

Mystical 321

Chapter 321: Dazzle 1

Garen kept observing the changes in the sky as he left the War Guild.

Huge numbers of White Dragonhawks and Giant Hawks were battling with the creatures and corpses would plummet from the sky from time to time.

The streets were completely empty as most of the citizens had gone to defend the borders. Only a few people remained in the center of the inner city.

A melody of harp music drifted from Garen's right. It was a middle age man with a freckled face. He was giving his all to a performance that no one was listening to.

"Life is like a water splash without the foam, clear and paradoxical. What is the purpose of the war when I hear the sadness of the Iron Tank City during its night. I could clearly hear the creatures scream in the wee hours. Ahh~~~ The blood is red and it is so thick... Yet tears are colorless and so thin... Life, where it could bloom a cursed flower, could also bloom a pure lily. Ahh~~ Will you please tell me if the beauty eventually dies..."

The poet's musical voice echoed in the empty streets.

Garen saw the tears on his face and a black golden adonis flower adorning his chest, which was only worn when a family member died.

Garen gently pulled down his hood as he walked past this person.

Inside the white Palace in the inner city.

At the center of the empty Palace laid a pyramidal hero monument.

The monument was pure white in color and black names were densely carved onto it. They were the names of the totem users who died during the war.

Multiple men in black stood in front of the monument.

One of them was a youngster. He was looking at the pyramid in silence, thinking of something.

"The Memorial Tower, where all the dead totem users were buried here and had their names carved." An old man walked towards the monument as he said softly. "Aisaiya, I hope you live a better life in heaven and not suffer like how you did here..." He gently spread soul sand onto the pyramid. The black sands landed onto the pyramid and gave off a sizzling noise.

Garen, too, grabbed a handful of sand and gently spread them out.

He spread the sand at the familiar name in the pyramid.

'Andy Cruise'

"May you rest in peace in heaven." He muttered.

"Perhaps I have been keeping a low profile for too long... I have almost forgotten the glory back in those days." Garen opened his hands and quietly stared at his hands which had taken countless lives. "Time will eventually erode a human's will, and I am not excluded. Perhaps it's not too late..."

He looked passed the pyramid through the small gaps and saw a little girl standing at the opposite end of the pyramid. She had a long golden hair with fair and tender cheeks. The girl was quietly staring at him in sadness as well.

An adult and a child, staring at each other in silence.

Garen smiled, turned around and left as he put on his black robe.

Kaboom!

The right halo instantly exploded the abandoned area and shattered many fragments of stones into dust.

Goth stared coldly at the creatures that had exploded. This creature that resembled an ostrich had instantly died to him.

Behind him stood a man and a woman in white shirts with golden sleeves.

"Be careful! The Thousand Moon Flower is just up ahead" Goth ordered softly.

"Don't worry about it." The white-clad woman huffed. "I alone could have completed the mission if not for my superior, who wanted me to work with you!"

"Quit it Aisijia. It wasn't Goth's fault!" The white robed man placated her.

Goth continued walking forward without any change in expression.

Two of them followed closely.

The situation in the inner city had been stagnant for a while and they required an elite to eliminate the energy source of the creatures' Enhanced Spirit Light, the Thousand Moon Flower. It's a magical item that was created by the Creature army's Sammy, which could provide endless stamina and strength towards the army.

Goth's team was one of the few that were ordered to take care of the Thousand Moon Flower.

Goth was still replaying the scene of him meeting his father.

The father that had never tired in his memory, had been covering his wrinkled face with his hands.

"It's alright. Have confidence in your father. I am the Iron Tank City's Grand Duke White Dragonhawk and I have a formidable presence even going against the royal alliance. The Heart of the Dragonshadow is nothing."

"Go and battle with ease and do not let other things distract you. You are my son and my pure blood flows within you. The Blackfield Birds are the proof of the bloodline." The Grand Duke looked at Goth and his injured eye with sympathy, as though he saw himself in the past.

"You have to learn to forget. If you're truly unable to forget them, keep them as the beliefs within your heart."

Goth felt warmth inside him.

"I still have my father. He would not lie to me..."

The Grand Duke's words were like a sharp sword that instantly destroyed the confusion in his mind.

Goth unconsciously sped up as they arrived at the outskirts through the dark passage. They were attempting to alleviate the stress upon the inner city.

Huuu~~~~

Suddenly, the Dragonhawk Horn's blast echoed from the inner city.

"It's the Dragonhawk Horn! The final battle in the inner city is about to begin! The Three-eyed Black Bear and the remaining third form creatures have appeared!" Goth turned his head and looked at the inner city. His red totem light expanded and turned the surrounding creatures into mince meat.

Countless creatures had gathered to form the black cloud above the inner city.

"It's starting..." The girl in white robe whispered.

"Quick! We have to speed up!" Goth muttered. "We will retreat immediately once we destroy the Thousand Moon Flower!"

"Okay!" Both of them responded in unison. Both of them were the strongest form two totem users. Excluding the form three totem users who were currently busy, they were the best candidates for this mission. Since the city was lacking many form three totem users, they simply couldn't send out their men for an away mission as they had more important things to take care of.

Furthermore, a form three totem user would've attracted a lot of attraction so they had specifically sent out the elites from the form two totem users for this mission.

The three of them jumped through the abandoned grey city at incredible speed, passing through countless creatures. These creatures were under the form three ultimate creature's command to rush into the inner city so they would ignore the trio unless they were being attacked by them. The three of them had high speed so they instantly killed the ones they could kill and avoid the stronger ones. Just like this, they had arrived at an abandoned wall in the outskirts.

"This is it!" Goth confirmed the mission's location from his memories. "Start searching! There should be Transparent Creatures around! Stay alert Aisijia!"

The girl in white robe didn't say another word and took out a white short staff and slammed it onto the ground.

Pew!

An invisible ripple expanded through the region with her at the center of its source.

Multiple invisible wolf type creatures were discovered by the ripple as they were trying to ambush the trio from their back.

Aisijia sighed and a silver light burst out from her back and shifted into a white hawk that spanned at least three meters. It immediately killed off the transparent wolf type creatures in her surroundings.

The beak of the giant hawk was burned with a brown flame. As it opened its mouth, it spewed a brown torrent of flames and scorched all the wolves. The wolves started to roll on the ground in silent agony and died after a few moments of struggle. What was left behind were burnt corpses that were no longer invisible.

Goth and the other man were looking for the Thousand Moon Flower's potential hiding spot.

"I found it!!" The man in white robe yelled in excitement.

They gathered and found a square transparent black box underneath the rock. Inside it lay a delicate and beautiful black crystal flower.

The flower stood straight and there appeared to be a black pearl in the middle of the petals.

"Thousand Moon Flower! Let's quickly destroy it!" Goth ordered. "The time limit is 1 minute. Once we attack the Thousand Moon Flower's defense, we will definitely alert the form three totem users. We will work together and attack at the same time!"

"Okay!" "Okay!"

Three of them placed their hand onto the black transparent box at the same time.

Suddenly, a deafening avian cry rang forth from the inner city.

Chirp!!!

It sounded like a cross between an eagle and a nightingale and the outcry reverberated throughout the inner city.

"That was... The cry of the Grand Duke's Dragonhawk King!!" Aisijia recoiled as her face was filled with despair. "Only an injured Dragonhawk would produce such a noise!!! We must go back and support them!"

"Quickly!!"

Goth started to panic.

Three of them took out a yellow scroll, which was covered in Tactic symbols.

"Tactic Curse!" Aisijia glanced at Goth

"Dragon Spirit Summon!!" Goth shouted.

A high pitched sound rang out and red lightning burst forth from all three of their scrolls at the same time. The red lightning soared and struck the surface of the black box as wind gusted in all directions.

The red lightning slowly shifted into tiny dragonhawks hovering around the box.

Crack!

A fissure gradually widened on the box.

The black flower started to wither at a rate where the process could be seen with the naked eye. It swiftly arched down from a straight posture and soon turned into a pool of black ash.

"Let's go!!" Goth shouted as they packed up the scrolls and retreated.

Two white Giant Hawks grabbed the duo in white robes to increase their speed. The Blackfield Bird chirruped and melded into Goth's body, increasing his speed tremendously.

The three of them accelerated into streaks of black and white, and sprinted towards the inner city.

As the three of them were moving swiftly, something appeared in a dark corner on their right.

"How could I let you guys leave and destroy the work of my lord?" A shrewd voice whispered from the shadows. "The Blackfield Birds. Hehe. If it could merge into the Grand Duke's White Dragonhawk Totem, its strength would be unexpectedly strong. I didn't expect to have such a little surprise. Three form two totem user elites? It will be a good appetizer for my babies, hehe."

A man clad in a black robe sauntered out from the shadows as he stared at Goth with his Emerald eyes. Although the movements of his legs appeared slow, it was surprisingly agile as he surged towards Goth's team to intercept them.

He then stomped the ground with his leg.

"Who is it!" He looked to the right as his emotions started to falter.

"A battle is the collision of life. A stage for us to perform our best dances." A second man walked out from the darkness. He was also in a black robe and had short golden hair. His eyes couldn't be seen, but he projected a fierce and powerful aura.

"Do you want to spice up your life? Trash from the Obscuro Society?"

Garen took off his hood and squinted his eyes.

In an instant, pairs of emerald eyes surrounded him from the darkness.

From the top view with Garen as the center of point, green eyes were densely packed staring at him from up to a hundred meters away. These Giant Wolves were emitting a faint signal. They were all from two totems!

The man in his black robe smiled as he stared at Garen with his green eyes.

Goth's team was sprinting across the abandoned buildings. Suddenly Goth picked up a strange signal.

"What was that?" He couldn't see anything as he was moving so swiftly.

"What's wrong?" The man in white robe asked loudly. Two white streams were generated by the Giant Hawk above his head, which tore apart whatever was in their way.

"It felt like someone was there... whatever, let's move quickly!" Goth dismissed the thought.

"Okay."

Chapter 322: Dazzle 2

Garen looked at the man in black nearby. He wasn't one of Jess' men from this area.

He had used the Derivator before to check information about all of Jess' subordinates, but he wasn't one of them.

Brr...

In the air above the inner city, far away, a sphere of black light was continuously expanding, like a growing fireball.

The sky and the ground began to tremble. The surface of the light ball kept shooting out pillars of black light, each light pillar accurately hitting the totem users in the inner city.

Vaguely, everyone could see the bird-like creatures sprawling their wings and chirping within the light ball. They had long and sleek black tail feathers, graceful wings, and a peacock crown shining with silver light.

Brrr!!!!

The black birds once more made a loud, jolting cry.

The black ball of light instantly scattered into a halo of black ripples, throwing all the nearby totem users away into the air.

Garen didn't turn back to look at the black light ball's terrifying attack, his gaze quietly fixed on the green-eyed man before him.

"You're not one of Jess' men," he said suddenly.

The other party's green eyes gave an abrupt jolt.

"Who the heck are you!?"

"Devour him, White Dragon!"

Garen spoke those words calmly.

Whoom!!

A large white shadow fell from the sky, and rushed towards the man in black.

The Petrifying White Dragon immediately sprayed a large cloud of grey-white mist, covering this entire area.

It was as though the grey-white mist had a life of its own, gathering towards the man in black en masse. As soon as this mist touched the ground, be it the grass or the rocks, the dead bodies and carcasses, the blood stains... everything would be quickly petrified, turning into grey-white stone.

The swarm of Green-eyed Giant Wolves rushed towards Garen madly, with total disregard for their lives, but were completely surrounded by the petrifying mist in mid-air. They howled, their bodies quickly turning into grey stone, and they fell to the ground one by one. But these then morphed into puddles of green liquids, which meant none of them was the real thing.

The man in black wanted to raise his hand, but realized in shock that his actions were more than a little stiff. He tried to draw tactics in the air.

Boom!!

A huge amount of grey-white petrifying mist swept past where he stood.

The man in black was immediately petrified into a human-shaped statue.

Garen turned his head to look into the distance.

The Dual Headed Salamander slowly pointed its head out of the ground, holding a Green-eyed Wolf as big as a calf in its mouth. The Giant Wolf's body was shriveling up, fast enough for the naked eye to see.

