

Mystical 971

Chapter 971: Arena 1

After some time, Garen was awakened by the sounds of a heated argument.

“My stuff isn’t something anyone can take,” a seemingly young male voice rang out loud.

“The stuff I want is not something anyone can deny me!” A cocky female voice calmly said.

What followed was a loud and violent shockwave.

Garen was awakened from his calculations. He let out a big sigh and looked up at the ceiling that was flaking dust. The shockwaves continued one after another, seemingly never-ending.

He stood up, walked to the window, drew open the curtain and looked down where two small silhouettes were standing facing each other on the street below. In between the two silhouettes, a red and a blue shadow kept rapidly colliding with each other. From the looks of it, the blue shadow seemed to be at a disadvantage because every time it got hit it would let out a loud moan.

It could clearly be seen that the two silhouettes were both below the age of 20. The boy was in a blue shirt, with a silver bracelet around his wrist, emitting multiple spots of silverish light. The blue shadow in front of him seemed to be getting forced into a corner.

On the other hand, the girl was waving a golden can in her hand, giving off a prideful aura. She was instructing the red shadow to attack continuously, almost as if the waving was conducting the red shadow’s every move, like a whip continuously whipping forth.

The willpower shockwaves from their battle caused ripples that were at least Level Three in strength. Looking at the core of the battle where the strength was most intense, it was even at Level Four degrees of power.

There were many Energy Machinists surrounding and watching the bout. In this location, it was impossible to bring out large-sized Self-Defense Evolved Creatures. One could only carry super-small-sized strong types or utilize space equipment, but both of these methods were far too expensive. Even if this was the city of Nagadako, a super-small-sized evolved creature was not something the average energy machinist could afford.

This was comparable to having a person earn tens of thousands bucks per month when the average monthly income was two or three thousand bucks. Everyone would be using a cheap ten buck wallet, whilst the person would be using a pure leather wallet worth thousands.

It's the same in this situation. Those who own super-small-sized evolved creatures would at the very least be from a wealthy household. It was considered a brand and a status symbol after all.

However, at this point, the two were displaying an unmovable arrogance in their actions. The boy was being suppressed so much that he had started to lose his breath. His blue shadow started to move slower and slower, becoming clearer and clearer. Slowly, the shape of the shadow could finally be made out, it was a tiny hummingbird that was completely blue in color.

As the hummingbird's movements slowed down, the other red shadow also slowed down its attacks in response.

Surprisingly, the red shadow was a palm-sized red skeleton. The red skeleton was floating in the air, with a pair of red wings flapping rapidly on its back.

"Hand out the stuff," the girl put out her hand. "Your hummingbird is no match against my skeleton."

"Red skeleton! Hmph!" The boy coldly sighed, his face pale. Finally, with a toss, he threw a brownish ball to the ground, turned around and left.

The figure of the hummingbird slowly started to fade away, then disappearing into the boy's body.

"Looks like you at least have some tact!" the girl chuckled as she picked up the brownish ball. She glanced around at the surrounding energy machinists, then returned to her cold emotionless expression as she turned around and left the area.

Garen let out a breath in amazement.

“This is indeed the central city, where the energy machinists are the most advanced. The elites from all around the universe have gathered here. To be a Level 4 energy machinist at the age of 20, this degree is far crazier than me.”

Garen did some calculations and it would take more than 10 years for him to successfully get to Level 4. However, in this 10 years, there's no telling how far these geniuses would have already progressed.

“This time, the body I got was certainly average in the willpower aspect...” Garen let out a sigh, closed the curtains and continued his calculations. All achievements relied on slowly accumulating small steps.

Word of the battle between the hummingbird and the red skeleton started to spread. Soon, a recorded video of the two's confrontation got uploaded to the Internet. Garen took out some time to use the inn's public computer to watch the video, but he couldn't learn anything from it. The skills used by the two were one tier higher than his capabilities so it wasn't something he could learn at this time.

The elite evolved creatures they used were at least Level 4 or 5 in terms of combat power. He might not even be able to withstand their attacks even back when he was in his strongest state and in a mech.

After all, he was only testing the waters.

After an uneventful night, early in the morning of the next day, Liz and Accord came over and knocked on his door. Garen had already washed up earlier. The three then proceeded to make their way towards the selection tests.

At the time, plenty of youths planning on taking the selection tests had already gathered at the Star Core Plaza. Almost all of them were below 20 years old, with barely a handful of people in their 20s.

Walking amongst the crowd, Garen and company did not look anywhere out of the ordinary.

Bong!!!

A melodious clock bell sounded from within the Star Core Plaza.

The fence started to vibrate and instantly faded away, almost as if it was never there in the first place.

At this moment, a mustached man in what seemed to be yellow royal garbs walked out from inside. He pridefully surveyed the people in the crowds who were eagerly awaiting their entrance.

“Routine maintenance inspection has just been completed. Please prepare to enter the arena. Today, we will open five big arenas and all small arenas, so please make your choice wisely. Let me give you a word of warning, do not be overambitious. Try to select an arena of a sect that is most appropriate for your personal growth, and not based on the overall strength of the sect. Of course, stronger sects will naturally give you more advantages and benefits, but you will also have to take up the corresponding duties. If you do not have the mental preparation to take up these duties, you may leave.”

He paused briefly.

“Everyone will only have the opportunity to select their arena of choice once. In the end, the combined ranking competition will be held.”

After he finished talking, he slowly raised his hands, turned around and shot up into the sky, disappearing into the distance in a flash.

At the gate of the Star Core Plaza, the crowd stood there briefly in shock, before slowly funneling themselves into the plaza. Everyone who entered the premises would have an internal map of the plaza appearing in their hands.

Garen also received one, the map clearly stated all the specialties and characteristics of the arenas, what sect they belong to and where their actual location was.

As the three walked through the masses of people whilst Garen was looking down at his map, Liz suddenly patted him on his shoulder.

“Look, it’s the hummingbird user!” Liz said softly, looking at the direction of the person on her right.

Garen and Accord, followed suit to see that it was indeed the hummingbird user from the battle yesterday. The boy in the blue shirt had a cold and sour expression, his silver bracelet looked matte and dull, it was not as bright and shiny as it was in yesterday’s battle. It seems like it wasn’t activated yet.

In front of him, there was naturally a small sized area being created as he moves. This was not because people were intentionally making space for him out of respect but rather because his body was emitting a slight willpower energy field that forcefully parted the crowds in front to him like the red sea.

“It’s a Level 5 energy field... There’s no doubt about it, he’s one of the big three seeded participants in our competition area,” Accord said as he adjusted his glasses once more.

Garen nodded, he could also feel his opponent’s strength. For him to attain a Level 5 energy field at his age was amazing. Moreover, it seemed like he was not a Level 5 energy machinist, but rather just a Level 4. He used an experiment platform to create his own evolved beast to reach Level 5.

“He was the one who fought against the red skeleton girl yesterday night right below where we stayed. He lost the match though,” Liz muttered softly.

“You guys saw it too?” Accord asked. “Him, the red skeleton user and another person, they are considered the prodigies of our competition area. We need to be cautious of them during the combined competition.”

Garen and Liz nodded in agreement.

These types of geniuses amongst energy machinists all have terrifying calculating prowess. A lot of the tactics used by them would be very hard to be assessed by their opponents and all of them would already have a fully prepared a counterplan and battle tactics. They most likely have already been through countless simulation battles. So in that battle, they’d much rather skip all the tactics and just fight through a clash of strength.

In these situations, for rookies who have to face the hummingbird user, they would be out of luck.

After assessing his current strength, Garen came to the conclusion that if he faces this person, his chances of winning were extremely slim. The speed of that hummingbird was too high, there was no conceivable way for him to dodge it. Furthermore, that Level 5 energy field was not something he could break through easily.

“Let’s go,” he said with a frown on his face.

“Mmm.”

The two others followed closely behind as they proceeded to the arenas deeper in the Plaza.

The Star Core Plaza was filled with countless dry and withered trees of all shapes and sizes. The dark blue color of the dried tree bark made the trees look like weird evolved creatures, neatly stationed at two sides surrounding the plaza.

In the plaza, there were also a few minotaur guards patrolling the area. They looked the same as the ones from Figures Plaza, with the only difference being the lack of advertisements on their axes, giving off an intimidating aura.

The crowds slowly separated into the respective branching roads in the plaza, the people walking around Garen and company has also visibly decreased.

“Where are you guys planning to go? Which sect do you plan to choose?” Accord asked while seemingly recording something into his PDA.

Liz grinned, “I’m headed to the Dragon Light Sect. I’ve been admiring the Dragon Light of the Dragon Light Sect for ages now, it’s very pretty and strong.”

“I still haven’t decided,” Garen shook his head whilst looking at the major sects listed on the plaza map. The list was completely filled with the names of countless sects.

Accord kept his PDA and chuckled.

“It must be fate that the three of us would be here together today. I’m planning on going for the Star Cloud Sect. I don’t know if I’ll be able to make the cut or not, but this has always been my dream since I was young.”

“That’s one of the Big Three Sects... How ambitious!” Liz said in admiration. “Too bad I don’t have the confidence to try it. We don’t have absolute God-given talents, our willpower is also not strong enough, the odds of getting into one of the Big Three Sects are too low.”

“Well, that’s still better than me, I still have no clue about what sect I want to join,” Garen chuckled bitterly. He looked towards Accord and asked, “Do you have any suggestions for me? Accord?”

In this trip, the three could be considered fellow students of the same level. Accord had great knowledge of theoretical aspects, Garen was filled with combat experience, and Liz was good in a linguistic aspect. With that, the three managed to help make up for each other’s weak points, forming a decent bond through their interactions. Energy machinists are mostly rational people, there would not be anyone who would want to decline these types of mutually beneficial relationships.

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“My only suggestion for you, Garen, is to choose your own path that you think suits you best. Don’t focus on the strength and size of the sects. Of course, the strength of a sect can have a positive impact on your growth, but during the distribution of their resources, those who lack the prerequisites would naturally receive fewer study resources, as it would just be a waste of time and resources. It’s not worth the candle,” Accord answered sincerely.

“That’s true. I’m more suited for Frost Radiation style energy machines. Are there any in this list that belongs to that type of style?” Garen asked once more. If he just goes by the information displayed on this map, there would be no feasible way for him to make an informed choice. The characteristics of each sect were not something that could be easily you could search up on the web, there would be a lot of minor details people who are unfamiliar with the sect itself would never understand.

Accord answered while looking at Garen seriously.

“To be honest, Garen, your actual combat prowess is absurdly strong, if you feel the styles that use Frost Radiation suits you the best, then you should narrow it down to the sects that specialize in Frost Radiation. Give me your map, I’ll help narrow down the list for you, then you can choose one that fits your style the best. I’ll also key in some of the key strengths and weaknesses of these sects for you.”

“Mmm, thanks!” Garen nodded.

“Don’t worry about it. My actual combat ability was too weak, as you were telling us about your combat experience, I was covered in cold sweat. If you didn’t bring up a lot of those tips and common problems, I would most likely be destroyed as soon as the fight started. Let’s benefit from each other,” Accord calmly said as he adjusted his glasses once more.

He grabbed Garen’s map and rapidly pointed out thirteen Frost Radiation based sects and their respective arenas. At the same time, using his PDA, he made minor changes to the contents on Garen’s map, displaying the characteristics and styles of these sects.

It could be seen that he was still a baby in the woods, still treating others with a heart full of sincerity.

After a while, Garen was handed back the map, it now displayed thirteen bookmarked locations for the sects and arenas.

“What are you guys doing?”

Nearby, a group of young Level 2 energy machinists seemed to have gotten into an altercation with another Level 3 energy machinist. The noise was loud enough to be heard even from their location.

The Level 3 energy machinists had her hair in small pigtails, her face was showing an arrogant expression.

“How can good-for-nothing trash like you, being only Level 1 and Level 2, even wish to come to Burton Island? Keep on dreaming!”

This person did not release their energy machine but rather lunged over personally. Surprisingly, he used a set of very familiar combination combat skills. Suddenly, two gill-like breathing organs appeared on the back of his hands, continuously spraying out a white gas. In an instant of explosive acceleration, every punch packed he threw packed two to three times the original power.

The group of Level 1 and 2 machinists were only kids, they stood absolutely no chance against him. All of them got knocked to the ground in an instant. Many youths started surrounding them to get a look at what was going on, but none of them attempted to stop the fight but instead, they just stood there looking at the scene coldly.

There were countless similar cases that had happened in this place, a few of strong young energy machinists, to reduce the competition in their arena, would hire an even stronger person to stand guard outside the arena to take care of their competitors.

Garen surveyed the surroundings, he had already memorized the basics of the map in his hand, carefully keeping it back into his pocket.

At this moment, the Level 3 energy machinists who started the fight glanced over, his sights falling on Garen and company.

The others also looked on as if a show was going to happen.

Garen looked around once more and realized that amongst all the people nearby, their Level 3 strength was considered quite high in comparison. Furthermore, the path they were headed was directly past the place where the fight took place.

There were a lot of people coming to this area, most of them seemed to have similar dressing styles, with pale yellowish accessories on them, seemingly all locals. On the other hand, the handful of people in varied clothing all had slightly stronger Willpower and spoke with weird accents. Clearly, they were from a foreign land.

