

Mystical 331

Chapter 331: Change 1

The wheels on the carriage turned round and round.

Garen turned sideways to look at the scenery outside the carriage window.

Up in the blue sky, a few enormous black dots were circling in the air slowly, making chirping noises in the distance.

The green grassy plains seemed limitless, and the continuous stretches of hills stood up high as a few black sheep the size of little cows lowered their heads and chomped on grass. They occasionally looked up in curiosity at the three carriages that passed by.

The early morning fresh air blew into the carriage window.

Garen lowered his head to look at the Resonance Stone in his hand, before playing with it gently.

The index finger on his left hand lit up suddenly with a black flame, and left a Tactic gesture in the air. His right hand continued to turn the Resonance Stone over in his palm.

Garen put his left hand down and picked up a pen on the table and dipped it in ink, before jotting all this down in his notebook.

Once he had finished his notes, he began to turn the Resonance Stone over again.

"How is it? Are they any results?" Reylan sat up from the opposite seat, which was also the bed area, and asked while yawning softly.

Garen nodded.

"Still alright for now. But it's very difficult. This Detection Tactic that you gave me is quite good, it can be used to increase these kinds of frequencies within specific degrees, as well as detect them. The only downside is that it requires a lot of Silver Energy."

"Silver Energy is used to sustain Totems, and is also the basis of operating Sustain Tactics. I did not expect that Brother would have such an abundance of Silver Energy to be used for Tactics," Reylan shook her head. "According to our research, this type of Silver Energy is probably determined by the state of mind of the Luminarist. The better their state of mind, the higher their Silver Energy."

Garen nodded.

"My body has been healthy all along, and I've always been in a positive state of mind. We don't have to worry about this aspect."

He picked the pen up again and began to write down a new set of data in his notebook.

"It's been two days since we left that fortress nearby Ferrochrome Town. We should almost be reaching Aisley City by now, right?"

Reylan grabbed the glass of plain water on the table and gulped it down in one mouth, exhaled, and began putting on her coat.

"Since we sped up we should almost there," she moved to sit next to the window on the other side, and looked outside.

Cough cough...

The sound of Lala's coughing echoed from the carriage in front again. She sounded as if she were about to cough out her internal organs.

"Stop the carriage! Stop the carriage!" A young man alighted from the front of the carriage. He was the totem user from the Hunting Group that had guarded Lala earlier. He had a grim expression on his face as he ran towards Garen's carriage, waving his hands frantically.

The three carriages began to slow down to a stop.

Garen pulled the carriage door open and got off, before walking towards the man.

"What's wrong? What happened?"

"Lala just coughed out blood! We need to think of a way to help her!" The man replied solemnly. "I can't bear to look at this anymore. She's just a regular person. She doesn't deserve this kind of punishment."

"I'll go and take a look," said Garen, furrowing his brows.

He followed the man into the first carriage, and suddenly noticed the shockingly large pool of fresh blood on the floor of the carriage.

Lala lay on her side on the carriage floor, her face as white as a blank sheet of paper.

Garen's expression darkened, and his eyes glanced past the others. Angel shrugged her shoulders immediately, showing that she was powerless.

Vicky furrowed her eyebrows and said softly: "I've seen this type of illness in Sitcher County. It seems to be Miya tuberculosis, and may be contagious."

At once, a forced expression appeared on the faces of everyone in the carriage.

"I'll do it," said Garen indifferently as he stepped forward and carried Lala in his arms. He turned around and walked towards the third carriage.

Lala's weight had decreased severely. He estimated that she weighed less than eighty pounds, and was now skinnier than a person should be.

Garen took the opportunity to look at her face.

Both of her cheeks were sunken and her eyes were listless. All that was left of her were skin and bones.

"No medicine, no specialized doctors. I'm sorry, I caused all of this to happen to you," said Garen softly, as he placed her on the seats of the third carriage, against a barrel of beef jerky.

"This was my own decision," Lala's voice was very weak now, and most people would have to place their ears right next to her before they were able to vaguely hear what she was saying. "I... wanted to follow you..."

Garen looked at the girl who had taken such good care of him all this while, and felt a sense of uncertainty inside his heart. Without a suitable treatment method, Lala would surely die. Garen himself had unconsciously neglected her during this period of time, which resulted in her deteriorating to this degree.

He reached his hand outwards and touched Lala's wrist to feel her pulse, before realising that it was extremely weak, almost non-existent by now.

"Right now, there's a way to save you, but I can't assure you that it will be successful, because everything depends on luck. It is only a possibility."

Lala's eyes jolted open immediately. "I could still... live?"

"But you'll have to give up your freedom in exchange," Garen nodded as he answered her question.

Frankly, both of them knew deep in their hearts that if it was really tuberculosis, it was only a matter of time before it became a death sentence.

There was not the slightest bit of hesitation in Lala's eyes.

"Please, I'll leave it up to you then. I'm just a regular person, and to be honest in a world and era like this, I don't have much freedom to talk about." She was someone who was well-versed in the law, and could see everything clearly. She understood that Garen's treatment of her could already be considered excellent. If she had any other master, she would have been dead a long time ago.

Garen was in awe of her rationality and intelligence. The ability to put everything into perspective, and the knowledge on whether to advance or to step back were Lala's greatest virtues. As for her pretty face, it was only secondary to everything else. In this world, those who were beautiful but shallow could be found anywhere. However, girls as gorgeous and wise as herself were truly rare.

"You should get ready then," Garen turned to look at the Hunting Group members outside who were looking in their direction.

"All of you should wait outside first. I'm going to see if I can save Lala."

Angel rushed towards him and nodded, as a playful smile appeared on her face.

"Up to you, as long as your 'cute' little sister doesn't get jealous."

Garen was too tired for her nonsense. He pulled the carriage door and shut it, before closing the curtains.

He looked at Lala in her white sleeping gown, and crouched down beside her.

"Just rest for awhile. When you wake up in a few moments, you'll feel better."

Lala nodded slightly.

"I'm in your hands, Lord Garen."

"Yes." Garen's hand shot out as quick as electricity, before quickly hitting the side of Lala's neck.

Both of Lala's eyes closed immediately, as she fell into a state of unconsciousness.

Garen spared no time in taking out the red crystal ball from his inner shirt pocket, before placing it on the side of Lala's head gently.

The red crystal ball suddenly began to emit a soft light. A row of small words began to float upwards near the top.

'A creature has been found nearby, would you like to empower the creature?'

"This is an experiment. If it succeeds, you live. But if it fails, you'll die. We'll see what your fate holds." Garen glanced at the words in the crystal ball, and stretched his hand out slowly, clicking on the part that said 'yes'.

Abruptly, the crystal ball began to emit a silver light, as the colour of its entire body began to turn from pink to silver. A ray of silver light shot out of its core and landed straight on the right side of Lala's temple.

Shh...

Suddenly, white gas began to form near Lala's head, appearing to be water vapour.

Garen looked at the crystal Derivator frantically. This experiment was the key to finding out whether he could successfully empower a human body. After Jessica was first empowered, she went missing without a trace, and there had been no news about her even until now. However, humans could definitely be empowered to a certain degree, because the option to choose humans existed. Deep inside he felt that this was not completely right, but it was worth trying.

This was its final quota, the tenth item that the Derivator would be able to control. Now it was time to see if it would succeed or not.

The silver ray shot out for a full ten minutes, before it faded slowly, and finally became dark.

Garen waited until the silver light had disappeared fully before he kept the crystal ball quickly, and then began to check on Lala's condition.

Everything seemed normal. She looked the same as she did before the empowerment process, even her body looked as weak as it was before.

"Did it fail?" Garen glanced at the crystal ball, and noticed that it clearly stated on top that the empowerment had been a success.

He looked at the bottom part of his field of vision. If he had succeeded, there would surely be a totem icon here.

Sure enough, an unknown icon had appeared in the silver totem pane. The icon was a three-dimensional full-body image of Lala.

'Lala Pearson: First form living totem, upgradable. Probability of successful evolution: 89% (The weaker its body, the higher the success rate). Potential point cost: 300%.

Abilities: Housework, studying.'

"She really became a totem." Garen was somewhat shocked. He peered at Lala who was still lying down. The girl was opening her eyes slowly now, and looking at him with a slightly confused expression.

Garen began to use his Will. "Lala, can you hear me?" He passed his message mentally without having to say a word.

Lala opened her mouth in shock, but understood immediately, as an alarmed expression appeared on her face.

"This...?!" She looked at Garen and felt as if his emotions could now decide whether she lived or died. However, the original feeling of weakness from the tuberculosis that was once entangled around her was completely gone.

She felt as if her heartbeats had gotten stronger.

"Don't feel doubtful, I'm using my thoughts to communicate with you now. Currently, you've become my exclusive creature, in a certain sense. Your life and death is in my hands," Garen explained carefully. "Do you feel something different about yourself now?"

Lala nodded, but her response was somewhat delayed. She was also just expressing her thoughts internally.

"My illness seems to be cured..."

"That's good," Garen nodded in satisfaction. "This experiment counts as a success, so you should try and get used to your body now. It should be much safer for you now than before."

The greatest benefit of becoming a totem was that it was less likely for them to succumb to harm that was not caused by their own species, such as illnesses, accidents, or disasters.

Garen pulled the door open and alighted the carriage, before looking at the grim face of Reylan who had been waiting outside. Her wizened, shrivelled face was lightly painted with an unwilling and jealous expression.

"Brother, it looks like you've decided not to listen to my warnings," she said in a very solemn voice. "Do you know what happens when you don't listen to me?"

Garen could tell that she was masking a stern threat behind her words. He squinted his eyes.

"I don't remember what you said to me?"

Reylan sneered. She said nothing as she turned away and returned to the carriage.

Garen watched the figure of her back, as he felt for the first time that it might be a wrong decision for him to let this person stay by his side, even though she had given him an abundance of other-worldly knowledge.

"Be careful, your sister looks slightly abnormal."

Angel walked beside Garen and said the words softly. Her voice was hardly audible, but the both of them noticed when Reylan, who was now in front and had walked quite a distance away, turned around suddenly. Her pupils glared directly at Angel.

Angel huffed coldly, and brought her people towards the first carriage.

Garen looked at Reylan, unsure of how to solve the problem for now. He waited awhile before getting on to the carriage, before noticing that Reylan had her back facing towards him now, and was currently asleep under her blanket.

This continued until lunchtime at noon, when Reylan woke up and ate quickly, before going back to sleep again.

Garen felt that something was strange, but decided to leave this thought at the back of his mind for the time being. Whenever he came across a problem, it was better for him to solve it on his own. With his basic knowledge, as long as he knew the foundation of the situation, he only needed to investigate it deeper, and this was not something that would be too difficult for him.

Up until night time, they managed to take care of a herd of more than ten white cats. These white cats were almost the size of horses, and had extremely sharp claws, but were not totems. One of the men in black in Angel's group took care of them on his own, and left the meat to be made into jerky, while the fur would be used to make clothes.

After dinner, Garen continued to research biological engineering for awhile, before going to sleep as well.

Suddenly, he felt that something was off. While still in a daze, he began to feel an uncomfortable feeling.

Garen hazily opened his eyes with all his might. He saw Reylan standing at his side, and looking down at him. Her eyes were glowing red, and she was emitting light in the darkness.

"Reylan? What's wrong?" Garen had yet to wake up, and was just looking at Reylan who was standing beside him.

Reylan did not say a word, but turned around and returned to her own area. She went back to sleep again, completely ignoring Garen's question.

Garen rubbed his head and sat up straight, before noticing that something was not right with his cup.

He grabbed the cup on the table as a little black thing crawled out and attempted to fly out through the carriage window.

Pop!

Garen pinched the little black thing in one swift moment. When he opened his hands to look, he saw a little black cockroach-like insect, that was almost the size of his fingernail.

Chapter 332: Change 2

Suddenly, he heard the quiet creeping sound of insects crawling.

He lowered his head to look, and noticed that his entire bed was filled with a large number of these insects crawling everywhere. There were so many of them tightly packed together that it was impossible to count.

Some of the insects were climbing up his arms, some were crawling on his thighs, while others were attempting to crawl up his chest and head.

The large clusters of insects looked like a pool of black mucus that covered the entire bed. A rotting smell that compelled people to vomit also permeated in the air.

"Damn it!!" Garen's totem light flashed across his whole body as all the insects were shaken off. He felt a tingling sensation on his scalp, and got up frantically.

Immediately, the insects on his seat slid downwards like flowing water, and scuttled into the bottom of the carriage, disappearing quickly.

