are under no one's orders. They were only scouring around hunting based on their primal needs. If it were not for the Dragon Guards'wanton massacre that angered these monsters, I am afraid it wouldn't have blown up into such a large scale attack, involving the whole city.

Garen waited for the giant red lizard to pass, tapped his feet once, and transported himself into another cluster of shadows in the speed of lightning. He kept on going so, continuously closing in towards the outskirts of the city.

On his way he passed by a family of 3 who were hidden in a house, but he could only protect himself, unable to bring along anyone else. The ability the secret weapon has only provided speed and strength for one, making it unable to hide anyone else.

Whenever he encountered an opening during his journey, he would dash across quickly; whenever he did not, he would use small stones to divert the attention of the monsters, revealing an opening.

Soon, as he progressed forward like so, he finally reached the battle guild's mission hall.

The entire building which the guild was situated at was completely destroyed, leaving only a piece of broken ruins where the walls once were. The surroundings were deserted and quiet, only a few giant lizards crawled by.

The cold wind whistled, blowing up a piece of thin wood board and causing it to roll around with a clear flapping sound.

Garen released the giant deep swamp croc, made sure to be constantly alert of his surroundings and searched around the ruins of the hall alone.

"Hey! Here!" A weak voice floated along the wind.

Garen followed the voice and looked over, some distance away near the lid of the waterway, stood a bald middle aged man who was waving his hand at him.

"The guild moved underground."

Garen nodded his head, retrieved Giant deep swamp croc, dragged along the box and ran towards his side. Seeing as he crawled into the waterway, he followed suit, shutting the lid after him.

Two of them followed the iron ladder and eventually reached the ground.

Following a narrow and dark passage they moved on; after a few minutes, drilled a hole on the ground that was about 40 to 50 meters. Only then did the bald man speak.

"Okay, here's safe." He suddenly halted his steps and pulled open a metal door the height of a person from the right side of the walls. Inside, a bright yellow light spilled out.

"Go in from here, inside you'll find the new Guild hall. Young chap, you were lucky you found me, the others would not have been so kind hearted."

Garen smiled and handed him a few silver rums.

"Thanks brother."

The bald man took it from him and returned the smile.

Both men walked in the brightly-lit tunnel, this tunnel extends in all directions, from time to time it would branch out into more tunnels. In them were others who walked out one after another, both male and female—it was apparent this was not the only entrance.

It's the first time Garen had seen so many people since the catastrophe. Catching the gaze of a few others, it was evident that they felt the same.

"Quick! Save him quick!" All of a sudden from the right passage in front, bursts out a group of people; they carried a stretcher, on it laid a young man who was clutching his abdomen. Blood was pouring out continuously from in between his fingers. Gasping for breath, his face was ghostly pale and his forehead plastered with sweat. It seemed as if he was not going to make it.

The stretcher was dashed into a corner of the passage ahead.

"He is almost gone!! Anesthesia quick!! Start the surgery now!! Henry!!"

"I am here! Everything is prepared, quickly lift him in!" "Be careful of your actions!" "Garisith! Disinfect him now!"

A series of hurried voices came from the front.

"It's the people from the sacrificial mission team, all three teams were badly injured." "Even the Dragon Guards suffered a huge loss, if Iron Tank's tactical ring formation was not started up, it seemed as if even the inner part of the city would have been completely compromised."

"Thank goodness the war guild has an emergency underground place."

Garen heard someone say. He looked around and felt surrounded with a bunch of strangers, all of them wearing unfamiliar faces.

"Garen!" All of a sudden a voice came from the back.

Chapter 296: Resources 2

Garen looked back and saw fake-eye Thomas rushing over from behind.

"Thomas? It's so great to see you alive!"

Garen gave him a fierce hug. This guy had given him much help over the years, a very well-informed person; the timing was splendid, he can now learn what the current situation is from him.

"Let's go, take a rest inside." Thomas dragged Garen forward for a distance; in no time, after going through a small door, impressively, was a quest hall exactly like it was above ground. The only difference was that 7 or 8 people were scattered around; a woman with one arm skillfully served everyone food, drinks and alcohol.

The atmosphere was dull and heavy, there were lots of people with low spirits – some lying on the table drunken, while some were polishing their silver knives with a cold and detached expression on their faces.

Thomas familiarly dragged Garen to a corner to sit down.

The outskirts of the city had been damaged, now our war guild base is the logistic point for our frontlines. What do you have in mind?" Thomas rushed to enquire as soon as he sat down. "I would suggest you to go straight to the inner part of the city; the only ones brave enough to be left behind are masters. I am planning to go straight to the inner part of the city to participate in defense tasks, you should follow me."

"I have my own plans, no worries." Garen smiled, "What is the current situation in the city?"

"The Dragon Guards collapsed, if it were not for Grand Duke who came after to combat the monsters, I am afraid not one would have lived to defend the inner city." Thomas explained simply, "Now, half of those in the city have perished, leaving only a small portion of residents living in the inner city to avoid massacre. Those from the outskirts and suburbs have pretty much all perished. Perhaps there remains few who were hidden, but the numbers are definitely not large."

"How about the other places?"

"I have no idea, according to the guild's last contact with foreign guilds which was the day before yesterday, the current skies have been completely saturated and blocked by the monsters. Guilds of different locations are being isolated." Thomas lowered his voice, "The heads of the guild seemed a little off."

"How about battle resources? It should be priced lower right?" Garen asked after thinking for a moment.

"Definitely, as the number of people decreased, the amount of people capable of using totems for battle is not enough. There is an oversupply, a lot of items have decreased in price."

Garen suddenly noticed his motive, it was true that he needed to stick to a group at this crucial time.

"I have companions, no worries." He shakes his head to refuse. "Let me settle my box first, some items valued higher when sold, will be given in exchange instead. Nothing is more important than life. Right?"

"No problem, look for me here when you are free, I usually hang around during noon." Thomas didn't insist further and agreed with ease. During these times an extra friend meant an extra security blanket.

Garen dragged the box towards the counter in the hall.

He walked to the left window and knocked.

The girl inside went blank for a moment, visibly downcast shortly after.

"Sorry, this afternoon Mr. Jason had already..."

Jason's heart sank. the middle aged man worked well with him when he was around, he'd have never thought he'd be gone so soon.

"How much are war shackles and a war hall? He asked in a low voice.

"20 million for all, if resources were used in exchange, even better."The girl snapped out of her daze and replied.

Garen placed the box on the counter, opened it and took out the books and notes. He then proceeded to put money and precious items such as diamonds and silver blocks through the window.

"Mind estimating the value for me?

"Alright." The girl took over the items and skillfully separated them into similar groups.

The estimation was soon given.

"Altogether 36 million or so, do you want me to record it in your badge or?"