Garen also noticed that it was not just the three of them. Everyone from foreign lands was at least Level 2 or 3, one whole tier higher than the average of the locals.

“Let’s not stay here, we need to move,” Accord said softly.

The three minded their own business and started to walk away, this made the tense face of the guy who started the fight to slowly relax. He looked over, gave them a smile and left the scene.

The group of knocked out energy machinists was left out cold on the ground.

After walking a bit more, Liz was the first to part ways. The arena she was headed to was just up ahead.

The three exchanged their contact information via their energy machinists key, promising to keep in contact. Briefly, after that, Accord also walked off on his own. He seemed to be quite mature for his age and very introverted, but he might also be slightly overambitious. He had looked down on Liz slightly but was able to see Garen as an equal. His tone towards Garen was very respectful.

Garen had too much life experience and has also seen countless types of people. He had no trouble noticing the slightly hidden intricacies in Accord’s shifts in his tones, though he didn’t point it out.

A person’s life passes by in the flash of his eyes, who knows what type of person Accord would grow up to be, how he would treat others. He would never have a condescending attitude and look down on others, especially towards this group of energy machinists who posses frightful calculation and analytical prowess.

After the two left, he looked up the bookmarks on his map and the sects he was interested in, then he picked out what he deemed to be the most suitable sect and arena for himself.

At the far right area of the Star Core Plaza near the outer wall, in a middle-sized sect arena, a long queue of people was patiently waiting to have the judge register their names.

While the queue was still growing, there were also people who left the area dejected, after their application was rejected. On the other hand, those who managed to would proudly or calmly enter the arena into an empty space, patiently awaiting instruction from the staff.

Two middle-aged men in white uniforms stood at the sides coldly staring at the surroundings. They had a sign hanging on their chest, clearly displaying the words “Ice Rainbow Sect”.

Garen had been in line for quite some time and it was finally his turn.

Walking to the front, he tapped his energy machinists key in front of the judge in charge of the registration.

Beep.

The key started to light up, the display screen in the hands of the judge also started to display the related information.

‘Garen, 21 years old, Level 3 Energy Machinist, Training Method NIS Universal Simplified Version, Place of Birth: Frontier.’

“Level 3... Not bad,” the judge nodded, signaling Garen to wait at the side.

Garen breathed out a sigh of relief as he walked towards the group of other participants who passed. The Ice Rainbow Sect was one of the strongest major sects below the Big Three Sects, it was a Southern Sect. The arena over here was used only for preliminary testings. There would still be a secondary testing once they head over the headquarters of the sect where it was intermediate in difficulty.

Garen chose this sect because his current body did not have a good enough Willpower quality. It was at best considered average, if he attempted to head over to even better sects, he would no doubt be rejected instantly, wasting his opportunity.

This opportunity was something that everyone had only once a year. If he gets rejected this time, he would have to wait an entire year for his next opportunity. He did not have so much time and money to afford such a luxury.

It seems like the first batch of selection tests had already been done earlier, he was part of the second batch.

After thirty minutes, the number of registered participants had reached the quota. The people who still wish to register would have to wait till after this batch of selection tests are finished. However, no one was in a rush, the Star Core Plaza was open almost every day of the year, the big arenas are opened based on the schedules, whilst the small arenas are always open. As long as you had the potential, it didn't matter which day you come to take the test.

Garen stood in the middle of the group, he was surrounded by energy machinists' Willpower force. His Level 3 Willpower did not stand out at all in this group. Almost everyone here was Level 3, with the exception of two Level 2s who were extremely young, being at most twelve years old, and a Level 4 young man who was resting his eyes with his arms crossed.

The judge in charge of registration earlier headed up on stage and took out a sign to put on stage. It displayed the rules of the selection tests. It seemed like he was too lazy to even speak, he just pointed at the sign and went off the stage back to his seat.

The sign said:

Second Selection Test — Elimination Competition. Top three based on actual battles, where ranking are decided based on the number of wins. Those who win 10 consecutive matches may stay. The remaining people will leave the arena.

Third Selection Test. Test for the appraisal limit. Those with high scores may stay, those with low scores will leave.

Final Selection Test. Participate in the combined selection test, those who ranked within the top one hundred will stay.

The rules were simple.

Immediately, two people had already taken the stage. It was a fat boy and a small girl. They familiarly released their respective energy machines, one was a big human-sized spider and the other was a flying

swordfish. They were both elite templates. The two jumped straight into an intense battle. The spider's limbs were as sharp as a knife's edge, it could also spit out webs to trap the opponent; whilst the swordfish could instantly use an explosive acceleration to pierce through its opponent and had terrifying firepower. The swordfish was repeatedly weaving through the spider webs set up by the spider.

The judge was below with a computer positioned vertically, with the built-in camera pointing towards the stage, seemingly recording the battle.

Garen was stood at the side, observing the battle while paying attention to the two middle-aged men in white uniforms. The two were clearly men from Ice Rainbow. They did not talk to the judge at all, making the atmosphere very tense.

"What the hell?" The energy machinists on his side started whining.

Garen noticed that a batch of participants consists of 30 people, but they would only take in the top three and the people who managed to win ten battles consecutively. This made the competition very intense. Of course, taking the top three was much easier than to win ten battles consecutively.

Given that the Level 4 energy machinist was definitely going to take a spot, no one bothered even trying to take his spot from him.

As for the remaining two spots...

Garen looked through his belongings. He could not bring the biochemical pond over, it was left in the energy machinists' secret region. Except for his energy machinist key, he did not bring anything at all.

He started to consider how he would rank within this group of people.

He had no way of using energy machine evolved creatures, he did not have an experimental platform, nor did he have a micro-type evolved creature. He was in the same predicament as a lot of the other energy machinists here. There was a specialized public-use biochemical pond somewhere nearby and everyone was allowed to use it once for free. However, he was out of time, the Ice Rainbow Sect mainly targets support-type energy machines, focussing primarily on self-strengthening. Unless absolutely necessary, it would be better to just display his own self-strengthening skills.

Whilst the people on stage were still fighting, Garen saw a few energy machinists coming out from the public-use biochemical pond. There were flower-like items floating around their bodies. Energy Machinists then had countless tricks up their sleeves and he had no idea what those flowers were.

“Black Jade Dragon Beast!!!”

Suddenly, a loud insuppressible roar sounded from afar, almost as if it was the roar of a rhinoceros stampeding towards the arena. This caused everyone to look over at the direction where the sound was coming from.

“Black Jade Dragon?!” The judge’s face lost color for a brief moment as he stood up and looked over at that direction, his face showing signs of jealousy.

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Not just him, even the two men in white uniforms were also looking in that direction.

“This has already been the fifth case of special talent prodigies this month... As expected of a big arena.”

“Even if we’re not some talented prodigy, we will still eventually become stronger than them!” A youth said in a dissatisfied manner.

Most of the people here were still kids, only a handful were full-fledged adults, Garen included. Listening to the words of the kids around them, even if these energy machinists had strong calculative abilities, they still lacked emotional stability. At this moment, they could not help but feel a surging feeling of jealousy.

Using this chance while everyone was still saving their full potential, Garen quickly surveyed the people surrounding him. The few youths with a more veiled willpower were all remaining calm, fully confident in their abilities.

“Without an experimental platform, my potential is only limited to my close combat. I’m definitely at a disadvantage against these guys. Whilst everyone was still saving their full potential, I should use this opportunity to go on stage and earn my 10 wins as quickly as possible. No point trying to snatch away others’ rankings.”

A few thoughts flashed across Garen’s mind. He had been hiding, intentionally keeping a low profile, befriending Accord and Liz, all for two goals. The first was to fully understand the unfamiliar situation surrounding energy machinists. Now that he has a clear grasp of the situation, he learned that the energy machinists world has the same rules as any other world. As long as you don’t cross the line, everything is based on your own potential.

The second... Although he originally still had his worries, there had not been any problems in such a long time, there shouldn’t be any big issues happening soon.

He remembered the series of unfortunate events that happened back in the Blackboard Region which he was still slightly haunted by.

At this point, the fat boy on stage had already been defeated. To be defeated by a little girl who was at least seven or eight years younger than him, He frantically fled the arena in shame after he bowed to the judge.

“Now... It’s time to test it out. Let’s see whether or not my original hypothesis is true...”

With a swift leap, he lightly landed on the stage, standing right across of the little girl.

Hiss...

The swordfish next to the little girl started making snake hissing noises.

Without useless chatter, the two just nodded at each other.

“Be careful...” Garen said softly. Before he even finished, he furiously stomped down onto the floor.

Bam!

The entire stage started to shake, an ice blue mist radiation started to rapidly spread, completely engulfing the little girl and her swordfish in an instant.

A small black paper box suddenly appeared in Garen's hands, inside it contained strong Willpower forces.

Hiss... A void shadow stopped in front of the box in that instant, as if it was a car that activated its emergency brakes. It was the small swordfish. If Garen had been even slightly slower in taking out the box, he would have been pierced through and been forced off the stage.

"I concede," the little girl's face turned green as she uttered out those words. In that instant, the terrifying strong Willpower forces started to expand, if it was released, her opponent's Willpower storm would have hit the entire stage. The first victim would be the swordfish, it was very likely that her swordfish that she spent so long creating could have had its Willpower core annihilated in an instant. She wasn't even sure if she could manage to survive through the Willpower storm herself. Hence, at that key moment, she stopped her attack.

The little girl jumped off the stage, and started bawling her eyes out. Carrying the swordfish in her hands, she left the selection test arena in tears.

Garen started to feel the guilt of bullying a child, but he swiftly discarded this notion and focussed on his next opponent.

At this point, the icy cold energy radiation had completely covered the arena's stage. This made the energy machinists on the bottom quite concerned. This level of energy field radiation required him to maintain his energy every minute was a frightful task. They realized that he wasn't just your average joe.

A thin and tall man jumped up to the stage. He looked like a stick of bamboo and he also did not have any energy machines. He relied only on his speed when he jumped onto the stage just now, he attempted to run circles around Garen and shoot him with the freeze ray he was equipped with. Unfortunately for him, the freeze ray seemed to have no effect on Garen. On the contrary, he started to get frost bites from the frost radiation, forcing him to helplessly get off the stage.

The next two who came up to the stage to test their luck were also helpless against Garen. At this point, the frost radiation had reached around -20°C. Even staying up on the stage for a brief moment would start to numb their entire body. It slowed down not just their physical movements but also their thinking speed.

Garen only used two moves so far, releasing the frost radiation and occasionally holding up the paper box. This huge threat he had on his hands was so strong that even the Level 4 energy machinist couldn't help but put his attention on the box, showing a worried expression.

"The fourth."

Looking at his fourth opponent was what seemed like a twelve-year-old child, Garen silently counted in his heart.

Ding.

Suddenly, his key emitted a crisp notification tone.

Liz's voice could suddenly be heard.

'Garen, I have successfully entered the sect, good luck to you.'

'Good luck,' Garen replied.

Using the paper box in his hand to accurately block his opponent's attacks, after a few more tries, his opponent helplessly got off the stage once more. When the willpower accumulated in the box had reached such frightening levels, even the Level 4 would not be able to block it.

The judge sitting below speechlessly shook his head. Garen employing this sort of strategy had made him slightly disappointed, but since Garen was able to release frost radiation for such a long time, it proves that Garen had a certain talent, so he just turned a blind eye to it.

Next, Garen used the same paper box tactic and his extreme reflexes, he managed to completely stall his six remaining opponents into submission via the effects of his frost radiation. If not for the ruling that they had to finish the battle within a fixed amount of time, he wouldn't have been so successful.

After successfully winning his 10 matches, Garen decided to quit while he was ahead, so he voluntarily leaped off the stage. This shameless act shocked not just the judge, but also the two men in white uniform.

At the end of the day, Garen only managed to show his extreme reflexes and his ability to release frost radiation, with literally nothing else.

The schedule then quickly progressed to the second phase, the test for their appraisal limits.

Garen barely passed it. The Ice Rainbow Sect's requirements were not that high, Garen's modification of the traditional Frost Radiation showed that he had a certain degree of modification and combat prowess. Thus, even though his appraisal limits were not that high, he was still given a pass.

Looking through the results slip of the test, Garen saw the stats for his bottleneck limit stated clearly at the very top.

"Bottleneck is Level 5, that's not too bad..." Bottlenecks represent the maximum Level one can manage to achieve, just that the amount of time needed in the later levels would be much longer. "50 years..." Garen was speechless.

This estimates shows that in theory, he could reach the level of a Level 5 energy machinists, but that would require at least 50 years of continuous hard work.

However, the most important part was that he successfully passed the test. A few of the Level 4 limit participants had been rejected. Garen learned that even though he barely made the cut, his quality as an energy machinist still wasn't as bad as he originally expected.

The final combined selection test was also a fluke. The others were having awesome battles, but only Garen was holding onto his paper box and being a one-trick pony. The opponents were all extremely

wary of him and chose to avoid him as a whole. After all, there was no need to actually, since the rankings were based off win counts. Thus Garen got past the test easily once again.

Furthermore, he did not break any rules, the paper box he was using was completely built by himself, so it abides by the competition regulations.