Ker... Ker-chak!

The Dual Headed Salamander broke the Green-eyed Wolf's body in half with one bite.

At the same time, the petrified man in black also broke apart. With a whoosh, he became a pile of meaningless rubble.

Garen looked at the corpse of stones that had been killed instantly.

"A totem user outside of Jess', interesting."

He turned around to look at the sky of the inner city. That giant mass of black light was madly sweeping shots at the totem users inside the city. Several small platinum dots were circling the light balls and attacked non-stop, but in the end they could only wander outside, held away by the light.

"Goth, this is as far as I can help you..." Garen murmured as he looked at the inner city. "Don't die..."

He stood alone amidst the swarm of monsters. Countless monsters walked past him, but none at all attacked him. He was like a coral in the current, they split and went around him as though it was natural.

The giant black light ball floated mid-air.

The Grand Duke was wearing platinum armor and riding the Platinum Dragonhawk King, avoiding the black laser light pillars with the speed of the lightning.

He gripped his giant gold-colored Dragon Spear, pointing the spike on the sharp end towards the black light ball.

Hiss!

A pillar of black light brushed past his face, making his Totem Light tremble and shake.

"You alright, Reid." A woman's voice came from the platinum-colored Dragonhawk. There was already a large silver abrasion wound on its stomach, dripping slowly with silver blood.

"I'm fine." The golden hairband behind the Grand Duke's head had been blown away, and his long golden hair blew about in the air behind him. "After so many years, it's been so very long since I fought together with you. Thinking about how we used to conquer together back in the day, my heart still palpitates even now."

"The opponent this time is far more challenging than any battle before, you and I might die in battle here," the Platinum Dragonhawk King said calmly, her silver eyes shimmering with a human-like light.

"That's fine, I've long wanted to join her down there. I'm just sorry to trouble you, to make you come with me." The Grand Duke's expression showed a hint of gentleness. The black light of the light ball shone on his face, as though plating him with a layer of holy light.

"Why are we still talking about this? Your son has already awakened the Blackfield Bird, why don't you ask him to let you temporarily merge with his totem, so you have a higher chance of finishing off the enemy?" the Platinum Dragonhawk King asked softly, confusion in her voice.

"I've already made him leave the core area here. That way, I can protect the lineage for my family." The Grand Duke suddenly paused. From above in the air looking down, he could already feel that familiar aura rapidly approaching.

"Didn't I ask him to leave here!?" He frowned for the first time.

Suddenly he heard the waves of cheers from below.

"Blackfield Bird!! It's the Blackfield Bird!"

"As long as it merges with the Platinum Dragonhawk King, it can create the legendary strongest King of the Skies!!"

"We won't lose!!"

Many of the totem users below them were well-read, and instantly recognized the black bird with its wings outstretched.

Once the Blackfield Bird merged into the Dragonhawk King, the strongest King of the Skies would appear once more. When that happened, they would definitely be able to finish off that strange bird in the air!

That was the understanding everyone reached at the time. The dozen or so remaining Form Three totem users were all staring intently at the Blackfield Bird carrying Goth. The giant black bird flapped its wings and rushed towards the Dragonhawk King, its eyes also filled with leaping black flames.

This was the last hope for all those people who could barely catch their breath under the light ball's oppression!

The Blackfield Bird and Dragonhawk King constantly avoided the countless black light pillars and approached each other.

The Grand Duke looked at his son, who was riding on the Blackfield Bird's back, helplessly.

"You shouldn't have come back..." He had purposely let Goth go to the outskirts, to leave the core, just so he couldn't come back for now, but to think... He had always felt guilty towards this pair of mother and son, towards that female totem user, who was so gentle, and who had always supported him quietly behind his back. Sadly, it was already too late to understand that now. She was already dead as well...

And now, now, all he had left was his son.

Looking at Goth flying towards him with determination in his eyes, he was suddenly and indescribably moved.

The Blackfield Bird flapped its wings, and suddenly accelerated, avoiding a blast of black light that shot towards it, and rushed towards the the Dragonhawk King.

Pff!

In an instant, the Blackfield Bird abruptly spat a gold thread from its mouth.

The gold thread pierced through the Dragonhawk King's wounded stomach in the blink of an eye, and with a hiss, emerged from its back.

It was as though the sky fell instantly quiet. Everyone was shocked.

Silver blood poured down from the Dragonhawk King's stomach.

No one guessed this would happen.

The smile on Goth's face froze, his eyes widened, filled with disbelief and despair. He shook his head, his lip bleeding from where he bit it, and his expression panicked.

"No... No... It wasn't me... It shouldn't be like this! ...Not like this...!!" He kept shaking his head, sitting on the Blackfield Bird, the despair in his eyes so deep it was nearly madness.

The gold thread bent, and with another whoosh, it went straight through the Grand Duke's armor, as well as his heart in his left breast.

"No!!!" He heard Goth's angry roar of despair.

The Grand Duke looked down in shock, staring at the gold thread on his left chest. His expression went from surprise and pain, to dazed, release, and peace.

His mouth coughed out some blood despite himself.

"I'd only truly remove the Totem Light's core defense when merging, you sure counted accurately..." He seemed to understand something.

"Reid... To think... that we really are going to die together this time..." The Dragonhawk King laughed somewhat sadly, but it was difficult.

The Grand Duke smiled sadly as well.

He wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth, and slowly turned his head to look at Goth underneath him, his face already covered with tears. Even this simple movement seemed to be unnaturally hard for him.

"Don't cry, this life of mine has already been interesting enough. This isn't your fault." He raised his head, his face nothing but peaceful. "Life is like a show, there are ups and downs, highs and lows. I have just walked to the ending I was meant to reach."

"Father..." Goth sat on the Blackfield Bird, but was completely unable to control his own body. He could not help but grab the gold thread, and toss it hard. The sharp tip of the gold thread poked out again, and penetrated the Grand Duke's heart once more.

Psst!

Goth's face was covered with tears, he had no idea what he was doing. An unimaginably huge power was controlling him, making him do these completely incomprehensible things.

The Grand Duke smiled, his face already rapidly growing pale. He glanced at the strange bird's light ball in front of him, now gathering an unprecedented black light. The overwhelming sense of danger already felt as though it could explode at any time."

"Goth... don't blame your mother... If possible, please... protect the Dragonhawk family's Iron Tank City for me..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he abruptly waved his hand.

A powerful invisible force field suddenly spread out, pushing Goth away. It sent him flying, towards the most important core of the inner city, the Grand Duke's residence.

The Grand Duke faced the black light, on the verge of explosion, and an intensely burning desire to battle rose in his eyes.

"Come, Anna! Let my people witness the true glory of our Dragonhawk family!!!"

"As you wish!" The Dragonhawk King's gentle voice reverberated throughout the sky.

"Howl of the Heavenly Arc!!!"

In an instant, a blinding ball of golden light appeared in the sky, and hung high in the air just like the black light ball. A web of black and golden electric arches wove between the two light balls, and the sound of crackling electricity was everywhere.

By now, the totem users had been forced down into the lower skies or onto the ground by this extreme force. No one could have predicted this result.

The two light balls were like magnets, rapidly attracting each other.

And then there was the soundless collision.

Goth had been blasted into the pond in the Duke's residence. Both he and the Blackfield Bird were numb all over, completely unable to get up or move. They could only stare blankly at the dazzling golden light ball in the sky.

His face was drowned in tears, and he tried to open his mouth, but couldn't say anything.

A flash of blinding white light instantly dazzled the sky.

Boom!

A suit of platinum armor crashed down in front of Goth, steadily sticking into the grey-white stone floorboards.

That was the Grand Duke's legendary armor, and also the White Dragonhawk family's heirloom. The left chest that had been pierced by the golden thread just now was presently good as new.

After a long time, the light faded, and the stiffness enveloping Goth's body also slowly diminished.

He walked out of the pond, covering his face with his hands, and silently knelt down in front of the armor.

Chapter 323: Leave 1

Garen stood in front of the memorial tower in the inner city, wearing a golden adonis flower. Standing alone in the line of people dressed in black, Garen didn't stand out in the slightest.

Everyone in front and behind him stood in a straight line, making offerings to the Grand Duke's body one by one. Those who had offered their flowers walked away quietly, and stood to a side. The people behind him followed suit quietly.

In the wide memorial hall, everyone somehow came to an unseen agreement to not make any sound.

In the large grey-white hall, next to a pyramid-shaped memorial tower, there were the Grand Duke's remains. His body had been frozen by a platinum-colored, amber-like translucent metal.

Garen didn't recognize the people in front of and behind him, but the shimmering ripples around everyone prove that nobody here was weak. With all these people lined up here, only he had a Form One totem user's Totem Light.

Everyone else was either a Form Three or Form Two totem user, their bodies covered with the thick scent of blood.

Anyone who could survive safely in these times, would definitely be an executioner whose hands were stained with the blood of countless monsters.

Soon, it was his turn.

Garen took one step forward, and put the adonis flower in his hand in front of the crystal coffin lightly. He bowed, and turned to the left.

He glanced over. It was compact with people, but he didn't recognize a single one.

The people were gathered in twos or threes, speaking softly. Some stood alone at a side, their expressions cold. Not far away, a heavy air hung over the nobles.

Garen didn't see Goth anywhere.

After the Grand Duke expended his life to clash with that strange bird yesterday, the army of monsters suffered a heavy loss, and finally retreated. That strange bird was also grievously hurt, and flew away pathetically to save its life.

The situation had been temporarily stabilized.

But Goth had vanished without a trace.

Garen sighed. At first he had only come here to meet Goth for his own personal gain, but he didn't think that after seeing the scenes from history with his own eyes, he would feel rather upset inside.

Soon enough, a middle-aged man and woman entered the memorial hall, both wearing platinum armor, covered by a white robe with silver edges.

"Lady Vesta, Lord Kanan." The receptionist went up to them and greeted them respectively.

"The situation is urgent, we can only stay for a short while." The man, Kanan, nodded solemnly. He and Vesta were now the strongest Form Three totem users in the inner city. Although they were still far from as strong as the Grand Duke, the monsters were obviously too afraid to really bear down on the inner city after the fright from the previous battle. The situation had also calmed down significantly.

A group of people surrounded the two of them respectfully as they walked to the coffin. Some asked about the situation, some were worried, some wanted a guarantee.

Most of the people went up to them, surrounding them in hopes of getting the answer they wanted.

Garen gave the center a wide berth, feeling suddenly frustrated at the rather noisy situation inside.

Turning around and leaving the hall, he raised his gaze to look. The surroundings were echoing empty, and he could barely see anyone anymore. There were only a few lonely people with numb expressions walking on the road. Most of them had already ducked into the defense fortifications that had been built in advance.

Garen had already searched everywhere, but hadn't caught even a glimpse of Goth's shadow.

It was empty inside the city now, there were too many places for him to hide. Walking on the main street, he wandered for a bit but eventually decided to leave the inner city through the underground tunnels.

"Garen?"

A confused voice came from a passing carriage.

Garen turned around, and looked towards the black carriage that had stopped beside him.

"You are?"

The carriage door curtain was pulled aside, revealing a solemn man's face. "I saw you that at Goth's house. Won't you come up for a chat?"

Garen hesitated. "Alright."

He pulled aside the curtain, entered the carriage, and sat on the man's right.

The carriage gave a slight jolt, and started moving again.

The man looked at the street outside calmly. "That day I went to investigate Goth's house, and just happened to see you walking out from inside. How is it? Do you know the situation?"

Garen shook his head. "I'm completely in the fog right now. Goth was controlled by someone and killed his own father, but who on earth controlled him? And what's up with Jessica?"

The man's face flashed with a hint of heaviness.

"We've already started our initial investigations on this matter, but only a few higher-ups know about it. All of this started with Goth's mother, Jeanria Jess."

"Jess?" Garen's gaze grew serious.

"You know about it too?" The man glanced at Garen in surprise. "As a Form One totem user, you sure are well-informed. Since I happened to meet you on the street, I might as well explain the situation to you, so you can help to advise Goth if you ever meet him."

Garen nodded.

The man fell silent, although organizing how he should explain what happened next.

The carriage also slowed down very considerably.