"Give me a set of war shackles instead, keep the remaining in the badge."

"Okay, please wait for a moment."The girl rarely encountered war shackle related transactions, and was a little unfamiliar with it. She decided to seek help from people behind.

After Garen waited for a short while, a tall and slender young man walked out. In his hands was a silver cylinder.

"May I ask if it's you who wanted war shackles?" He walked to the counter, replacing the girl's position.

"Yes, is there a problem?"

What type of war shackles do you need? A blank one, or one with effects?"The young man solemnly asked. "A blank one." Garen answered concisely.

"In this case you would want to add a permanent tactic. Here we have two types of permanent tactic that can be added on, you should consider it. One deepens your damage, tearing the wound in a way that makes it harder to heal. The other is a paralytic toxin, a layer coated on totems would slightly interfere with the enemy's attack.

"There's no need, we have other considerations." Garen rejects him. These two permanent tactics are pretty useless. The guild would not bring out anything useful for sale, but would have taken it for themselves instead.

"It's alright then." The young man quickly drew a tactic symbol on the silver cylinder, the symbol glowed red and vanished, disappearing into the surface of the cylinder. He then passed it to Gren."Please take this, this is your blank shackle. This shackle is of the lowest level, with only two effects inset. Although so, you could choose to upgrade through a forger in the future; a high leveled forger is capable of transferring an inset permanent tactic into a new shackle. Of course, only forgers of our guild have the technique for it."

"Thank you." Garen took over the cylinder and noticed all of a sudden around him, greedy glances headed his way.

He looked back and glanced around, not minding a bit.

He opened the cylinder straight, plucking out a silver V shaped arrow from inside, it was a like a thin sheet of metal. The surface has an abnormal shine to it, only tilting towards the light showed a layer of colored light swirling in the internal alchemy.

Garen checked it in detail, and pressed the metal sheet into his left arm.

Ssssss...

The metal sheet accompanied by a sizzling sound melted into Garen's skin. After a cloud of green smoke, it looked like a birthmark gotten since birth, completely natural. There was nothing that gave it away to being unnatural.

Under Garen's field of vision, a horizontal bar appeared. Behind it were two pink boxes.

"War shackle: 2 permanent tactics can be added. Master the forger's technique, and its ability will level up.

Effect: Could be used to connect companions, allowing both to benefit from the effect of Permanent tactics. As to how much effect one benefits, it can be controlled by the shackle's owner."

"This is the one." Garen nodded his head in satisfaction. He had used up the War shackle without any hesitation, and the greedy glances started to mind their own business. A used War shackle is not of much value.

"Let's see if it is possible to evolve the core totem." Garen looked at the potential points in the potential bar.

Killing Mecca, a Form 2 totem user, had increased his potential points to 1516%.

"15 points, we can try now."

Till now, he had reached the first stage of his ultimate goal—he managed to get his hands on the core totem. After this, the key would be combining potential points with Gothic and the rest.

The only thing is, Gothic had definitely participated in the defense tasks, and was bound to showcase jaw dropping abilities, attracting the attention of the Grand Duke. To follow in this footsteps of such genius...

Thomas disappeared again, so Garen went back to the hall alone to find a seat. If Angel did not live, he was planning to find a few people to establish a new team.

"Aska is here.."

"Resta as well."

Someone seated at the door muttered.

Not long after, two people emerged from the tunnel. One was in front of the other – The one leading had red hair, a good looking youth; his outfit was in a state, but he was unhurt.

"Aska, here." A red headed girl waved her hand from across the hall.

Garen recognized him. He was popularly known as a genius among the guild members – Aska Byzantium. According to popular belief, the moment he lighted up a totem, he shared the innate gift of black panthers – its speed. He then continuously controlled 3 different totems, benefiting from all 3 of them their dissimilar unique abilities.

Much earlier on, his second totem evolved into Form 2. He was an innately talented and excellent guy. His natural ability is the rare ability to power share, capable of casting the totem's power unto himself; this ability helps the totem user to adapt to different situations easily. For example using the Fire Wolf's fireball power, the polar bear's ice attack and more.

Garen's gaze faltered upon the person behind Aska.

Resta, also a new found genius with natural golden curls. His ability is hardening. He can prepare all his totems with a tougher skin, protecting them from huge damage. He had also used a Form 1 totem to kill a Form 2 totem alive. Only 19 this year, Aska and him belonged to the Genius level.

But Resta was not someone of the War Guild, but a nobleman from the city, or so he heard.

Garen retracted his gaze.

He was not a genius, in comparison to these people, his only strength was his potential points. Although this ability grows stronger as development continues, in its earlier stages, its incomparable to these insane talents.

He was all in all one of a normal rank. His military strengths from his previous life was not obvious here.

Aska and Resta walked together towards the red haired lady at the corner, they were from the same circle; Resta obviously a friend of Aska. These people are either geniuses or elite machines. Their circle and other circles are of two separate worlds. In a small place such as Iron Tank City, they have even become the main force fighting against the monsters.

Garen sat on his seat, quietly waiting. If Angel did not die, she would have made the same decision as he did. During these times, the only way to be safe is to stick to a group, else they would be the object of bullying.

Now, Garen could possibly defeat a Form 2 totem user with great difficulty, but was definitely incapable of facing off two. He barely passed off as talented in the guild's hierarchy.

Not long after, in the tunnel where many come in and go out from, a black robed lady walked in quickly. It was Angle. Her left shadow was wrapped with thick bandage, blood stains were visible. As she saw Garen, she walked over and sat on the opposite side of him.

Chapter 297: Evolution 1

Although the two didn't exactly trust each other, there wasn't any conflict of interest, and they were both the same type of person. Garen had his pride as a member of the strong, and wouldn't allow himself to find a weakling as a companion. He needed someone who could stand independently, a strong fighter who would not give up easily regardless of the dangers faced. He needed someone who could help him when needed, and not a weakling who would constantly need his help for every little thing.

Garen didn't have much of an advantage here on this world. Compared to those prodigies, he only had his potential points to possibly bring him to the peak. But he had his pride, and the strong would remain strong however much their environments changed. It was just a matter of time accumulation.

Similarly, Angel had the same opinion, someone of the same level who could defeat her in direct confrontation, and the same type of person as she was. That made her acknowledge Garen all the more.

"I thought you died." She leaned her back on the chair, wiping away the sweat on her forehead.

"I won't die before you do." Garen smiled. "What's wrong with you? Your shoulder."

"I was ambushed, someone tried to take my stuff. I got two of them, hehe." Angel licked her lips, smiling cruelly.

"I bought the War Chain, add yourself in for now." Garen stretched out his left arm, revealing that silver-white V-shaped arrow.