In the end, there were a few people attempting to imitate his tactics, but they were easily defeated. This showed them that this type of tactic was not something anyone can pull off, it required an inhuman reaction speed and reflexes.

Out of the final five that passed, Garen was one that was being despised by the others.

Every batch would have around three to five passing participants, Garen was seen as the worst performing person in this group.

After several hours, all of the candidates have been confirmed. From a total of five batches, there was a total of twenty people.

There were three Level 4s ranked at the very front. Surprisingly, the hummingbird user Garen had seen earlier was one of them. However, it was understandable, since the Ice Rainbow Sect is one of the strongest sects outside the Big Three Sects. For him to choose this sect was no surprise at all.

“Howmet, look at this...” The judge saw that the numbers were almost enough, so he softly asked at the direction of one of the white uniformed man.

The white uniformed man slowly floated up and landed on the stage, looking down at the passing candidates.

“These ones should do,” he reached out and grabbed a short dark golden cane from his sleeves and lightly waved it around. The tip of the cane suddenly shot out a white light, as if a peacock spreading its feathers it turned into countless light spots, slowly falling onto everyone below.

“Grounded Prison, Command, Aiz!” He roared in a low voice.

Immediately, the light spots on the bodies of the candidates started to lightly vibrate.

They started to shoot out both weak and strong pillars of light, pointed at the sky.

These light pillars could go up to 2 meters in height, with the shortest barely reaching the top of their heads. With the uneven heights, it looked like a white light pole behind their backs when looked from afar.

Garen's back also had a pillar of light, it wasn't too tall or too short, it was in the middle amongst all of these pillars.

The white uniformed man pulled back his hand and slowly flew above all of the candidates. Everyone that his sight scanned started to feel shivers down their spine. The sharp gaze of those two eyes felt like a knife cutting through your skin, making the person ache.

"Nilo, these people, are there too many of them?" The other white uniformed man flew past and said softly. The two bodies were emitting a strong inheriting level energy field as if it was nothing, forcing everyone's head downwards.

"It does seem like we have too many." The white uniformed man Nilo nodded his head and frowned. His gaze landed on Garen. "This person..."

"His performance was decent, although he made use of some exploits, his reflexes are extraordinary. In addition to that, he seemed to have made great self-modifications, adapting the radiation and halo-type energies. I'd say that he's fine," the judge's voice rang from below.

Nilo nodded.

"You, you and you!"

He simply pointed towards three others, they were the three people with the worst performance other than Garen. "You may leave. Your ranks are too low, you've been eliminated!"

Instantly, the faces of the three candidates changed drastically. It was two white-collar-looking men and a model student-looking girl and after they got called out, their faces looked horrible.

“On what basis!!?” One of the white-collar guys interrupted out loud. “Our performance wasn’t the worst! On what basis do you want us to leave!” He purposely increased the volume of his voice to cause a commotion.

“On what basis?” Nilo laughed coldly, “When I tell you to leave, you will leave! On the basis of me, Nilo’s, authority as the supervisor’s disciple!”

Garen looked coldly from the sides. He was indeed not a match for these people, but after he had experienced their attacks, wanting to beat these people would not be a difficult task. After all, the difference in strength was not that big. The only thing was that a lot of people would dismiss his skills as nothing but fancy flourishes.

Chapter 974: Sect 2

The moment they heard he was the infamous supervisor’s disciple, all three people hesitated slightly. The first person who stepped forward earlier turned timid immediately and retracted his outstretched hand.

“Then why is he still standing here despite being ranked last?! You’re doing this illegally! I refuse to accept this!” The young girl yelled loudly unexpectedly.

“You refuse?” Nilo narrowed his eyes. He glanced at Garen but saw that the expression on his face was unperturbed, as though the current situation here had nothing to do with him at all. Suddenly, an ill feeling rose up in his mind when he thought of another member of the sect who was very similar to him.

I strived for your reputation but you remained indifferent without being flattered or even showing the slightest hint of gratefulness? Fine! That’s just fine!

Nilo had always been petty. Now that he was unhappy as well, the four people including Garen looked like eyesores to him.

“I refuse to accept this!!” The girl continued to scream loudly.

“Then just refuse!”

A stern look flashed in Nilo’s eyes before he raised his palm up high and drew it towards the girl below.

Bang!

The stress of the invisible force field sent the girl flying at once. A splash of blood sputtered out in mid-air before she crashed violently against the sharp corner of the high platform. She rolled down and fell on the ground face up.

When Garen saw this scene, his mind tensed up slightly. He felt as if something was amiss and that his previous assumptions were beginning to show traces of being confirmed. Now that the selection quota had been fulfilled, those who had not succeeded would need to wait until next year before they could return. If he had to wait another year, would that mean that he would be left behind by his peers?

He glanced at Nilo and noticed that his facial expressions were becoming more contorted. The feelings in his mind which indicated that something was amiss became clearer.

Suddenly!

“All four of you can just get out now!” roared Nilo in a low voice irritably. Four invisible force fields were shot out in front of his body suddenly. The force fields wound themselves around the four people including Garen and flew out immediately.

Sure enough!

Garen was speechless. This was an unexpected disaster. He could vaguely feel that his assumptions had probably hit the nail on the head again...

While his body was suspended in mid-air, he felt a bout of dizziness from the lack of balance. While determinedly steadying his body, he saw that a few people in the crowd who were standing there earlier now had joyful expressions on their faces because of the misfortune that had befallen him. His mind remained speechless. Despite his best efforts to downplay everything, he could not shake off the bad luck of stirring up trouble.

It seemed as though he had been constantly encountering misfortune ever since Red Moon planted that unknown Willpower inside him. Terrible incidents had befallen him one after another continuously, simply making him a comet of disaster.

There was a 'bang' before all four people were thrown out far away again. Garen took a protective stance naturally. After rolling a full circle on the ground, he stood up quickly and did not resemble someone who was in a difficult position at all.

The examiner who admired Garen more than the others sighed faintly when he saw this.

"That person possesses the rare glowing abilities..." he continued to comment. The examiner himself was also threading on the path to become an expert in modifying glowing types. Therefore, when he saw that Garen was of this rare type as well, he was internally somewhat protective of him.

"That's enough talk of that. Trash like him who can only resort to using tricks will still be useless no matter how much they practice. He'll only be a waste of resources if we let him through," Nilo waved his hand. "This matter ends here. How many people does our sect select every year? Do we still lack someone like this?"

The examiner was helpless and did not speak anymore.

On the other side, Garen's face became slightly contorted. However, it was unrealistic for him to truly use his strength to force these elites to submit. The only thing that he could excel in now were the Big Wild Wolves. Unfortunately, the strengthened Big Wild Wolves only possessed Level One combat power that was close to Level Two at the most. Without an experimental platform, he could not use his Level

Three Energy Machinist abilities to create an experimental piece of elite Energy Machinery at all. Thus, he had no other choice but to use tricks.

When he noticed that the examiner seemed as though he had given up completely, Garen's heart sank. If everything was delayed for a year, Garen did not know how much his progress would lag behind in comparison to the others. At his current age, a single year would mean a world of difference to a year in the future. His body would grow and mature in this year and the time that had passed would never return. This information was part of the Energy Machinist's general knowledge. Once they had reached twenty-five years of age, the maturing of their rains would stagnate completely. Therefore, every year before they reached the age of twenty-five was a time where they could change their destiny.

Nilo did not even glance at the four people that he had flung outside. Instead, he merely raised his head and looked at the faraway sky.

In the direction of a different contest platform that was far away, a long cry echoed over now. It sounded like a loud yell of a bird.

At that moment, a huge snowy white Giant Hawk flapped its wings and flew towards the heads of the crowd. In a few short moments, it slowed down from its initial great speed. It spread its large wings open and covered the people below while its ferocious talons clawed at Nilo's head.

There was a whooshing noise before a ray of blinding white light was released from its two talons. The light enveloped Nilo and the other selected candidates. It wrapped them up and they disappeared without a trace.

The Giant Hawk turned and circled the area before flying towards the direction where it had come from. It flapped its wings a few times before disappearing at the horizon.

The remaining people stood on the ground and looked at the Giant Hawk that had flown far away. Some of them sighed admiringly with emotion.

The four people including Garen that had been thrown out arranged their clothes and packed up. Garen glared coldly at the girl who kept shouting her disapproval earlier before turning around and leaving. This was truly unacceptable. He could merely find a job first and pass the year for now.

This world was unlike the previous ones because it was exceptionally difficult for him to develop himself. Moreover, he had jumped into a completely unknown territory and could not even gain much support from his Potential Points. Furthermore, his incomprehensible bad luck had caused him to fall into this state now as well.

“All of you, wait a moment!” Just when a few of them were planning to leave, the last examiner that had remained called out and asked them to wait. “Are you interested in joining the next ranked sect? Although it’s slightly weaker, you will still receive Star Core treatment.”

“Are you joking?!” After being thrown out and getting humiliated, one of the men that looked like a white collar worker turned around and asked crudely. The other two merely ignored the examiner and left quickly without even turning their heads.

“Star Core?” Garen’s mind stirred. He dusted himself off and walked over. From the corner of his eye, he could see that the white collar worker was looking at him as if he was an idiot. However, Garen was unconcerned and walked forward to talk to the examiner.

“I would never lie to you. We examiners are not sent from the sects where the examinations are being held. Instead, we are members of external sects that were merely invited here to be examiners. I have no reason to lie or trick you,” said the examiner sincerely while stroking his white beard. “Of course, I would never force you if you were unwilling.”

Garen had good feelings towards this examiner. He did not know why this man had spoken on behalf of him earlier. Although he did not succeed, at least his good intentions were something that Garen would remember.

“You’re not someone that was sent by the sect to the arena?”

“You don’t even know simple things like this. You’re just another careless hick from the countryside,” cursed the male white-collar worker before he turned around and walked away. He had quickly left for a different arena in another area with the crowd that was not lively anymore. The contest that was being held here earlier had ended already and the arena would only be reopened again tomorrow.

“Will there really be a Star Core?” asked Garen quietly.

“Of course. Although the choices are extremely little and there are only Star Cores of the lowest level, it’s still better than nothing,” replied the examiner while nodding. “What do you say? Are you interested?”

“Is it a frost-type sect?”

“If you’re looking for frost-types, I can suggest a sect that you can go to. It should be rather suitable for you,” said the examiner softly.

Garen asked some questions regarding specific information carefully.

Apparently, the second rate sect that the examiner was talking about specialized in inviting the remaining members that were initially selected by larger sects. However, it was obvious that their resources and other factors such as safety and database were not equivalent to the larger sects and were actually much worse than them. Fortunately, despite only having those of the lowest grade, they still had Star Cores nonetheless. Even if he was able to reach the Inherited Level by relying on this, he would still only achieve the lowest level. Moreover, the success rate of this particular Star Core was frighteningly low.

The second rate sect that the examiner was talking about was called Scarlet Snow Sect. It was a smaller-scale sect that was not far from Ice Rainbow Sect. They had about ten members and their sect was once brilliant. However, the faults of their Training Methods and Inherited books caused them to decline halfway, making them an inferior minor sect now.

Very few people were willing to join sects like these. The examiner had only asked Garen this additional question because he was good friends with one of the Elders inside.

“Scarlet Snow Sect...” Garen had always felt that this Energy Machinist Sect was slightly weird. It seemed as though certain parts of it was slightly familiar for unknown reasons. However, he was indifferent towards all sects. Perhaps the strength of the weakest foundations could be instantly increased immensely once they were strengthened by Distorted Seeds. Perhaps everything would be made much easier when he relied on his powers to find resources everywhere when the time came. Currently, he was lacking the Energy Machinist’s important system education the most. The Star Core was something that he would only need much later on. Moreover, it was still very early now.

“Are there any entry requirements?” asked Garen. “I’m not young anymore and I don’t want to waste any more time.”

“There are no requirements. With your Appraisal, you will definitely become a candidate to be an Elder’s disciple immediately upon joining. However, you’ll need to think this through. Once you join this sect, this will be recorded in the Federation of Energy Machinists. You won’t be able to change sects anymore in the future,” the examiner mentioned kindly.

“It’s very normal to not be able to change sects,” nodded Garen. He was able to achieve Level Three by learning on his own and he believed that he would definitely be able to turn over a new leaf as long as he was given system training lessons!

“Could you take me there to have a look?”

“No, the sect’s encampment is extremely secretive. However, I can tell you that this is the only frost-type second rate sect that I can recommend to you. The rest are of different natures and will not suit you,” said the examiner frankly. “You need to consider this carefully. Perhaps it won’t be late to return next year again.”

“Next year?” Garen shook his head. “Alright, I’ll join the Scarlet Snow Sect.”

“Are you sure?”

“I’m sure!” answered Garen in a calm and concise manner.

The examiner sighed in relief. He had managed to finally get a third candidate for his old friend. He could report back on his task now.

The absence of Star Cores that were of good enough quality was equivalent to not being able to see hope of achieving Inherited Levels. Coupled with the fact that the Scarlet Snow Sect’s powers were declining day by day. Therefore, no one was willing to join this sect that was gradually waning. Faults had appeared within more than half of their Inherited books. There were also issues with the Star Core and Inherited Secret Tactics which were two of the sect’s most important things. Naturally, it was the

rationale that no one would be willing to join this sect. Moreover, the other sects had conditions that were much greater and better than those of Scarlet Snow Sect.