"Actually, be it Jessica being Empowered and taking away the Heart of the Dragonshadow, or Goth's assassinating his own father, all of this was already planned from the start." He finally spoke slowly.

His deep voice echoed slowly around the carriage, making it seem even more solemn.

"Jeanria Jess used to be one of the higher-ups in the Obscuro Society. She infiltrated Iron Tank City, but accidentally developed feelings with the Grand Duke... sigh... and their feelings grew stronger by the day. We don't know a lot of what happened in between, but in the end, we think Jess threw away all her standings for love, gave up everything she had before, and chose love. And she became pregnant with Goth. After she threw away everything, she realized that the one the Grand Duke truly loved wasn't her."

The man paused.

"Jess was a very proud and single-minded person, she gave up everything she could have for the Grand Duke. After abandoning everything, and getting pregnant, she went alone to the Grand Duke for solace, and realized that the Grand Duke didn't really love her, but was only playing with her. Back then, the Grand Duke was young and handsome, talented and capable. There were too many people in love with him, so he hadn't taken this tolerably pretty girl seriously. And then... the tragedy began."

"So this was the source of it all." Garen breathed out softly. "The deeper the love, the deeper the hatred. She set a trap on Goth for twenty years, and now it has finally taken effect."

"Oh, life..." The man sighed, "We make a lot of mistakes in life, choose the wrong things, but never let your mistake be unsalvageable..." He seemed to have remembered his life as well.

"Then where is Jess now?" Garen asked the most critical question, the one most important to him.

"Dead." The man laughed rather helplessly, "Why else do you think Goth's Blackfield Bird could be activated that easily? That's a peak-level totem that only appeared once in history!"

.....

By the time he alighted from the carriage, it was already afternoon.

The orange sunlight dyed the entire inner city a sea of golden-red.

Garen glanced at the carriage as it drove into the distance, standing at the door to the War Guild headquarters. For a while, his emotions were inexplicably complicated.

He still remembered Goth's mother, that gentle and beautiful middle-aged woman. She gave off a feeling like a spring breeze, and he just couldn't see through her, but to think that she was hiding such a deep vengeance within her heart.

"If she's Jess, maybe everything can make sense now..." He touched the Derivator in his pocket. "The Derivator has the ability to connect at all times, so if Jess wanted to hide and carry out her own plans, she naturally couldn't carry a Derivator with her. Maybe she would destroy her own Derivator directly, and ask headquarters to get her a new one. That way, that means this Derivator's appearance near Iron Tank City was also planned ahead."

His thoughts turned quickly, and he was just about to understand everything.

"Because Jess didn't want a Derivator at all, perhaps even Goth's igniting the furnace explosion to destroy the base was also a part of her plan." Although this explanation was still flawed, it was nevertheless very complete as is.

Walking up to the War Guild, Garen glanced at the Grand Duke's residence for the last time.

He didn't know how Goth was doing now, but it was evident that right now, he was already on the brink of breakdown.

"Oh, life..." Garen sighed deeply, and turned to walk into the Guild. He knew, that this was the critical time for Goth to truly metamorphosize.

The Grand Duke had been destroyed by his own heartlessness in the end. Although his actions were very common in the world of aristocrats, it was extremely unfortunate that he chose the wrong target.

Half a month later...

Garen sat by the desk, quietly studying the second tactic.

In the scarlet study, Angel and Reylan took up one corner each.

Angel was playing with a small silver knife, tossing it up and down, a mischievous smile on her lips. Her gaze would sweep over Garen occasionally. She was wearing skin-tight brown leather armor, her long slender legs wrapped in brown leather leggings, making her look like a forest hunter on the hunt.

Reylan was wearing a grey robe, her terrifying face hidden with the hood. She sat in a wheelchair with an air of hostility, staring at Angel at the side with some jealousy.

"I wanna join in Brother's War Chain," Reylan said in a deep voice.

Garen's pen paused, as he raised his head to glance at Reylan.

Angel also looked at Reylan in surprise, the knife in her hand pausing slightly.

"I won't let a woman prettier than me get too close to Brother," Reylan said darkly without holding back.

Garen's expression looked instantly speechless. Based on how Reylan looked now, didn't that mean even sixty-year-old grandmas couldn't approach him now?

Reylan was totally unfazed, her icy cold gaze sweeping over Angel like a poisonous snake. "There are far too many ways to make someone wish they were dead..." she hinted, and turned the wheelchair to leave the room, closing the door quickly.

Garen smiled wryly at Angel, whose expression had obviously changed.

"Why do you have such a crazy little sister!?" Angel sat down promptly and angrily. "To be honest, if she weren't your little sister, I'd really want to squish her dead with a slap!"

Garen didn't really know what to say either, should he be grateful that his brainwashing was too successful, or should he be worried around Reylan's overly extreme thought processes?

"Be a little more forgiving, Reylan is actually a good person." He could only comfort her like that.

"Good? You haven't seen how your little maid is always pale as a sheet from fear." Angel was speechless. "The forger from my team is also so scared that he only dares to live on the first floor. Will your sister get jealous as long as it's a woman?"

Chapter 324: Leave 2

She stood up again, walking to the window and looking down.

"Come to think of it, it's weird but even though you obviously have nothing standing guard here, not a single monster dares to enter the vicinity. Looks like you must have used some secret methods."

The streets of the suburbs underneath them were empty, without a thing in sight, and that was what piqued her interest.

Garen smiled. There were ten Deep Swamp Crocs hidden in the shadows, the Dual Headed Salamander was waiting in the labyrinths underground, the Petrifying White Dragon was hibernating in the ground underneath the suburbs. After eating too many monsters, these instinctive monsters would also know that this wasn't a place to mess around with.

Even Form Three monsters would not purposely start trouble here without a definite benefit to gain. The scent of two Form Three Silver Totems was enough to completely mask the smell of humans in the villa.

"How's your situation now?" Garen asked casually. "It's been a while since you reached Form Two, right? Any new developments?"

Angel continued to toss the knife in her hand.

"Developments are average, the regular Form Two totem is no problem. I can take two on at once, and I have to thank your Exhaustion Ray for that, this solidifying tactic works pretty well."

"You have to speed up your own growth, the times wait for no one." Garen closed the notebook in front of him. "I also plan to move elsewhere, this place won't be inhabitable soon."

"Why? With surroundings like these, where else would you want to move to?" Angel was taken aback.

"This place isn't that safe anymore, I plan to return to Kovistan," Garen replied calmly.

"Kovistan?! You're crazy!" Angel stared at Garen with an expression of shock. "It takes at least three days to reach Kovistan from here, and that's including the steam train! If you want to walk, it'll be at least five or six days. Do you know how many monsters there are between that? Even the Form Two monsters might come in droves!"

Garen didn't explain, only smiling.

"What does your whatchamacallit group plan to do?"

"It's the Hunting Group!" Angel frowned and corrected him. "Our plans, hmm, we plan to scrounge a living around Iron Tank City. Now that all the knowledge in Iron Tank City is open to all, it's practically heaven. As long as you have the ability to, you can crawl your way up!" She whistled. "I heard that the White Dragonhawk Grand Duke died and was resurrected. To think that the Dragonhawk King has the ability to fake death and resurrection, did you know that?"

Garen paused.

"Fake his death and then get resurrected?" Comprehension quickly dawned on his expression. "I never did know about that."

"The situation in Iron Tank City is not bad right now. The fact that the Grand Duke wasn't dead after all really raised the spirits of many commoner totem users. That damned Goth assassinated his own father, and he's apparently been executed by burning, incinerated directly in the furnace." Angel casually told him the important matters that had been happening recently. "I heard that on the night of the memorial tower, the Grand Duke suddenly sat up in his coffin, and nearly shocked the guards into wetting their pants."

"Is that so?"

Garen just kept smiling.

The news he was hearing now was slightly different from that of history, but the change happened anyway.

Right now, on the Kovistan side, his hometown of Lush Forest district was probably experiencing a change as well.

His father on this world, Vanderman Trojan, his cousin Sofea Hathaway, and those normal, harmful friends of his. And there was his previous crush, Aquarius too.

He had left for so long. It was almost a year, so it was time for him to go back and check. And it was time to return to being that Acacia from before as well.

The Royal Alliance was currently at a disadvantage, but it was still huge. As long as the three strongest countries at the core didn't fall, the Alliance would never encounter any sort of problem. The three strongest country powers wove together, creating the terrifyingly large three departments.

"I heard that the revived Grand Duke plans to take the initiative and attack, trying to clear the straggler monsters in the surroundings as much as he can. If you have to leave, go check out the outgoing team just before you set off, it'd be a lot safer if you follow behind them too," Angel advised him.

Garen was planning to rely on his Silver Totems to protect him the entire way, so he could solve the Derivator's hidden problem and upgrade his own core totem in the meanwhile. Right now, his potential points were snowballing by the day.

The Derivator's hidden problem, upgrading his core totem and finding Solidifying Tactics to increase his physical qualities. These were the three goals he had set for himself.

"Why don't you just come with me? And bring your group, I have a way to solve the camouflaging problems," Garen said directly.

"I can tell, what with how confident you look." Angel laughed. "After dealing with you for so long, I've gotten to know you, and you don't do anything you're not sure of. Last time I thought you couldn't hold up on your own, but you're doing quite well despite living in the outskirts. Looks like you're no weaker than I am..."

"As long as you're clear about that." Garen didn't explain further. "How about it? Won't you consider?"

"I still need to rely on the War Guild for my Legacy..." Angel was conflicted. "And I'll need a lot of resources too."

"It's alright, there's always hope," Garen said determinedly.

Angel looked at his expression of confidence and was slightly hesitant. But then she thought about the series of events happening recently, and how far away she was from Form Three. She clenched her teeth.

"Fine! I'll go with you! I'm telling you in advance, I already have two elite Form Two totems, it'd be extremely hard for me to reach Form Three."

"No rush..." Garen wasn't worried in the slightest. Once he got back to the Royal Alliance's territory, there would definitely be as many resources as they could want, now that most of the totem users were incapacitated. It would definitely be a lot better than Iron Tank City, which was relatively poor.

The two of them continued to discuss some other areas of cooperation in detail. With the War Chain connecting them, Angel felt a sense of belonging with Garen. After their chat, they finally heard cheers coming from the direction of the inner city.

"They must have killed off a few more groups of monsters in the surrounding outskirts," Angel said with a laugh. "It's always been like that these past few days."

Garen nodded. "We prepare to leave in a few days. We'll do as you said, and set it at the same time as the Grand Duke's rounds."

"Sounds good."

Five days later...

Large tides of monsters flowed towards the inner city from three directions around Iron Tank City.

After the flood of monsters, it was the three spots of Form Three monsters.

Iron Tank City, which looked like a white disc, seemed like it was being flooded from all directions by countless black ants, and there were occasionally larger insects among the ants.

Outside the city, on a tall yellow cliff.

Garen wore grey robes, several carriages stopped behind him. These horses were all purely black, with horns and fangs. They looked like horses on the surface, but they were polluted animals.

Angel and four members of the Hunting Group gathered to discuss something in whispers. The few of them looked at the large group of monsters walking around them curiously, and also had a mysterious respect for Garen, who brought them out.

The black monsters flew across their heads, black shadows gliding past, as they flew towards the inner city.

Reylan sat in a white armchair, counting something with her pen and paper. She kept writing and switching many complicated equations and numbers. No one except her could understand them.

Meanwhile, Lala was constantly on hand and ready to take care of Reylan.

Garen looked far and long at the inner city that was slowly being surrounded by the monster tide.

In the inner city's defensive area, a circular hole was opening slowly.

A group of people in black hoods riding black horses slowly walked out of the hole, each of the riders wearing extremely heavy black armor under their hoods.

The man leading them all was tall and stout, sitting with a straight back on a large horse. His black helmet completely wrapped up his head, so that all anyone could see was his slightly red eyes.

His whole body was wrapped inside the magnificent and imposing armor, making him look like a moving iron tower, as he slowly rode out of the defensive circle.

Bang bang...

The huge horse's hooves stepped on the ground, leaving fist-sized holes, and throwing up sprays of dust and tremors.

Ker-chak...