Garen picked his cup up to drink some water, but suddenly remembered the little insect that had crawled out of there.

He looked inside the cup and saw a fat white maggot soaking inside the water. The maggot's body was covered in layers of folds and was curled at the bottom of the cup. It was as thick as two fingers and was still turning around and wriggling.

Many white insect eggs were floating on the surface of the water as well.

Bang!

Garen threw the cup on the carriage floor. A wave of unprecedented anger burst out of him.

"Reylan!!!"

He pointed a finger angrily at Reylan who was still asleep.

"What's wrong, Brother?" Reylan turned over and looked at Garen calmly.

Both of them met each other's eyes, but neither of them was willing to give in to the other.

Some time passed before Garen calmed his emotions.

"Are you using your methods to threaten me?" Garen felt that this was the first time he truly understood this girl from the Obscuro Society that he picked up.

"What methods? I don't know what you're talking about, Brother," said Reylan with a strange expression on her face.

Garen began to feel slightly suspicious that Lala's illness may have been caused by Reylan. After witnessing the scene with these strange insects tonight, he had now started to suspect this possibility even more.

"What are you trying to do?!"

Reylan's mouth stretched into an ugly smile.

"Brother, you like beautiful women, don't you? Unfortunately, my face has disappointed you greatly. Isn't that right?"

Her smile disappeared, and she seemed to be reminiscing something.

"Frankly... I knew earlier on that you weren't my real brother."

Garen's heart stopped for a moment and he paused his speech, as he waited for her next words.

"I just wanted to continue to bask in the feeling of being cared for by someone else, Brother," Reylan's eyes grew wider, and her red eyes grew more bloodshot. "Of course, it would have been better if that little servant who was prettier than me actually died. That's what I thought, so I decided to induce her slightly," she said. "You know as well, that some illnesses only require certain specialized environments, and that's all that is needed to induce them."

"So it was you," Garen said calmly.

"Hehe..." Reylan laughed, and stood up suddenly. "Oh Brother looks like we have no choice but to be separated now. However, all this will only be temporary."

As she smiled, her face began to melt suddenly, as if it was a candle, and the wax-like liquid dripped downwards and turned into countless little black winged insects.

Immediately, Reylan's entire body turned into a cluster of black winged insects that flew out of the carriage noisily, and buzzed towards the faraway sky.

The winged insects formed into a black human figure in the sky and waved at Garen from a distance.

A sullen expression appeared on Garen's face as he watched Reylan leave instantly. He had no intention of making any moves right now, as both he and Reylan were individuals that the Obscuro Society wanted to get rid of, and there was no need for him to have any conflict with her now.

This incident with Lala had severed the mutual affection between them completely.

As for how Reylan felt, he had no idea about that, and did not plan on finding out.

"It's good that she left," Garen huffed coldly as he scattered the Platinum Aura around his body everywhere, using it to check the condition of the three carriages. Once there were no more little insects, he returned it to himself slowly.

"Just like Jess. Nothing but another extreme madman."

There was not a sliver of regret in Garen's heart.

Even though Reylan could have aided him greatly, a person like herself, who would hurt anyone by his side at any moment for the sake of lust, was definitely unstable. At a time like this where he was unable to grasp the situation, distancing himself was the best option.

"What happened?" Angel and the others got down from the carriage after they were woken up. They put on their coats as they stood beside the carriage window.

"Nothing. Reylan left. She fought with me," Garen forced a smile and said softly.

Angel's expression had clearly relaxed as well.

"She left? I've always thought that there was something abnormal about your sister. It's good that she left."

"You're being honest for once," Garen smiled bitterly.

"We should be able to reach Aisley City by tomorrow. You should sleep early and get some rest. The Striped Crystal you're looking for, and the other crystals, they have them all there," said Angel as she shook her head, and turned to leave the window.

Garen tried to detect his totem creatures.

The Dual Headed Salamander was sleeping in a hole that it had dug for itself at the back. The Resonance Hawk was on the left side within a seven hundred meter radius, hunting down an Aberration White Deer. The Petrifying White Dragon was in a different hole, cleaning the scales on its body.

The Deep Swamp Croc and the Beetles were scattered in different areas, and most of them were already asleep.

Angel, upon finding out that Reylan had left, did not seem shocked at all. She had noticed the complexities of Reylan from much earlier on.

Garen did not want to think about it any longer, and decided to lie down once again. But when he closed his eyes, he will still unable to fall asleep for some reason.

On the second day at noon, they reached the end of the plains in front, and a metal-grey colored hexagon-shaped city finally appeared in sight.

Aisley City looked like a hexagonal coin that had been embedded in the ground, it was abnormally neat. Each of its six sides had a watchtower built there.

Garen poked his head out of the window and looked at the city in front of him.

One of the watchtowers near the road had already collapsed. It looked like a broken pencil from the way that it had snapped in the middle. Half of it had fallen in the middle of the road, blocking the road that the carriage was using to pass through.

There were broken pieces of carriage tyres on the right side of the road, and some of the blood stains on the ground had begun to oxidize and turn black already. A few red-eyed rats were crawling around in the grass.

Once Garen's carriage arrived, the little guys became frightened and ran away in all directions.

"Aisley City was an industrial city that was rich in mineral resources. It was also one of the two largest headquarters of the southern War Guild. Who knows if they are still any survivors from the guild?" Angel and Garen were sitting in the same carriage, as she chatted to him leisurely while sitting opposite him.

"Maybe there are or maybe there aren't, but what does that have to do with us?" Garen joked. "In this kind of environment, other than our living essentials, everything else is unimportant."

"That's also true," Angel smiled as well. "Get down first, the road in front is blocked."

She flung the door open and jumped off.

Garen followed closely behind.

Both of them walked towards the watchtower that was blocking the road in front.

Their surroundings were completely quiet, except for a few rats that crawled below the watchtower quickly, making soft noises as they went.

Weeds were growing on the surface of ashen roads, and dark green vines had begun creeping around the fallen watchtower. Bright daylight vaguely illuminated the interior of the watchtower.

The watchtower had a diameter of five to six meters, and had caused a blockade in front of all the carriages that attempted to move forward.

Garen walked to the side of the watchtower and looked in front, before realizing that the city gates was right there.

The city gates were opened, and there was a row of ruined little houses on the left, which appeared to be sites where merchant stalls once stood. The air was completely silent, and there was not a hint of rotten blood scent anywhere.

"So quiet..." Angel stood beside Garen and said softly as she furrowed her brows.

"It's too quiet," Garen nodded. "To think that there wouldn't even be one monster to be seen." Garen detected his Beetles and commanded them to look out, but they did not find even one monster. Everything felt strange.

"Let's go. We'll talk a look before we decide," Garen turned around and jumped over the watchtower, landing on the ground on the other side.

"If you're looking for the Striped Crystal, I'd suggest that you go to the storehouse at the Governor's residence right away, because there should be more there," Angel said loudly.

"We don't need to do that. The museum one of your members was talking about last time, we'll go there instead," Garen turned his head upwards and looked at the Resonance Hawk that was circling over his head.

The large grey hawk was looking downwards at the entire city.

Garen drew a tactic gesture quickly. Suddenly his senses were dulled, before instantly becoming clear again.

He was now in the midst of the cold air, looking downwards at the entire Aisley City.

The interior of this hexagonal city was a mess of multicolored broken stones that had been muddled together. Most of the buildings had collapsed. Some areas were continuous sections of charred wreckage, making it obvious that a fire had occurred there. Other places were unharmed and still in perfect condition, as a protective barrier-like wall had been built around it. It was supported by heavy metal buckets, a sign that it was a man-made stronghold. However, there were still no movements there.

"What were the special features of the museum?" Garen asked directly.

"Eight pillars, all black, and a triangular fountain at the door. There were four brass statues in the surroundings, which were all statues of Fedilipa. The roof was rectangular and extremely long, resembling a street," explained Vicky with detailed descriptions, as she stood next to Angel.

"Very good," Garen locked down their destination quickly. "We'll go there right away. We'll enter through the city gates and passed through three straight streets, turn right, cross an arched bridge, turn left again and cross another two streets, before finally reaching the museum."

"It's pretty far. All the streets in Aisley City are very long," Vicky said softly.

"Doesn't matter. We'll get our things, divide them amongst ourselves, and leave immediately. If you need anything, list them down and give the list to me," Garen said in a straightforward manner.

"The list was ready a long time ago. Here!" Vicky passed him a piece of white paper that was filled with materials and supplies.

Garen took it and glanced at it, before his brows began to furrow slightly.

"Some of these things are unnecessary, such as these historical books that can only be found on the other side of the city. Kardo fruit jam? This is not the time to be enjoying yourselves. And all these rare metals..."

"We should split up then. In this area, it seems that there aren't that many monsters anymore," Angel shrugged. She passed him a black stick that was only the size of her palm. "This is a smoke signal used to alert others. If you're facing trouble, just use this signal, and all of us will come over to assist you."

Garen took the smoke signal. "Do I need to light it up before using it?"

"Just rubbing it quickly against a rough surface will do."

"Alright. However, since there's nothing wrong here, we should wait until we're completely sure that there are no monsters before we split up and move."

Chapter 333: Secretive 1

White rays of sunlight fell inside the hexagonal city, and basked most of the wreckage in a layer of white.

Inside the empty city, on the abandoned streets, a blonde man dressed in a grey robe walked forward slowly. He surveyed his surroundings from left to right occasionally as his feet stepped over littered building debris and rubbish. There were also some mysterious deep pits on the ground that looked like white dots, and could be seen everywhere on the city streets.

Both sides of the street were filled with ashen shophouses and the occasional multi-levelled hotel building, and there were broken stone sculptures on the roofs of the buildings.

All of the doors and windows of the buildings were now empty black holes that allowed the cold wind to blow in endlessly.

The blonde man stepped on the ground with his leather shoes, crushing some of the broken stones and making crunching noises as he walked.

He walked on the streets alone while his eyes scanned the area from both ends quickly without giving his pupils enough time to focus.

After walking for a distance, the man passed through two neighbourhoods and walked unto an ashen stone arched bridge.

The right side of the bridge had been damaged by an unknown object and only left than half of it was left. Below it was a dried out river bed, where an abundance of fine green grass was growing in the black river bottom.

"To think that I wouldn't be able to find a single survivor?" The man walked across the arched bridge slowly, as a doubtful expression appeared on his face.

After he had separated from the others, he decided to go to the museum alone to obtain the item that he was looking for-- the Striped Crystal. Initially, he thought that he would have encountered at least a few monsters, he certainly did not expect that he would not even see one.

"Garen! En... En... Oh..." Suddenly, the sound of Angel yelling and its echoes could be heard in the distance.

Garen looked towards his left near the further parts of the river, and saw Angel and Vicky walking further away in the direction of the river. Both of them were dressed in bright red leather armor, and resembled sharp, little red dots.

The yelling noises sounded throughout the empty city endlessly, and formed echoes.

"Did you find any... ni... ni... ni...?" Angel's voice echoed from a distance.

Garen raised a hand and shook it from left to right, signalling that he did not.

Angel soon realised that her loud yells would easily attract monsters, so she shut her mouth and stopped shouting. Instead, she used her hand movements to point in the direction of the furthest part of the river to signal that she was walking over there.

Garen understood her actions and walked forward to point out his own direction as well.

Both of them waved at each other before they separated and continued walking forward.

After crossing the stone bridge, a street shaded by trees lay ahead, and when the cold wind blew, the fallen leaves on the ground would roll past and made soft noises as they brushed against the ground.

On the side of this street, a row of wilted buttonwood trees were planted there. There were almost no leaves on the trees, as most of them had become dried leaves that littered the ground.

Garen walked forward calmly at a seemingly slow pace, when in actual fact every step he took covered a great distance, and was actually an average person's running speed.

He surveyed the environment of his surroundings and noticed that a majority of the shops on both sides of the street were clothing stores and accessory shops. There were shelves of women's clothes and jewelry displayed inside, and some of the clothing racks had already collapsed while thick layers of dust had accumulated on top of the expensive fabric.

In the middle of the road in front, a brass statue was built there. It was a statue of a little boy in a urinating position which was connected to a round pool below. The pool had dried up completely and a pile of wilted buttonwood leaves had accumulated at the bottom of the dried out ashen coloured pool.

Garen walked to the side of the pool and stretched his hand out to pick up a buttonwood leaf. The wilted leaf resembled a yellow claw that had curled upwards at the edges.