However, Garen was unconcerned because he merely needed training for his Energy Machinist systems. Since he was already able to achieve Level Three by studying on his own, there would be no problems throughout the road ahead as long as there was someone here to help him. As for the Star Core, it would be enough as long as it was there. He could not delay this for another year because he was already too old and his assessed value would decrease. More problems would arise as his age approached twenty-five years. He felt that it would be impossible for him to breakthrough to the Level Four Energy Machinist Level after a year. Perhaps his assessment value would be even lower than his current value when he reached twenty-two years of age. His range of selections would decrease greatly as well.

The most important part was that he was still worried about the unknown Forbidden Willpower inside his own body. The thing that Red Moon had planted inside his body was abnormally tight. It was uncertain when misfortune would befall him again. A Star Core with a slightly lower probability was better than none at all, right? This was what he thought.

Chapter 975: Scarlet Snow Sect 1

In the examiner's perspective, examiners like himself had outstanding strength within the second rate sects. Many of them were actually bearing the burden of being the third party that was invited here to observe the progress of the examination objectively to ensure that it was fair. He would receive some rewards from his old friend after completing this task, and reciprocation would be considered impressive.

When he saw that Garen had agreed, the examiner sighed in relief faintly and relaxed. This time, most of his quota had been fulfilled already. Moreover, he had something to give in exchange for his reward while preserving his old friend's reputation.

"Garen, you can come with me now. I'll inform someone from Scarlet Snow Sect to meet you soon. The distance between their encampment and this place are not that far actually. You will be able to arrive there on your own after being sent there a few times," he smiled while mentioning this.

"I don't have any problems with that," nodded Garen.

Once he had decided to follow the examiner, both of them turned and walked towards the other arenas.

As he observed each of the arenas, every time the examiner encountered the remaining contestants who were not chosen in the end, as long as they had pretty good fitness levels, he would go forward and attempt to attract these contestants by speaking to them. However, all of the contestants that he tried to attract could not be bothered with him. Meanwhile, those who stepped forward voluntarily to speak to him were merely Level One or Level Two Energy Machinists who were already more than twenty years old. Despite achieving high levels, their Appraisal was too low and they had already reached their personal peak levels. Therefore, they were useless individuals who were not impactful enough to reach Level Five or Inherited Levels.

Along the way, there was only one more individual that joined Garen's side. That person was also a young man like himself who dressed plainly and only possessed average Appraisal and Level Two Willpower. However, he was only nineteen years old.

After walking circles around all of the smaller arenas, the examiner was unable to enlist any more recruits. He could only take Garen and the other young man back resentfully.

"Next, we'll be going to the main arena. However, we're mainly going there so that both of you can expand your horizons and gain greater knowledge. It'll be impossible for me to recruit people there but both of you should take this opportunity to broaden your view of the world. It'll be good for you to see what the stronger prodigies are like," said the examiner while turning around to speak to Garen and the other young man.

Garen and the other person nodded faintly to indicate that they understood.

The trio left the smaller arena area and was enveloped by an Energy Field before rising into the sky. They soared upwards for more than a few hundred meters at once before flying directly towards the centermost area of the Star Core Plaza.

Below them, the entire Star Core Plaza was oval shaped. There were three white high platforms in the center that were the same exact size. The tops of these platforms were currently shrouded in a layer of light yellow energy membrane.

Through the membrane, they could see that a few people were engaging in close combat while others were prompting beasts to sprint forward and attack.

Garen lowered his head and looked over. He could feel that the three of them were flying directly towards the centermost arena.

A familiar silhouette was coincidentally driving someone off the platform in the arena.

“Red Skeleton, one hundred and twenty-three victories!” said a gentle female voice.

It was truly the girl in red who had compelled and seized Hummingbird previously. Tiny red skeletons with two wings each were currently flying around her. Almost six of them could be seen if you counted carefully.

“Tch Tch... Red Skeleton, this girl has managed to touch the edges of the Inherited Level despite only being eighteen years old... Once she has obtained the Star Core and continues to work hard for two more years, she’ll definitely reach the Inherited Level once she comes out,” praised the examiner while clicking his tongue. Behind him, Garen and the other man became jumpy with fear. Was she only eighteen years old?

“That’s impossible! Her current Forces are clearly almost Level Five so how could she only be eighteen years old?” The other young man found this somewhat hard to believe.

“It isn’t impossible. This little girl is probably the successor of her household. She had probably undergone special nurturing and training ever since she was young,” the examiner shook his head. “Moreover, it’s obvious that she possesses the best talents in her household. She would definitely possess Accelerated Talents. Therefore, it’s almost certain that she will enter a large sect.”

Many other Energy Machinists had stepped forward to observe the match, much like these three people. Most of them had lowered their altitudes gradually while suspending themselves in mid-air around the high platforms below. These people could rely on their Energy Fields to hang in the air. All of them were Inherited Level individuals who released Forces that were extremely powerful. They had also weaved a densely packed Willpower net high up in the sky.

A few people who had used aircraft to fly up did not have enough strength to support themselves. Within the blink of an eye, they were entangled by the numerous Willpower webs that forced them to drop downwards.

The examiner glanced at these people coldly.

“Only Inherited Level individuals have the right to suspend themselves here. Aircraft? They obviously don’t know their own strength.”

The trio descended gently on the edges of the high platform in the center. They paid close attention to the movements inside quietly just like everyone else.

“Examiner, what are Accelerated Talents?” Garen had noticed this term that he had never heard of before.

“Accelerated Talents refer to a higher level of talent Appraisal that is present within most talents,” the examiner turned back and glanced at Garen. “Since your Appraisal is Level Five, Level Five would be your maximum limitations in theory. Although there is a probability that you can rush to the Inherited Level, it’s extremely low. Elites would regard your Appraisal as being weak but you would be a prodigy in the eyes of the average person.”

Garen nodded to indicate that he understood.

“In other words, the thing that would be accelerated is my Appraisal?”

“Right, there’s still one level or division above your Appraisal that we call Resonance. This level corresponds with the Resonance of the Mech Pilot inside, or simply replaces them. This means that their combat powers can definitely achieve Resonance Levels. People like these would have computing powers that are slightly stronger than yours once they are upgraded. Any higher and they would be the supposed Accelerated Talents,” said the examiner while praising them slightly.

“How much stronger are the Accelerated Talents in comparison to us?” The one who asked this question was the young man who stood on the side and sounded somewhat unsatisfied. He was only nineteen

years old and after hearing that he was naturally unlike others, his train of thought had diverged somewhat.

“How much stronger?” the examiner shook his head. “Statistically, once they have upgraded them, the computing powers of Resonance Talents are forty to sixty percent stronger on average. They improve much faster than you and are able to develop themselves into stronger combat elites. They can also use stronger and more complicated Secret Tactics in actual combat.”

“Sixty percent!! Then... what about Accelerated Talents?” The young man was slightly subdued now.

“The increase of their computing powers are usually almost similar to those with Resonance Levels. However, the key aspect is that they have an ability called Acceleration which can upgrade their computing powers by twofold in a short span of time. When they release it after integrating it with their Secret Tactics, most obstacles or bottleneck situations that resemble natural moats to others are simply pieces of cake to them. Perhaps both of you will be able to rely on your determination to catch up to them in the beginning. However, as time passes later, the distance between you will become bigger. Both of you will be unable to surpass the obstacles while they will continuously force their way forwards without stopping for even one step.”

“Are there many Accelerated Talents?” asked Garen quietly.

“No, it would be impressive if there was even one of them within a thousand Energy Machinists. Of course, within a large population base like this, there would be more than a few who had reached the Accelerated class,” replied the examiner. “The Accelerated class is a standardized division for the most outstanding talents.”

All three of them stopped talking and merely looked downwards quietly at Red Skeleton’s fight.

The girl called Red Skeleton did not move. She was hugging her own chest with both of her arms while numerous red skeletons flew around her as quickly as lightning. They continuously flew towards her opponent quickly and attacked him from all sides.

Within such a short span of time, three people had already collapsed after stepping forward and were all disposed of quickly.

Among the people who had stepped forward was a person who was similar to Garen. This person possessed a rare radioactive glow as well and was able to use this radiation to affect their opponent while strengthening their own Energy Machinery. However, they did not have radiation achievements that were equivalent to Garen's own. The defense systems that this person had established seemed nominal as he was sent flying immediately after being defeated.

"Too weak! Are you sure that you're an Elite who's here to participate in the Star Cloud Arena and not a piece of trash that merely came here from the dump to try and make a fortune?" sneered Red Skeleton sharply in a loud voice.

There were some Energy Machinists below who had been attacked to the point where they were afraid. It looked like there were hundreds of them there who were now somewhat indignant after hearing the things that she had said.

A few middle-aged male and female examiners were sitting at the side of the arena with looks of admiration on their faces. They sat at the side of the arena and chatted while looking like they were enjoying the current situation very much.

Boom!!

Suddenly, a thunderous noise could be heard not far away. They could vaguely tell that it came from the high platform on the right side of the main arena.

"Red Skeleton! I heard long ago that your powers were astonishing, so what use is it for you to simply yell while standing inside your little circle over there? Everyone here possesses triple Acceleration, so why don't you fight me if you dare!!" A deep and resounding male voice echoed from another side. Although his voice was deep, a tinge of immaturity could still be heard in his tone.

"Do you think that I'll go over just because you're asking me to? Wouldn't I just lose my reputation that way?" sneered Red Skeleton sharply. Her voice traveled towards the protective membrane that was far away and pierced through it.

"If you're afraid then so be it. Why do you have to resort to hiding it?" said the voice disdainfully.

"I'm afraid?!" Red Skeleton's hair stood on end immediately like a hissing kitten as she was slightly threatened now. "You'd dare to come over here if you had the skills, right?!"

"What are you yelling about?! Just get over there if you want to fight, stop yelling here!" Another person in the main arena who did not want to seem weak began to make noise as well. The voice of the person sounded like a young boy who did not sound older than fifteen.

"Black Jade Dragon Beast?" A hint of dread appeared on Red Skeleton's delicate face. It was very rare for her to stop disagreeing or refuting.

The deep male voice on the other side did not turn silent.

"The Black Jade Dragon Vitality? That's one of the legendary peak Talent Vitalities. I, Mammoth, desire to experience if your powers are truly stronger than my fierce brute force!"

"You'll get a chance to see it," replied Black Jade Dragon coldly.

After that, all three of them stopped speaking. The three main arenas were extremely close to each other but the trio continued on with their selection procedures quietly. However, these procedures were merely formalities to them.

After taking Garen and the other person to observe Red Skeleton, he took them to see the other two remaining arenas.

The youth called Black Jade Dragon was a child of only fourteen years old. He was dressed like a girl and was covered from head to toe in gold. He operated a type of Energy Machinery that resembled a large golden peacock-like bird. It was obvious that this kid loved the color gold. He had an extremely fine appearance and was abnormally pretty while golden ornaments and jewelry dangled from his whole body.

Meanwhile, Mammoth who stood on the other side was quite the opposite because he had a rough and boorish style. The top half of his body was naked and his skin was dark. A picture of a white sun was tattooed on his body while numerous Unihorn White Wolves were creeping beside his body. Each of these White Wolves were the size of little calves and were at least Level Four Energy Machinery. He had

dominated the entire arena and would only charge forward and personally engage in close combat with peak Level Five Energy Machinists that the White Wolves could not handle. This person had managed to modify himself to reach peak Level Five degrees. His strength was astonishing and he was able to use a set of combined boxing techniques. There were only a few Energy Machinists who could withstand his set of boxing techniques.

The youth Black Jade Dragon, Red Skeleton, and young Mammoth were the three strongest and most eye-catching individuals within the three main arenas.

Garen and the two other people walked around the main arenas. Most of the people who were selected to join the contest were extremely confident in themselves. The ones with the weakest Talents were of similar levels to Garen and the other youth. Therefore, both of them clicked their tongues in admiration secretly.

Chapter 976: Scarlet Snow Sect 2

The battles of each of the three main prodigies ended quickly. The examiner then took Garen and the other young man and flew towards the outside of the main arena.

“Guru, you only managed to bring two people today, huh?” A bald man with a white beard who was fully dressed in white flew over from the faraway sky. Three youths followed behind him. There were two girls and a boy.

“I could say the same about you. Your gains weren’t much bigger,” said the examiner helplessly while shaking his head.

“We only get our turn after the main sects are done with their selections. This is something we can’t help,” nodded the bald old man while stroking the bushy white beard that covered his entire face. “Alright, I’ll send these people off first. Let’s go drinking at the same old place later.”

“Mmhhh, okay,” the examiner agreed. He took Garen and the other young man away before walking past the bald old man.

Garen flew off with him while being wrapped in the Energy Field. He gazed downwards while they traveled past Star Core Plaza below them quickly. Stretches of areas filled with light yellow buildings were left behind instantly.

He passed by the inn that he was staying at yesterday quickly as well as the monumental forest of famous people.

Whoosh!

A light green aircraft shuttled past the three people. It created strong winds that caused ripples to surge through the examiner's invisible Energy Field.

The examiner was unbothered and continued flying forward. High-speed aircraft would occasionally fly past him quickly.