The rider suddenly raised his head, his whole body of armor making slight noises.

A breeze blew by with a whoosh, picking up the long white hair from underneath the rider's helmet, and making the waist-long hair fly in the air.

With a clang, the rider suddenly unsheathed the huge sword at his waist.

"We fight to protect the weak and elderly! We fight for justice and honor! I am the Grand Duke Cadarsman, King of Glory."

"This is a fight for the people, to retreat is to give up!!" He abruptly raised his long sword. "Charge!!!"

Countless monsters rushed at him fiercely. The Three-eyed Black Bear and the Black-winged Bird returned, bringing even more huge Form Three monsters with them as they charged forth.

The heavy footsteps grew heavier with each step.

All the sounds were instantly overwhelmed by the strange cries and roars.

A pair of enormous black wings appeared suddenly behind the black-armored rider. With him in the center, a huge vicinity of black spirit light appeared out of nowhere, and any monster that entered this territory was instantly disintegrated, as though torn into pieces by some tremendous power.

Several Form Three monsters rushed at the Black Territory madly.

Screech!!!

There was suddenly a loud cry, and in the sky above the entire Iron Tank City, the illusion of a huge black bird began to materialize slowly, covering the entire sky.

The black rider sat on his huge horse and didn't move. The huge horse advanced slowly, the black spirit light as though a mouth swallowing everything in its path, devouring all the monsters it touched and turning them into mincemeat.

Nothing could stop his advancing. The black spirit light was like a plague that kept spreading.

The Three-eyed Black Bear roared, and finally turned around to run away.

Many black riding soldiers gushed out from behind him, charging at the group of monsters on the outside. They were like a black current, mercilessly piercing into the monster tide.

From far away, the black rider suddenly looked at Garen's direction.

Garen met his eyes as well.

"Is this your decision? Goth, I wish you luck..." He murmured softly, sighed, and finally turned around to leave the cliff.

The carriage slowly turned around, arranged in one line, and drove into the distance.

"Charge!!"

Amidst the endless cries for blood.

Goth was like a pitch black coral, his body surrounded by thick black smoke. It was the terrifying air that came from between the black feathers.

Sitting in the middle of the battlefield, all the sky above covered his shadow.

Chapter 325: Conjecture 1

The golden sunlight scattered.

Amidst the emerald grass, a yellow dirt road curved and winded ahead into the distance.

On the road, three black carriages drove slowly ahead.

Garen sat in the carriage, quietly looking out the carriage window.

On a high mountain far to their left, there was a line of grey fortresses, their serrated surrounding walls wrapping them up in the center. Some parts of the wall had already been knocked down. Everything was silent.

A few huge black bats were circling above the forts, and there was even a black bat flying out from inside the fort.

There was the smell of something burning in a huge fire in the air.

Garen took out his pocket watch to check the time: 3:24.

"Let's rest for a bit, we've already been on the road all morning," he said calmly.

He didn't speak loudly, but it was just enough for the other two carriages to hear him.

He sat in the middle carriage, and Reylan sat right opposite him.

The carriage in front of them carried Angel and her Hunting Group. Behind them was Lala and some supplies like food and drink that they had to bring with them.

The three carriages instantly stopped at the same time. The three aberrated black horses naturally stopped without requiring anyone to order them.

Garen opened the carriage door and got off the carriage. He raised his gaze to look at the surroundings.

Everything around him was emerald green grass plains, with flower bushes on each side to welcome travelers. The bushes had little red and yellow flowers, unusually vibrant. The breeze made these tiny flowers sway in the wind continuously.

He followed the plains and gazed into the distance. The green grassy plains continued to the fortress at the faraway mountain, with dying yellow weeping willows dotting the large swathe of green in between.

Garen raised his head to look at the fort, frowning slightly.

"These are the private fortresses near Iron Tank City, we haven't left the governance territory of Iron Tank City yet." Reylan alighted from the carriage behind Garen, her voice deep. "We need at least one more day to leave the territory, judging by our current speed."

"Looks like that fortress has already been conquered," Garen guessed.

"Definitely, the ones flying in the sky are Carrion Bats. These bats come out in the day and rest at night. Unlike normal bats, they only eat rotting corpses," Reylan replied calmly. "Carrion Bats will only appear where there's no danger, they're very cowardly. Be it monsters or humans, they're all things these bats think they should avoid."

She took out a small notebook, and started to carefully note down something. He didn't know what, and could only hear the scratching of the pen she brings with her everywhere on the paper.

Garen nodded, indicating that he understood.

"How much longer can our supply of food and water last?"

"I'll call Lala out. She knows the answer to this best," Reylan frowned, and walked directly to the third carriage.

She quickly got onto the third carriage, but he didn't hear her scolding Lala.

"Brother, come and look. Lala seems to be pretty badly sick," Reylan's voice came from the carriage.

Garen glanced at the Hunting Group members, who had just gotten down from their carriage, waving as a way of telling them to rest. Striding towards the third carriage, he stepped in from the wide open carriage door.

It was slightly cold and dank in the carriage, all sorts of miscellaneous items in barrels littering the dark interior. The yellow wooden barrels were wrapped into a cross with metal belts. Lala leaned on the wooden barrel, her face flushed and her breath panting.

"Cough... cough..." Lala coughed painfully, the sound of phlegm in her throat. She held her chest with her hand, as though unable to catch her breath. Even when she sat on the ground, it was weakly.

She only wore a grey summer dress, without long socks.

Garen surveyed Lala's entire body, crouched down, and lightly picked up the cloth on the right shoulder of the dress, carefully taking a black speck off from it.

"I... feel like... can't breathe..." Lala said with difficulty. Her gaze on Garen was as though she saw her savior, her eyes lighting up.

Garen sighed, pressing her chest lightly with his right hand.

"Brother!" Reylan's voice came from beside him, sounding unhappy as she grabbed Garen's hand, "It's just a servant, it's fine if she dies, but don't let her pass it on to you."

Garen glanced at her. Reylan's pale yellow eyes shone with jealousy and dissatisfaction. She averted her gaze slightly, turning her hateful glare at Lala instead.

"She's having an asthma attack, it was my fault for not thinking ahead. I let her live for a long time in a place with bad air circulation, and a breeding place for bacteria and other microorganisms as well. She's just a normal person, it's already not bad that she managed to stay this long without falling sick."

"Let her die, we don't have any medicine for asthma." Reyland's gaze flickered. "I'll take care of these supplies for you."

"Leave for now," Garen said calmly. "Be a good girl."

Reyland glared at Lala unhappily, before she finally got off the carriage.

Garen turned around, suspending his right palm over Lala's chest. His fingers expanded rapidly, turning into five thick black steel rods.

Smack-smack-smack...

His fingers instantly began dotting Lala's lungs quickly.

"I don't know the actual healing method, so I can only reduce your symptoms for now. And besides, I'm not really sure that it is asthma," he said softly, looking at Lala relax as he continued his treatment.

Her soft chest kept shifting into different shapes underneath Garen's hand.

Lala had just recovered when she felt the strange sensation on her chest, and her face flushed again. She turned her head to aside, unsure of how to reply.

On the other hand, Garen was unperturbed. After quickly solving the problem of the blocked blood qi in her lungs, he finally added a bit more force into his palm.

Wah!

Lala pitched forward, and coughed out a mouthful of black phlegm.

The black phlegm was about to land on Garen's body, but he flicked his fingers to shoot out a blast of air that shot it out of the carriage and onto the grass far away.

Garen stood, his heart sinking slightly.

"Once you fall sick at this time, under these circumstances, it's very hard to find medicines to treat you. Right now, all I can give you are medicines to reduce the inflammation and coughing. The rest is up to you."

Lala nodded. "It's fine, I'll get better soon." She smiled at Garen, telling him not to worry.

However, Garen frowned. "I found cockroach droppings on your clothes, it's best if you don't stay here anymore. Switch carriages."

Lala nodded, she noticed this reason as well.

Garen shook his head and got off the carriage, coming face to face with a thunderous Reylan.

"What's the matter?"

"You shouldn't have agreed to let her come along," Reylan said in a low voice. "That person is a burden. She doesn't have to worry about anything, and now that she's fallen sick, she can't do any little thing at all! Why should we keep her?"

"You're being a little extreme, Reylan," Garen frowned. "Her family died in the previous war, and now she has no other relatives, so she has no choice but to come with us."

"So what?" Reylan glanced at that carriage jealously, "Brother, don't tell me you want to fuck that whore? Isn't she just a little prettier, with slightly better skin!? Do you still expect to enjoy yourself

under these circumstances? If it was any normal time, I'll catch as many as you want for you! But now's different!"

Garen looked at her expression and knew that she was getting more and more jealous of Lala. After her own face was destroyed, she got unusually jealous of other women with whole faces.

"I promised her that if she worked for me, she would get sufficient safety in return. Right now, I haven't achieved that promise yet," he said softly. "Alright, Reylan, I know you're in a bad mood, but don't take it out on others!"

Reylan didn't say anything else, but her expression grew darker, and finally she turned and left without a word.

Garen massaged his temple, feeling a headache coming on.

Looking at the sun above him, the golden sunlight was bright but not very warm.

Compared to Lala, Reylan was indeed a lot more important. She was still teaching him a lot of basic knowledge on how to study the Derivator. Right now, he had no choice but to rely on her. That was why Garen couldn't afford to piss her off either.

But her twisted view of the world and values could indeed cause the team a great deal of trouble.

From the Hunting Group's side, Angel walked over, her expression confused.

"What's the matter?"

"Lala fell sick, it's probably acute asthma," Garen replied helplessly. "She's the only normal person among us, and her body isn't that strong either, plus she got hurt before. It's already not bad that she only fell sick now."

"Now what do we do?" Angel also frowned. She also had a pretty good impression of Lala, the dutiful maid. "I still have some Tavinipin here, take it to her and it might help."

"Should be okay."

Garen took the medicine to Lala, and after she ate it, she did recover a little shortly. This sort of medicine was mostly to suppress coughing.

Garen didn't think too much more about it. He let the Petrifying White Dragon lead the way, and had the Dual Headed Salamander ride two Petrifying Lizards to watch the rear. On the two sides, the Deep Swamp Croc and Resonance Hawk stood guard from a distance. They carried many parasites with them, chasing away any strong monsters that might appear nearby, and only allowing some weaker fellows to enter so Angel and the rest can train.

His potential points kept increasing, but at an extremely slow pace. It was far from his time in Iron Tank City.

They basically didn't meet any strong characters at all in the wild.

After that, they proceeded for more than another day, all the way until they reached the border of Iron Tank City's territory. All they met on the way were Form One monsters, with extremely few Form Two monsters. There was no need to chase them away at all, so Garen decided to let his subordinates ignore them all, letting them come in directly.

By now, his potential points had reached an unprecedented 125 points. He had been hoarding them since Iron Tank City.

He planned to hoard more at once, and then focus them into evolving the Black-Striped White Tiger.

The pale morning sunlight shone in from the cracks in the curtains.

Garen slowly awoke from his dreams, massaging the back of his neck, feeling slightly sore. When he opened his eyes, he saw that Reylan, who was lying down opposite him, was sleeping soundly on her side.

Everything was quiet outside, except the occasional snorting of the aberrated horses.

He sat up from the cushion seats, and pulled away the blankets on his body, putting on his leather breeches. He peeled a wooden plank away from the wall of the carriage to their right and let it down, supporting it with two wooden sticks to form a simple table.

Taking up the dried vegetables and beef jerky that he hadn't finished eating from last night, Garen took two large glasses of water from the water bottle, and tossed the dried vegetables and meat inside.

And then he held one glass in each hand, his palms glowing slightly like red jade.

After more than a minute, the smell of beef jerky and dried vegetables wafted throughout the carriage.

"Brother?" Reylan woke up from her sleep, looking at Garen with blurry eyes. With the table between them, she instantly saw the two large glasses on the table.

White steam floated out from the mouths of the cups, carrying a faint aroma.

Chapter 326: Conjecture 2

"You're awake? Come eat something," Garen said with a smile. He loosened his left hand and pushed the cup towards her. The water inside was boiling, with some radish, cabbage and scallions floating on the surface, and expanded jerky at the bottom. The water in the cup had also turned into a pale milky white.