Angel wasn't surprised either, as she reached out her hand and pressed down on the arrow.

Garen instantly saw Angel's icon appear in the pane for the War Chain at the bottom of his vision. He seemed to be able to chase her out whenever he wanted to.

Bringing his gaze back, he said calmly,

"Right now there isn't any effect at all. Do you have anything to contribute?"

"Do you think that's possible? I may be good, but even if I'm good, I still haven't reached Prodigy-level yet." Angel rolled her eyes at him.

"Oh yeah, you've met Prodigy-level totem users, right? Tell me what's so different about them," Garen asked quietly.

"Prodigy-level? The difference between prodigies and the other people is very simple. The biggest difference is, it's very hard for you to beat them," Angel said, reminiscing. "If you say our talent is at a human level, then they're all inhuman. I know a few of their talents, it's extremely over-powered."

"For example?" Garen was instantly interested.

"Ability sharing, that's the one everyone knows about. If someone can have a Form 3 totem, or even the very peak, a Form 4 Aberration. When that happens, the totem user is the strongest, while the totem is just a tool to provide power. Totem users at the level are humanoid monsters." Angel sighed. "We can forget about that."

Garen can imagine how terrifying a totem user like that would be. Their defense would be impenetrable, even stronger than totems. And they had the power of totems too, which would basically make them moving fortresses.

"And then?"

"In truth, ability sharing can be divided into types. Some are suitable for wolves, others suitable for leopard, and yet others bears. If they used another type, it wouldn't have that effect. Besides that, the other talent I heard of would be totem fusion. A few types of totems fused together have a certain chance of becoming a new totem, this is yet another ridiculously over-powered ability. Many of the new mutated totems were created when these guys messed around like that, such as the White Dragonhawk. And then there are those strengthening types, strengthening speed, power, defense, vitality - four in total. These are the most basic Prodigy talents. They're slightly weaker than the previous two."

"In other words, there are three types, ability sharing, ability strengthening, and totem fusion, right?" Garen concluded.

"That's right. Why are you suddenly asking." Angel was slightly curious.

"I just wanted to really know what level these Prodigies are at." Garen sighed.

"Don't compare yourself to them, a lot of these Prodigy totem users evolve extremely quickly. They have different factions supporting them, it would be hard for them not to evolve quickly. Their rate of growth is far beyond normal people," Angel said helplessly. She glanced at Resta, Aska and the others nearby.

"See Aska over there? He only took five months from the moment he lit and activated a totem to

evolving his second Form 2 totem. His talent is ability sharing with the leopard totem, so I've been paying attention to him these past few days, because I use a leopard too."

"Five months..." Garen was rather speechless, only then did he understand how terrifying these Prodigies were. If he hadn't gotten the Derivator, he would still barely be a Form One totem user now. Meanwhile the other guy had gotten his second Form Two totem step by step, and Garen still didn't know what other trump cards he might have in addition to his ability to share a totem's power.

"I need to hurry up and upgrade my core totem..." Garen decided to hurry up and hunt the Unihorn Lizard, and upgrade the Black-Striped White Tiger as soon as possible.

His gaze fell on the totem pane.

'Black-Striped White Tiger: First Form Totem, upgradable. Probability of successful evolution: 11%. Potential point cost: 700%.

Abilities: Tail Whip, Puncturing Crunch.'

"I'll just go with it!" He clenched his teeth, chatting idly with Angel on one hand, while his gaze fell on the Black-Striped White Tiger's icon.

After three seconds, his potential points gave a jolt, and seven points disappeared in an instant, becoming 816%.

The Black-Striped White Tiger's icon shook a little, and blurred for a moment, then became clear again, before growing still.

Garen waited for half a beat, but nothing else happened. Finally, he understood with painful regret, that the evolution had failed.

"11% chance... it's too low..." He wiped his face, that was all his accumulated savings over all this time. "Even if I try again, the result will probably be the same. With chances like that, two tries are too few. Looks like I'll still need to focus on upgrading one totem, and then hunt for potential points en masse."

He decided, his gaze falling onto the other totems.

Primitive totems: Neon Butterfly, Black-Striped White Tiger.

Silver totems: Howling Wererabbit (Form 2), Blue back Lizard, Grey-feathered Hawk, Deep Swamp Croc (Form 2).

Garen's gaze fell on the Deep Swamp Croc.

'Deep Swamp Croc: Short-Tailed Croc Form 2, Second Form Creature Totem. Upgradable, Probability of successful evolution: 24%. Potential point cost: 500%.

Abilities: Explosive Strike, Iron Hide, Parasitism.'

"Probability 24... it's too low... I'll give it a shot." His gaze fell on the Deep Swamp Croc, three seconds later.

The Croc's icon gave a sudden shudder, and then became clear again. It didn't move after that.

Smack!

Garen couldn't help but smack his palm onto the table.

Now he understood why there were so few Form Three totems. This was basically burning money and resources. He was still okay because he had his potential points, but if he was taking the conventional route, to raise enough resources just once would require several tens of millions. After burning that kind of money a few times, many people went bankrupt. A few more times, and you could lose up to a billion.

"What's wrong with you?"

"N-nothing, I just suddenly thought of something unpleasant." Garen resisted the rage burning within, and replied softly.

"I was talking about someone who wanted to take my things, I'm guessing her identity might be a bit troublesome. It should be..." Her question satisfied, Angel continued talking. She was completely unaware that Garen was currently distracted.

Garen finally looked at the potential points, 316%.

"I have only 3 points left, looks like I must look at the others." He hesitated, and his gaze instantly fell on the other Form Two, the Howling Wererabbit.

'Howling Wererabbit: Iron Rabbit Form 2, Second Form Creature Totem. Upgradable, Probability of successful evolution: 54%. Potential point cost: 300%.

Abilities: Explosive Stomp, Plant Exterminator (Voracious Eater).'

"This one has a probability of 54, that's considered very high. But this rabbit hasn't reacted much up till now, I don't know what its overall condition is like." Garen felt for the Howling Wererabbit's movements. From the other end of his spiritual connection, he felt a sense of weakness, as though it was hurt.

"Forget it, it's too far away, I don't dare to go out and look for it. Even if I did evolve it, it would still be outside and surrounded." Garen's gaze finally fell on the Blue back Lizard he had bought earlier. The Blue back Lizard's poison and the Neon Butterfly had helped him a ton. Back then he bought three of them experimentally, but perhaps he could see how this type of lizard would change when evolved to Form Two.

He looked at the last three potential points, and felt for the condition over at the Blue back Lizard. It was still normal.

He had hidden the three Blue back Lizard at his residence outside the city. There were few people there, and it seemed that the Silver Totems didn't attract Unihorn Lizards to attack either, instead making them treat the totems as part of their own.