He pinched it gently and the leaf instantly let out a crunchy noise, before it broke into many paper-like pieces.

Garen brought his hand up towards his nose and sniffed it, as a dry scent entered his nostrils immediately.

"What caused so many people in this city to leave this place? There isn't a single trace of monsters. However, the fallen watchtower outside clearly shows that a war had broken out."

Still uncertain, he threw away the leaf pieces in his hands, and crossed over the decorative pool.

After crossing this neighbourhood, up ahead on the right side, a plaza that was filled with wilted leaves appeared before Garen.

The plaza was oval shaped with three different stone sculptures in the middle that depicted three different single-horned beasts that were posed in a neighing position with a single hoof raised. Their snow-white bodies had begun to show thin crack lines.

On the sides of the plaza, long strips of flower beds had been erected to line the borders, but only black soil remained inside, as the colourful flowers had disappeared a long time ago.

Garen's gaze scanned across the plaza before he looked in front and noticed a foggy rectangular building there.

It looked like a simple white rectangular box. The perimeter of this building was propped up by black stone pillars that were spread out at equal distances from each other, with unknown patterns engraved at the top.

Garen quickened his footsteps and walked towards this building.

Once he had reached the front of the building, he saw a triangular fountain at the main door that had dried up a long time ago. The road leading inside had been split in the middle with one end leading towards the right and the other to the left, forming the shape of an eye. On the outer area of the road stood two bronze statues of people. They were both identical statues of a young man raising a book in one hand. Garen felt as if he was leading something along with him, so he turned his head and looked behind as he walked forward and took long strides.

Garen came from the left side and walked around the fountain before standing in front of the sculpture and stroking the human sculpture gently.

The temperature was extremely low and the air was as cold as ice. The texture of the ground was also rough, and very hard.

He looked down at his fingers and noticed that a thin layer of black dust had appeared there.

He arched his head upwards and looked at the sunlight. Garen suddenly noticed that the sky had started to turn dark. The rays that had warmed his body earlier had now disappeared. Instead, it was substituted by a cold breeze.

Garen furrowed his brows and took his pocket watch out of his pocket. Inside the brass watch face, the hour hand stood straight at the '1' position.

"One-twenty in the afternoon, who would have thought that it would be cold at this hour?" He kept his pocket watch carefully and wrapped his grey robe tighter around his body. He took long strides and walked towards the main door of the museum.

There was a large metal-framed wooden door outside the museum. The large door was as tall as two people, and the golden keyhole in the middle seemed to be of an expensive grade. Two silver chains hung outside the main door, and were probably used to tie it up.

Garen lifted the chain and twisted it lightly with his fingers.

Clang!

A crisp noise sounded before the chain broke into two.

Once the chain had been opened, Garen pressed his palm lightly against the keyhole. There was no sound, so he pushed again lightly.

The entire keyhole was pushed inwards and fell on the ground with a 'clang'.

The main door was pushed open slowly and the doors faced the outside areas in both directions.

The interior was completely empty and the floor was filled with black dust. The walls were also stained with traces of smoke and most areas had been burnt and melted by fire, causing some of the metal cupboards and burnt coal to stick together, blackened to the point where they were indistinguishable.

"This is going to be troublesome..." Garen knitted his eyebrows together closely.

He walked forward and looked straight ahead.

The whole museum could be seen straight ahead. Up in front, the middle section was completely burnt black, and the only undamaged exhibition counters were situated in the back. All of these counters were shaped like spheres, and were protected by a piece of transparent crystal glass. The surrounding floors were covered with scattered pieces of broken glass, causing the place to be in a state of disorder.

Garen crossed the charred section hurriedly and walked towards the last exhibition counter.

The sound of his own footsteps could be heard continuously throughout the empty museum, and as the noise echoed throughout the emptiness, it seemed as if another person was following Garen from behind.

He narrowed his eyes when he suddenly thought of the issue with Reylan last night, and his emotions turned gloomy all of a sudden. The echoes made it seem like there were more footsteps in the distance that were softer than his own, stalking him from behind. They seemed nearby, following him closely from behind.

Garen turned around suddenly and stopped in his tracks.

There was nothing behind him, and the sound of the footsteps stopped immediately as well.

"Was it an illusion?" He tried to silence his footsteps, not allowing himself to make any noise.

Suddenly, the hair-raising sensation from before finally ceased.

When he reached the front of the counter, Garen began to examine the exhibits inside one by one.

Extravagantly priced jewels, some exquisite copperware, ancient metal boxes, and the latest silver pocket watch. All kinds of mysterious exhibits were displayed inside the counters.

Garen walked passed the expensive but unimportant items right away, as his gaze scanned across the room, before finally noticing that there were lists of the exhibits placed on the wall a fixed distance from each other.

The lists contained clearly-written records of various treasures and the numbers of the counters where they were kept.

Garen's eyes scanned across the lists before finally finding the counter where the Prime Crown was kept: Number 28.

He walked in front of the undamaged counters and looked at the numbers on top, noticing that were between numbers 270 to 350.

"28..."

Garen followed the direction of the counters and walked forward towards them.

He quickly found counter 28 where most parts of it had already melted.

The crystal glass had been stained black by the smoke. He placed five fingers on the surface of the counter and pushed it lightly, before his fingernail suddenly penetrated it deeply.

A cracking noise could be heard as a large lump of coal and something else was instantly dug out by Garen.

The inside of it was empty, and seemed like it had not been burnt completely.

Garen reached inside and felt around, before grabbing a crown-like object, and pulling it out immediately.

A pure silver crown was now in his hands. The crown was completely spotless, a pure silver colour, except for the red diamond-shaped crystal embedded in the middle. The crown was simple, but also delicate and neat.

The jewel was the size of a fingernail, crystal clear, and pure beyond comparison. There was not a single defect or impurity to be seen.

Garen picked up the crown and examined the red crystal in the middle carefully.

"The Striped Crystal. It's main characteristic is that when it faces external oppression, thin stripes will naturally appear inside it."

Garen's finger pressed against the red crystal gently.

Suddenly, thin web-like lines floated upwards like countless stripes, and could be seen clearly.

"This is it."

He kept the crown in his clothes pocket immediately.

After that, he began to refer to the list again, before searching the other counters for the exhibits he might require.

In many of the burnt counters, the majority of the exhibits inside were unburnt, but the exterior of the counters had melted because of the fire, which made removing them more troublesome. The ones that had truly been burnt to a crisp, were but a few.

To prevent the exhibits inside from being damaged, Garen's every move was executed extremely carefully, which proved to be unnecessarily tiring.

Seconds and minutes ticked away. The sky outside began to darken.

Garen reached his hand inside one of the burnt counters.

Bang! Bang!

Suddenly a loud noise echoed from the outside and the ground began to shake violently. It sounded like the footsteps of a large creature.

"What was that?"

Garen kept his hands to himself and placed the black crystal inside his pocket.

Bang bang! Bang bang bang!!

The footsteps echoed once again and the ground quaked violently as large amounts of dust began to fall down from the ceiling of the museum.

Chapter 334: Secretive 2

Garen's expression had changed slightly. In the blink of an eye, he felt twenty of his Parasitic Beetles disappear.

Suddenly, a whine sounded in his Will, and his connection from the Resonance Hawk was cut off instantly.

"Fuck! I knew there would be a problem!!!" Panic rose in Garen's heart, as he grabbed his pockets and ran out of the doorway of the museum quickly, exiting the main door. Suddenly, he was frozen in shock in his position.

In the city on the left side of the museum, an incomparably large fatso carried an unbelievably huge mace as he walked through the interior of the city one step at a time.

This monster's body was covered from head to toe in dark green, and it had rough skin that resembled the bark of an old tree. He also had a large protruding belly. His height was apparently much taller than most of the buildings in the surroundings. The mace on his shoulder was completely black, and its size was beyond comparison.

He strolled through the city one step at a time, as if he was patrolling his own territory.

Garen swallowed his saliva.

This monster's height was already almost fifty meters high! As he walked through the city, the houses and buildings on both sides seemed like his wooden block playthings that would be destroyed easily with one gentle push.

Around his neck hung a round tooth chain, and two large horns grew out of each of his shoulders, as black as cow's horns.

Garen had seen large monster totems, but had never seen a monster this big.

The Petrifying White Dragon and Dual Headed Salamander were large enough, but compared to the giant monster in front of his eyes, their size difference was equivalent to the difference between an adult and a baby. Without even trying, Garen already knew that he would not be able to defeat him.

For a troll that was over fifty meters tall, every time his feet stomped against the ground, a five or six meter deep imprint would be left behind.

Garen executed his commands hurriedly through his Will, and allowed all of his silver totems to escape the place quickly.

The troll seemed as if it had discovered Garen his presence. His dark green head bent down slightly as it looked over at Garen curiously.

Suddenly, he raised the mace above his shoulder.

"Uh... No way..."

Garen began to feel uneasy. He picked up this things as his feet stomped on the ground violently. A few strides later, he had already dashed more than ten meters away.

Boom!!!

An ear piercing roar echoed behind him.

He turned around to look, and saw that the museum had been fully destroyed. A large mace lay on top of the collapsed wreckage, and just like a smashed paper box, it had was no obstruction to the weapon.

"Woah woah woah!!!" yelled the fatso as he raised his mace and made loud incomprehensible noises. It was unknown if he was laughing or just roaring.

The noise sounded like thunder, and the quakes that it caused made Garen's whole body numb.

He noticed that even the little stones on the ground in front were beginning to jump from the quakes.

Suddenly, another black shadow covered him.

Without enough time to think, Garen used all the strength in his body, as he stomped the ground with his feet powerfully.

Boom!!!

A large amount of gravel crashed against his body violently, and the impact caused a burning pain throughout his entire body.

His Totem Light had apparently broken in the blink of an eye!! Right now, he could not even feel a sliver of its existence!

"Which fucking form of a monster are you?!" Garen could not help himself from cursing. He turned around began to shamefully run away.

The fatso began to roar loudly again. He held the mace in both of his hands.

Boom boom boom boom!!!

He began to swing it around violently. He moved his big feet and chased Garen from behind quickly, with unusually fast speed. One step was enough for him to move thirty to forty meters forward.

Countless buildings were smashed until dust filled the air, and as they collapsed, bits of stone would fly everywhere, and some of the larger rocks even destroyed a few houses.

The black mace moved constantly in a quick flurry, and within a few hits, all of the buildings surrounding the fatso were smashed to debris.

Garen ran away frantically. He was too afraid to turn back as the fatso was incredibly fast, and could reach the distance he hastily ran with just one step. If the fatso was a totem user, he would have easily smashed Garen with one step. His speed-based secret technique was truly frightening.

He was too afraid to call upon the totems in his hands for assistance because when the monstrous fatso had attempted to hit him earlier, the gravel had broken through the totem light on his body. It was important to note that the totem light of a totem user was much stronger than the totem itself.

In that moment earlier, if a totem itself had been hit, there was a chance that it would have been destroyed instantly.

He had painstakingly nurtured and evolved a Form Three silver totem, and if it was destroyed here for nothing, he would not know what to do but cry.

The fatso chased after Garen quickly, looking as if he was extremely happy.

"Woah woah woah...!! Ansai! Lucan... Mokeya...!!" he roared loudly once again.

Garen ran frantically and suddenly felt his whole body shiver.

Suddenly, he leapt towards the left, breaking proper posture, as he used all of his strength to evade the mace that came smashing down behind him.

Bang!!

A white mansion that once stood upright was instantly smashed to bits. In the garden, a large tree broke off at the middle, and let out a crisp whooshing noise as it fell.

"Endor language!! Apparently it's the Endor language!" A layer of haziness began to form in Garen's mind. Initially, he assumed that he had seen almost everything clearly, but now he had apparently discovered new mysteries and strange things.

"Nusija! Anboer! Kasiduor!!" Suddenly, he turned around and used his secret technique to gather his voice in one place, before directing it towards the troll's ear.

He was also using the Endor language!

Suddenly, the fatso stopped in his tracks. He lifted the mace back towards his shoulder while his face became expressionless.

"Ansai... Lucan... Mokeya... (Flesh and blood... Fresh... Want to eat...)"

Garen simultaneously translated all the other sounds into meanings he could understand. He was not extremely fluent in the Endor language, as he had not used it enough.

Standing in the middle of the street, he arched his head upwards and looked at the troll, afraid that he would suddenly become mad again, which would cause his mace to come crashing down once more.

Once his strength took a hit, it mattered not whether he was a totem user or a secret technique possessor, he would get smashed flat all the same.