Soon, the long stretches of houses and buildings below them became more spaced out and dilapidated. The aircraft that were flying past them at low altitudes decreased significantly as well.

A soft crashing noise that sounded like a moving water source echoed from below.

Garen looked downwards. They had currently arrived at the top of a continuous stretch of yellow rolling mountains. Down below, a gigantic white waterfall was slowly flowing behind it.

"This is the Guana Great Falls which is one of the most famous scenic spots in Planet Naga. There are many types of creatures living inside these waters. Energy Machinists from different places who want to research natural genetic banks come here to retrieve samples. Both of you can come here next time too," explained the examiner softly.

He pointed at the edges of the waterfall. Many tourists were currently taking pictures there. There were even a few suspended aircraft that were hanging in mid-air above the waters of the waterfall. They were trying to salvage something unknown from the there.

After passing by the waterfall, the trio entered a gigantic yellowish brown ring. It was actually a ring-shaped building that was made up of layers of circles that were stacked on top of each other. When looking down at it from above, it resembled a pile of rings of various sizes that were placed together.

A white beam of light was shooting out of the center of the ring in an eye-catching manner. It was abnormally thick and faint buzzing vibrating noises were faintly echoing from it.

“We’re here,” the examiner flew downwards and rushed into the gigantic light beam in the middle. His speed continuously increased as he kept going.

“Pay attention to your balance! This is a public teleportation light beam. Accelerate and go towards the transfer zone on your own!” He threw out the last sentence quickly as his current speed had reached an extremely fast degree.

Garen could only feel that light beam approaching him at full speed. It was getting bigger and thicker before his entire field of vision was filled with white light instantly.

Hum!!

That buzzing noise flooded his ears and made it completely impossible for him to hear any other noises. There were no sensations throughout his body either, as if he had immediately fallen into a world that had nothing but white light.

About a few seconds later, his vision brightened suddenly before a vast wild forest that was filled with vibrant and dark green shades appeared.

The earth was slightly black while the surrounding plants were lush and green. The herds of deer below them scattered and ran off in all directions because they were frightened.

In the faraway sky, a thick clump of purely white clouds were shaped like a funnel. The lowest point of the funnel that was also the sharp end at the bottom happened to be connected to the top of a white tower in the forest below.

The tower was slender and serene like a thin inclined pyramid. Black aircraft that were the size of flies revolved around it. From afar, these aircraft that were moving extremely slowly emphasized the hugeness and magnificence of the tower.

“This is the Fermium Cloud Tower. It was Scarlet Snow Sect’s most dazzling and illustrious symbol previously. However, once the sect dwindled, it lost its Cloud Circulatory System. Hence, fewer people were willing to come to come here after that,” the examiner Guru sighed.

“It’s truly magnificent...” the other young man praised sincerely.

Garen praised it as well and nodded. Although he did not know the function of the Cloud Circulatory System, it was obvious that it was an extremely important installation.

“Is the Scarlet Snow Sect inside this place?”

The examiner glanced at him and nodded impatiently.

“Just wait a little longer, we’re almost there.”

The trio floated mid-air silently. The white light beam that teleported them here was only capable of performing one-way teleportation. Hence, there were no traces of the white light beam on the place where the trip had appeared. It was clear that they would need to use other means to go back from here.

Within less than five minutes, a white streamlined Flying Ship approached them from afar. It shot out towards the front of the trio before halting quickly.

“Alright, this is the designated public transport Flying Ship. You can get on now,” said the examiner while patting Garen’s shoulder.

A little square shaped door was opened on the Flying Ship now. A White youth with a delicate and pretty face was standing in the doorway.

“Master Guru, I apologize for the troubles you had to undergo throughout your journey while escorting these new members here.”

“It wasn’t a big deal. I made a promise to all of you and I would certainly deliver. These two are little prodigies from the Central Metropolis who can also be considered as Elites. Including the three previous ones, I have fulfilled my promise to the Elders,” nodded Guru. Unlike the incident in Nagadako, he sounded slightly more dignified and proud this time. There were also subtle changes in his manner.

“Many thanks, Master Guru,” the youth bent his waist and bowed respectfully. He wore a little pauldron on his shoulder. This piece of armor was entirely white and had sharp edges. A little red heart was painted on it as well.

Guru turned his head and nodded at Garen with a kind expression on his face.

“Alright, you can go now. He was sent by Scarlet Snow to meet you. The Core Disciples with white armor and red heart statuses are specially sent to take you to the sect’s headquarters,” his attitude was completely different while speaking to people like Garen who were prodigies that had a chance of entering the Inherited Level.

Garen nodded while a hint of shyness on his face.

“Thank you very much for your care throughout our journey, Master Guru. Would it be possible for you to leave a method of contact so that you could teach me again in the future?”

“Of course I could,” Guru smiled. He used one of his hands to pat Garen’s shoulder again before a hologram of a key appeared in his hand suddenly. He burrowed it in Garen’s chest before it disappeared without a trace. “Okay, I’ve given you a method to contact me. Work hard and keep advancing. I have very good prospects for you!”

“Yes,” responded Garen certainly and respectfully. Despite being an Inherited Level powerhouse, the other party treated him kindly. This treatment was also given to him to see his future potential. Therefore, he needed to work hard and give him a good impression on the surface at least.

While watching Guru fly away with the other young man swiftly, Garen turned around and embarked the Flying Ship while smiling at the other youth who had a delicate face.

“Hello, I’m Garen. This is my first time coming to the Scarlet Snow Sect. Senior brother, could you introduce the circumstances of the sect to me please?”

“My name is Bainster but I’m unworthy to be your senior brother,” said the youth while smiling and waving his hand. “Of course I can explain everything to you because that’s my job. You came from the Central Metropolis and were able to become Two Hearted Disciples directly. In comparison to prodigies who can compete with each other for the Star Core, One Hearted Disciples like myself are nothing, but come with me first, it’s not convenient to talk here.”

“Okay, yes.”

Both of them walked along the path inside. There were only a few people who were sitting in the seats and most of them were closing their eyes and resting in a sleepy manner. A few others who were slightly more awake evaded the gaze of the delicate looking youth slightly. They lowered their heads and did not look at him. Some of them looked at Garen instead with hints of admiration in their gazes.

Both of them walked into the front section of the Flying Ship. They entered a luxurious VIP cabin and sat down in their own seats.

Both of them were the only two people inside the entire white cabin that was the size of a hall.

The youth took out two bottles of beverages that resembled fruit juice from a machine beside him and passed one bottle to Garen.

“Although our Scarlet Snow Sect isn’t impressive in the Central Metropolis, we are still a pretty good mid-range force within the White Cloud Continent. We also have more than ten Three Hearted Disciples with the highest Cores. Oh, that’s right, the Three Hearted Disciples in our sect are all powerhouses that have entered the Resonance Levels.”

“They only become Three Hearted after they’ve achieved the Resonance Levels?” asked Garen in a slightly surprised manner.

“Yes,” nodded Bainster while smiling. He was already extremely glad to be able to get this job because this was a good chance for him to form a good relationship with the new Two Hearted Disciple prodigies in the first instance. He had paid a heavy price in exchange for this job.

“Our Scarlet Snow Sect currently has three Elders that whose rankings have never deteriorated. The strongest one is the guardian beast, Lord Labourcast. We don’t even know the grade of this old man’s true strength but we do know his level has never worsened. He’s the strongest support pillar within our sect. He’s also one of the five Inherited Level supervisors. After that, there are more than ten Three Hearted Disciples who have achieved the Resonance stage. Following them are the Two Hearted Disciples including yourself, senior brother. There are probably a few hundred of you. Next up are the One Hearted Disciples like myself of which I’m afraid there are more than a thousand. At the bottom of the pyramid are the odd-job workers, servants, and maids. There’s also a trade center for radioactive people slaves. Energy Machinists like ourselves no longer need to fear the radiation disease after achieving Level Three. Therefore, the radioactive people slave Center exists for us to select goods at valuable prices. Senior brother, you can go there and take a look later.”

“Radioactive slaves? Where do these slaves come from?” Garen’s mind trembled slightly.

“It’s rumored that there were captured from the radiation belts on other planets,” Bainster moved closer to him and lowered his voice. “I’ve heard that the larger sects have their own slave planets that are specially used to breed radioactive people.”

“Slave planets...” A thought stirred in Garen’s mind. Slave planet?! They were using the populations of entire planets to breed slaves?

Massive plans, policies, and forces like these... were simply shocking!

He had never imagined that ancient and savage practices like slavery would actually exist on such a technologically advanced planet in this era.

“There are probably more than ten thousand odd-job workers, maids, and radioactive people in total. Therefore, our Scarlet Snow Sect’s headquarters have fully occupied an entire mountain. One of these mountains has been separated into five bases. Three of the main Elders occupy one of the bases respectively while Lord Labourcast occupies one of them. The remaining base is used as the dwelling area for most of the disciples, odd-job workers, and slaves.

“Then who provides for the daily needs of the sect?” asked Garen quietly while suppressing his shock at the slave planet.

“The daily needs of the sect are sent to the hill of the mountain every day by specialized people. They will then be transported up the mountain. The food and drink will go through various safety measures. Moreover, our sect has its own group of corporations,” said Bainster softly. “Do you know the Planet Naga Space Transportation Corporation? Our sect has shares in that as well.”

The blank look on Garen’s face indicated that he was slightly disappointed. However, he fixed it quickly.

“You will discover more things when the time comes.”

The Flying Ship turned quickly. It traveled for ten minutes above the forest before quickly descending near the bottom of a large mountain on the left side of Fermium Cloud Tower.

There was a popping noise before the door of the Flying Ship was opened. After that, both Garen and Bainster walked out.

There were already people who were waiting for them at the foot of the mountain outside the forest. There were all dressed in similar white clothes with the symbol of the One Hearted Disciples on their shoulders. There was a middle-aged man at the front who had a Paul from that was silver and different from the others. He was currently smiling while looking in the direction of Garen and the other youth who were walking out of the Flying Ship’s door.

Chapter 977: Strict Training 1

“Welcome to the Scarlet Snow Sect,” said the middle-aged man in a clear and loud voice while stretching both of his hands once Garen and the other young man approached him. This man had long thick golden curls that resembled a large hairy towel that was draped over his head. It looked somewhat strange.

Simultaneously, the remaining One Hearted Disciples opened their mouths and spoke in a synchronized manner.

“Welcome to Scarlet Snow!”

“My name is Garen and I’ve come here to gain knowledge. Please guide me,” Garen bent his body slightly and bowed respectfully.

“You’re the Elite who rushed over from the Central Metropolis. By choosing our sect, you displayed your faith in us. Please put this on,” the middle-aged man smiled while taking out a tiny black jewelry box. The cover automatically snapped itself open quickly and exposed an exquisite crystal carving inside.

People would find it surprising when they noticed that the crystal carving was actually floating in mid-air slowly and was not merely laying inside the box quietly.

Rays of nearly scorching sunlight were shining on the surface of the crystal, causing a faint silver glow to reflect off it.

“This is...?” asked Garen because he was somewhat unable to comprehend it.

The middle-aged supervisor smiled faintly. “This is the symbol of entering our sect, the Communication Crystal. It will disintegrate into a tiny structure on its own to enter the human body. It also possesses special abilities that allow it to modify Willpower gradually.”

Garen understood now. Although he knew that this item was definitely not as simple as the man had described, he was aware that this represented a necessary procedure for entering the sect that was similar to an identity verification. This crystal would definitely possess measures to restrain the disciples as well. However, he was sure that they were necessary. Cruel sects would not be easily passed off as others as there were also sects that did not interfere with their member’s freedom.

A thought stirred in his mind. Garen reached his hand out and used his fingers to pinch the crystal gently. Suddenly, he felt a slight chill flash past the moment his fingertips came into contact with the

surface of the crystal. He then realized immediately that the crystal had quickly disappeared despite being right in front of his fingers.

“It has disintegrated already,” said the supervisor, smiling. “Alright, your room has been arranged. You’ll need to rest in the public base for some time, probably a month or so. Next, there will be internal competitions within the sect. Highly ranked competitors can choose to listen to the teachings of various Elders on their own at different bases. If you’re able to breakthrough to Level Four, you can request for the Elder examination. Once you’ve passed that, you can become an official disciple of one of the three main Elders.

“Understood,” Garen nodded.

“Then follow me,” the supervisor brought a group of One Hearted Disciples and turned around before clustering around Garen and walking towards the forest.

A strange phenomenon appeared. When the crowd approached the lush green forest, the greenery disappeared at once and was replaced by a white fish shaped Flying Ship that was parked on the grassy lawn.

Along the way, the supervisor explained the Scarlet Snow Sect’s situation. It was mostly similar to what Bainster had said except that it was less detailed.

Garen nodded while sizing up the One Hearted Disciples beside the supervisor.

There were both male and female disciples. Some of them had solemn expressions on their faces while others were gazing at him respectfully. The Forces surrounding their bodies were mostly only Level One or Level Two.

After speaking for some time, the supervisor finally became silent. Next, he went into another room inside the Flying Ship and answered a phone call.

His actions seemed intentional as Garen and these One Hearted Disciples now had space and time to interact. As expected, the group of disciples rushed over automatically right after the supervisor left.