Reylan looked touched. She got up neatly, her hands cupping around the glass and feeling the heat it emanated.

"Your body's a lot better, huh," Garen said softly.

"Mn," Reylan nodded. "My injuries have more or less healed, and there's no problem with my stamina either. It's just that the scars got left behind, so many scars..." Her emotions sank in an instant.

"If I want them to heal, I'm afraid..."

"Don't say such negative things so early in the morning, you'll have a chance." Garen rapped the table. "Alright, the others haven't woken up yet, so let's start today's lessons."

"Sure, we'll talk as we eat." Reylan quickly took a petite little red leather notebook out from beside her, putting it on the table next to Garen.

"I had collected these from my own memories, they're information about biological engineering. Silver Totems and the research regarding the Derivator, all of it is very complicated, and dabbles in content from many fields. Biological engineering is just one of them, after that you still need to learn about material and energy science, as well as advanced mathematics. Of course, you just need to understand it, it's enough for you just to be able to tell what's good and what's not."

"Biological engineering, material and energy science, advanced mathematics? Are these three subjects enough?" Garen asked.

"Of course, these three subjects are actually umbrella terms, if you want to be more specific, there are even more branches of study." Reylan nodded. "The Obscuro's way is to evolve creatures, it's different from the Royal Alliance's way of tools. Obscuro seeks to use totem techniques to finally increase the level of their own lives, that's why they developed creature totems."

The Royal Alliance, on the other hand, uses White Silver Totems. In other words, they develop the primitive totems to a certain peak, and their final path is to use the peak-level primitive totem to boost the original totem user in return."

"Both paths seem clearer now. They just use the same power differently." Garen nodded.

He picked up the Reylan's notebook, and read through it carefully.

Because he had basic knowledge in advanced maths and physics from Earth, as well as some research knowledge here on this world, he went through the notebook in no time. Other than some extra formulas to do with totems, he understood the rest easily.

He had also studied biological engineering with his teacher Emin, just not as deeply as this.

"I've already taught you some of the earlier basics," Reylan said calmly. "Now I'll tell you about the main points in this book. Once you got a hold of that, you'll be considered a Beginner in biological engineering."

With that, she started to explain some of the important formulas in detail to Garen.

As she spoke, Garen quickly understood these formulas completely.

Finally, he saw some change in the skill pane at the bottom of his vision. A new skill icon slowly materialized, and lined up together in a pane together with the other knowledge types.

"Biological engineering: Beginner. (By understanding this, you have understood the principles of a creature's internal and external structures; one of the compulsory studies in totem research.)"

It finally became a skill.

Garen also heaved a sigh of relief. Now that it was a skill, that meant he could use potential points to level up. As long as he had the follow-up knowledge, he could improve rapidly.

As for the other two subjects, as long as he understood it all, he just needed to find an opportunity to grab some research materials from the Royal Alliance and his old man. With that, he should be able to reach extreme heights in no time at all. He would then have a certain level of confidence to solve the Derivator's secret problem.

He might be no good at everything else, but his ability to learn was nothing to scoff at. With enough potential points, it would be a cinch for him to steal research, systems, knowledge, and experience from others.

His potential points allowed him to drastically reduce his studying and comprehension time.

So far, the Derivator seemed to be lagging, so the other two Generals hadn't contacted Garen for now, giving him a short buffer time. He needed to use this time to quickly solve the secret problem.

Based on his conjecture, the reason he didn't develop a skill when he was studying biological engineering with his teacher Emin was because he hadn't learned all the basic knowledge in this field. Now, with Reylan's teachings, he had finally completed it, and obtained the skill icon.

Biological engineering, materials and energy science, advanced mathematics. Garen had learned some basics in all three subjects before, but in order to act normal, Garen purposely controlled his learning speed, so that Reylan wouldn't notice that he was too fast.

Today, however, Reylan was tossing out all the last bits of knowledge, so Garen threw caution to the winds, memorizing and comprehending everything about these subjects immediately.

His body had now reached the peak of human understanding, achieving the uppermost limit where he didn't need to worry about the subject requirements.

He completed the Beginner level in no time. Each of the three subjects became skill icons, one after the other, in less than four hours.

From the knowledge of these subjects, Garen also obtained a deeper understanding of Silver Totems. He especially understood a lot more about the key to how the Derivator controlled Silver Totems.

All the way until noon, the carriages finally continued moving on automatically under Garen's control. He used the Derivator to control the horses pulling all three carriages, so he could carry them forward without a driver.

Cough cough...

The sound of coughing came from the first carriage again. Lala had been transferred to the first carriage. Her condition seemed to have become even more serious.

Garen woke up from his calculations, frowning slightly.

But there was nothing he could do. He looked up to glance at Reylan in front of him, but she didn't seem to hear a thing.

"Totem users have their core totems, that's why they can avoid infections from most of the outside bacteria, and be unafraid of diseases." Garen sighed inwardly. No wonder all totem users seemed to be looking down on others, the reasons came from all areas.

"Forget it, it's more important to upgrade my core totem now. Without real power, I can't do anything even if I found the medicine." He didn't really know how to deal with this sort of bacterial infection either, and looking at Lala, it seemed to be more than just asthma.

He calmed his heart, his gaze falling on that part of his totem pane.

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

Ability: Tail Whip, Puncturing Crunch.'

After Garen's gaze rested on the totem for three seconds, the entire icon become blurry, and then quickly cleared up. It was as though nothing happened, if he hadn't lost seven potential points, Garen might even have thought that his eyes were the ones that went blurry.

"Once more." He was already numb to it. After throwing more than a hundred potential points last time without a successful evolution, this time it was mere child's play to him.

Second attempt, failure.

Third attempt, failure.

Fourth attempt, also failure.

He didn't know if it was a trick of the mind, but Garen vaguely felt as though his core totem changed a little.

Fifth attempt. Failure.

Brr...

Suddenly, a description in tiny red figures slowly appeared behind the icon.

'Missing core: striped crystal. Unable to evolve. Begin returning of consumed potential points, a portion of the potential points caused a catalytic effect.'

The Black-Striped White Tiger's icon instantly dimmed.

Garen paused. In that instant, he felt an enormous gush of clean, cool air gush out from the icon. After taking a round inside his body, it returned directly to his brain.

His potential point value shot up madly.

From a little over 130, it rapidly increased to 150, 170, 190, 210.

And only stopped at 213.

Garen's heart settled.

"As I thought, when I evolve a core totem with potential points, there's an accumulative mechanism to it. Looks like if I try to evolve it without the critical core, the potential points I pile on won't disappear totally. Instead, they would be stored in the totem, becoming an accumulative power. This is just like before, potential points that didn't successfully upgrade something would return to me naturally. Looks like the potential points I put on those failed evolutions didn't disappear, nor were they wasted, they merely gathered inside the totem, and were used to accumulate power."

"Then why are there these probabilities?" He frowned again. "Or are these gene fragments different? Is it a problem with the activation probabilities? Is it a random chance of activation every time, or will it only activate and evolve after accumulating to a certain level?"

He suddenly remembered the biological engineering he just studied. Putting it together with the basic genetic knowledge he had from Earth, he suddenly made a bold conjecture.

"Could it be that each activation attempt is activating a gene fragment, and failure to activate means it would go to waste? Successful activation means successful evolution? That so-called probability, is perhaps decided by the total number and quality of the gene fragments. Failed activation would remove these gene fragments. In that case, how are the standards for success and failure decided?"

Garen fell into deep thought.

The activation mechanism for these potential points seemed to be all murky, as though there were some complicated calculations and rhythms to it.

"It'd be all clear if I explained it like this. Activation and evolution were always meant to choose the best direction from all the countless genes. And in order to evolve these certain genes, we would certainly need a certain amount of activation energy. These two aspects decide how the potential points evolve the totem."

"Firstly, there are the potential points needed to perform the lowest level of evolution. Just like how so many points were stuffed into the Black-Striped White Tiger before it finally started the first activation. The potential points before that weren't evolving, they were accumulating the energy required for the first evolution. I will probably need some techniques to figure out if it's evolving or accumulating."

"Secondly, there are the probabilities. After achieving the required number of potential points, it will start attempting evolution. If successful, the points will be utterly used up. If unsuccessful, some of the points will be returned, just like with the Black-Striped White Tiger. In that case, the primitive totems and Silver Totems should be using different evolution mechanisms."

Garen was beginning to understand.

Chapter 327: Thoughts 1

He had only evolved silver totems before this, never attempting it on a primitive totem, which was why he had absolutely no idea what the situation was. Now, it's finally as clear as day what was going on.

Primitive totems are living organisms, which means their bodies naturally accumulate a certain amount of energy. Not only that, an increase of energy happens whenever food is consumed. This was the reason why evolution through potential points only needed one step – activation.

When it came to silver totems[1], it was completely different. They do not need to consume food, which also means that they are unable to accumulate energy. Everything is provided by the totem user. Which is also why evolution then takes two steps – accumulation and activation.

"It's no wonder why Reylan said that silver totems will sooner or later surpass primitive totems." Garen suddenly understood the biggest advantage when it came to silver totems. It was not the derivator, or control of the numbers. It was in regards to the difficulty of what was required to evolve.

His cheapskate dad from this world was into biochemical studies. Garen could not wait to reach there a little earlier, as he yearned to increase the level of his knowledge with those books.

"Striped crystal was something I used as to play with, in a way you would with a potted plant at dad's when I was younger...I'd have never thought that black striped white tiger would need this as an evolution core." Garen was slightly emotional. "To think of it, there were a lot of rare items and resources over at dad's...he sure lives up to his name as a scholar employed by royalty.

In Acacia's memories, resources of this level were treated lightly, as they could be played with at random. The house was full of them.

As these were rare alternative sources and not mainstream evolution resources, when Garen first gained knowledge from Emin, it had never occurred to him the value of these items.

He only understood now that he used to live in a house full of treasures without knowing it.

Striped crystal is a type of strange, fascinating crystal that grows continuously when planted. As long as he returned home, he could have as many of them as he wanted.

Besides, black striped white tigers needed more than a hundred potential points before undergoing an evolution activation. Once the evolution succeeds, there is no telling how strong it will turn out to be.

Garen was filled with expectation.

He examined himself carefully.

"If we were to assess in detail, Silver totems are always placed in the outside world as they can't be kept in storage. At this rate, the silver totem light will always be present. This is equivalent to the use of a core totem. If the trouble caused by the derivator was non-existent, I would have been equivalent to a third form totem user."

After Garen's self-evaluation, his mind became absolutely clear.

"Now the biggest problem would be the derivator. As long as the problem posed by the derivator is resolved early, I would not have to worry about the silver totems going out of control. The core totem should be capable of an upgrade as long as I head back.

His vision finally swept across the black striped white tiger's icon, the data above changed slightly.

"Core- black striped white tiger: First form totem, can be upgraded. Probability of successful evolution: 11%. Potential points needed to activate gene fragment: 700%. An accumulation of 145 potential points is needed to achieve a chain activation. Striped crystal is needed as a core resource.

Ability: Tail whip, Puncturing Crunch"

The talent and power data displayed was in line with Garen's own understanding, which is why he was not surprised.

Even though there were still a lot of grey areas when it came to understanding the evolution of a primitive totem, Garen had decided to put probing further on hold.

As he returned to reality, he came down from the carriage.

Outside, the hunting group crowded around a bonfire cooking something; the mixture of white smoke and water vapour carried a pleasant smell.

Surrounded by a vast expanse of deep green plains, there were occasional clusters of dense woods.

A few Unihorn lizards circulated the skies, but were afraid to swoop down and attack the crowd; they reduced to only squawking.

Nearing late noon, soft rays of sunlight shone from the rear, casting long slim shadows against the crowd.

Garen and Reylan walked aside privately, discussing difficult questions on the 3 subjects in low voices.

Angel brought Lala, who was still coughing, and joined the circle of the hunting group, talking about anything under the sun.

The surroundings were not filled with the roars of monsters, which intrigued the people. Although, they boiled it down to the mystery behind Garen. When it came to facing the rest of the journey, they began to relax a little.