This tall building-sized monster had a body that was large enough to cast a huge black shadow that enveloped Garen completely.

A man and a monster, one large and one small, stood facing each other unnaturally, as if they were engaging in a conversation.

"Ansai... Lucan... Mokeya...!! (Flesh and blood... Fresh... Want to eat!!)" repeated the troll again. It seemed like he was unable to say anything else, except for this one sentence.

"Ruo... Xifeidela? (You... what type of meat do you want?)" Garen attempted to form a chain of Endor words to ask the troll a question.

"Ansai... Lucan... Mokeya..." The troll continued to say the same sentence, repeating it over and over again. Sticky saliva began to drip from the two fangs at the corner of its mouth, before falling unto the debris below, and drenching a huge area instantly.

Garen tried other questions but the troll did not respond in the slightest. It seemed to only know this particular sentence and repeated it continuously. Fortunately, it was no longer attacking Garen.

Garen tried again, but did not get the desired effect. Finally, he gave up on his plan to communicate with the troll. He thought for a moment. Before ordering his next command with his Will.

Instantly, a swarm of black Parasitic Beetles crawl in from outside the city, looking like a colony of black ants as they moved in the direction of the troll.

The troll did not move away, but reached downwards with its large hands and grabbed a huge handful of black insects before shoving them into its mouth. It began to chew them loudly. A large amount of sticky white liquid began to drip out of the corner's of its mouth.

It ate two handfuls consecutively while Garen's face remained expressionless, as he watched the troll quietly. All of his Beetles were here, and out of the two hundred of them, the troll had already eaten over thirty in just two handfuls.

Seconds and minutes ticked by as the troll continued to grab handfuls of beetles before chewing them thoroughly.

Soon, the last beetle was finally devoured by it.

"Woah woah woah...!!!" The troll patted his protruding tummy as he roared loudly once again. It sounded as loud as lightning, and was much louder than before.

Garen felt a slight aching sensation in his heart as his whole body became numb, and his blood began to pump furiously. His field of vision became blurry, and soon he was unable to see anything.

He wanted to release his aura, but was currently being suppressed by a large pressure, and was unable to release it.

His field of vision became a blurry mess. Suddenly, Garen felt his surroundings light up.

All noise disappeared instantly.

He opened his eyes frantically. He was standing in the middle of the street while sunlight outside was shining on the ground, leaving no trace of darkness.

"Troll? What happened to that troll fatso?" Garen turned his head upwards and scanned his eyes around his surroundings, but was unable to find any trace of the troll.

He turned towards the road he came from, and saw that the museum had already become a pile of wreckage.

Traces left behind by the troll were still here, but the fifty over meter in height, almost seventeen storey tall troll itself, had now disappeared completely.

His surroundings were completely quiet, as if nothing had happened.

Still in a state of disbelief, Garen jumped on top of a building and surveyed his surroundings. The entire city was pin-drop silent, and there was not a single trace of the troll.

"Endor again...." he said before sighing in relief.

Looking at himself closely, he could see physical proof that his grey robe had been torn full of holes. His arms, abdomen, and thighs, all of them were full of dark red bruises, all of which were caused by the gravel hitting him.

Suddenly, his expression was tinged with a sliver of shock.

On his own right hand, he was unsure when exactly it happened, but a new dark green ring had appeared on his ring finger.

Garen tried to remove the ring gently, but this little thing seemed as if it was growing from his finger, and was completely impossible to remove.

The entire ring was smooth and glossy, and had the colour of a dark green jade. The surface of the ring was engraved with a thin line of words in a square.

Garen tried to recognize the words carefully and soon realised that it was obvious, that those words were written in the Endor language as well.

"The city troll will only accept the first life that gives it a gift..."

Garen looked upwards. A confused expression flashed in his eyes.

"City troll? Is it referring to the monster from earlier?"

He suddenly thought of the recorded legends and myths that he had seen in the previous world. His expression became serious all of a sudden.

"If it really was the city troll... Then this ring..."

He quickly looked at the attribution pane at the bottom of his field of vision.

In the bottom of the attribution pane, a little dark green glyph had appeared. This was the first time Garen's ability had displayed a color other than red.

The meaning of the glyph was: Troll Grip. (In the ruined city, if one successfully encounters the nomadic city troll without dying, but manages to communicate with it instead, once it is satisfied with the first gift it receives, it will then repay you with another present. According to the myth, the city troll's gift will increase one's strength to a great degree.)

"An increase in strength!" Garen's eyes lit up when he noticed that there was a huge change in his strength attributes.

His initial strength was at 2.66, but had now unconsciously increased to 6.66, which meant that it had increased by another 4 whole points!!

Chapter 335: Strength 1

He held his palm gently. Garen used his enhanced physical control to detect changes, but did not feel as if his strength had increased.

Garen looked at his attribution pane again doubtfully, and sure enough, his strength had already reached the 6.66 mark. There were no further changes to the number, and it remained firmly at that point.

He reached his arm outwards and leaned against a long ashen coloured bench on the roadside, grasping it tightly.

Suddenly, he felt a hot sensation travelling quickly throughout his right arm from ring finger. His entire right arm began to warm up, as if he was soaking himself in a hot spring.

Crunch!

A cracking noise sounded in the air even though he did not lean heavily on the bench, as the wood broke and turned into dust in a blink of an eye, and dispersed in the wind.

Garen narrowed his eyes in disbelief, as he truly was not using a great amount of strength, He merely pressed the bench innocently for a moment. It felt as if the sturdy wood was completely non-existent when he touched it.

"What great strength!" Slight fear trembled in his heart.

After hesitating for a moment, he lifted his right arm, straightened it into an offensive position, and swung it forward suddenly.

Tch!

A shapeless air fluctuation flew out immediately.

Crash!

A bronze statue far away was cut into two halves instantly. The top half of the human statue slid down slowly, and was abnormally smooth.

After that, a loud crashing noise could be heard.

No one knew how many things and walls these air fluctuations had passed through to cause such a fine layer of white dust to form in the distance. It happened so fast that the number of things it passed through was unknown.

"Tch tch..." Garen himself was feeling an uncontrollable sense of shock.

He suddenly thought of the troll's mace, and realised that both of these things possessed almost the same degree of monstrous strength.

"Such powerful strength, who knows what the effect will be if it's used against totem light." Remembering the troll's strength, Garen began to feel slightly hesitant.

The troll did not consume all of his totem light. Its attacks also brought its own type of unique strength, and was not held off completely by the totem light. In other words, it was a type of power that possessed a similar nature to the totem light.

He really wanted to call the Deep Swamp Croc over to test out the new strength he had on hand, but before that, a series of footsteps began echoing from the far end of the messy, damaged streets. Leila, the man in the red hat from the Hunting Group ran towards him and arrived here quickly.

Behind him was Angel, who was holding a girl and lagging behind slightly.

The three of them were looking towards here from far away, with panicked and alarmed expressions clearly displayed on their faces.

Garen hesitated for a moment and relaxed his right arm downwards temporarily, afraid of the slightest movement. This arm was weird because it could release an unbelievable amount of strength without its reactionary force springing back. The slightest accident could cause him to injure others. He was not ready to use his right hand for the moment.

He dashed towards the direction of the three other people quickly.

"What's the matter?" he asked softly as he looked at the girl Angel carried, who was actually Vicky who was now unconscious. "What happened?"

Angel furrowed her eyebrows and scanned the surrounding area.

"I feel like something isn't right with this city. Earlier, some of the houses in the area collapsed without reason, not to mention that I think I heard a giant monster's footsteps, and I'm not sure if it's an illusion or not. Before I knew it, I heard Vicky collapse and faint. She seemed like she was hit by something, as her totem light was penetrated suddenly, and her core totem was heavily damaged!"

Hearing her say this made Garen suddenly think of his own core totem, the Black Striped White Tiger, and how it was almost wrecked as well. Once the totem light was completely broken, the core totem would also suffer similar damage.

He could not help but glance at Vicky. This girl was also a form two totem user, but her complexion was completely pale, an obvious sign that she was gravely injured.

"Has it been five full years already?" he asked.

"It's already the sixth year," Angel replied quickly.

Garen nodded his head.

"That's fine. Get this girl a new core totem immediately. If a totem user is protected by their totem light for too long, their immunity becomes extremely weak, and when they're exposed to air and other external substances for extended periods, I'm afraid she may face more problems later on. I assume she has more than one totem, right?"

Seeing Angel nod her head made Garen relax.

"We should leave this place. I don't think it's safe here anymore." Garen examined all of the streets around him.

All the streets were filled with smash marks left by a heavy object, showing that the traces left by the city troll still remained.

"But we haven't finished collecting our things? Are we really just going to leave like this?" Leila wavered.

"Are you things more important than our safety?" Angel glared at him.

"Uhh... Both are important..." Leila shook his head warily.

"Move!" Angel kicked his buttocks.

"My limited edition '43 out of print fashion!!" Leila wailed, but was pulled away on his ear by Angel nonetheless, as she dragged him away immediately.

Garen took the items he had collected and returned to the carriage on the city outskirts with Angel's trio. Ansa, the black clothed man in the Hunting Group that had stayed back to keep watch, was now crouching beside the carriage, and checking some of the dead rat corpses. He noticed that everyone had returned, and were carrying large and small bags of items. He stood up hurriedly and came forward to help carry some of the stuff.

Lala, who was inside the carriage earlier, also got down to help arrange the various goods.

Basic cooking essentials, flour, tissue, a change of clothes, new cups, and cutlery. There were also some tools that Luminarists used for conducting experiments.

Everything was immediately moved into the third carriage.

Leila, the bastard had the audacity to command his Black Beetles to drag a brand new, gorgeous, large silver carriage outside.

"Using form one totem insects to pull a carriage. Haha. Only a brilliant totem user like myself would have the right to enjoy special privileges like this."

Garen did not say anything. Four members of the Hunting Group in one tiny carriage was truly a tight squeeze. Meanwhile, this large carriage had six wheels and was over six meters long and four meters wide. It was almost the size of a small house. Four of them inside this carriage would definitely be more spacious for them.

The black clothed man Ansa was very attentive. He found various spare parts for the carriage, and also a lot of nails and a hammer that could be used for repair work.

Both Angel and Vicky found a myriad of tools used by Luminarists and Forgers, such as an incubator, petri dish, thermometer, conical flask, and a centrifuge, among others.

"It's a shame we couldn't find a unit factory, but the things that we did manage to find aren't too bad. Unit factories were involved in the deep secrets of the Forgers and Luminarists, hence, even if we didn't take them with us, they would still be destroyed in the end. It's very likely that others would be able to uncover the techniques of creature units from there."

"These are already pretty good," Garen nodded in satisfaction. "With these tools, I can conduct new and deeper research. Thank you very much."

Angel's mouth twitched.

"We don't need meaningless rewards or gratitude. Some for you, some for Ansa. Ansa's equipment is specially used for totem repairs. Melting machine, repair instruments and separators, and the precision instruments are all specialized. Meanwhile, yours is mainly used for creature research, so both of you can exchange equipment if needed."

"I know," smiled Garen. Although Leila had left, the basic equipment that he left behind was sufficient. With these tools, Garen could start from the most basic experiments and quickly progress towards his plans.

Once everyone had retrieved their own items, it was nearly evening, and the sky had begun to darken slightly.

Everyone returned to their own carriages, and by evening, Aisley City began to look even more gloomy. There was not a shadow of a person to be seen and barely any light. Every inch of the city was dark and empty.

Standing outside the city, one could definitely feel the endless cold and chills coming from inside.

Garen reversed the order of the carriages. His own carriage was the first in front, while Lala's goods carriage was in the middle, and the Hunting Group's two carriages were the last ones at the end.

He clapped his hands and lined the four carriages in a row, before they left Aisley City slowly.

Sitting next to the carriage window, Garen took the map out and began looking at the road carefully.

The yellowish map depicted a little red dot, and beside the dot a line of words read: Lush Forest district, Vanderman mansion.

Garen stretched his index finger outwards and placed it on top of the red dot on the map lightly. They would pass through a large forest, a river, and a stretch of mountains. Finally, they would stop at the position on the map with the city symbol.

"Aisley City is here, so we still need to pass over a stretch of mountains, cross the Naserweiya river, pass through the Red Rat forest, before we can finally enter the Lush Forest district. I'm just unsure about what this place looks like now."