One of Garen's junior sisters who was slim and beautiful was the first to speak.

"Senior brother, welcome to Scarlet Snow. I was certain right away that you weren't an ordinary person when I saw you walking out of the Flying Ship dashing! This is a little gift from me. I hope that you remember my name in your Trusted Slip..."

She smiled like a beautiful flower and quietly passed a tiny blood colored ball into Garen's hand. It was shaped like a peach but its surface was filled with fine and closely woven lines that looked like they were tinged with blood.

"This is... Beast Root!" Garen recognized this material. He could use it on his experimental platform when he was leveling up. It was used to increase the success rate of creating experimental Energy Machinery by about ten percent and was worth a hundred crystals.

"Dear senior brother, this is a little gift from your junior brother. I hope that you will be able to remember my name in your Trusted Slip..." Another person gave him a present with a respectful look on his face.

Next, while Garen was scratching his head and trying to figure out something to do, most of the disciples in the group gave him presents.

Bainster then explained everything to him softly.

"Every Two Hearted Disciple has the right to be placed in an optimized radiation villa as their own dwelling. These villas can release radiation that will optimize and accelerate their computing powers while improving their vitality. It provides many benefits towards our bodies. Clusters of houses have been placed around the area as well. These houses are provided for the followers and servants of Two Hearted Disciples. As these clusters of houses are too close to the main villa, the benefits of the optimized radiation will affect them too. Therefore, the houses that were meant for the servants were rented out to the One Hearted Disciples by the Two Hearted Disciples instead. Unfortunately, there weren't enough houses to satisfy the demand."

"In other words, they're coming over for the sake of those clusters of houses? So the Trusted Slip that they were talking about was merely a sort of permission slip?" responded Garen immediately.

“You could say that,” Bainster nodded. Next, he whispered beside Garen’s ear and said, “Of course, there could be a possibility that they weren’t eyeing the clusters but the main villa instead,” he smiled perversely.

Garen understood suddenly and glanced at a fiery golden-haired young lady who was batting her eyelashes at him not far away.

Incidents like these were very common everywhere.

After the disciples had given him their presents, the supervisor returned and acted as if he had an abundance of free time. He chatted with Garen leisurely and allowed him to walk around on his own and take in the Scarlet Snow Sect’s scenery.

Through the Flying Ship’s side window, stretches of green forests and mountains passed them continuously. The whooshing sound of wind could be heard occasionally as well.

Whoosh!

A white Flying Ship flew past the outside of the window suddenly from the opposite side. A bald youth was sitting with his legs crossed on top of the Flying Ship. Both of his eyes were tightly shut and his arms were intertwined in front of his chest in a twisted pose that resembled a snake. He gave off a strange feeling, especially the fact that there was a faint red scar in the middle of his forehead that looked like an unopened third eye.

Garen’s gaze fell on the youth for a moment before he felt a faint but stabbing-like pain in both of his eyes. In an instant, the other person’s Willpower Energy Field had attacked him. It passed through his Energy Field and hurt his eyes which caused him to fall into a state of shock!

“This power... Even the previous Nine-Headed Dragon Queen Nadia was not this strong!”

Garen secretly compared these two individuals in his mind. He noticed that Nadia’s power was truly unlike the power of the man from earlier. Although he had only caught a glimpse of that man’s power but he could already detect the grade of his Willpower. He could also feel the spatial distortions that

were produced from a natural flesh body that was too strong. He had seen power like this in Nadia previously but had never experienced it so intensely.

“That’s the Third Elder of the Scarlet Snow Sect, Lord Copper Sera,” Bainster explained softly.

The moment that person flew past, everyone inside the Flying Ship lowered their voices unconsciously.

“Lord Copper Sera?” murmured Garen softly.

The Flying Ship flew above a lush green forest and passed it quickly.

They could occasionally see Energy Machinists who were engaging in combat on the flat platform in the forest below. The white circular platforms were abnormally eye-catching in the middle of the forest. Some of them were empty while others were filled with numerous people that were sparring. They fought extremely intensely while people stood on the side and cheered loudly.

Some disciples who were escorting the slaves of losing groups walked on the path below where the Flying Ship was traveling. They raised their heads and looked at the Flying Ship where Garen was located and gazed at him in admiration.

On top of Scarlet Snow mountain on a lonely silver circular platform stood numerous people in white who were already waiting there.

Their leader was a quivering old woman who was fully dressed in white. She raised her head and looked at the Flying Ship that was flying over from afar. A cute and charming young girl in a red skirt stood beside her. Her little mouth was fully pouted as if she was in a bad mood. Her long black hair cascaded down her vest in braids and reached her bright red miniskirt that was tight around the waist, emphasizing her girlish charm.

“Another Two Hearted is here. Why do I have to meet him this time? I’m not happy with this. I’m not happy at all!” the girl muttered to herself quietly.

“Both of the two other senior brothers have had their turn while you’re the only one who has yet to do it, senior sister. It’s very likely that the Two Hearted Disciple that has arrived this time is going to be one of us. As long as he passes the identity origin examination and does not have any temperament issues to be found, this is something that has already been set in stone. Teacher told you to come for a similar reason, so that you would leave a good impression on the new person,” explained the old woman quietly.

“Good impression?” the little girl continued to pout. “Are you sure that’s not just lip service? It’s a good thing that I’m naturally pretty and possess an abundance of beauty. Would I still be here to meet people if I was as ugly as an old man?”

The old woman merely smiled bitterly and nodded without refuting her.

A few disciples behind her had impatient looks on their faces as well. The young mistress’s bad temper was infamous throughout this branch. She had a good face but every time she opened her mouth to speak, two out of her three sentences would be self-praise. Moreover, she would only compliment herself by putting others down. She was also the most famous person within the entire sect.

“Senior sister, please don’t speak for a while. Let me handle everything,” said the old woman helplessly.

“I know, I know. So annoying!” the young girl nodded impatiently.

The Flying Ship floated above them slowly and stopped there before making humming noises and descending slowly.

The ship door was opened with a ‘puff’ before the One Hearted Disciples walked out from the inside. When they saw the crowd that was waiting for them, they lowered their heads and bowed respectfully before separating themselves on both sides and spreading out. Bainster was one of them.

Next, the supervisor and Garen walked out.

“Two Hearted Disciple Garen has arrived. Your subordinate requests to withdraw,” said the supervisor softly while bowing to the old woman.

“Yes, you may leave,” the old woman nodded. She looked at Garen who was walking towards her as her gaze considered him for awhile.

Garen’s entire body had been cleaned up inside the Flying Ship, making him extremely clean and neat. His disposition was steady and strong while his body was muscular but balanced. Both of his eyes particularly made people feel as if they were staring into a deep abyss. His shoulder-length black hair was arranged behind him neatly without a strand that was out of place.

“Disciple Garen, I’m here to learn!”

He walked forward and lowered his head slightly while illuminating his Energy Machinist key. They could clearly see that he was a Level Three Energy Machinist from there.

“I’m your senior sister, Rainy and my rank is number five. She’s also your senior sister, Eva Regar and her rank is number three. You may just call us fifth senior sister and third senior sister,” said the old woman quietly. Her voice was throaty and weak as if she could start panting at any moment.

“Yes,” Garen nodded.

“This special treatment is only given to new people like you who choose to join our division. Take it,” the old woman moved her hand and threw a little black ring towards Garen.

When he picked up the ring, trembles ran through Garen’s mind slightly. This ring apparently possessed faint traces of spatial distortions.

“Space Equipment?!”

“Not bad. Take a look at it yourself and check it. Everything should be there already. Within a month, you can visit the speaker’s halls and the first floor of the library to read anything and listen to the talks. The other places within your field of vision that are displayed as red zones cannot be entered. You will be punished if you trespass into these places, so remember that. You may freely enter the places that are displayed as green areas,” the old woman explained quickly.

“Understood,” Garen checked the ring for awhile. This was his first time using Space Equipment. Apparently, it was the size of a little bedroom. So many large materials were placed inside it and most of them were used to create Biochemical Pools and experimental platforms.

“You should create your Biochemical Pool and experimental platform as soon as possible. However, our sect’s main principle is that self-modification is the best path to power. Don’t invert it,” reminded the old woman.

The greeting from the supervisor and the guidance and explanation of the Three Hearted Disciples showed that they had already treated Garen extremely well. Garen was also able to experience the high positions of the Scarlet Snow Sect for himself on the inside. It looked like the people who were only trying to make a fortune from the one-time selections at the Central Metropolis had a different experience. They had missed this accidental opportunity by being blinded by the prospect of the bigger sects. After receiving praises from the Inherited Level Masters, it now seemed as if this sect had been painted with a bright layer of attractive gold paint. Moreover, he had also received such exceptional treatment upon stepping into this place.

“The Scarlet Snow Sect is the ultimate ruler within a range of ten thousand kilometers from here. Alarms will be released around you automatically when you encounter dangers so don’t panic when that happens. The nearest powerhouses will come and assist you then. Of course, if there are disciples who are facing similar risks nearby, follow the rules of the sect and help them to the best of your ability. Everyone here has a responsibility to help others when needed.”

Garen listened to the old woman as she explained the house rules while following the line of people down the side of the high platform before walking down the little mountain path.

Chapter 978: Strict Training 2

The white buildings in the middle of the hilly forest rose and fell like faintly discernible waves. Most of them were surrounded by big tall trees while others were simply built on top of these trees. Meanwhile, Two Hearted Disciples like himself seemed to be treated very well. They were people in front who were specially assigned to the task of opening a path while the old woman and the beautiful senior sister led the way behind them and introduced everything.

The most beautiful part of the Scarlet Snow Sect's public base was its gigantic triangular library that was embedded in a precipice halfway up the hill. This library used the most primitive method to record their books. The largest books were as tall as a person and as wide as two people, while the smallest books were the size of a palm.

All of these books were made of metal. They were unusually solid and could not be removed from here.

When the line of people walked past the library on the precipice and looked afar, they could see clusters of One Hearted Disciples who were stepping on suspended flying platforms, carefully reading the contents of the books as they faced the forceful strong winds.

"Alright, we can take a better look another day when we have more time." The old woman led Garen through a sparse forest of peach trees. Suddenly, the area in front of them turned bright as neat rows of white villas and buildings came into view. A pair of these buildings were grouped as a unit. Meanwhile, their surroundings were covered by a thin protective membrane layer.

The two other people allowed Garen to pick a little three-story villa on his own. These villas were located in an area that was slightly lower than where the library was built. The administrative areas and the library were located on higher ground while the dwellings of One Hearted Disciples were located at the lower areas, making everything very convenient.

Once they had helped Garen settle in properly, the old woman and the beautiful Third Senior Sister told him the ways to contact them before leaving on their own.

"Senior Brother, I'll return first for now. You can message me anytime if you require any assistance," said Bainster to Garen, respectfully.

After nodding, Garen exchanged contacts with him as well before standing at the front of the villa, watching him leave quickly.

The entire villa was snowy-white and filled with faint chills that were of low temperatures. The surrounding areas were also desolate as he could only see a few people passing by in the distance. They left right after stepping on a flying platform the moment they exited the door and did not seem to remain at all.

Suddenly, Garen's eyes shifted to the right. He saw that the grey curtains behind one of the windows on the second floor of a nearby villa on the right had been opened. Inside, a silver eye was staring at him right now. He could instantly feel icy chills crawling up his spine.

"What is that?!" He was certain that it was not human. When he noticed that the eye was shifting away before it finally disappeared behind the curtains, he looked away as well.

"Looks like the neighbor isn't very friendly..." Garen furrowed his eyebrows slightly while his mind stirred as the main door of the villa closed on its own instantly.

He turned around and returned to the main hall on the first floor. After that, he took out the Space Ring as a thought flashed through his mind.

Boom!

There was a dull thud before various items flew over and suddenly shot out of the floor of the main hall. Some of the things were presents from the One Hearted Disciples, whereas most of them were provided by the sect.

Most of these large piles were made up of various materials and metal pieces.

Two blueprints were laid aside as well.

Garen picked the blueprints up and glanced at them. The instructions for building Biochemical Pools and experimental platforms were written there. The part of the villa that was allocated to them was written there as well.

'Two Hearted Villas have specialized Biochemical and experimental laboratories that can house Biochemical Pools and experimental platforms respectively. There are people who will be specially in charge of delivering your food and drink. Besides that, you will need to wear the sect's uniform and adornments at all times when going out. Please note, when the assembly bell rings, please be sure to abandon all tasks and rush to the transmitting beam at the doorway to be sent to the center of the main plaza to gather there. — May the honored Two Hearted Disciples receive a promotion as soon as possible (from Scarlet Snow's logistics supervisor: Donlai Olsen).'

Garen put the blueprint down and walked around in a circle, inside the villa for a few times. The layout of this villa was very simple. He had seen this too many times in the other world and was too lazy to look at everything properly. He merely checked whether any surveillance equipment was present here. At the same time, he went to check the locations of the other important rooms like the bedroom, toilet, and kitchen.

Both the Biochemical and experimental lab were nearby each other on the right side of the first floor. All of the rooms had automatic lights. Therefore, the lights would turn on by themselves once he approached the room. The important part was that the main door was controlled by his mind, making it extremely advanced.