"After a bit, I'll go back and start attempting the evolution." Garen decided, and brought his gaze back to Angel opposite him. She was just reaching the important part.

"...In the end one managed to escape. I can guarantee that she's hiding in some corner right now, observing me. She must have seen that we were talking. You be careful now, don't get seduced and lose your life." Angel asked for a cup of black tea, and sipped at it carefully."

"When I kill someone, I don't care whether they're pretty or not," Garen smiled. "What level are you at now? Any news about the Legacy?"

"If a Legacy was so simple, would I still be a fugitive for so long?" Angel shook her head. "The only opportunity would be to join a guild or a party. I don't have that qualification, but you do. I'm waiting for your promise, you know."

"This is what I have to contribute, when the time comes it'll be part of the the War Guild's shared resources." Garen thought it over, "Actually, I'm not very clear about the Guild's structure."

He paused, and dipped his finger into the black tea, writing on the table,

"The Guild is controlled by the War Parliament, which consists of nobles and officials. As members of parliament, they can elect a president to oversee the guild's affairs, as well directly appoint a Defense Minister.

The Vice President and the other ministers below are all appointed by the president. We're now in a crisis, so it'll probably be under the full control of the president and the other main ministers." Garen drew three dots, from top to bottom, to represent the three main powers.

Angel nodded, "I asked around before. The branch president, the defense minister, and the incumbent captain of the Headquarters' Cleansing Division. These are the three factions in the Guild now, all three of them have complete knowledge of the legacy. That Aska for one is from the Cleansing Division."

"How powerful..." Garen nodded. "It's too bad Jason, who was quite close to me, died. Otherwise, he was coincidentally part of the defense minister's faction, and we could have went to him. They need manpower right now, so they would surely all be looking for the scattered firepower. But whether I join or not, right now I need a reason." He looked at Angel.

Angel knew what he was talking about. "Didn't you swear to start a meritocratic organization? Are you giving up now?"

"To be precise, I'm not trying to up. I'm trying to get something, so I need to contribute something in return. It's the same for both of us. If I contribute but you earn, that's not fair to me," Garen replied simply.

"Simply put, we need a fixed long-term alliance. Is that what you're trying to say?" Angel understood, leaning on the back of the chair as she heaved a sigh of relief. "You want the War Chain's cover for core totems, right? I'll give it to you."

"As long as you agree."

Only he could see the condition of members in the War Chain, but before Angel hadn't given him the right to cover her core totem, which meant she didn't add her core totem into the War Chain.

And now, after Angel agreed, an icon of a black panther slowly appeared behind Angel's icon at the bottom of Garen's field of vision.

'Large Black Panther (brink of evolution): Angel's core totem, sharing state: 0.'

Chapter 298: Evolution 2

Garen nodded, satisfied. Now that this Large Black Panther on the brink of evolution was connected to the War Chain, Angel would be reluctant to give up the Large Black Panther she had raised for so long even if she wanted to leave on her own. This way, their relationship was even more secure.

Garen briefly told Angel about what he knew about raising totems. When it came to skills on raising leopard-type totems, however, he didn't have much to say. This required more detailed raising knowledge. Based on Aska, they were sure the War Guild in War Tank City had this sort of information.

The two of them sat in a corner, and soon enough, that one-armed waitress girl walked up to Garen's table, clearing the table for them.

"Mr Garen, Mr Caddy asks if you're willing to take Mr Jason's position," she suddenly asked Garen softly. "If you are, you can go talk to Miss Mina at the counter."

There it was!

This was what Garen was waiting for. At a time like this, the Guild would never let go of any firepower that they might recruit. This Mr Caddy was actually part of the president's faction.

Thomas' invitation from before was very likely to have come from another faction, but Garen had rejected him.

He exchanged a glance with Angel, and stood up. Walking towards the counter, he figured his relationship with Jason was still pretty decent, so joining them wasn't a bad path to take.

After the stout man buying medicines in front left, Garen walked to the counter, and rapped the tabletop.

"Come with me." The girl inside, Mina, glanced at him and smiled, then pulled open a small door from the left to allow Garen in.

Another young man took her place at the counter.

The two of them entered from a small door on the left, one after the other. Beyond the door there was a sizable tea room, with yellow wooden floors and walls, as well as similarly-hued tables, chairs, and lighting.

A middle-aged man with a goatie was writing something on his desk. Upon hearing footsteps, he lifted his head to look over.

"You've come." He stood up and welcomed Garen, reaching out his hand to shake Garen's.

"Hi, I'm Caddy. Right now I'm part of the Fourth Division, under the respected branch president. It's both our fortunes that you would choose our side."

This person was all smiles, and looked very friendly.

"You're too kind."

Garen shook hands with him, and the two of them sat at the table facing each other.

"Then, let's discuss the benefits of joining us." Caddy pulled a sheet of paper out of the stack of documents on the table, and flicked it to make a crisp sound. "The conditions we can give you are very simple. Firstly: A sufficiently safe base, to protect all our assets from infiltration. Secondly: You can buy low grade Legacy knowledge. Of course, if you need a Form 2, that would require higher authority and enough money. Thirdly: We'll give you prior access to better medicines, and higher quality equipment as well as facilities. Everyone can claim basic insurance rations every week: one set of medicine for external injuries, one set of medicine for stemming internal bleeding, one single-use defense tactic. One set of standardized nutrients. These are all free."

"Not bad at all. Tell me about my responsibilities." Garen knew that three sides had more or less the same conditions right now, at the most it would be a difference in which resource they had more of, and would then emphasize.

"You only have two responsibilities." Caddy was very satisfied with Garen's decisiveness. "Lord Engra has two divisions under his influence right now. I'm directly under the Discipline Division, and the other is the Self-defense Division. No matter which one you join, your responsibilities are, One: obey any urgent summons, and obey all rational orders. Two: complete your tasks and duties as your position requires."

Garen mused for a while, and started asking about the differences between working at the two divisions. The two of them discussed it for more than half an hour, and then Mina brought in the next person. Only then did Garen rise to leave.

Next would be his consideration on whether or not to join them, and their inspection of his identity and qualifications.

Upon leaving the room, the atmosphere in the Guild Quest Hall had gotten even rowdier. The hall was the size of a basketball court, and seated over a hundred people. There were people squeezed up to each other, making the place seem congested as there was a chaos of noise. The smell of blood mixed with the stench of sweat, wafting through the air.

Garen frowned.

His gaze swept over the hall, and realized that Angel had left. Thomas, Aska and the others were gone too, only unfamiliar faces remaining in the large hall.

Some young men and women dressed in black armor would occasionally go in and out of the entrance to the corridor, streaming through the hall.

These people in black armor walked through the hall and directly entered another corridor in the right, without even looking at the others in the hall.