When he thought of the abnormally huge city troll, an uneasy feeling bubbled up inside him. It felt as if everything had deviated from its initial course. The experimental aberrations and various germs and viruses released by the Obscuro Society had caused various unfathomable changes.

It seemed like the world had become more mysterious day by day.

Tch...

His index finger had accidentally torn through the map. The map fell on the table, and Garen unknowingly pierced a hole through the table as well.

Garen immediately realised what had happened and retracted his right index finger frantically, as a panicked expression appeared on his face.

He looked at the Troll Grip he wore on his finger, the insignificant dark green ring that was tightly wrapped around his ring finger.

"Was this also the Obscuro Society's intended change?" he pondered quietly.

He turned around and took a leather suitcase from below his seat and opened it to rummage the clean clothes inside, before finally taking out a black leather glove, and wearing it on his right hand.

After moving his palm and feeling that nothing was amiss, then only did Garen stuff the box back into its place below his seat.

Right now, he was unable to estimate the true strength of his right arm. He only knew that it felt extremely powerful, because at 2.6 it was already at the pinnacle of human strength, and with just one hand, he was already as powerful as a Deep Swamp Croc. This was something that Garen had tested out once before with his own eyes.

But now it had increased to 6.66 at one time, and this number meant more than just two or three times of his initial strength. The higher the numbers, the effect of the strength generated would also become more obvious.

He had investigated and found out that the enhanced strength from the Troll Grip did not mean that he had exceeded the limit of his attributes. Instead, it meant that his other attributes would not be able to increase in the future after some time.

Daa...

The sound of the carriage wheels could be heard softly, as the carriages began to move slowly.

The grassy hills outside the window looked as if they were moving backwards slowly. The carriage shook slightly when it rolled over some gravel. Next, the carriage turned in a semi circle motion before speeding up gradually.

Garen sat up straight and held the Resonance Stone in his left hand again, as he began to feel the frequency carefully again.

His brain possessed calculation and analytical skills that were far superior to an average person. It was the effect of intelligence levels that had reached 2.5, which also caused him to have an increase in physique-based secret techniques. The progress in which he grasped frequencies wildly exceeded Reylan's expectations.

From his initial stage of weakness and inability to sense them, to his current stage of improved clarity, it now felt as if he was holding a beating heart in his hand. Before this, he had wasted a duration of a few days.

Holding the Resonance Stone gently, Garen continued to bury his head in the process of researching frequencies.

As long as he could synchronize his own frequency and reach the Resonance Stone's level, he would be able to restore the Crystal Derivator to its initial stage at the right degree.

Regardless of the Troll Grip or the nest revenue brought on by the Resonance Stone, the thing that he truly wanted was neither of them. Instead, his goal was to fully grasp the Crystal Derivator.

To him, the Crystal Derivator, regardless of its current strength or his future plans, still possessed utmost importance for him. He could not lose it!

Chapter 336: Strength 2

Two days later...

Sunlight was shining brightly, and the air was warm, as everything was basked in a layer of golden light.

The rapidly gushing river looked like a glittering golden river. Beside the river, a few Deep Swamp Crocs had bitten a large black water anaconda and had dragged it up the river bed, and were now tearing it to pieces and eating it.

Garen sat inside the carriage and nodded his head in satisfaction, as the carriage passed the shallow water bed slowly, and travelled forward in the direction of the railway bridge. In front, a thick and densely-packed forest could be seen.

One day later

Under the light drizzle, the entire forest was covered in a layer of rainy mist.

An elegant, snow white coloured large flying dragon flapped its large wings gently and dived downwards.

Whoosh!

A large gust of ashen air landed directly on the backs of two large black bears. There were lots of blue-coloured bone shards growing out of the black bear's back, and when it crawled on the ground it looked like a stegosaurus.

When it felt the ashen breath blowing against its back, the Thorny Back Black Bear let out a roar and all of the spikes on its back sprung forward. At once, they petrified themselves into two stone statues.

As the thorns rained down, a few white imprints soon appeared on the White Dragon's hard scales.

The White Dragon dived downwards again, and grabbed both of the Thorny Black Black Bear statues with its claws, with one in each claw, and immediately flew towards the faraway sky.

An hour later, a troop of carriages passed by the area slowly, and travelled across the road in the forest that headed towards the Kovitan Empire. Three of the carriages were black, while the last one was silver. In the first carriage, the windows and curtains had been opened. Garen looked at the White Dragon flying in the distance with a blank expression on his face, and pulled the curtains closed again.

Kovitan Lush Forest district

Vanderman mansion

Vanderman sat on the sofa in the hall on the first floor and chewed on a black pipe that had run out of cut tobacco a long time ago. His eyes were glued to a piece of paper in his hand.

Opposite him sat his two loyal subordinates, Edney and Maxilan. Both of them were clad in strange black-purple armors that looked sturdy and majestic, except for the dark red crystal lines that were embedded on top. The lines looked like blood vessels and contained red liquid that flowed through it endlessly, which also caused bubbles to float around in the liquid occasionally.

"What is Aquarius planning to do now? Seems like I forgot to beat her up properly the last time. Lost two form two totem users but still unrepentant..." Vanderman's expression darkened as he tore the piece of white paper up slowly. "Right now, Her Highness the Twelfth Princess is planning to arrive in person immediately, and no matter how much she struggles she won't be able to pull anymore tricks out of her sleeve anymore. Except..."

"Except what, my Lord?" Edney stroked the small knife in her hand gently. "You just need to wait for Her Highness the Twelfth Princess to arrive, before you ask Master Masuya to lend you his strength, and then you'll definitely be able to get rid of that disgusting, ugly woman. If two form three totem users go up against her, she can struggle with all her might, but that will still be useless."

Vanderman lay face up on the sofa.

"It's just that this letter arrived in such a timely manner, a sign that Aquarius' side is well-informed..." he said as his face began to contort.

"That's true, her messengers are too well-informed," Maxilan nodded as a slightly disturbed expression appeared on his face. "We too only received the news this afternoon."

"Why should we trouble ourselves with all this? As long as our power is strong enough, we can just get rid of any situations we face immediately!" said Edney, unfazed.

Vanderman nodded, his complexion had improved slightly.

"Right now the main war is there, and I've heard that they've started using Spiritualized totem users. Once this kind of war weapons that can greatly influence the outcome of battle have been released, it clearly shows that it has come to the White Heat degree already. We're still alright here, so I'd assume that the main force has been sent to other places already."

"I'm worried that the Obscuro Society has deployed a Spiritualization totem user to Aquarius, which would be troublesome for us. Aquarius can single-handedly control one form three and five form twos. Meanwhile, these Spiritualized totem users are all war weapons, and the pressure they exert upon their enemies through their Spiritualization is too strong, and will also be too strong for us to handle as well!" said Maxilan as he furrowed his brows. He had followed Vanderman for so many years, but this was the first time he had encountered such a difficult situation.

"What's done is done, it won't make any difference even if we spend more time thinking about it," Vanderman waved his hand. "You should go and rest first. My old friend is looking after the mansion, so there won't be any problems there."

"Yes, sir."

Both of them stood up to open the door and leave, while the maid closed the door carefully and left the hall herself, to avoid disturbing Vanderman.

Vanderman stood up and only then did he notice that his pipe was already out of tobacco, and the fire had extinguished long ago. He mashed his lips together to get the pipe. He walked towards the front of the fireplace unconsciously and looked at the dazzling fire, before noticing the black and white photo that was hanging above the fireplace.

A sea of green grass, himself sitting on a chair, Acacia standing behind him with a small smile on his face and a joyful expression.

He looked at the photograph quietly for a good while, before exhaling a deep breath, and reaching his arm outwards to take the box of tobacco under the photo frame.

Lush Forest district

Inside the secret underground room in the Aquarius mansion

"Right now most places have been cut from all contact for a long time already, and we won't be able to support everyone on our own for much longer. We need to make up our minds soon," Aquarius furrowed her brows as she looked at the crystal ball in front of her. The white crystal ball began to give off a dim red light from the inside. It caused the entire secret underground glow to light up dimly.

"You need to stabilize that area first, this division here is also facing difficulties. The interior of the main section defected a few of its members, and the frontlines of the war have barely made any progress either. Daniela is facing rebounds, but those were the messages from a few months back, we don't know what the current situation is like over there. The areas here where I require support troops are far too many," said an old man's voice as it sounded through the crystal ball.

"I don't care. Anyway, you still need to make the necessary arrangements here for me quickly, because I cannot bear to stay here any longer!" Aquarius said furiously. "This goddamn, disgusting, rotten to the point where he should be used to feed the dogs Vanderman has nurtured a final form, and last time it almost broke my left arm off! Out of the eighteen other mountainous spots, you could send me to any one of them and I'd be fine with that!"

"Don't be anxious, I'm merely a Brigadier General, I don't know anything about the arrangements made by the higher ups. The Kovitan higher command center is located in the Kovitan capital and Iron Tank City. They're too lazy to even care about our message reports," said the old voice impatiently.

"Anyway, just do as you see fit. I've already given Vanderman the letter already." Aquarius turned the crystal ball off angrily at once. Regarding these new toys, she had yet to understand them fully yet, but that did not hinder her from using it to increase her power.

The crystal ball was kept properly, and she walked towards the right side of the secret room, pulled out a secret drawer, and took out a black envelope.

Aquarius then tore open the envelope , took the letter out, before she began to carefully translate the words one by one using the secret language.

As the translated contents increased, the expression on her face improved as well.

"This thing is still happening?" Finally, when she put the letter down, her facial expression had become much better by then. The corners of her mouth were also curling up into a strange smile.

"Ooh... Erm... Oh...!!!!" Leila pulled Garen's arm with all his might and used his entire body weight, causing his face to turn red.

"Could you not let out these constipated noises?" Angel stood at the side with her hand on her forehead. "If you want to test your arm strength just do that, you don't have to make these disgusting noises as well..."

"Can you feel the blood flowing through my veins? That's true strength! Oh oh oh~~~ My strength is burning!!" Leila roared as he furiously push Garen's arm downwards again.

Garen looked at the other man wordlessly and used his left arm to arm wrestle with Leila. Due to Vicky's broken totem light, because she was exposed to air, she now had a fever, an obvious sign that her physique was lacking. As they got bored during the journey, everyone decided to squeeze into the biggest carriage to engage in some entertainment for training purposes.

The current event was arm wrestling, and the unfortunate part was that Garen was single-handedly beating everyone without any competition.

After Garen had defeated the three women and Ansa, his thin body suddenly gained the interest of Leila. This bastard assumed that this was a good opportunity for himself, so he stepped forward as the last person who would conclude the legend of Garen's undefeatable account.

Leila used of his might, and now a leopard's paw was hidden behind his left shoulder. The paw belonged his totem beast, and suddenly a surge of powerful strength rushed forward.

"Haha, bet you didn't expect that I'd still have this final skill!" He was giddily happy, as his leopard totem possessed exceptional concealment, especially his secondary totem the Shadow Leopard, and currently no one had realised that he was cheating.

Suddenly, he noticed that Garen had been distracted by something that Big Sis was saying.

"And now!"

The man and the leopard attacked, and he pushed its paw downwards and pressed hard.

"Ah!! Your legend!! Will be ended by me!!" "Roar!"

Bang!!

The hand and the paw smashed downwards violently, and pressed against Garen's left hand.

After that...

There was nothing after that.

"What did you say just now?" Garen turned around ignorantly and looked at Leila. "I think I heard you saying something about my legend?"

Leila stared at Garen's unmoved arm blankly, before turning his head upwards, and looking at his opponent.

"Nothing... I didn't say anything..."

"Oh..." Garen turned away and continued the discussion on the previous topic with Angel.

Lala and Vicky who were standing on the sidelines both covered their mouths and laughed secretly. Ansa stood on another side and checked the slots in the carriage, and shook his head wordlessly.

Frankly, everyone had known about Leila's cheating, and recognized his signal, but this guy was still the clown of the group, and no one had seen through him yet.

The carriage travelled forward slowly at a fixed pace. After a fixed interval, everyone would take turns releasing their totems outside to monitor the situation, but there were still no form two monsters to be seen. Everyone felt that this was extremely strange.

"It's unbelievably calm," Angel shrugged, and looked at Garen. "Do you have some sort of good method to avoid them?"

"That's a secret," smiled Garen mysteriously. "If I tell you it won't be worth any money anymore. I'm still planning to use this to get something good from the Kovitan capital, you know."

"Always hiding something. But recently, why have you been wearing a glove on your right hand?"