Only Garen, who was in the midst of discussion with Reylan, saw that right below his field of vision, his potential points that were fluctuating like crazy. It meant that the silver totems under his command were on a wild hunt, targeting large groups of monsters in the area.

"We are almost exiting the area of Iron Tank City, next will be a desolate no-man's land. According to the slow rate that we are moving, even the nearest city would require 2 or 3 days. Reylan stared at Garen with a little confusion, "What are your plans brother? Your current theory lacks concrete steps, I hope to get my hands on better research tools as soon as possible."

Of course, Garen would never reveal that the reason they were moving at this speed was to increase his potential points. "You should be able to find a temporary set of research tools right? The stuff that you are teaching me now belongs to the forgers?"

"Indeed, forgers are luminarists that specialize in researching totems, but our direction is more towards researching living totems." Reylan nodded her head.

"Then, you should know if there is a way to empower humans without being controlled?" Garen finally asked the question he had been yearning to ask.

"Empowering humans is our main area of research. Empowering a body itself is nothing new; the technique required is nothing difficult, but there is not much use for it either. No matter how strong a body is, it is impossible to evolve more powerfully than carefully selected living totems. Over at the headquarters, a significant number of people chose to be empowered in order to extend their lives." Reylan confirmed what Garen had in mind. "Although so, I do not recommend you to do that, brother."

She paused, "Top level primitive totem users have encountered a weird phenomenon. The totem light brought by their totems would bring changes to their own bodies, making it stronger and healthier, as well as extending their life. There were even totem users that merged themselves with their totems, becoming a collective body. This was the highest power imaginable achieved, which was also signified the birth of empowerment."

"Elemental totems, Plant totems, Animal totems. In actuality, these 3 types of totems would definitely reach that stage. The main body and the totem will merge to become one, transforming into an inhuman being that exhibits the terror of a totem. This is Obscuro Society's main goal. Brother, if you want to walk this path, the requirements are of high difficulty. When it comes to technical abilities, even I myself would not be able to help. This type of technical ability requires too much, even if I were to research for more than ten years, it would not guarantee any success." Reylan rejected Garen's train of

thought, "Obscuro society had researched for so many years, and only reaped a small area of technical success. Let's not even consider the possibility if I were to do this alone."

Garen smiled, changing the topic. "So how do totem users define their abilities?"

"Usually evolution is divided according to Form; the first form is definitely incapable of beating second form, and a form 2 definitely incapable of beating third form and so on. Besides that, there are tactics and precious heirlooms that will affect the level of strength. Of course, there is also the manipulator's strategy and natural talent. Let's put everything aside and talking about totems alone. Of the totems, the strongest is The Ultimate totem. This means that the totem has reached the highest level imaginable for evolution. Ultimate represents the end of possible evolution. Although such, when it comes to which ultimate totem is stronger than the other, it boils down to the nature of the body itself. The better the nature of the body, the harder it is to evolve, but the stronger it is after evolution. If the nature of the body is good and the number of evolution undergone is high, when and if the totem has finally evolved into its final form, it would be horrifying. Just like the black striped white tiger that you have brother, if it evolved into the fourth form, the power it holds is unimaginable." Reylan explained carefully.

"But no one even knows if there is a third form; no one has been able to evolve this thing." Garen shrugged his shoulders.

"That's because its foundation is too strong, the difficulty of evolving it is extremely high." Reylan shook her head. "I suggest you to look for a new core totem when you can."

"We'll see." Garen has not given up yet.

Garen and Reylan talked a lot when they were together. This helped him to have a deeper understanding of totem users.

In the evening, the hunting group made potato and meat broth, served with stale bread, and an apple per person. They ate as if it were a feast.

A group of people sat around the bonfire barbecuing, their bodies and hearts were warm.

The temperature dropped in the late evening; everyone was freezing. Lala, an ordinary person, felt the same way and wrapped herself with blankets near the fire, her face still red. Obviously the sickness hasn't left her body.

"Further forward is Ferrochrome. Ferrochrome is a small town at the borders of Tilan City and Aisley City. I went there for a holiday when I was younger, and the red tea biscuits there are amazing. I am not sure how it's like now..." Amongst the hunting group, a petite young lady spoke in a soft voice, she seemed a little down.

"In this kind of environment, I would think there is but a few human habitations."

"Tilan City and Aisley City?" Garen was not familiar with these two places, "These two cities, which are richer in resources? Anyone knows?"

"Chief, Aisley City is very rich in resources, are you lacking any evolution resource?" That petite lady said softly towards Garen. She and her companions have always called Garen and his sister Chief. Reprimand in them for this didn't work, and after a couple of times, Garen just gave up and allowed them to called him whatever their heart desired.

"I want some striped crystals." Garen thought of attempting to look for the item along the way. As everything now was pretty chaotic, and deaths were prevalent, resources have been left unused. Who knows if he will be able to get his hands on it ahead of time. If he could find it along the way, he wouldn't have to speed up the journey anymore; going at a slower rate to increase his potential points would be the wiser move.

"When it comes to striped crystals, I know which place has them." A black shirt guy who didn't really like to talk much from the hunting group voiced out.

Seeing that everyone in the crowd turned to look at him, the guy fiddled with his collar.

"There are striped crystals in Aisley City, I have seen it in the city museum. It is embedded into a crown that is being kept as a relic."

"You are talking about the Prime Crown right? I have heard of that crown, never have thought it to be in Ailey City's museum." A man from the back of the group whispered.

Angel nodded her head and looked to Garen, he was already deep in thought.

After thinking for a moment, Garen spoke out again. "From here, if we were to turn into Aisley City, how long would we need? Anybody knows?"

The petite lady was most familiar with the geographical area, and answered after some calculations.

"It is similar to our route now, just in the opposite direction. Our time would not be delayed. We will need to cross two paths, Aisley City and Tilan City. According to our current direction, we move towards Tilan."

"Vicky, how can you be so sure without a map?" The black shirt guy said in puzzlement.

"My family was from Tilan, I have explored the surrounding areas." Petite Vicky said. "So what now? Do we head towards Tilan City? Chief." Her gaze fell on Garen. She was always intrigued by this powerful and mysterious man. His relationship with Miss Angel had seemed a little unusual.

"Since it does not affect the distance, let's change it." Garen nodded his head. "Do you guys have any opinion?" He looked towards Reylan and Angel.

Both of them shook their heads, signaling that they did not have any opinion.

Chapter 328: Thoughts 2

"Wasn't our departure from Iron Tank City according to your wishes anyways?" Angel said. "If it is possible, do you wish take a short visit to your hometown, Daer and Vicky?" She looked towards Vicky and the guy in black.

The petite lady and the black shirt guy were silent at the same time.

"Thank you Miss." Vicky said softly and lowered her head, silent again.

Garen said calmly.

"If it is possible, I hope that we could take along everything we need during the journey. The resources in Aisley City should be abundant. We will arrange our affairs later according to the threat of the situation.

"Alright." Angel nodded her head.

After dinner, some fed their horses while most returned to their carriages. 3 horse-drawn carriages were tied to a cluster of trees by the side of the road. It was covered with some branches and hay in an attempt to keep it hidden.

Garen returned to his carriage and took a glance at his potential points.

It was now at 248 points.

He looked out from the window and saw Reylan and Angel exchanging a few sentences here and there. He had no idea what they were talking about. Both of them sat near the fire; the atmosphere was strangely harmonious.

He retracted his gaze.

"Since I am unable to upgrade silver totems, let's just upgrade another primitive totem."

He held out his forefinger. Behind him a blue light glimmered and a blue laser shot out. The blue laser landed on Garen's fingertips, suddenly transforming into a neon butterfly.

The neon butterfly the size of a face basin lightly battered its wings, emitting a soft blue glow around it.

Garen let out a white gold aura, covering his surroundings to prevent anyone else from walking in on him without him knowing.

Then, his line of gaze fell unto the Totem column below his field of vision.

"Neon butterfly: First form totem, can be upgraded. Probability of successful evolution: 21%. Probability points needed for gene fragment activation: 500%. Non-chain activation.

Ability: Poison pollen attack (Dispersed in the form of poisonous pollen, only up to 3 times in a day.
Effect: paralysis, death.

"This was the totem given to me by my teacher, which was also my first totem. Let's see how my luck is. If my potential power is sufficient..."

Garen did not continue his thoughts, focusing instead on the icon.

After 3 seconds, "Buzz..."The icon blurred for a while and quickly became clear again. It failed.

The second time – the icon blurred and became clear again; it has failed yet again.

The third time – the icon blurred, this time it did not become clear right away, but stayed in that state for some time, and its whole body started to turn transparent quickly.

In less than 10 minutes, the entire neon butterfly the size of a face basin disappeared directly in front of Garen's eyes. Only through the touch of his fingertips, Garen was clear that the neon butterfly was still at the same place it was before.

His face was filled with astonishment. "I remember when it came to neon butterflies, according the information teacher gave me, wasn't the evolution supposed to turn it into a poisonous white butterfly instead of this?" Right before he left he had received some information from Emin; it was in relation to the neon butterfly. Amongst the info, there was a section that stated one of the evolution paths this butterfly could take: poisonous white butterfly.

But right now it was obvious his evolved butterfly was not a poisonous white butterfly, which was stated in the recorded data.

Garen looked carefully and could barely see the neon butterfly on his fingertips. There was only a small outline; if he were to use his 5 senses he wouldn't be able to detect it at all.

He couldn't help but looked towards the icon description under the totem pane.

"Color changing butterfly: Neon butterfly's level two evolution, second form primitive totem. Can't be upgraded, Ultimate totem.

Ability: Invisibility through discoloration (Senses and adapts to the subtle colors of the environment's light rays, in purpose of achieving invisibility).

Reproducing offspring (The color changing moths reproduced can be used as a spying or investigative tool. Once every day.)

Poison pollen attack (Poisonous pollen can cause dizziness, hallucinations and paralysis. Effect upon contact.)

Garen wrinkled his brows.

Color changing butterfly's abilities disappointed him a little.

When it came to sleuthing, he already had the beetle. In this very moment, hundreds of beetles are all around, ready to return with danger reports if it ever came to that. This ability was sort of redundant. However, the invisibility sounds good.

"Not all totem evolutions go according to our wishes."Garen shook his head. As he flung his fingers lightly, he thought he remembered something.

An idea came to him.

The color changing butterfly at the tip of his fingers flew up abruptly, its invisible abdomen laid a large amount of brown eggs; it fell unto the table.

These eggs were individually as large as the size of a fingernail, oval in shape.

Garen realized that the description on the color changing butterfly did not mention that there was limit on the number of offspring at all.

As he watched, the brown oval eggs began to rip apart; out of it wriggled transparent moths one by one.

He counted carefully, there were 25 moths.

These small moths soundlessly flew out from the window; under the control of Garen's consciousness, they flew into the surrounding four directions.

As the days passed, Garen kept on increasing the number of moths; the numbers reached a hundred quickly.

The team has passed through a few empty villages, replenishing some of their basic resources. During this time, Garen's moths slowly began to grow larger.

The only downside was, color changing butterfly's offspring consumed silver pieces. It was a good thing Garen brought some silver pieces in preparation.

More than a hundred moths consumed 3 silver pieces in total.

But he had realized the advantage in having these moths.

There was no need for feeding, the only thing they fed on was the power of the totem light. Every time the color changing moths were let out, they could only be controlled up to 2 hours. A rest is needed after that.

These color changing moths were extremely covert. As they scattered around the surrounding areas, none of the monsters had ever managed to detect them.

Although finally, two of the parasitic beetles that were sleuthing from before disappeared. This cut off all contact with Garen's deep swamp croc.

The group finally ceased their progress; Garen had given directions for them to stop. They will only move forward after he had investigated what had happened.

At night, Garen stood at the edge of the carriage, looking into the faraway fortress of the hills above.

The fortress was built with stone bricks, a tall tower stood in the middle of it. There seemed to be minimal damage as the structures still looked as they should.

The fortress was accompanied with silence; no lights, no torches, nothing. Just pitch black.

Garen furrowed his brows.

"My sleuthing bugs disappeared in the area near this fortress." He turned back and looked at Reylan, who was traveling next to him, speaking in a low voice.