Garen went out of the hall, and saw Angel in the corridor, leaning on a wall.

"So, how?"

"Waiting for the news," Garen replied. "I have something to do, I'll need to go back ahead. Are you alright on your own?" He could feel some gazes on Angel, sometimes there and sometimes not.

"It's fine, just some punks with a death wish." Angel smiled.

Garen nodded and cast her out of his mind, walking straight down the corridor. After taking some more turns, he followed the wide network of underground tunnels and was soon back at the entrance where he had come in.

He left the tunnel exit, closed the cover behind him, and was back at the metal ladder that led into the sewers. With a light tap of his foot, he catapulted his body up to the very top of the ladder. Reaching out his hand to push up the metal cover, he tried his best not to make any noise.

Garen poked out his head, and looked out.

The sky was dark out, and there was the cooing of insects. It was all quiet, but there was the sound of footsteps in the distance.

Garen quietly crawled out of the well cover, and closed it behind him, standing in the debris of the Guild Hall as he looked around.

Everything was in ruins about him, and he could vaguely see some figures looting for things by the pile of corpses in the shadows.

Garen looked towards the shadow of a collapsed wall on his right. In the darkness, a huge piece of charred wood moved, and then abruptly opened its eyes. It was actually a Deep Swamp Croc in hiding.

"I'll make a trip back, and then start a full-on hunt for the Unihorn Lizard, to rack up some potential points." Garen made the arrangements inwardly, and let the Deep Swamp Croc clear the way. He followed behind it, carefully vigilant of his surroundings.

The platinum-colored aura spread open soundlessly, stretching up to a hundred meters in radius.

Garen moved quickly, following outside the damaged city walls. Most of the buildings both inside and outside the city walls had been knocked down and collapsed.

After proceeding for a certain distance, in the distance ahead, a black silhouette darted out of a small ruined building. The shadow's face met Garen's at a distance, and both of them stopped.

Garen froze in his tracks, watching the other person dart into yet another clump of shadows, leaving quickly towards the right. Only then did he continue progressing.

The small area he lived in was towards the right on the outside of the city wall, and was surrounded by a smattering of other suburbs. There was even a small-scale produce market. That person had left in the direction of the market.

He didn't linger long, going through the ruins of this area and quickly turning a few more corners before he saw his own suburban house up ahead.

It was all quiet in the suburbs, dead quiet, without any sound whatsoever.

Garen stuck close to shadow of the houses near the wall, soundlessly approaching the suburbs.

The whole suburban area was empty. This place was very far from the city, and barely anyone lived here. Most of the houses weren't damaged. They just looked lonely and dead.

Garen carefully walked over, taking the pebbled path that led through the area. The white houses on both sides were eerily quiet, the windows like so many black holes, deep and dark.

Wah!

Suddenly there was a sound like a child's crying in Garen's ear. The noise was messy and grating, unusually piercing on the ears.

A wave of dizziness overcame him, and his reactions were instantly delayed by a beat. Then he saw the Deep Swamp Croc in front of him wave its tail to the left.

Bam!

A red shadow flew over like a shot, and rammed hard into the Deep Swamp Croc's tail, making a dull sound.

The Deep Swamp Croc made a low roar, and was actually pushed back by two steps. That red shadow also flew backwards, tumbling onto the lawn of a villa on the left and revealing its shape.

Garen took a sharp intake of breath. The red shadow was a baby with reddish-purple skin, completely naked and with a mouth full of sharp, serrated black teeth. One of its eyes was spotted with furry blue mould, while the other had long since dried out.

"This is... Obscuro's human experiments?!" Garen's expression turned slightly tortured.

He willed the Deep Swamp Croc to wind around the dead baby, as he walked around and ran towards his own villa.

Behind him, the sound of the baby's cries and the Croc's roars never stopped.

He quickly arrived at the center of the suburbs, where it was unusually clean. Ahead of him, on the left, some rats were surrounding a human arm and chewing away at it. Hearing footsteps, these rats immediately raised their heads, revealing their ferocious red eyes.

Squeak-squeak-squeak!

The red-eyed rats actually pounced at Garen like bugs.

"These Unihorn Lizards actually brought viruses with them?" Garen's expression became unpleasant. He was suddenly rather worried about his teacher, Emin, who was far away, as well as his cousin and Vanderman. Although Vanderman was only this body's cheap father, but they had still spent a long time together, and the man's concern for him was absolutely sincere.

He lightly jolted his foot, and a translucent circle of air spread open with a whoomph. The air went past the red-eyed rats, and the group of rats instantly fell to the ground, motionless.

Garen turned around and leapt over his own fence, took out the key and opened the door, then closed it behind him. The hall on the first floor was pitch-black, and some black shadows quickly pounced onto him.

Three Grey-feathered Hawks flew nimbly in circles around him, and three Blue Back Lizards climbed onto Garen's feet, acting cuddly.

"Let me try evolving the Grey-feathered Hawk first." Garen walked to the sofa and sat down. Without lighting the lamp, he raised his right arm, and let a Grey-feathered Hawk perch on his arm.

A Grey-feathered Hawk leapt up and landed on Garen's arm. Its beak was slightly longer compared to the other two, and its body slightly larger. When it stood, it was roughly a third of a person in height.

"It'll be you, then." Garen touched this Grey-feathered Hawk's head, his gaze falling onto this Grey-feathered Hawk's icon.

Three seconds later.

His potential points leapt to 16%. Three potential points vanished.

And this Grey-feathered Hawk's icon gave a jolt, slowly becoming blur.

Ba-thump, ba-thump...

The Grey-feathered Hawk flapped its wings, and took flight.

Its wings were growing longer, turning black, its body rapidly growing larger, expanding. Its two claws became sharper.

Squawk!!

At a speed that can be seen with the naked eye, this Grey-feathered Hawk grew from less than a meter to two whole meters. Even more strangely, its head actually rapidly grew, and tiny sharp teeth appeared in its sharp yellow beak. There was even a bright red sarcoma on his head, beating rhythmically like a heart.

In the dozen or seconds, this Grey-feathered Hawk directly went from a hawk into a huge, ferocious, monster bird. Standing on the floor of the hall, it furled up its wings, even taller than Garen was now.

Garen looked at the newly-changed icon of the Grey-feathered Hawk at the bottom of his vision.

Chapter 299: Ambush 1

'Resonance Hawk (named according to ability): Second form of Grey-feathered Hawk, Form 2 evolution totem. Not upgradable.

Ability: Resonance Burst (the sarcoma on its head can induce the enemy's heart to beat with it, increasing the burden on its heartbeat, and in extreme cases make it burst, causing death. Natural strength (it is very powerful)'

"Resonance Hawk?"