Angel looked at the black leather glove on Garen's right hand. This guy had one ungloved hand, while the other hand was gloved, hmm... It as unsaid that he ended up looking really cool. At a glance, he looked like powerful boxing champion.

As a totem user, she had always been in awe of physically fit professionals.

"This is because my right hand got injured, and I didn't want you guys to see it, so I decided to hide it under a glove," Garen explained calmly. He was looking for an opportunity to test out the true strength of his right hand.

He placed his Black Striped White Tiger core totem with Ansa, to allow the other man to help him repair it. In Aisley City, due to the totem light on his body breaking completely, his totems either suffered light or serious injuries. The core totem suffered the most, and had almost half of its body destroyed. This made Garen, who had painstakingly searched for the Striped Crystal, extremely furious. He faced a lot of difficulties evolving it, and never expected to encounter this problem as well.

The difficulty in fixing the core totem, as well as the difficulty in evolving it, drew Garen in the direction of creature totems. According to his plan, these creature totems were the only ones that could help him reach his goal.

After chatting to the others in the carriage for a while, he got off soon after that.

At night, it was completely quiet, except for a mooing noise that could vaguely be heard from the distance, that came from an unknown monster.

On the top of the largest silver carriage stood a silver owl that had a pair of light yellow eyes that were giving off a soft blue light in the darkness. They were like two large light bulbs.

The owl stood on the roof of the carriage but did not move, as if it was just a sculpture.

Garen glanced at it before turning around and walking towards the back of the carriage troop, disappearing into the darkness quickly.

He stretched his right hand gently. This time, he wanted to test out his arm strength with the strongest Dual Headed Salamander, and see the true strength and upgrades that the Troll Grip had given him.

Chapter 337: The Return 1

After travelling with the convoy for a few minutes, Garen found a silent, pitch-black forest.

Standing in the middle of the woodlands, he waited silently for a moment.

Very quickly, from deep within the forest as black as ink, came the sound of heavy footsteps. The sound came in bursts, carrying a rhythm.

A giant creature, almost eight meters in height spanning no shorter than ten meters, was squeezing between the trees as it headed here. It was a dual headed salamander. It raised its two heads in mid-air, and continuously protruded its black tongue.

The dual headed salamander stopped in front of Garen, with a distance of less than 10 meters between them.

"Let's begin." Garen signaled his intention.

The pitch black dual headed salamander let out a soft growl, then suddenly thrust its head fiercely at Garen.

Garen took off his gloves, slowly extended his left palm, then placed it on the salamander's forehead.

Bang!!

As his palm met its forehead, a circle of air shock waves blasted out suddenly from the impact.

Both the man and the salamander were blown several meters back abruptly. Their bodies were left with numerous scratches from severe friction.

Garen widened his eyes. He had a sense of irresistible delight.

"Sure enough...Sure enough... hehehe.." He could not help but let out a faint laugh. In the midst of the dark forest, his eyes seemed unprecedentedly bright.

"That's right, looking at the time, this is about it. I even came back a little earlier." He looked at the dual-headed salamander who was quickly digging a hole to leave. Its body disappeared in the distance, becoming a blur, as it headed towards the horse carriage.

Hwaaa...

Waves of sounds could be heard in the broad, dark green forest. Leaves formed layers of waves as they were blown in the strong wind. From time to time, there were some dark green creatures flying out from the forest, while occasionally, a few strange birds came down from the sky to perch in the trees.

The midday sun was covered by grey clouds, only revealing a circle of golden light near the edges.

In the distant sky, three giant grey hawks were flapping their wings as they headed towards the depths of the vast forest.

Each grey hawk had a six to seven meters wingspan. On their backs, sat two men and a woman in grey robes.

Among the two men, one of them had a strong body. Beneath his grey robe was shimmering silver armor, while at the waist was a heavy broadsword. His most prominent attribute was the black beard on his chin.

The other man had a pale complexion, and seemingly lacked training. He had a pair of calm eyes, while beneath his grey robe was a tight black gown. The most eye-catching attribute was his pair of eyes, which had exceedingly rare silver-black pupils. His white retina with silver pupils left a cold, strange impression on others.

The only girl had flaming red leather armor beneath her grey robe, clearly revealing her slender waist. She had a beautiful face with a youthful aura. Her bust was abundant, but not excessive, and her legs were long and slender. It was evident she was showing off her proud assets. At one glance, she was not more than eighteen years of age. The wind ruffled her short, flaming red hair, revealing a dark-gold earring on her right ear.

"Darian! How long more until we arrive at Lush Forest District?" The girl yelled. She rode her grey hawk parallel to the strong man, and turned to look at both men.

"I don't know. I only went there for a vacation many years ago. I know nothing other than that." The strong bearded man stroked his chin. "Ask Beckstone about these, he definitely knows."

The girl silently gazed at the man on a greyhawk in front of her. The pale-faced man in grey robes bowed his head, as he seemed to be focused on some calculations. Uncertain, silver flames continuously erupted from his fingertips.

"We still need half a day's time to reach Trejon's Territory. Viscount Vanderman hates people breaking his laws. At this time, his territory should have been armed with various air defense mechanisms. As courtesy, we have to land one kilometer away and journey by foot." The black-gowned man seemingly heard the girl's question and answered without turning his head.

"Hopefully we can gather sufficient information this time. So happen Barr and Baphje, the two professors from the Royal Alliance will be there. I've read their thesis on Silver Glitter, and it was enlightening for the cultivation of Nias' second evolution. This time we can meet them in person." The black-gowned man said, seemingly speaking to himself.

"Our trail previously ended at Vanderman's Manor. Maybe Leanna came to Trejon's Territory before. As we need Vanderman's help to search, do not be rude Darian, to avoid leaving a bad impression. It would be troublesome if they refused to help." The red-armored girl reminded in advance.

"Yes yes..." The bearded man lifelessly leaned on the back of his giant hawk. "It's so boring. Adiss, you no longer chat with me after your Spiritualization. I wonder why..." He murmured as he helplessly tugged at the hawk's feathers.

"A male riding on another male, what do you want me to say to you?" The hawk looked stupefied.

"I have goosebumps at the thought of a male riding on me. You better not have wishful thinking, otherwise, there are many things I will do. Of course, if you are Berlina, I would be glad to discuss reproduction with you."

"Why would you think this way?" The bearded-man loudly refuted, "Am I like that?"

"Very alike."

"Okay then.."

Berlina, who was beside them, instantly let out a shy laugh.

"Being looked down upon by his own core totem, Darian you can be considered the first in history."

"If i knew it earlier, I wouldn't have Spiritualized him.." Garen uttered in dissatisfaction.

"Look out, there's a creature in front." The black-gowned man closed his eyes, accurately reporting the numbers. "A second form acid bird and three first form black-billed geese entering attack range in one minute."

"Let me do it this time!" The red-armored woman was excited. "My flame sparks is the best for group combat."

In the distant jungle, a thick, brown, giant tree lifted its branches to the sky. Its diameter was tens of meters long, sustaining a huge shade of a few kilometers.

The lush leaves were like a blue blanket, growing furrily on the top of the tree. As the sunlight directly shot through the shade, only a glimmer of the golden rays remained.

At the bottom of the trunk, in the gaps of the roots, was a tree hole. The tree hole was about the height of three men, its width the length of two.

Inside the tree hole, there was a spacious brown wooden hall.

On both sides of the hall were three flower pots, with two flower pots directly above.

Hizzzz!

After a light sound, there was activity in six out of the eight pots. In the basin-sized circle, there was a green seed quickly emerging from the soil. After sprouting and emerging, small black flowers blossomed. Black fruits soon formed and dropped into the pot. The fruit then decayed and, once again, became growing and sprouting seeds..

Within 10 seconds, the pot was saturated with dense, green vines. The vines intertwined and grew upwards, forming a dark-green pillar of plants of about a man's height.

There was a total of six flower pots forming six dark green pillars of plant material.

The vines constantly twisted and entangled.

On the top of pillar on the utmost left, a wrinkled old face was coming to sight. The face was actually formed by a dense combination of leaves and twigs; it had a nose, eyes and complete facial features.

"Two have yet to arrive?" The old face spoke with a dry, hoarse voice.

Different leafy faces emerged on the remaining five pillars.

"Davis, you are always the first." The second face from the right whispered.

"You are not too bad yourself, Leena." Davis didn't utter much.

The other faces did not say a word but fixated their gaze on the two pots on the top.

Soon, a red seed emerged from the pot on the left, quickly growing into a red plant pillar.

A bearded, old face then appeared from the pillar.

"My apologies for the wait." The bearded man coughed twice. "I've already sent Beckstone off. According to the information he obtained and his current position, he should be quickly reaching Kovitan's Lush forest District.

"Royal Luminarist Zikhar's territory? One of my sons has a good relationship with him. Do you need a referral?" One of the elders asked.

"There is no need." Davis, the one who spoke first, muttered. "Let it be a test for Beckstone. If he can successfully activate his innate talent, we can find out the extent of his talent."

"This is just the first beginning... Vanderman's ultimate totem - Green Vine Sphere, is the first key to perfecting Beckstone's talent. Has the second been selected?" Leena asked.

"Count Eiskan of Bernarius. I will make the arrangements. His valor will be in display as Beckstone arrives." Davis answered.

"We have to grasp the opportunity. As Hellgate will be awakening soon, we do not have much time left." Leena nodded

"Beckstone will become the most perfect, strongest Luminarist in history. There will be no exception!" The bearded old man spoke in a low voice. "Currently he has already entered Spiritualization, but the Obscuro Society has also started making moves."

He swept his gaze across the hall.

"Friendship, family, love, despair, anger, sacrifice, glory...once Beckstone understands everything, his talent would develop thoroughly. When that day arrives, it would be the time to face the Obscuro Society head-on.

Garen quietly focused on the vase of fresh flowers before him.

Red and white little flowers fully covered the branches of a rust-colored tree.

The white and red flower petals brought a sense of freshness towards the carriage. There was also a faint fragrance from the flowers in the air.

Piak!

Garen naturally plucked a pink flower and placed on the side of his plate.

He was using his right hand.

Piak!

It was another flower.

Lala who was sitting across him twitched her eyes, revealing a trace of frustration in her expression.

"The bonzai that I chose and pruned with much effort, can't you let them be for a while more?" She said lightly.

After recovering from her illness, she wore a dark purple, one-piece short skirt, with a thick black belt at her waist. She wore pitch-black stockings, putting her slender legs on exhibit. She tied her blonde hair to her left side, allowing it to drape over.

After being empowered, she seemed to have healed completely. Her lips appeared to have a touch of pink, while her skin turned soft and fair, slightly glowing with pink.

Garen plucked another flower and raised his head to look at her. "Your dress is beautiful." He let out a satisfying smile.

Lala blushed at his smile.

"Leila got the clothes for me.." She whispered. "This, or even those that are more, and also many..."

Chapter 338: The Return 2

"I wonder why that fellow wanted to take so many things so adamantly." Garen lost his cool.

"How do you feel after being empowered?"

"It feels great," Lala answered after some thought. "I feel more healthy and energetic. Plus the sickness I've had since young has disappeared. I only need six hours of sleep a day to fully recover. It's as if my body is in its best condition."

Garen nodded.

"I will take this incident as a lesson for myself. You should stay by my side in the future."

"Okay!" Lala relaxed. She had been relying on Garen no matter what, as she didn't feel at home when she was with anybody else.

Her parents died when she was young. Her aunt, her only relative she had, died during the battle. Hence, the only person she could only rely on now was Garen. Recently, she was sent to take care of Reylan, but had fallen seriously ill afterwards. This thrust her into a serious existential crisis, she wasn't a totem user and therefore couldn't control totems at the front lines during the war. As a commoner, she had to make herself useful for the team, or risk feeling useless and unwanted after a period of time.

Lala's biggest wish was to return to Garen's side, and take care of his livelihood, just as she had always done.

"Alright, you can leave now," Garen said calmly, as he placed the flower pot on the table.

"Sir Garen, regarding your personal news, I had not said a single word to Lady Reylan or Angel and the team from the Hunting Group"

She turned around and left the carriage after finishing her sentence. Garen was both surprised and satisfied.

The group of carriages stopped as they were having a barbeque just outside. With a small harp in her hands, Ansa played and sang to the music. The tunes and hymns slowly traveled into the carriages.

Garen listened to the music and he had a strange feeling written all over his face.

"This music... sounds rather similar to the Green Grass by The River." Garen recalled the drama series that he had watched on Earth. It was as if his memory had traveled through the space time continuum and went back to the drama series where he used to watch with his mother.