The materials for the Biochemical Pool, experimental platform, and Nutritional Liquid were fully prepared. The other blueprint explained the fixed proportions that were allocated for each period of time. However, he would need to pay a price in exchange for enjoying these privileges. He would need to complete a task for the sect every five years that was corresponding to his current level. Fortunately, he could go to the task center and select it on his own.

Beep beep...

Suddenly, a faint trembling noise echoed from Garen's key again. A voice that sounded slightly familiar drifted into his ears.

'Garen, I've entered successfully! The Star Cloud Sect!'

It was Accord. Proudful and happy tones could be heard clearly in his voice. However, he also sounded exhausted.

'Where did you go? Why couldn't I find you?'

'Congratulations, I've entered a little group far away called the Scarlet Snow Sect,' Garen smiled. Although Accord was someone who he had just met on the road, both of them had gained a close relationship with each other during their journey.

‘Why did you join a small sect?’ echoed a voice that was indicated that the other party could not comprehend the current situation. ‘Someone with Appraisal like yours would not need to enter a small sect, right?’

‘We don’t have to talk about me first. How’s Liz now?’ Garen changed the subject.

‘She went to the Dragon Light Sect and entered it smoothly without any obstacles. Unlike you,’ Accord sounded troubled. ‘Didn’t I recommend some mid-range and large-scale sects to you that were pretty good? Why did you join a small sect?’

‘Don’t worry, I’m very certain about my choice,’ Garen smiled in response. He could sense that Accord did not have much experience with the negative feelings of others. His nature was still pure and he did not plan to abandon their friendship despite the difference between their positions.

‘I can only wish you good luck then,’ said Accord helplessly. ‘Alright, I have some things to take care of here. I’ll contact you again when I’m free.’

‘Mmhmm, okay.’

Both of them disconnected the call.

Garen stood at the hall on the first floor and muttered to himself for awhile. He used the key to send a message to Celine again but he did not receive a reply. Perhaps the distance between them was too far and the key’s message transmissions could not pass through planets. He did not know whether she had received it or not.

Since he was currently in the Scarlet Snow Sect, he would only need to wait to get past the Judge at the time when he would grant the sect’s important Inherited Secret Tactics. Only then would he become one of Scarlet Snow’s true disciples. However, he did not think that this would take a long time as this meeting was more important than the usual. Despite being individuals who had always preferred jobs that allowed them to research things on their own, these Energy Machinists had managed to dispatch so many groups to meet, explain things, and even arrange everything for him. One could well imagine that he was an outsider who had only entered this place after being introduced by someone else.

After walking out of the villa, he could faintly see a few silvery-white Flying Ships that were continuously shuttling back and forth in circles from afar. They formed a white river that was dense and unusually magnificent.

‘If you want to enter my Scarlet Snow Sect, you’ll need to pass through four rudimentary checkpoints and undergo strength and physique examinations, as well as a computing test. Those who are eighteen-years-old and above may not enter. Those who cheat will be killed!’ echoed a low voice from the faraway sky.

Next, music could be heard faintly. Occasionally, it sounded like a lively child was yelling as well.

Although he could not see the scene below the Flying Ships because he was too far away, Garen guessed that this was probably from the selection and recruitment ceremony.

“Scarlet Snow has been dismissed by the main central city but it’s obvious in this area that they’re a powerful force. So these are the regional limits...” He sighed and recalled Blackboard Region where he had stayed in previously. Was that place not similar as well?

“Rise well...” Everything was prepared and in order. He only needed to wait until the examination was over before he could immerse himself in training fully. Garen’s mind began to calm down.

With the protection of the sect, he would use his spare time to dash determinedly towards higher Energy Machinist levels. The Seventh Divine Wind General was waiting for him in Blackboard Region!

He turned around and walked into the main door slowly before the heavy white large doors sealed themselves automatically.

Without any obstacles, Garen passed the examination successfully half a month later. Although his true identity had been discovered, as long as it did not harm the interests of the sect or threaten it, it was not a problem at all.

As a Two Hearted Disciple, he had successfully obtained the Scarlet Snow Sect's most precious Core Inherited information, a training secret method that was used to counter one's own radiation — Scarlet Snow.

Scarlet Snow was similar to the previous Black Wind except that it was more complicated and it was of a higher level. He could see that the Black Wind had modeled itself after Scarlet Snow's rank faintly.

From this Training Method, Eighteen Grade Cold Scarlet Snow, Garen could vaguely detect something that was unusually familiar. This training technique resembled Secret Techniques and felt like advanced and top Secret Techniques.

Eighteen Grade Cold Scarlet Snow was an extremely terrifying Secret Method that was slightly similar to Living Secret Techniques. As long as he practiced this and upgraded it by one level, it would spur on all aspects of his Willpower, Vitality, Secret Method powers, and computing power. In other words, it would improve all four factors simultaneously. It would purely separate out the physical tactics and secret tactics as both of these skills would need to achieve higher levels before they could be elevated at the same time.

These peak eighteen grades referred to the peak environments that the sect leader had achieved previously. Level Nine Energy Machinists were close to the level of the Perpetual Motioners, while the current Elders were around Level Fourteen. Most of them would stay at Level Seven because those with prodigious Vitalities could not depend on their talents to break through the limits either. In the future, they would need to rely on other things to continue advancing because the uses of their talents would disappear completely.

Their levels would not drop once they had reached Level Fourteen of this Secret Tactic Training Method. This was extremely similar to the Living Secret Technique in which Garen was currently practicing. From this Secret Method that he had obtained, he could vaguely see a reflection of his Secret Techniques... He had his suspicions that it was very likely that Secret Technique Users had come to this place previously.

However, he could not be bothered to overthink it now. Instead, he would rather concentrate on practicing the strict training of the Scarlet Snow Sect.

Garen discarded the thoughts of his Living Secret Technique and Mech Pilot Willpower so that he could focus wholeheartedly on improving his Energy Machinist skills.

He focused all of his attention on practicing the Cold Scarlet Snow Secret Method. Due to the influence of his Level Three Willpower, as a Level Three Energy Machinist, he was able to reach Level Three of this Secret Method after practicing it. However, following that, his progress slowed down instantly.

Those with average Appraisals would need at least seven to eight hours of accumulated computing from Level Three to Level Four. Garen did not even leave the area and merely spent all his time computing determinedly inside the sect. Other than contacting Accord and Liz occasionally, he would only send messages to Celine.

He had found a way to contact Celine as there were long distance message transmission services within the sect. However, he would need to bear the expenses of sending these messages on his own.

Only then did Garen discover that the Planet Naga and Mother Planet were in different dimensions. This was a dwelling planet that the almighty Energy Machinists had pioneered in an antimatter universe.

Everything was well on Celine's end. She had sent people to look after Nono's parents, especially to keep them safe and secure. The only ones who were still lost were Baylon and the others. Clint, Baylon, and Red Moon had disappeared without any news for a long time.

By training his computing power strictly while using the resources of the sect, he was able to build a good foundation for his Energy Machinist Willpower. As expected, Garen's computing powers began to increase gradually and steadily.

Chapter 979

Five years later...

By the edge of the Scarlet Snow Mountains, at the peak of an abnormal rugged mountain.

The snow was piling up and the cold wind was brewing strongly. On top of a small snowy mountain, Garen sat by the edge of the cliff with his legs crossed and both eyes closed. Behind him, not far away, was a snow-white miniature Flying Ship with the number 15 clearly printed on the outside.

Whiz!

A ray of red light shone suddenly. Garen opened his mouth and a red glow shot out to encircle his body once before darting completely into his nostrils.

“Begin!”

He commanded in a low tone. A translucent pyramid, the height of a human then appeared before his eyes. On top of it was a dense flow of statistics and formulas.

The strange pyramid floated slowly before Garen; the statistics on it moving non-stop while beads of sweat were forming on Garen’s forehead.

Rushing for Level Four from Level Three Energy Machinist turned out to be an entirely different thing compared to a Pilot — it was so much harder.

Yet this sort of increase in his computing power was enough to keep Garen satisfied, just a mere four years to double his original strength. However, using the last one year to rush through it was not enough of a success, which made him slightly worn out. Within this one year, he had lost count of the number of times he had rushed for Level Four.

Back when he was a Pilot, rising up was an easy task. Though now as an Energy Machinist, he did not expect the chances to be this hard. All because of this, he stayed in the sect for a short period of time before he realized that he was not the only one. Advancing to Level Four from Level Three was indeed a difficult task and there was a lot of Energy Machinists out there who were not able to pass this test. This meant that the second Energy Machine Imprint was not that simple. It was a sort of qualitative change to increase the position of the Energy Machine Imprint, and it might even be harder than securing the third imprint.

It is because this was the stage where the Energy Machinist’s gift in computing power is put to test.

Garen finally understood how mediocre his computing skill was. Even though he could slightly increase his computing speed, reflex speed, and computing comprehensiveness through his potential points, he was still unable to change the kind of creative thinking and critical thinking skills that only mathematics prodigies portrayed.

This was not something one could improve just by intelligence, but more on imagination, creativity, and even a positive mindset that would relate to the world.

So now, he was not just trying to overcome this Level Four barrier, he was also trying to break through his mental obstacle.

After all, he was still considered a man-made prodigy. Perhaps his computing speed, depth, and complexity were nothing less of a prodigy. He was definitely lacking some other elements.

The cold wind whistled violently. Garen crossed his legs and opened his eyes slightly. He did not know how much time had passed but the sky was gradually getting darker. He opened his mouth lightly, the sweat on his forehead was still increasing.

Whiz!

Another ray of red light shot out from his mouth, towards the translucent pyramid.

Clang!

The fierce sound rang throughout the area. Garen arched his back violently as he spurted out fresh blood. Instantly, his face darkened.

Far away in the snowy grounds, two focused disciples in white glanced warily at the cliff Garen was at. One of them was Bainster, the one who went to meet Garen back then. The other one was a girl with maroon-colored long hair, along with bangs styled neatly on her forehands which gave her a pure and lovely look. The white women's sect outfit hugged her curves perfectly, but the only unfortunate thing was that her actions were somewhat stiff. Even an action such as raising her arm to tidy her hair seemed a little hard.

This person was Hillco, the one chosen by Garen among a bunch of other loyal disciples to be the master occupant of his villa's sub-building — the one chosen to enjoy the friendly effects of radiation.

Hillco used to be a normal person with ridiculously low talent as an Energy Machinist. However, she was not willing to sell herself out to gain the resources and conditions she needed either. So, she made her way to the ancient ruins and after a near-death struggle, she barely opened a small part of her computing brain. With the rise of her computing power, she managed to become a mere Level One Energy Machinist.

After that, she was accepted into the Scarlet Snow sect because of such peculiar transformation, to run experiments on how she managed to break through her brain's computing power. In the end, the experiments were unsuccessful and abandoned. Hence, she was let alone to fend for herself.

Among the others, Garen chose her because he saw the perseverance within her, the kind of firm belief only those who had experienced near-death experiences would only understand.

As for her slow actions, that was an after effect of her coming back from the near-death experience the last time.

Other than the head, for movements that people only need a second to prosecute, she needed at least ten seconds. Even if she had ten seconds, it was extremely challenging on her part. A simple gesture such as raising her arm to her forehead required at least ten seconds.

As for her rent, as a Level One Energy Machinist, Hillco was able to waive her daily quests as she was cooperating with the lab experiments. Besides food and accommodation, she was able to earn some allowance as an Energy Machinist, but a hundred Spar Stones a week was a very low price.

At this moment, Hillco and Bainster had their eyes glued on the snowy cliff that Garen had just attacked. As the red light escaped Garen's mouth and towards the translucent pyramid, Bainster's expression changed instantaneously.

"Brother Garen is using his secret method! Once the Cold Scarlet Snow secret method is used, if he can't breakthrough within the ten minutes, his injuries will be even more severe!!"

"What do we do then? We have to think of something to help Brother!" Hillco frowned.

“There’s no way! This is a critical moment. The secret method has started already. His computing power will expand immediately to 150%. These four years, Brother Garen has trained the Cold Scarlet Snow secret method to the third level already, slow and steady with each step. He has attacked multiple times just now and didn’t use the secret method, but now that he has used it, the power accumulated will be exerted all at once... He’s able to succeed!” Bainster said heavily.

By then, the both of them were joined together with Garen. Within the second, among so many disciples, they were the only ones who had Garen labeled on them. The power of Garen would affect their future. Within the five years, they had paid a price too, but how many more years would they still need to pay? They were almost twenty-five already. Once they reach the key age, their brain’s computing power would settle down and their limit would be set once and for all.

Right then, a ray of red light shone again at the edge of the snowy cliff, shooting accurately at the center of the translucent pyramid.

Garen roared and another ray of red light came out.

Clang!

The pyramid finally shook lightly and a small crack appeared in the middle.

Garen closed his altogether. Countless dense formulas of statistics computing formulas started to flow through his mind, with every possible computing thread circling his mind.

The cracks in the pyramid increased and became bigger.

“I understand now...! This level isn’t about problem-solving, it’s the breakthrough that matters!!” Opening his eyes, Garen opened his mouth again but the ray of red light remained in there.

The dense flow of statistics in the pyramid was gradually getting denser and more complexed.