Garen closely observed the sarcoma on the Hawk's head. The growth beat non-stop like a heart. He reached out his hand to touch it,, and felt that it was warm and with a sturdy quality like rubber. It didn't feel as thin as it looked. When he sniffed it, he smelled the odor of eggs.

He straightened up and took a customary glance at the other Silver Totems around him. The other two Grey-feathered Hawks and the Blue Back Lizards were cowering in a corner, shivering, frightened away by the Resonance Hawk's presence.

He swept the corners of the hall with his gaze. There was a pile of leftover bones there, a creature had probably be brought in here by these little pets and eaten up.

Garen walked up to the store room and used his key to open the door. Inside, there were many crates of different foods and drinks.

He had prepared these in advance, supplies enough for ten people to survive on for a year. This was also the reason he left his pets here.

Opening one of the boxes, he took out a hard loaf of young grain bread. This long piece of bread was extremely sturdy, and was nearly as hard as a baseball bat. Just a little bit would be enough to keep someone full for a day.

He pinched off a bit and stuffed it straight into his mouth. There was instantly a crunchy crackly sound of chewing, as though he was chewing wood. He then took a pre-filled bottle of clean water, twisting off the cap and chugging it down.

He then lifted the whole box of supplies and walked out of the storage room, closing the door behind him and returning to the hall on the first floor.

After putting the box onto the floor next to the sofa, he sat down on the sofa. Wiped his face with his hands.

He hadn't had a proper chance to catch his breath all this time, so now that he finally had time to rest a little, Garen just sat on the sofa, and before he knew it he was lying down and fell asleep.

His consciousness a blur, he didn't know how long had passed when Garen suddenly awoke from the darkness. There was the sound of the Deep Swamp Croc roaring from the yard outside, together with the sharp piercing sobs of a baby.

He sat up in an instant, sensing two more little dots in his detection that were moving together next to the Deep Swamp Croc.

"Could it be a parasite?" He stood up, feeling his brain was still slightly fuzzy, and massaged his temples. "After coming here, I wonder if I had ever completely relaxed and rested even once... It sure feels good."

As he sighed, he walked to the window and looked out.

In the yard of the villa outside the window, the Deep Swamp Croc just happened to be biting down on a dead baby, and then swallowed it down with a few cracking bites. It was surrounded by two black beetles, about half a person tall.

The beetles were glistening bright, their outer shells reflecting light like a mirror under the moonshine. Their heads didn't have eyes or noses, but a large mouth full of sharp teeth, with a white snake's tongue poking out from it intermittently.

They were just like two round balls. They pushed their bodies forward, letting their mouths chomp down on flesh and blood, pulling the food into their stomachs.

The two parasites actually worked together to take down a dead baby, their fighting power was formidable.

"So those are the Deep Swamp Croc's parasites?" Garen carefully felt the Croc, and instantly discovered the minute connections between the Croc and the beetles.

Under the moonlight, Garen swept his gaze over the front yard.

The yard's neat and orderly grass had been utterly destroyed, and only yellow dirt and dark red blood stains remained. The fencing around the yard had also been knocked over and damaged.

A few red-eyed rats would occasionally scuttle across the main road of the suburbs outside, and a couple of Unihorn Lizards also dropped down slowly, crawling over the streets. The two Lizards saw the Deep Swamp Croc and the parasites but didn't attack them, treating them as one of their own, ignoring them and slowly passing by the front of the villa.

Garen let down the curtain, and ducked into the darkness of the villa.

Scree!!

There was occasionally the strange cry of the Unihorn Lizards from outside, as he hid alone in the villa, going up to the second floor by following the stairs.

After entering the study, he pulled out Angel's little notebooks from his pocket.

He put the three pale yellow notebooks and lightly drew the curtains, using the matches on the table to light the oil lamp. Suddenly, the whole study was illuminated.

He was very confident in the safety of the villa. The Deep Swamp Croc was patrolling outside, together with its two parasites. Now this was number three.

He had observed a little just now, and concluded that the parasites were equal to a Form One totem, and a rather fiercer Form One totem at that. It was just slightly weaker than a Unihorn Lizard, and already made a decent guard.

"The Deep Swamp Croc can produce three a day at most, but without a suitable parasite, the parasitism would not work so easily. While I'm studying tactics, I might as well have it leave one parasite to watch the house, and take one out myself for hunting. That way it can be used as food, and it can catch other parasites."

Garen sat down, and gave the Deep Swamp Croc the order to go hunting on its own with the largest parasite.

The Croc in the villa's yard instantly crawled out of the pitch black corner and soundlessly left the villa, crawling into the distance, followed by a small beetle behind it.

"Remember not to hurt anyone." Garen added an order. That was the benefit of Silver Totems, they had a specific level of simple intelligence, and could act on their own away from the main body. There was no need to worry about their loyalty either, as he could monitor their movements at all times, and control their lives at his will.

"Resonance Hawk, go stand watch." Garen gave the large hawk in the villa other orders.

Soundlessly, the hawk with a height of two to three meters and a wingspan of four to five meters took flight from the yard, landing on top of the villa before quietly furling its wings to perch there. The large hawk eyes swept the surroundings with a radius of several hundred meters at all times.

The two Grey-feathered Hawks followed it up there, and started to bring twigs and pieces of tree bark to build a nest on the roof. The Resonance Hawk, on the other hand, sprawled on the roof lazily, ordering its lackeys to build it a nest.

Garen decided to chase the three Blue Back Lizards out as well, so that they could patrol the yard at all times. He let them eat and stay outside, lest they stink up the inside of the villa with their unbearable odor.

"It's too bad their intelligence is still too low, and they don't know how to clean up." Garen sighed and shook his head, thinking that scattering his little pets around the villa would greatly increase its safety measures. In these almost apocalyptic times, he had a sense of safety.

"Right now, even Iron Tank City isn't as safe as my place. After all, these monsters all consider the Silver Totems as their brethren, so they won't start a large scale attack."

Garen straightened up and stacked the three notebooks on top of each other, flipping open the first one.

"Anglo Academy Secret Tactics: Sight Sharing"

The title of the book was written in a small line of delicate and graceful pale red letters, using the Kovistan standard language. As one of the strongest countries in the East Continent, the Kovistan language had very wide coverage. Many other countries were also fluent in this language, making it something of a lingua franca.

Garen flipped through it. This tactic required the continuous release of fifteen transcendent glyphs in a short window of time.

Transcendent glyphs were the figures written in the air using their natural ability.

This tactic required fifteen transcendent glyphs, all of different shapes with no repetition whatsoever. And the easiest one still required five strokes, while the hardest needed more than ten.

Garen referred to the necessary time limit at the top of the page: within 3 seconds.