"How nostalgic..."

He closed his eyes and had left all of his thoughts behind opened his eyes.

He slightly moved his right hand to stand up and walked to one corner of the carriage where all the experimental instruments were placed. The experiment conducted yesterday had yet to be concluded.

It was shameful behavior for him, who possessed special abilities, to casually waste his time during this period of war.

It only required one to two days for him to get back to the Trejons' territory.

Vanderman sat quietly and reviewed the three youngsters sitting in front of him.

The leader was obviously the one in the black robes. He didn't look very well and was rarely exposed to the sun. His eyes were silver which gave off an emotionless vibe. He seemed to be in his twenties.

He claimed to be Beckstone, a traveler from a far away place. Due to the sudden events, he had been traveling all over the place to investigate the root cause. Although this reason was rather orthodox, ten out of five totem users would have the same reason. It was a reason that could be used in all situations.

Another person was a girl in red armor. She was about eighteen or nineteen years old and sat closely to Beckstone. She would occasionally stare at the person beside her; it was obvious that she fancied him to some extent. She looked very beautiful, and one could immediately tell that she was naive, with a mind devoid of schemes and plots.

The last person was muscular and seemed very interested in Maxilan's Creature Armor, as he kept closing the distance between him and Maxilan. This youngster obviously was the type who couldn't cover up his emotions.

Vanderman maintained a courteous smile the entire time.

"As a member of the Royal Alliance of Luminarists, I feel a deep regret for the current chaos. However, please forgive my investigation into your every move; we have a powerful enemy lurking in the dark."

"Viscount's actions makes absolute sense. I feel very grateful that you have allowed us to rest temporarily during the chaos. Please do not hesitate if you require my assistance." Beckstone, too, maintained a courteous smile. Naturally, he wouldn't reveal to anyone that he was currently investigating the disappearance of Leanna. It wouldn't be too late for him to request for assistance after probing for information during his investigation. This was especially true, when the leader of this territory was under suspicion as well.

"For you to lend us a helping hand, I thank you for your generous support, on behalf of the citizens' within the Trejons' territory." Vanderman thanked the trio with the highest regard.

"You're welcome." The three of them immediately replied.

"This is what we do."

"Then, I shall take my leave as I still have matters to attend to. The servants are available, shall you have any needs." Vanderman stood up. "Also, my territory is currently in the front line of attacks, and I have essentially taken care of all the creatures that would appear from behind. You will arrive at the human defense area if you walk from here, and if you wish to leave during this period, I will send someone to escort you to the other cities."

"Thank you, Sir Viscount." Beckstone stood up and bowed at him.

"No problem. Take a good rest. Someone will escort you to your rooms." Vanderman nodded and walked out of the living hall.

Beckstone looked at Viscount and Maxilan, who followed behind, leaving the living hall. He sat back down as could no longer hear their footsteps.

"What's wrong? What's on your mind?" Berlina came closer from the back and asked gently. Her body fragrance found its way into Beckstone's nose.

He frowned.

"It's nothing."

He took out a small delicate box and gently rubbed at the texture of the box.

"The clue points towards Trejons and stops here. We better investigate this manor thoroughly and we may find something."

"Leader, I sense something is off," Darian whispered.

"What's wrong?"

"Viscount Vanderman," Darian answered in all seriousness. "I smell something bad from his body."

"A bad odor?" Beckstone frowned. "Is he a Phantom Light?"

Darian nodded slightly.

"There are disagreements within the Royal Alliance of Luminarists so this is to be expected. Perhaps Viscount Vanderman comes from a rather extreme faction." Beckstone thought for a while before he answered.

"In any case, I have a bad feeling about this." Darian shook his head as he said.

Aquarius's manor.

"Hehe... two Spiritualised Totem Users? Where do these two powerful characters come from?" Aquarius, who was in a beautiful red dress was holding the report given by her subordinate. She was stunned as she looked at the report regarding the totem users.

The girl in green looked serious from the start till the end.

"According to the intel, they're currently tracking the whereabouts of a girl named Leanna. This girl seemed to be rather important to the leader, Beckstone."

"Leanna..." Aquarius's face was filled with joy. "Luck is truly on my side. Vanderman... Leanna... Leanna? What a joke. What are the current losses of the Green Shade?"

"It's still alright and we have confidence in our disguise so there shouldn't be any problem in investigating more. It feels weird that there are a lot of creatures appearing that didn't appear onto the intel's report." The girl in green skirt said.

"It's fine. I believe it's just a mutation from the bacteria and it's not up to us to meddle in this situation to begin with. When will the elites that we hired from the superior arrive? Vanderman does possess something valuable after all." Aquarius asked.

"The fastest duration is about two days." The girl in green skirt answered softly.

"Let's find a good time to tell the youngster the truth..."

Beckstone gently took out the message at the black pigeon's leg and placed a tiny black stick on its leg. He then jerked his hand and released it.

The pigeon flew out of the window and with a sudden acceleration in speed, the pigeon left a trail of black feathers and disappeared.

Beckstone squinted his eyes.

This pigeon arrived in a strange manner and suddenly appeared outside of his bedroom's window.

He tucked his head out of the window to look around and did not discover any suspicious trace.

After closing the window, he opened the message and scanned the words written on it slowly.

His pupil shrunk as he read the letters and as he finished reading everything, he gently crumbled the message into a pile of white dust with his right hand.

He stood by the window and was lost in thought for quite some time.

"Whether if it's real or not, I will investigate this matter myself..." His eyes were filled with resolve.

With a complicated look on Garen's face, he was looking at the sea of trees in front of him. It had been a long time since he returned.

He was in the driver's seat in the carriage with a notebook that he always carried along in his hand. Suddenly, he gently closed the notebook and jumped off the carriage as he frowned.

The whole carriage team was gradually put to a stop.

Garen took a few steps forward as four Deep Swarm Crocs went forward slowly in all directions. These ambush type predators were able to leap in a tenth of a second and wouldn't let go of their prey once they had bitten them. With the combination of their incredible strength and huge bite, they could tear their prey into pieces within a very short time.

These four Deep Swarm Crocs were the strength that he revealed to the public. He had his remaining strength hidden as the Crystal Derivator's strength was not meant to be showed off to the public.

"What's wrong?" Angel came from behind and asked.

Garen raised his hand, telling her that there's nothing to panic about.

He walked towards a big tree and touched its root. There were droplets of black liquid on it and seemed to be corroding the root as white smokes were coming out from it.

Garen's face changed as he had seen this special liquid in the creature's information from the Obscuro Society. It was a secretion from a creature that was used to mark their territory.

He squinted his eyes as he stood still on the ground.

"If it's that creature, perhaps..."

As he recovered from his thought, he turned around and walked towards the carriages.

Angel and the others had come down from the carriage for some time. Everyone was looking at him in confusion as all of them had released their totem, preparing for war.

"What exactly is going on?" Angela asked as she frowned.

"A ridiculously strong creature had just passed by. We're lucky we didn't encounter it as we're passing through its territory." Garen smiled.

"It definitely sounds strong if you even considered it to be so... It's best not to fight it." Angel nodded her head. "How much longer before we arrive your manor?"

"If we're quick, we will reach there by tonight," Garen answered with confidence.

Chapter 339: Suspicion 1

The carriages headed towards the manor at the top of the mountain, traveling along the Black Swan Lake.

The sky was slightly cloudy and gloomy during the afternoon and it seemed like it was going to rain soon.

Garen placed his left hand by the window and stared out at the familiar white manor in silence. He could see the faint white buildings around the manor.

A transparent force field which resembled an egg shell covered the whole manor. The security seemed to be very strict as groups of soldiers could be seen patrolling at all times.

"This is my home..." Garen muttered. This world's home, he said inside his heart.

"It's a beautiful place." Angel, who was sitting opposite of him, complimented, as Lala poured her a cup of coffee. "Are we going to stay here from now on?"

"There's no rush for that. I'm afraid other problems have arisen. We should take extreme precaution, as we are currently in the chaotic era. I will enter first to confirm my identity, before bringing you guys in to prevent them from separating us, since our group is quite large."

Garen started frowning as he thought of something.

"What's there to worry about?" Angel casually whistled. "Everyone would welcome us because of our strength, right?"

Garen shook his head.

"I'll go and make the arrangement."

"Whatever floats your boat. Just send the signal if anything happens." Angel nodded.

Garen finished his cup of coffee in an instant.

"Then, I shall take my leave."

"I'll wait for your good news."

Garen got down from the carriage, tidied up his grey robe and looked at the manor.

"It's... been awhile since I've seen this manor..." He sighed softly as he walked towards the manor through the lake.

As he walked across the wooden bridge of the Black Swan Lake that was strangely devoid of Black Swans. What was left behind were a few mere black feathers, by the pond. Weeds were everywhere, and the water was murky.

It looked so different, compared to the clear and beautiful Black Swan Lake from his memories.

Garen shook his head and tightened his black robe.

Splash!

A big silver fish jumped out of the water and attacked Garen, who was on the wooden bridge.

Without even looking at it, Garen flicked his finger at it.

Bam!

The big fish was sent back into the water. Traces of blood floated onto the surface.

Garen increased his pace, and crossed the wooden bridge, and as he walked along the small route between the forest by the hill, he realized that the fence on both sides were ragged. Grey tombs were strewn across his left, all of them looked very recent.

As he finished glancing at it, he continued moving forward with a pair of red eyes filled with resolve.

As he arrived the entrance of the manor, he could see a woman in red armor having a conversation with the guards from afar.

As the opponent had yet to notice his presence, he jumped to the side and hid behind a big tree.

Soon, people started to gather by the manor as if a team was about to depart.

"Quick! Where's Charles? Did he slack off again? It's supposed to be his shift! Call him out this instance!"

Loud voices could be heard from outside.

A faint voice could be heard from afar as well.

"...Confirm the identity of those people by the lake... They better..." "Garlock! Where's Sir Maxilan? Is there any new command?"

Looks like they had discovered the location of the carriage team.

Garen was relieved that the people from the manor were preparing to confirm the identity of the carriage once they noticed their presence. In this kind of situation, they need to confirm whether they were friendly or hostile since they were in such close proximity.

After some thought, Garen turned into a grey figure as he rushed out.

While he was on his way back to the carriage team, he knew that Beckstone and the team had most likely arrived at the manor, as he saw the girl in red armor. There was a beautiful girl in red armor among them, from his memory.

Since they have arrived earlier than they were supposed to, the best route to enter the manor was to enter together with the team.

Garen understood very well that Beckstone was the future star of the Terraflor Society, who aimed to be as strong as the Hellgate to fight against the Obscuro Society. Unfortunately, they had underestimated the Hellgate and overestimated Beckstone. They thought that they could reach the pinnacle this world in terms of strength, but they didn't know that there were always stronger opponents, out in this vast world.

Beckstone couldn't possibly face every powerful character that appeared during the Chaotic Era.

The three heroes had the support of two Overlords and three Emperors, which was the reason why they could even last for so long. The ambitions, the resolve to change and the crazy ideals towards the Obscuro Society of the emperors were pushing the future towards an unknown direction.

"Good timing. I would like to witness the potential of the future pillars of the Terraflor Society." Garen smirked as he sped up.

Half an hour later...

Angel led the carriages into the manor slowly.

All the carriage curtains were wound up, and everyone was relieved, yet tired, as they arrived at a place among human beings. They no longer needed to worry about a sudden ambush from an unknown creature, which brought everyone mental reprieve.

When Vanderman found out that his son had returned safely, he rushed out of his experiment room as fast as he could and welcomed the carriages personally. Maxilan and Edney were guarding him tightly by his side.

Although his expression didn't change at all as he looked at the silver carriages approaching, his shivering lips exposed his uneasy emotion. He held his hands tightly as his nails sunk into his palms. No matter how hard he tried to control himself, anxiousness and fear lingered in his brown eyes.

Vanderman lost his cool, as he saw his son, Acacia sitting beside the woman leading the carriages.

He took a few steps forward.

"Cia." He tried his best to prevent his voice from shivering.

Garen got down of the carriages and looked at his old man who was resisting himself with a complicated emotion. He felt distant and unease as he looked at his emotional expression.

"Father... I have returned..." He said softly.

He was then gently hugged by the Viscount.

"As long as you're safe." Viscount whispered. He immediately let go of him after a gently hug and examined his son to see if he was hurt or healthy.