Time was ticking. The cold wind continuously hit Garen, converting his sweat into ice cubes, layer by layer, almost turning him into a snowman.

Finally, with a raise of his jaw, the fourth ray of red light shot out and struck the vertex of the pyramid.

Crack!

Cracks instantly covered the whole surface of the entire pyramid, followed by crisp sounds of numerous silver bells chiming.

The whole pyramid shattered!

“He did it!!” Over here, Bainster and Hillco could not retain their excitement.

After Garen’s hard work, he had finally managed to breakthrough successfully and achieve the Level Four Energy Machinist.

Compared to those prodigies in bigger sects with better resources, his breakthrough was unusually difficult, but compared to smaller sects like Scarlet Snow, to be able to reach Level Four before the age of thirty was an achievement above the ordinary.

The entire sect was pretty small. Among the disciples, there were the three of them. In addition to Garen, that would be four people. Among hundreds of people, only the four of them were able to reach Level Four before the age of thirty. The younger the person is, the more potential the person has.

To be able to reach Level Four at an age like Garen’s, it meant that he was highly likely to be able to reach the Inherited Level. Just the thought of it made Bainster and Hillco smile in delight. Every year, approximately ten or so people are scouted and recruited from Central Metropolis to join the Scarlet Snow sect. They were all disciples, but how many of them actually managed to reach the Inherited Level? Technically speaking, although these elites had potential, each potential had its own limits too.

The competition within sects was unusually cruel. Some other sects had inside competition that led to hundreds of disciples being ambushed while fighting for resources. The Naga planet was full of danger, the mutated creatures in the ancient ruins were extremely dangerous; if ever faced by anyone from the sect, one would be dead for sure.

There was a high death rate for Energy Machinist competitions, which was also why Energy Machinists at the apex of the pyramid were able to put pressure into a Pilot's head. Natural selection of life and death was known as the cold-blooded competition system, and that was why the surviving Energy Machinist would be acknowledged to have truly strong combat skills. Compared to Energy Machinists, Pilots received lesser training, especially those fighting on the void battlefields to defend their planet.

After the pyramid broke into pieces, the second Energy Machine Imprint appeared in the back of Garen's mind. Both prints were floating side by side. The left one had a Big Bad Wolf mosaic print, whereas the right one was still empty, waiting for him choose a print when he got back.

Garen stood up with an overworked expression and ripped off the parts of his clothes that were stained with blood. Staring at what was left of the pyramid while it gradually disappeared into thin air, his body gave a violent shiver as he let out a breath.

With a crack, the layer of ice on the surface of his body shattered and fell to the ground.

"I've finally reached Level Four... Can't believe it took me five years... But it is still shorter than an average person's ten years, I guess it's not bad." A hint of satisfaction filled his eyes.

Turning around swiftly, he walked towards Hillco and Bainster. As he approached the both of them, Garen smiled and waved his hand.

"Let's go for a round of celebration. Now that I've passed this major threshold, reaching Level Five should be so much easier."

"Congratulations Brother Garen! Once you pass this obstacle, you can easily breakthrough Level Five using the Mars Radiation Stone distributed by the sect!" Bainster said excitedly, "Once you make it through Level Five, you'd be qualified to be a third disciple and become an elder Grandmaster!"

Hillco, who was standing by the side nodded in agreement. The smile on her face expressed a sense of heartfelt joy.

Garen shook his head with a smile.

"You're thinking too much, that's so far in the future. Just take care of yourself first, you're still at Level One after such a long time."

Bainster's expression stiffened as he rubbed the back of his head embarrassingly.

Chapter 980

"Brother Garen, what are you going to do next?" Hillco asked in a hushed tone.

"What I intend to do?" Garen clenched his fists, "I still need some time to get used to the jump from Level Four to Level Five. If I want to reach Level Five, the Mars Radiation Stone won't be the only thing I need..."

"Brother, our small territory has always been peaceful, relatively stable. With you as our leader, the area of the snowy peaks has always been calm. But I wouldn't say the same for the other snowy peaks," Hillno said simply, "every second disciple will be assigned to different houses and a snowy peak to practice alone; this is the rule, in the sect, to protect the followers and first disciples in the surrounding. But I heard something recently from one of the sisters, that one of the Brothers at a snowy peak nearby wants to contact you. Even though I'm unsure of the details and who..."

Before she could even finish her sentence, a soft voice broke through the air from a distance.

"Ha ha ha ha!"

In between the laughter, a white shadow leaped down from the sky and barged towards the three of them who were standing at the top of the snowy cliff. Followed that, a huge snow hawk circled above.

"Let me see what kind of special ability does an elite from the central have!!"

As the last of his voice fell, he rolled over and let out a piercing screech. Countless snowflakes were gathered, immediately forming a gigantic white dragon which darted towards Garen who was standing in the middle of the trio.

The dragon swept up the snowflakes from the surrounding ground and formed a huge snow column which was at least meters thick. The tip of the column was a sharp edge that was pointed directly at Garen's face.

Garen snorted, then proceeded to activate his Level Four Cold Scarlet Snow technique and clouds of white frost emitted from his body. Holding out just one arm, he pointed his index finger at the sharp edge, as if he wanted to use his own flesh and body to fight against the solid ice thorn.

However, his finger and the ice thorn closed in quickly. Just when they were about to touch, Garen's finger suddenly shot out like petals of a flower. Within a second, his palm turned into a pale icy-white shade and hit the ice thorn at the side.

Bang!

The ice shattered into pieces. The snow column was thrown to the side by a shadow by the side, whereas Garen remained still on the spot.

"Nice!!" The person made a flip in the air and landed on the ground steadily. His feet sank into the snow, leaving two deep footprints.

"Indeed the elite of the central. Just achieved Level Four, yet such strong lethality. Among all the brothers, your power should be ranked top three."

"Who are you to show up at my snowy peak without invitation and behaving so atrociously?" Garen asked icily. After the series of hand-to-hand combat and his style of speaking earlier on, Garen seemed to have a wrong impression that he was meeting a secret powerhouse.

When all the snow debris finally dissipated, the trio was finally able to see his true face. It was a white young man with a handsome face and white short hair. He had only one arm but there was a sense of emotion in his eyes that gave others a relentless feeling.

"I'm the owner of the twelfth snowy peak, Joyson but you can call me Joey. Garen, master of this peak, I've been observing your breakthrough for the past few days. What about it? Well, are you interested to

join me in competing for the top ten snow peaks?” This person’s previous rage was nowhere to be seen anymore — he was slowly warming up.

At this moment, Bainster and Hillco were still unable to regain their composure. Bainster stepped back in shock whereas Hillco just seemed pale. Even though she felt a sense of threatening death during the ambush, she did not step back, which truly showed her strong sense of will.

“How will I benefit from being in the top ten snow peaks?” Garen asked calmly.

His opponent was a similar Level Four Energy Machinist. However, during the short fight just now, he noticed that the opponent was just testing the waters, that’s why the opponent did not unleash his full power. Being a second disciple meant that his qualifications were not bad, so he should be at least between the third to fifth rank among the disciples.

“Obviously, there are plenty of benefits!” Joey laughed, “Second disciples in the top-ranked snow peaks get special treatment. Since you just recently managed to break through, you will need some sort of treasure to secure your position. Or else, you will need at least another two years to completely stabilize your position before you can try for the next level. Think about it, without the help of extra resources earlier on, you would have spent five years to break through from Level Three to Level Four. Do you know how fast the disciples from bigger sects progress after receiving resources? If you don’t fight for some things, you’ll just be long forgotten behind by others who have leverage above you!”

Garen frowned.

Spending five years to break through Level Four was something he did not think of.

Speaking of disciples from bigger sects, wasn’t Accord one of them?

In comparison to Accord who was already focusing himself on passing Level Five already, he thought that it was just their differences in talents. But come to think of it now, things seemed different.

Joey laughed at Garen’s expression. “I’ve been searching in the snow peaks for the longest time and after selection, only you Garen, you’re the only person I can’t see through. And that is why I am here to ask for you to team up with me. You’ve relied completely on yourself to reach Level Four already. Other

than the treasure to secure your rank, you still lack a suitable Energy Machine Imprint. If you're in the top-ranked snowy peak, you'd be able to buy more powerful Energy Machine Imprints... Not just the ordinary ones you see in the market, like... The new batch of mutated imprints that are stronger than the ordinary ones by a couple of times — Winter Night Wolf!"

"Winter Night Wolf?"

Joey stepped closer, within five meters range from Garen and the two others.

"Seeing that you chose a wolf Energy Machine Imprint, I have the impression that you have a liking towards this sort of Energy Machine creatures. The Winter Night Wolf is a rare mutated Energy Machine Imprint. Although it isn't much of a difference from the initial Giant Wolf Cannon Fodder, once cultivated in the right way, which is three by three from the biochemical pool, it will have strong jumping abilities and facing flying units would be no big deal. Most importantly, it's group increment would rise according to quantity! Now that's the scariest part!"

Increment rises according to quantity.

Suddenly, Garen was slightly moved. If he was to add the Distorted Seeds to these wolves...

"How do I fight for the top rank?" Garen asked in a low voice.

With the sight of Garen being moved, Joey smiled lightly. "That's simple, kill!"

"Kill?!" Garen was stunned.

"Brother, he meant killing disciples of the opposing sect. The more you kill, the more evaluations you get, and the higher you would advance in rank according to your battle records," Hillco explained softly.

"So what about it? You and I team up against the Dragon Eye Sect. I've been keeping an eye out for them for three days." Joey even had a target selected already.

“How are battle records calculated?”

“The sect imprint will automatically calculate the power extent and proportion of impact,” Joey explained.

“I should look this up.” Garen nodded. If the other person was speaking the truth, then he really had to fight others for resources that he would need to shorten his time of practice so that he would not be suppressed by the others. As for the resources, conflicts were bound to happen.

Survival of the fittest — that was the natural selection of life. This was still a path of life, whether it was the Combat World or the Technology World.

“I shall be waiting for your good news then. This is my communication device.”

Joyson threw a clear crystal brand towards Garen who caught it easily.

A gust of snow rolled up. Once again, he turned into petals of snowflakes, dissipating into the cold air. Who knew what kind of supporting tool he was using that allowed him to walk on air.

“To be able to fly away, that is something only a Legacy Master can do!” Bainster stated with envy. Only now did he dare to reveal himself from behind Garen.

“That was just some help from a prop.” Hillco cast a glance of disdain towards him, “You’re a man yet you were the first one to retreat.”

“What can I do when I have no power? If I were to have power like Brother Garen, do you think I will still be scared of him?” Bainster asked unconvincingly.

“Come on, just you?” Hillco rolled her eyes.

As the both of them continued to bicker, Garen fell deep into thought.

Originally, whether he was in Combat World or Totem World, he had the potential points to provide him with resources so he did not have to be swept into this battle vortex of limited resources. However, things were different in this world. Potential points were nowhere to be found and the second Staff of Absolute Yin was yet to be found. Even after such a long time, the remaining potential points left in his Attribute Pane were not to be easily used. It was only for emergency life-saving purposes.

To be exact, he had always been practicing alone, excluded from the world of interest.

“Turns out I’ve never really been into the vortex of natural selection of life.” He let out a breath.

“Let’s go.” He picked up his feet and walked towards his villa situated at the foot of the hill.

The both of them followed suit behind him, though still bickering. However, as if everything was blocked out, Garen was still lingering over the sudden realization that had never occurred to him.

It was his past all summed up.

Because of the potential points, he need not have to fight others for the limited resources. All he had to do was practice silently and continue advancing so that he could be the best. This was his luck, not his unfortunate.

Though the disadvantage of relying on potential points too much in this world had finally surfaced because he never had any past experiences. So, he would not take the initiative to find the resources he really needed. As for the path he took part in, he had to rely on himself to move forward and as a result of that, he kept being thrown off by others, further and further away. This was the consequence of not having resources and not trying to fight for them.

Accord, who should have been the same as him was already trying to reach for Level Five. Yet here he was, only achieving Level Four recently.

However, he remembered.

“With the help of external objects, I can improve faster. If I were to rely on just myself, it will be a sort of training for myself. This path would be more simple and pure, but it will not only take a much longer time, but it is dangerous at the same time. On the other hand, my foundation will be steady throughout, and it will be easier for me to achieve a higher realm in the long run.”

He held out his hand and stared at the snowflake that was slowly melting in his palm.

“If I want to reach a higher state, to reach the Army Level or even higher, speed is not the only thing I’m looking for.”

Horrible images of devils destroying the world from ancient mythologies kept popping in his head.

Garen then realized his own determination.

“What I want is not just temporary strength, but a power that will last me in the long run. I don’t need any foreign objects that will affect my foundation. As for what Joey mentioned about the Winter Night Wolf, it’s something I should give up on. It is a trick that allows people to accelerate their progress in a short period of time by sacrificing their potential. Anyway, the power spawned out is still not as good as one’s natural capabilities.”

Although he had understood this principle since long ago, he had never truly experienced it as he did at this moment. From what he saw, the potential points he had used to advance in the past was no different from an external support tool.

He may not be able to observe the after effect of using potential points to push himself into secret combat level, maybe because it was too high level, but there would definitely be a consequence. If he wanted to progress rapidly, would it be possible that he need not pay a price?