Three carriages circled around a bonfire, waves of faint heat emanated from that area.

Besides a man from the hunting group who was standing guard for Lala, the rest crowded near Garen.

"If my memory serves me right, this fortress may be dangerous. Although the areas nearby are paths we will have to go through. Both sides are terrain and lakes that are way more complicated and difficult to cross. If we were to make a detour, we would need at least 5 days to close in the great distance." Garen explained

"So we should try and see whether it is possible to go through here. If the monsters turn out to be too powerful, we will just leave immediately, correct?" Angel added on,

"Leila."

"Watch me, miss." A guy wearing a red cap nodded his head and lifted up his right arm. Immediately, a silver light shot out from the protective sleeve on his forearm.

The silver light landed on the ground in front and turned into a golden lioness right away.

Roarrrr...

The lioness growled and bent over to look at its owner. The tail was a living yellow snake. The head of the snake continuously hissed, coiling around and around while staring intently with its blood red eyes.

The guy with the red cap mounted the lioness and disappeared into the night, heading towards the direction of the fortress. Not a single sound was made.

Garen sensed the troops under his command: the deep swamp croc has already reached a number of 20, the beetles a number of 200. The dual headed salamander was just like a weapon generating war machine; it continuously produced a steady stream of deep swamp crocs, creating a massive army of second form totems. All she needed was time, and she'll be able to produce large amounts of parasites.

Garen was confident; there was definitely not one third form totem in Obscuro Society that was as scary as this. Their evolutionary direction only had a few definite types, which differed from his direction in relying on potential points for evolution; theirs was a controlled evolution with a clear direction.

Mostly importantly, till date, parasitic typed totems were unheard of. The most bizarre totem was the reproductive nest type totem, which was a specialty of the Obscuro society.

The legitimacy of this fact was confirmed by Rylan, who knew Obscuro Society best. Garen learned all this by prompting the answer out of her in an indirect way.

His evolution through potential points was seemingly different from Oscuro.

As he watched the guy in the red cap vanish into the darkness, he had an idea.

More than ten beetles followed Leila and crawled into the fortress.

The people from the hunting group knew that he was mysterious, and had at least 7 or 8 totems under his command. Private and secretive as he was, he always managed to do things none could imagine.

When they left Iron Tank City, everyone, including Angel, was rather anxious and insecure; it was the mysterious and unknown Garen that gave them the biggest sense of security and support. This was the reason why everyone unconsciously turned their eyes to Garen.

"Let's wait a moment and see what happens. If Leila is able to return safely and verify the situation, I will give him a little reward." He smiled and said calmly.

He already had a vague idea in mind.

At this moment the number of deep swamp crocs produced by the dual headed salamander was way too many; it was an impossible feat to manage all of them in a way that maximized the purpose of creating parasitic beetles. Just feeding and planning alone took up too much effort.

But if he were to distribute it to other people and allow a portion of the beetles to follow the orders of others, this would strengthen the rest and allow them to invest their energy into feeding these beetles, ultimately reaching the larger goal in greater speed.

Using these beetles as rewards for the underlings, as long as they don't backstab him, he'd be able to achieve the goal of upgrading his abilities safely. The beetles' abilities will be used at a greater rate; the situation will not be out of grasp either.

All of a sudden Garen thought of something – What if Obscuro's initial thoughts were similar to his? To issue the derivators out in order to increase their own power and overall strength, at the same time keeping the situation within the palm of their hands?

The excitement that bubbled up shortly before suppressed down again.

"It seems like I have to solve the derivator's control issue..."

Chapter 329: The Nest 1

A group of people silently waited in the forest. Vicky lighted a few torches and distributed them throughout the group. The crackling of the flames could be clearly heard.

The croaking of frogs one after another could be heard in the distance.

Croak, croak..

Garen fixated his gaze in the direction of the fortress. He abruptly stretched out his fingers and gestured in the air. Black flames emerged as a dot from his finger tips, leaving black strands in the air.

Very quickly with the formation of the gestures, his eyes dilated and lost its focus.

"Sight sharing tactic?!" Angel was slightly startled. "So fast..." She stared at Garen in disbelief. Her complexion was complicated, seeming like she had thought of something.

After a whole ten minutes, a light roar came from the direction of the fortress. It seemed like the roar of a lion, but from a long way away.

"Let's go. There is a problem here." Garen took the first step and moved towards the fortress. He seemed slow but was actually quick and had a rhythm to his steps.

The rest of the party followed behind him, but only Reyln could keep up with him. Angel and the rest had difficulty in keeping up, and had to summon primitive totems to carry them.

In the dark night, the group cut through the vast plains from the dark forest, and quickly headed towards the fortress. Only three swiftly moving orange flames could be seen in the dark, whereas their shadows were completely not visible.

Garen took the lead, following the pathway of the fort to directly arrive at the main entrance. The iron-clad wooden door was wide open, and the keyhole had obvious traces of damage.

The roar of a lion could be continuously heard from behind the door.

Garen went straight into the entrance.

There was a wide stone plaza within. As the faint moonlight shone on the plaza, it seemed like it was plated with a white-greyish layer.

In the middle of the plaza, Leila was commanding his serpent-tailed lioness in a battle with two black shadows..

Whenever the lioness let out a fierce howl, she would emit a circle of expanding pale yellow light, which would only disappear after expanding three metres. Every single time, the light would send the two black shadows flying and rolling on the ground.

The black shadows would then persistently get back on their feet and continued their assault.

Garen walked closer, trying to see the true forms of the two shadows with the aid of the moonlight.

It was two black panthers with bull horns on their heads.

They bowed their heads and pawed on the ground with their hooves like a bull. Air was coming out from their nostrils and their eyes were glowing red.

"They are not silver totems?" Garen carefully identified. Suddenly there was a flash of light in his eyes. "They are not totems, but mutated creatures who were infected. "

"Chief! They are not powerful, just very resistant." Leila shouted towards him. "Their speed is too fast. Although they have weak attacks, but because I'm totally unable catch them, I can only passively counter attack." A dejected expression could be seen on his face.

Moo!!!

One of the black bull panthers let out a roar, and directly dashed at the serpent-tailed lioness.

A dash like that might have been effective towards normal creatures, but not at all towards the serpent-tailed lioness with totem light.

The serpent-tailed lioness stood its ground and howled fiercely, emitting a circle of yellow light from its body, which immediately sent the black bull panther flying again.

With a bang, the black bull panther was savagely sent flying a long distance. Its four hooves left long black marks on the ground.

"Let me do it." Angel finally arrived behind Garen and dismounted from her black panther. Looking at the two black bull panthers, there was some mild covetousness in her eyes.

"These are living mutated creatures, if only the unit factory could be used to replicate them as totems.."

Reylan laughed without saying a word.

Vicky from the hunting group stood out.

"Do we need miss to act for mere speedy types? Let me do it!"

Before she finished her sentence, a yellow line leapt out from behind her and headed directly towards the two black bull panthers.

After two light hisses, the yellow line flashed across the two black bull panthers, and flew back towards Vicky's shoulder. It was a fully gold mink. It obediently crouched on its owner's shoulder and continuously licked its blood-stained claw. Its two eyes had a wolf-like dark green glow, giving off a dark malevolent aura.

Both the two black-bull panther were wounded by their side abdomens. After wobbling for a few more steps, they couldn't support themselves and fell to the ground.

"Be careful! There are more of them around us!" Reylan yelled loudly.

Their surroundings were full of black shadows. The shadows of black bull panthers kept flashing by, carrying a heavy aura of silver totems.

Garen's countenance changed slightly.

Among the totem auras, he could even feel second form totems, and it wasn't just one. To be able to gather so many second form totems together, there might even be third form creatures.

"Retreat for now." Garen ordered in a low voice.

The few of them slowly exited the fortress gate, constantly on their guards against any ambush.

"There is certainly a nest here." Reylan muttered as she walked towards Garen's side. Only Garen could hear her voice. "A nest is the Obscuro Society's biological weapon plant, if only we could conquer one..."

"Weren't these kinds of nest invented by the Obscuro Society?" Garen frowned.

"Of course not. They initially also found a special creature's nest, then imitated it after that. But many of them were unrefined, and it was impossible to control the nests." Reylan explained. "There should be a

black bull panther's nest here. According to the Obscuro Society's records, it is an agility type, and is decent among first form totems. Big brother, there are two ways for you to come in contact with the derivator's control method. The first method is to find a derivator not owned by the Obscuro Society to shift your silver totems. The second method is to directly make adjustments to the original derivator."

"A derivator that is not owned by the Obscuro Society? Besides the Obscuro Society, are there others who have derivators like this?" Garen curiously asked.

"Actually, the derivator crystal was discovered by the Obscuro Society in the outside world. It only achieved this form through unique modifications." Reylan explained softly.

Garen immediately came to a halt.

Angel and the rest in front noticed it, and stopped as well.

"All of you stay on guard around the fortress. If you meet something you're unable to fight against, immediately send signals through the fire bombs." Garen ordered. "Reylan and I have something to handle."

Angel frowned as she gave Reylan a glance. She didn't say anything but nodded her head.

"Then we shall go back and wait."

Garen nodded.

As he looked at Angel and the others quickly leaving the fortress, he turned towards the black bull panther herd on the plaza, which was growing by the minute.

"How do we conquer the nest?"

"The first step is to clear up these black bull panthers, get rid of all the guards. The nature of a nest is like a plant. The roots are rooted in the ground to absorb nutrients. These black bull panthers are like

the fruits. They are like vassals and guards who are being controlled." Reylan calmly said. "A black bull panther's nest should only be a first form nest. There are minimal second form creatures. The black bull panthers gathered here should be all of them."

Garen heaved a sigh of relief.

"As long as there aren't any third form creatures. There are strong and weak third form creatures, but their abilities are troublesome. If we are unfamiliar with their abilities, it might lead to injuries or even death if we are not careful."

Both of them faced off against all the black bull panthers on the plaza.

Garen stepped forward. A few deep swamp crocs^[1] crawled out from the shade behind him, while a resonance hawk was circling in the air above him .

He pointed at the tens of black bull panthers on the plaza.

The resonance hawk dived, letting out a horrendous cry. At that same time, there were sounds of resonant heartbeats.

Pok Pok!

Two black bull panthers leapt forward a few steps and crashed to the ground. There was blood on the side of their jaws as they laid there motionless.

Five deep swamp crocs armed with their long tails and pitch black hides crawled towards the black bull panthers. They darted forward time to time, grabbing the black bull panthers beside them with their jaws. They snapped the panthers into two and then flung them away.

The sharp claws of the black bull panthers could only leave minor scratches on the body of the crocs.

A few of the second form black bull panthers took on the deep swamp crocs. They were exceedingly swift, and their bodies were covered with black bone armor, like artificial abnormalities.

Owww!!!

As the second form black bull panthers bowed their heads, blue lightning arcs formed in between their horns.

Sheesh! The lightning arcs discharged a blue line and savagely landed on the body of a deep swamp croc. The electric current left a black burnt mark on its hide.

The deep swamp croc was knocked back by the current and retreated a few steps as it let out a roar signalling its injury.

"Electric current?" Garen instantly looked surprised. As he spread out his right palm, lines of black flames quickly erupted from his five fingers. Another tactic gesture was formed in the midst of the shadows.

Reylan was stunned at Garen's feat. "Five...five sight sharing tactics!"

There has never been someone as crazy as this. Even among the countless elites in the Obscuro Headquarters, she has never met someone who could draw five tactics at once. Can a human's hand be as agile as this?!

Garen wasn't in the mood to notice Reylan's reactions. His vision had split into five. Four of them were with the deep swamp crocs, while one of it was with the resonance hawk in the air.

The five different visions were monitoring the second form black panthers from different angles and directions.

The secret ideas that he had finally had a glimmer of hope of being realized.

"Electric current with totem light.....For me, doesn't it have the same properties as the legendary dragon blood?" His eyes narrowed as he had a definite objective in his heart.

Through the sight sharing, Garen's powerful martial arts body could finally reveal its strength.

He simultaneously controlled five totems, forming a defensive semi-circle around Reylan and himself. Every black bull panther that attacked was repelled with immense accuracy, or immediately bitten to death.