Edney followed up and said happily: " Cia, Viscount hasn't been sleeping well since your disappearance. We have spent a lot of manpower to track you down and lost a lot of them since the chaos. But these things aren't important anymore...you have returned! The most important thing is that you've returned safely."

"The most important thing is that you're safe." Maxilan nodded from one side. He was looking at Acacia in front of him, who turned from an immature youngster into a mature adult, with a golden beard under his chin.

Garen gave Maxilan and Edney each a hug. These people would stand by his side and support him no matter what happened. Garen couldn't help himself but to feel safe around them.

"This is Angel. Her team, the Hunting Group, saved me when I was in the Iron Tank City. I hired them to send me back here." Garen introduced.

He then introduced the remaining Hunting Group members to Viscount and Maxilan.

Beckstone's team, and two of the totem users, Barr and Baphje, who were guarding the manor came out to see the commotion. Both parties were happy for the Viscount. Whether they liked it or not, the return of a family member would always be a happy scenario.

Beckstone recalled his farewell with his teacher when he left his village.

Barr and Baphje, too, recalled the days they left their hometown. They had been friends with Vanderman for a long time, and were invited here to protect the manor.

After the greetings, Garen was surprised that Angel was behaving properly, and every action was well mannered.

This good-looking girl in red shirt conversed with Vanderman with respect, and explained the fake story, which Garen had discussed with her beforehand, to Vanderman.

As Garen was looking at the people in the area, he could immediately recognize Beckstone. This guy's characteristics were obvious; he always put on an emotionless expression on his face, and had a unique silver colored pupils.

There were a lot of unfamiliar faces in the manor, they seemed to be Vanderman's underlings. There were less familiar faces too, such as the housekeeper Duqian.

He had a better understanding of the situation in manor after enquiring of Maxilan.

The Vanderman Manor was currently safe, as it was being protected by two major powerhouses. One of them were Vanderman's two trusty subordinates, along with at least ten form two totem users, supported by the Royal Alliance due to the relationship between them and Vanderman. The other powerhouse were the Royal Luminarists, Barr and Baphje. The both of them not only had strong knowledge in battles and tactics, they were also very knowledgeable in servicing, maintaining and executing Tactical Formations. Both of them had a few students who followed them everywhere, and were either form one totem users or form two totem users.

Although Maxilan didn't reveal which form of totem user Vanderman was, Garen know that his father Vanderman had an ultimate weapon. On the surface, he was just a mere form one totem user, but he definitely had a strength that could possibly match a form three totem user. He was currently the strongest man in the manor.

Soon, he placed all of his attention on Beckstone and his team.

This young man in the black robe always had a smile on his face, but it gave off a sense of coldness. It's as if he looked down on everyone from a pedestal.

He did have the power to feel arrogant. He was very talented, had an ancient inheritance, a mysterious teacher and the strength of a form three spiritualizations. These were the foundations of his arrogant behaviour.

As he noticed Garen's gaze, he smiled at him politely and showed no interest in interacting with hi. He gave off a cold and distant vibe.

Perhaps, deep down, a form one totem user wasn't worth his attention, as he was just small fry.

"They're the Beckstone team, and they arrived here two days ago. I heard that they came from very far away, and were trying to find a place to stay where there would be people around so they could avoid the creatures." Maxilan stood beside Garen as he explained.

They walked towards the main building, where a faint fragrance of meat came out from the main hall as two servants opened the door to welcome everyone.

"Beckstone? He looks very strong." Garen nodded his head.

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"They're very strong. According to Master Barr, there are at least two among them who are stronger than him!" Maxilan said emotionally. "To have such a powerful strength at such a young age. I wonder what kind of teacher is able to nurture such a talented man." He looked at Garen as he thought. "You must have suffered outside, right? I guess you can take that as training. Looks like you have become a totem user as well, right?"

Garen nodded.

"My totem is still under repair as it was broken by the creatures a few days ago. I didn't expect you to notice it, since my totem light has weakened drastically."

"It's a good thing, since you can share some load of your father's load." Maxilan patted on Garen's shoulder.

"Yeah." Garen nodded his head as he looked at Beckstone once again.

After a festive dinner, Viscount gifted Angel and her team a myriad of gifts, even the resources that they needed were provided to them. He had even written them a letter of recommendation to allow them to enrol in the Kovitan's Royal Totem Academy. It was the most technologically advanced academy in the East Continent.

Future development would be endless if they could learn under some powerful Luminarist, and this made Angel and her team ecstatic. However, they immediately felt a twinge of guilt for Garen, as they teamed up to trick Vanderman after all. In addition, to be called Garen's savior? It should be the other way round.

Garen didn't mind it in the very least. He didn't give much thought about how Angel and her team felt towards this situation, thought what he cared about were two main things. The first one was whether Beckstone had found out the truth, and the second was whether the incredibly strong creature outside would come in this direction.

Both of which could bring problems, no matter what.

In the two days that they stayed in the manor, Garen could feel that Beckstone and his team were investigating in the shadows, and this made him very cautious.

The Deep Swarm Croc totem that he had left outside of the manor was starting to feel more and more threatened, as the giant creature crept closer and closer.

Inside the guest building.

Garen tucked his legs in as he sat on the red wooden chair, smiling at Angel who was sitting opposite of him.

In these two days, Angel had been well fed, even obtained a few good items from Viscount Vanderman. She suddenly felt ashamed, and shied away from Garen's gaze whenever she noticed Garen's attention.

"Why are you looking at me?! If you have something to say then spit it out!" She couldn't resist anymore, and started shouting.

The morning sunlight came in through the window and landed on the floor between the duo, and a faint red light bounced around the room. Dust would occasionally float into the pillar of light, which resembled little worms dancing within.

Garen placed his hands together and said. "Have you been living well for these past two days?"

"I get to eat, drink and obtain free things! I would be lying if I said I'm not living well!" Angel started to show her true nature. "Do you want the things I have taken? Impossible! I don't have any money, and the only thing I can compensate you with is my body!" She opened her hands wide and closed her eyes. "Whether you want it or not, I'm right here!"

"Alright, stop joking around." Garen shook his head and put his serious face on. "I wanted to talk to you about something serious.

Angel stopped joking around. "Something serious? Aren't we very safe now? How is there another serious issue?"

Garen shook his head. "Do you remember traces of a black substance before we arrived here?"

"Do you mean to say that... that creature is coming here?" Angel's eyes widened. "Impossible... Such a coincidence? We have just arrived at a safe zone and something is about to happen?"

It's troublesome because it's not a coincidence." Garen said calmly.

"You mean to say... someone is controlling it?" Angel inhaled.

"Keep an eye on Beckstone and his team. I need to go out and examine the surroundings myself." Garen said.

"Can't you use Sight Sharing? It would be easier to find if you told your father and his subordinates, right?" Angel couldn't understand his train of thoughts.

"I have my own arrangements." Garen held his calm tone. "Just prepare yourself mentally. Our stable life would be over before you know it."

As angel looked at his serious, grim face, and couldn't help but turn serious about it as well.

"Whatever. I have managed to survive all the attacks along the way here. This is nothing."

Garen nodded. He stood up and in doing so agitated a lot of dust, which rose into the pillar of light, and he walked passed through it with his grey robe. In a blink of an eye, he walked out of the room, and only his footsteps could be heard as he walked further away.

Angel shook her head as he started to feel that she could never understand him. He had gotten more and more mysterious as trouble escalated.

Inside Vanderman's study room.

Garen and Vanderman were sitting opposite each other.

The maidservant quietly backed out of the room and closed the door behind her, after pouring a cup of red tea for each of the housemasters, leaving both of them alone.

The steam of the red tea rose slowly into the air, dispersing and finally disappearing as the cups were placed on the table between son and father.

A faint fragrance were mixed within the air.

"Your favourite sugar cube has been added into it." Vanderman pointed at the red tea. "Have a drink. The taste made from home can't be compared to the ones you drink outside." Vanderman revealed his rare gentle smile.

Garen picked up the cup and had a few sips.

"I have become a totem user." He whispered.

"I know, The Black-Striped White Tiger." Vanderman wasn't surprised. "I'm not surprised that you've chosen the path of the totem. With your talent, you had almost no chance of evolving at all, so it's the best that you choose to become the strongest among the form one totem user. It's given by the totem user who had saved you last time right? It ain't bad."

Garen didn't say a word. He had deactivated all of his totem lights except for the Core Totem and Butterfly Totem's Totem Light. This was to prevent from his father from discovering them, so that his future plans would not be affected.

"Why did you not let me become a totem user in the past? If I couldn't become a Luminarist, at least I can control a portion of my fate when I'm a totem user, right?" Garen had wanted to ask this question for a long time.

"Why? I don't know how you became a totem user. With your skills back then, you must have put in a tremendous amount of effort." Vanderman shrugged his shoulder. "I have originally planned out another path for you. However that doesn't matter anymore now that you have become a totem user."

"Another path? Is it the same as Maxilan and the others?" Garen recalled the armor that Maxilan wore.

"Yes. It was a new technology that I had developed. I can weaken the totem light so that the requirement to use it is reduced as well, thus allowing a commoner to use it during battles." Vanderman said proudly.

"I have spent a lot of effort in this, and I finally I have solid results. I have been preparing my strongest work just for you; it was specifically tailored to your body's characteristics. If not for your sudden leave and disappearance, I would have tailored one for you already!"

Garen didn't say another word, as he didn't think that this would have happened at all. Based on the original history, this item was destroyed before it could see the light of day, and this was the reason why it had no opportunity to be known to the world.

"You can go to the treasury and get any resources you need for your totem. You can take a rest, as we have a few guests coming." Vanderman patted onto Garen's shoulder.

Garen stood up, bowed with respect and opened the door.

Master Baphje and Beckstone were already standing outside of the door. Master Baphje had a goatee and a bald shiny head.

"Master Baphje and Sir Beckstone." Garen lowered his head as he greeted them. Currently, his position was the lowest as Baphje and Beckstone were on equal footing with his father in terms of strength. Regardless of his age, he was a form one totem user; nothing worth noting in the eyes of the two.

"Oh it's you Cia. I brought Master Stone along. We have some things to discuss with your father." Baphje smiled as he said so.

"Master Stone?" Garen noticed how Baphje addressed Beckstone, suggesting that Baphje respected Beckstone a lot.

Beckstone greeted him with a nod and ignored him afterwards. The door was soon shut as both of them entered the room.

The reason Beckstone came over today was to find out more about Leanna's details. Coincidentally, he witnessed the return of the Viscount's son, his impression towards him was typical and vague. If Garen weren't the Viscount's son, he would not even bother taking notice of a former totem user.

He believed that the relationship between father and son was rather good.

However, the most important thing to him was to take note of the Viscount's reaction. He started to predict the scenarios that could possibly play out, and came up with the best course of action.

Garen stood outside of the door and tried to eavesdrop but he couldn't hear a thing. He then realized that there was a Tactical Formation set up here to isolate sound, so he left the place immediately. With Baphje around, Beckstone was most likely suspicious of it and hadn't confirmed the truth yet.

"Good day Master Cia."

"Master Cia."

"Do you want to go for a drink, Master!"

As he walked, the totem users Vanderman hired treated Garen as the same rank.

His position was overlooked in this precarious front line.

As Garen had no plans on making any arrangements, he greeted these totem users with a smile as he left the building. He was fairly similar to how Beckstone treated everyone else.

A few beautiful female totem users were attracted by his handsome figure. Sexual relationships were not looked down upon during such a chaotic period. As long as both of them were attracted to each other, they could get a room and have a one night stand. Perhaps they would still remain as strangers after having a go at each other.

However, Garen had yet gotten used to such a casual lifestyle.

After circling the manor once, he realized that Beckstone's team members had gotten suspicious of Vanderman. Berlina, the girl in red armor, and Darian, the muscular guy, were asking for information all over the place clumsily.

Garen couldn't look any further at such a clumsy way of collecting intel, and was sure that his father Vanderman had already realized it. It was just that he had yet to expose them.

Together with Leila, Garen gave an excuse to go to the Black Swan Lake. As he was a form one totem user and a Black-Striped White Tiger Totem user, which was much stronger than the typical form one user, Vanderman's restriction towards him were very little. Furthermore, there were experimental beings that had yet revealed to the public patrolling the area so it was very safe.

Both of them got out of the manor with ease, and were on their way to the Black Swan Lake. Strangely, the weird fish in the lake stopped attacking Garen. It was very obvious that they were related to Vanderman's experiment.

Leila didn't ask Garen of his true intentions and was surprise that Garen was walking leisurely around the manor.