He remembered when Angel released this tactic back then, it did seem like she used very few movements. But thinking back closely, her hands did move extremely quickly, and there was a slight tremor to it. The tremor wasn't involuntary, but well defined and rhythmic. It seemed to be the gestures needed to release an even higher level tactic.

Garen easily flipped through the whole notebook, and it remained fresh in his memory.

Satisfied, he glanced at his attribute pane.

'Strength 2.66. Agility 2.72. Vitality 2.76. Intelligence 2.53.'

"My intelligence has been fully restored, returning to the peak level from my previous life." Garen's gaze slid down, and he looked at the skill pane with a hint of anticipation.

There was still no movement there. Obviously tactics didn't fulfill some requirement too become a skill, or rather that potential points had no effect on tactics.

Slightly disappointed, he pulled back his gaze and focused all his concentration on carefully researching this Sight Sharing tactic.

Time trickled past. The oil in the lamp gradually grew drier, and grew less.

Garen repeatedly memorised everything in the notebook, and then began to draw it out with one transcendent glyph at a time. Each successful etching would light a whitish flame on the tip of his finger.

That was how he knew if he succeeded or not.

Smack.

The flame of oil lamp burst a little, as though it had ignited some form of impurity.

Garen instantly awoke from his concentration.

With Master-level ability when it comes to precision blueprints, his hands were as steady as an intricate machine, but his speed was still not up to par. He could only complete three transcendent glyphs in three seconds.

Taking out his pocket watch to look at the time, he realized it was already four in the morning. More than three whole hours had passed

"If it's this hard to progress for me, with Master-level precision blueprint steadiness, who knows how hard it must be for those who are weaker, at Intermediate-level, or Beginner-level."

Garen touched the sides of the notebook. It was full of wrinkles from being read too often over a long period of time. Be it the original owner or Angel, they must have read it countless times.

"I can't make it a skill, so I'll just have to practice non-stop the old fashioned way, with no shortcut to take." Garen quieted his heart. With his Divine Statue Technique, he had extraordinary endurance, and needed only three hours of rest per day to fulfill his biological needs.

Judging from this speed of progress, he would need at least a month or more before he can more or less grasp this tactic skill.

But this speed was all because of the micro-control needed for the secret techniques he had originally trained in, added together with his Master-level precision blueprint steadiness. If it was anyone else, they would need more than a year before they could even think about it. And yet the real result would more than likely be that they couldn't quite accomplish it even with more than a year's time.

The pale white sky quietly shone through the black cloth curtains.

Garen stretched, and finally brought his mind back from his training.

He glanced at the potential value in his attribute pane. It had jumped from that pathetic 16% to 132%.

"According to the previous comparisons, a Unihorn Lizard would equal to about 60% potential value, so now I have enough for two Unihorn Lizards. That sort of dead baby looked scary, but in truth it didn't have that much potential value. I killed one on the way, killed another just now, and after the Croc went it at least killed another, and yet we only reached 132%."

Chapter 300: Ambush 2

Garen stood up from his desk. Blowing out the lamp, he walked to the window, and drew the curtains with a whoosh.

Looking down from there, he saw the corpse of yet another Unihorn Lizard in the shadows by the walls. The body lay face down, a large, basketball-sized red sarcoma on its abdomen.

Garen felt for their connection, and discovered that these were the Deep Swamp Croc parasites' eggs.

He looked at the parasite eggs carefully, and noticed that they were faintly growing bigger. Pulling his gaze back, he drew the curtains closed, turned around and left the study, stepping his way down to the first floor.

The first floor hall was wide and empty, and a window on the right had been broken. The cold air blew in through the hole, making the curtains rise and fall, rise and fall.

Clearing out the bones and body bits out of the corner, Garen brought a large bucket of water out of the store room, and started cleaning the house from top to bottom. He used a wet cloth to rub the furniture down, and used a mop to clean the floor, especially the place at the corner where they used to keep the bodies.

After cleaning everything once, using up several buckets of water, and spending half an hour of time, Garen finally called it a day.

"This will be my long-term base from now on." He breathed in the clean air, feeling satisfied. Without the rotting stench of bodies and the pets' foul breath, he felt instantly lighter.

"The stuff in the store room can last me several years, and then I can go out hunting for Unihorn Lizard every few days, and use that as my source of meat."

He was completely unbothered by the bacteria brought by these Silver mutants. With his body, he didn't need to worry at all about most bacteria. If any harmful substance entered his body, he would be able to sense it immediately, and then he could use his powerful blood chi to mass produce the relevant antibodies and white blood cells to swallow the bacteria right up.

Garen remembered clearly that this uproar had actually gone out of Obscuro's control, or perhaps they never intended to control it from the start. Stronger mutants kept appearing one after the other, the infections grew worse, and humanity's living space was constantly getting invaded, the population decreasing dramatically.

Perhaps this was the perfect world Obscuro wished for. Survival of the fittest, natural selection, the weak had no choice but to die. They discovered a power that even they couldn't control, and chose to release it, attaining their motive of destroying all existing order.

Throwing out all the miscellaneous rubbish, he made the Blue Back Lizards act as rubbish trucks, carrying the waste to a domestic trash landfill in the distance.

Garen took a relaxing bath, and then changed his clothes.

The Blue Back Lizards had the ability to dig into the ground, so he let the three Lizards dig from the floor of the kitchen itself. When one got tired the other would take its place, until they find an underground water source.

As for Garen himself, he did one round of secret technique training in the first floor hall, had breakfast, and then returned to the second floor to continue researching tactics.

The Deep Swamp Croc would occasionally go out hunting, bringing back Unihorn Lizards for food and parasitic purposes. Within three days, the parasites increased from two to five. If it weren't for the fact that two of them failed, it might even have been more.

The Resonance Hawk would fly out on its own once in a while. The gigantic bird with a wingspan of four, nearly five meters was like a fighter jet. It flew out here, and soon came back all covered in wounds, a Unihorn Lizard in its claws for food. It would even share with the other two Grey-feathered Hawks.

Every time it flew out, Garen could sense his potential points leaping twice or thrice. Evidently the Resonance Hawk directly faced off with two or three Unihorn Lizards at once. Unlike the Deep Swamp Croc that snuck out at night for stealth hunting, it fought head-on, and could actually succeed in its hunt when outnumbered. And its wounds weren't all that serious either, allowing it to recover very quickly.

This greatly increased Garen's approval of it.

In almost three days' worth of time, Garen's potential points had gone up by six whole points. He immediately put them all onto evolving the other two Grey-feathered Hawks. One of them succeeded, but the other unfortunately failed, wasting three potential points.