Every electrical attack from the second form black bull panthers would be blocked by Garen with the deep swamp crocs. The powerful electric attacks could only leave minor burn marks on the black hide, not causing significant damage to the giant crocs.

Garen's gaze was still. His pupils faintly separated into five fan shapes, every fan presenting images from a different angle.

A second form black bull panther quietly crept towards to the back of Garen and Reylan. It lurked and hid its body in the dark, and took steps towards Garen's rear.

Suddenly, it swooped quietly to grab the back of Garen's head. There were traces of blue electric current on its claws.

As the sharp claws were about to touch Garen, from the right came a big black jaw.

Crack!

As the deep swamp croc's jaw landed on the black bull panther's abdomen, bone crackling sounds continuously came from its jaw. The croc brought its prey to the ground with a thud. Then immediately started to roll on the ground.

In a moment, after a few flashes of lightning arcs in its jaw, everything became still. The second form black bull panther's corpse broke into two parts and fell out from the side of the deep swamp croc's jaw.

The five totems were like meat grinders, annihilating every black bull panther on the plaza. Very quickly, the numbers of the black bull panthers gradually decreased. Finally, the two or three remaining looked at Garen in fear, as if they could run away any time.

Garen brought his tactic and control to a stop. As he looked at the black bull panther corpses all over the plaza, there was no hint of expression on his face.

"Let's go to see the nest. How do we conquer it?"

Reylan retracted her surprise expression. She adjusted her wind-swept hood to cover her dry, ugly face.

"To control a nest is difficult indeed. But the core material to create the derivator could be obtained from a nest. It is called the Resonance Stone and has wonderful effects. After a splitting a resonance stone into two, one of the pieces could be transmitted through resonance to the other piece regardless of distance. Although there is a certain loss, but the frequency will be the same. Because of this, the Obscuro Society used it as a core for long distance communication. After complicating the simple resonance, then going through informationization, then coding, it will then have the communication function of the derivator in your hand."

"Then how do we concretely control the nest? With the Resonance Stone?" Garen asked.

Chapter 330: The Nest 2

"Right." Reylan's knowledge was indeed profound, as she talked about these secrets like household matters. "A nest has only one resonance stone. It is its core, and its heart. Without the stone, although they wouldn't die, they would gradually wilt and become a normal plant. Two things have to be done to control a nest."

"What are the two?" Garen looked at the remnants of black bull panthers after the massacre by the deep swamp croc, then walked towards the tower in the middle of the fortress.

Reylan followed closely behind.

"The first step is to segment the resonance stone. Hold one half in your hand and leave the other half in the nest. You will be able to control the nest's life with the resonance stone. As the plant as no intelligence, survival is their basic nature. With the resonance stone in your hand, you will gradually be filled with their aura. Naturally, you will be the master of the beings it creates."

"The second step is to remember the vibration frequency of the nest. It is like the password to a code. Only by remembering this you would be able to truly control the beings of the nest with the password. This is difficult, exceptionally difficult."

"How can we say no without giving it a shot?" Garen smiled.

The two of them followed the steps to the door of the tower.

Garen stretched out his hands and pushed open the door.

With a deep groan, the door slowly creaked open. A large amount of dust continuously cascaded in the wind.

As they entered the tower, a dark hall instantly appeared in their vision.

In the magnificent hall, everything, including the walls, floors, fireplaces, oil paintings, sculptures, were covered in a dark green mucous membrane-like flesh.

Hanging on the wall opposite the door was a golden sun ornament. The golden ornament was covered in green flesh, and a water basin-sized ferocious eyeball was popping out in the middle.

The surface of the white eyeball was full of blood strands, with a black pupil in the middle. It constantly adjusted its focus as it kept a close eye on Garen and Reylan.

In the red lines of the eyeball, blood was clearly flowing into the inner part of the eyeball. The flow of blood in the translucent blood vessels was like delicate red sand, faintly emitting the sound of moving sand.

Garen looked around the hall.

To the left and right of the eyeball were multiple black bull horns. The horns were arranged in the formation of a saw. They seemed to sense danger as they slowly protracted and covered the eyeball like a big mouth with black, sharp teeth, completely protecting the eyeball.

"Disgusting. There's a sour smell in the air." Garen frowned and covered his nose. "What do we do now?"

Reylan also took out a scarf and covered her nose.

"Every nest has a different internal form. You have to look for the resonance stone on your own, which is one of the difficulties of taking a nest. Take note that once the nest dies, the resonance stone will melt instantly, even if it has been retrieved."

Garen nodded. He paced around the hall as he observed the surroundings.

A white-gold aura slowly emanated from his body. The peculiar thing was the eyeball of the nest shrunk back slightly, as if it felt the great aura.

Garen realized it and looked interestedly at the eyeball. After he came to this world, this was the first time meeting a being that could sense his white gold aura.

"The nest will assimilate into the first building or area that it comes into contact with. This tower was also a structure that was assimilated by it." Reylan was explaining to one side.

Garen nodded, showing that he understood.

He stepped on the flesh-like surface on the hall, feeling its softness. It was like stepping on a rubber surface. There was even white slime sticking on his leg as he lifted it up, forming white filaments.

The white gold aura expanded incessantly. Garen, with complete concentration, shrouded the whole area of the tower with his aura.

Very quickly, he could thoroughly sense the blood flow of the black bull panther's nest.

He grinned as he walked towards the wall on the left. He stretched out his hand and pressed it on an oil painting on the wall.

A deep swamp croc crawled out from behind him. It opened its large jaw and slowly extended its tongue armed with ferocious needles, aiming at where Garen's palm was.

Garen stepped aside.

Chiiii!

The giant croc's tongue shot out like a sharp arrow and pierced into the art on the wall. Very quickly, an oval-shaped red piece of flesh was retrieved as it retracted its tongue.

Its tongue held the piece of meat and slowly put it in Garen's wide open palms.

"This should be the resonance stone," Garen said confidently. This was the largest focal point of the blood flow in the eyeball's nest. It should be what Reylin was saying.

Reylin looked at Garen with surprise. He couldn't comprehend how Garen could locate the resonance stone in such a short time. It looked like he had unimaginable methods.

"Next is to segment it. As the resonance stone is not considered as hard, it is easy to do. Big brother, you can carefully study the control mechanism of the nest. The Obscuro Society's derivator also imitates this mechanism. Once you understand it, you can quickly resolve the concerns regarding the derivator."

Consequently, the two of them cut the resonance stone into two pieces, a big one and a small one. The small piece was then replugged into the hole in the wall.

After Garen's aura expanded, he thoroughly memorized the blood flow of the nest according to Reylan's explanations. It was tremendously fruitful.

As for the frequency of the resonance stone, Garen could feel that this oval piece of meat was indeed like a heart. It was beating lightly, but its frequency was messy and randomized. Even after holding it in his hand for a while, he couldn't sense any repetition.

The two of them exited the nest tower. The black bull panther corpses all over the plaza had disappeared completely, leaving not even a trace of blood.

"Absorbed by the nest." Reylan wasn't surprised.

"Let's rendezvous with the others." Garen shrugged and took huge steps towards the door.

As they exited the deserted fortress, Angel and the rest were starting a bonfire nearby. They were scattered around the fortress as guards.

Angel and Vicky were trying to pry open snail shells with a twig. Leila and the remaining person from the hunting party were huddled together. They seemed to be recording something.

Garen took a glance at the group of people.

"Leila."

"Boss!" Leila instantly noticed Garen and Reylan coming out and quickly ran towards them.

A thought flashed through Garen's mind.

Five black beetles crawl out from behind the group. The beetles had full-black bodies and were half the height of a grown man. Their jaws were full with sharp teeth, looking abnormally ferocious.

"Many totems users have their own way of sleuthing. However, the five black beetles here will be my reward to you to do that. They will fully obey you, but only simple commands can be used to convey your orders. Each of these beetles have power equivalent to a first form totem."

At his last sentence, Angel who seemed unapproving started to be slightly moved.

"First form totem? Impossible!" Angel couldn't help herself. "Without totem light, no matter how strong the beasts are, they wouldn't be able to stand against totems!"

"Who said that they do not have totem light?" Garen smiled and pointed at the beetles with his finger.

At that instant, there was faint black light glowing on the surface of the beetles.

Psssttt...

Angel, Vicky and the other two people from the hunting group had chills from the scene before them.

"Giving five level one totems to an outsider in one go!" Vicky couldn't believe it. She fixated her gaze on Garen's face, trying to find a trace of pain in his expression. But regretfully, she failed.

Garen's expression was like deadwood, without any change.

In fact, the truth fit his expression.

The five beetles were only a tiny part of his army. By giving it away, he no longer had to worry about feeding them, and the deep swamp croc could very quickly breed a few more.

Moreover giving them away did not mean that they were free from his command. He was already in control of these beetles.

This was also a good way to recruit a team. With the benefits of totem strengthening, and having creature totems to order around, a team like this had overwhelming advantages. Of course, there was only one solidifying totem currently, but very quickly they would be able to increase the number.

It was Garen that looked down on the solidifying totems that were too weak.

This was the first time he encountered a nest. There used to be multiple nest appearances in Iron Tank City, but the Grand Duke penetrated the enemy lines and destroyed all of them, temporarily relieving the city from danger. This stopped Garen from really seeing a nest.

There was no way Garen would give up on the derivator at the moment. A large majority of his strength came from the derivator. Furthermore, he couldn't stay in this state of lag for long. Once the elemental generals realized something was wrong, that would spell trouble for them.

According to Reylan's description, the elemental generals had at least the ultimate form of elemental totems. They had incredible power, only second to the marshals with precious heirlooms. They were at least on the level of the former Grand Duke, considered to be on the level of fourth form aberration totems.

Although totems can be classified into animals, plants, and elementals, They were in fact of a unified division.

Such was the internal levels of the Obscuro Society.

After Garen obtained this information from Reylan, he used it as a standard to gauge his enemies.

The Obscuro Society categorizes all the totems under them into six levels.

First form, Second form, Third form, then Spiritualization, Fourth form, Fifth form.

Only the strongest two marshals have achieved the fifth form. Their exact strength was an unknown, but definitely not something an average person can match. In fact, this path was the path of the elemental totems and spiritualization was the beginning of elementalization.

所以凡是元素图腾,都至少是第三型灵光化阶段.哥德的父亲大公爵也是这个阶段,并没有达到第四型层次,只是手中的秘宝龙影之心对他有着提升.可惜,龙影之心也没了.所以才被数头三型灵光怪物逼得最终自爆.

All elemental totems were at least at the third form of spiritualization. Goth's dad, the Grand Duke, was at this level. He couldn't progress to the fourth form, but the Heart of the Dragonshadow increased his power level. Pitifully, the Heart of the Dragonshadow was gone, and he was forced to self-destruct by the third form spiritualized creatures.

In addition, Goth was currently at fourth form, after almost completely elementalizing his core totem, the King of the skies[1]. His precious heirloom also elevated his strength. But the most frightening fact was, this guy was improving every single day.

Vanderman, the father of his host body, Acacia, was considered a second form, while Aquarius was a third form, but evidently did not reach spiritualization. Angel was a second form, but for the elemental generals, they were at least at the stage of third form spiritualization. All generals had at least a third form totem. The only difference was whether it has undergone spiritualization, and the number of third form totems they controlled.

The truth was, with Garen's current strength, he should not be afraid of any single elemental general. His two third form totems, the petrifying white dragon and dual headed salamander, were both incredibly strong. The petrifying white dragon was at third form spiritualization, but it was a pity it could no longer be evolved. Although the dual headed salamander wasn't spiritualized, it was a relentless war machine.

According to Reylan's judgment, spiritualization is obtained naturally through the evolution process. If they had poor innate talent or bad cultivating resources, the evolved totem will not have spiritualization. This is the difference between the quality of evolution.

Even the same type of totem will have differing strength with different cultivations.

Initially, Garen planned to follow this path steadily to the end.

However, with the emergence of the nests, and his increased understanding towards creature totems, Garen had some new thoughts.

Even though that was the case, he could only thoroughly pursue these thoughts after resolving the control issues of the derivator.