The two Resonance Hawks built a nest on top of the villa together, the second one still afraid of the first Resonance Hawk. Garen named the first one No. 1. It was the largest Resonance Hawk that also evolved the fastest, and its intelligence was equivalent to that of a two-year-old child, so it could even carry out some simple orders. Garen put it in charge of the other Resonance Hawk and the Grey-feathered Hawk. Together, they were in charge of surveilling the movements around the villa.

Garen didn't know what the situation was like in the inner city. He stayed safely in the villa, continuously working on his power. The Deep Swamp Croc and the Resonance Hawk kept on killing all the monsters around them, and his potential points could be continuously increased without any danger as well. As long as he didn't purposely reveal himself, he wouldn't attract a large scale attack from the monsters.

Afternoon

Garen sat quietly, eating the mashed potatoes he made as he stood by the wall of the villa's side yard.

In front of him, Resonance Hawk No. 1 was facing down the Deep Swamp Croc. The two beasts glared at each other ferociously, about to launch into a terrifying attack at any moment.

The Resonance Hawk stood on the ground, its wings flapping constantly and bringing up gusts of winds.

The Deep Swamp Croc tossed its tail, soundlessly sprawled onto the ground, waiting for an explosive strike.

Garen held his plate and spooned the mashed potato into his mouth, watching the battle quietly.

He had never observed the Resonance Hawk's abilities closely. This was the perfect opportunity, he planned to let the two beasts compare against each other, to see exactly how their true powers match up.

The two beasts stood off for a while, and then the Deep Swamp Croc suddenly pounced. It didn't open its mouth to bite, instead crashing into its opponent with brute force.

Bam!

The Deep Swamp Croc was actually knocked flat onto its back by the Resonance Hawk. It made a flip, revealing its white stomach. It tried to get up, but was immediately pressed down by the Resonance's Hawk sharp talons, trapped down to the ground hard.

The Resonance Hawk kept flapping its wings, generating a great force, keeping the Croc down and unable to turn over.

"What formidable strength." Garen narrowed his eyes, looking at the Resonance Hawk thoughtfully.

Among the Resonance Hawk's abilities, there was an icon for natural strength. This evidently manifested in its extraordinary strength. Even the Deep Swamp Croc was no match for it.

Garen began to understand. The Grey-feathered Hawk could only evolve to Form 3. As a creature whose original form was merely a wild animal, it wasn't one of those primitive totems that had been studied for a long time, and had extremely high evolution levels. Its evolution was more towards using the potential points to awaken its genetic potential, to find the strongest part of its genes and then strengthen and replicate it. In the end, it would be the strongest of its genes. This definition of strongest was evidently influenced by the direction the potential points took it in.

It might be a state that existed in the past, or a state it could evolve into in the future, anything was possible.

And within the Grey-feathered Hawk's genes, the strongest would probably be the Resonance Hawk's form.

The sound of the two beasts clashing quickly attracted the attention of a Unihorn Lizard to flew over. This Unihorn Lizard pounced down fiercely, directly grabbing for the giant Resonance Hawk.

This savage animal had a strange habit. They weren't afraid of dying, but they particularly liked tearing their prey into pieces. They enjoyed the sense of accomplishment from tearing prey into pieces, and instead focused less on hunting for food.

The Resonance Hawk's eyes went red, and it raised its head to face the Unihorn Lizard pouncing down from above, the sarcoma on its head expanding and beating.

Ba-thump! Ba-thump!!

The continuous heartbeat instantly spread, until even Garen could hear it from the side.

Ba-thump! Ba-thump! Ba-thump! Bump! Bump! Bumpbumpbumpbump...

The sarcoma beat faster and faster, faster and faster, until in the end it was almost a continuous sound, beating twice or thrice every second.

Bam!!

In the air, the Unihorn Lizard's eyes grew redder and redder, large bloody spots appearing all over the surface of its body. It fell head-first, landing heavily on the fence next to Garen and rolling onto the ground before it finally fell totally still.

Squawk!

The Resonance Hawk opened its beak and made a strange cry, walking over and biting down on the Unihorn Lizard, mercilessly pulling away a piece of flesh and began devouring it hungrily.

Garen also walked over to inspect the body. He just reached out his hand to pat it lightly, and judging from the echo, he could feel that something was wrong on the inside.

"Impressive! The heart burst due to the vibrations. No wonder the Resonance Hawk's first ability is called Resonance Burst. This is an instant kill!" Garen sighed inside. When facing such an ability, he believed he had a certain resistance to it. After all, this was a test of one's control over their own blood and organs. But if a few more Resonance Hawks showed up... His heart also gave a cold shiver.

He carefully observed the Resonance Hawk's state. This guy seemed rather down, and even the sarcoma on its head was dimmer, no longer the bright red it usually was. That meant it needed some time to recover.

Through their connection, he made it do another round of Resonance Burst, but the reply was weak, and he needed to wait for a reply.

Garen poured the mash into his stomach with a few gulps, put down the plate, and walked up to the Deep Swamp Croc.

This one was fully recovered, if still rather unhappy and hostile towards the Resonance Hawk.

Garen let it use Tackle on himself. The Deep Swamp Croc hesitated, and then performed the order.

It roared, and lowered its body, as though gathering power.

Whoomph!

It instantly turned into a black shadow, blowing up strong gusts of wind as it rammed into Garen, who stood still.

Garen steadied his feet. Just now the Resonance Hawk made it seem like this was very easy to dodge, so he wanted to see how strong his power was now compared to totems.

When he could really feel that unbelievably powerful wind blasting in his face, he mustered all the strength in his body, making it instantly grow up to two meters tall. The platinum aura instantaneously was absorbed back into his body, becoming a halo of platinum light around him.

"Red Jade!!" He pushed his hands out, his palms as clear as red jade, bringing an intense heat as he held it against the Croc's head.

Bam!!

The man and the beast both retreated two steps. Somewhat dazed, Garen pulled back his hands and stopped, at the same time motioning for the Croc to stop as well.

He looked at his hands, unharmed in the slightest due to the protection of the Totem Light. And because the Deep Swamp Croc also had a layer of Totem Light, carrying the same properties of a Totem Light attack, it managed to break through that layer of defense, and was only forced back by the pure momentum of it, remaining similarly unhurt.

But the black Totem Light on the surface of its skin was rippling non-stop, evidently the impact from that collision just now.

Such a collision actually had twice the impact of a one-sided attack on the relevant area.

Obviously, Garen's Totem Light was much stronger than that of the Deep Swamp Croc.

"It's too bad purely physical attacks would find it too hard to break through the Totem Light."

Garen did some calculations. He had finally returned to the very peak state of his previous life. If he used his body alone to face the strength of the Totem Light, and brought out everything he had, he could still only break past an elite Form 1 totem's Totem Light if he focused all his power on one spot for three attacks.

If he wanted to be a totem user using his secret techniques, he would still have a difficult journey ahead of him.