

Chapter 191 Qilin Lion

Not long after, Su Ping arrived at a barren mountain chain fully covered by burning earth and of course, groups of fire-type monsters, who immediately sensed his arrival and crept closer.

Su Ping summoned his Inferno Dragon. The dominating aura of the dragon did a quick job scaring lesser monsters away, while slightly stronger ones stayed inside their territories and trembled.

Without minding the monsters, Su Ping headed straight to the biggest volcano in sight. If his memory served him right, the only threat he would come upon was a Qilin Lion that lived at the mountain peak. It was a superior species among all fire-type monsters who could wield many ninth-rank abilities and was immune to dragon will.

He had previously managed to defeat the lion only by throwing himself to death repeatedly. Just then, however, he was confident that his pets could take on the lion just fine; they had grown a lot stronger since that day.

Rather, Su Ping wasn't planning to kill the lion this time. He wanted to capture it.

As he expected, he saw a large lava pool at the tip of the mountain, which began bubbling madly upon his arrival.

Abruptly, a pillar of fire was shot his way.

The Inferno Dragon growled, then took a leap ahead and blocked the fire attack in Su Ping's stead.

Splash!

A gigantic creature over a dozen meters in length from head to tail emerged from the lava and stayed afloat above the surface on its burning limbs, gazing down at its enemies with a pair of burning eyes filled with unquenchable anger. Its body was fully covered by glossy, emerald-like scales. Despite its body resembling a bulky lion, it had a long-snouted, reptilian head that was occasionally spitting violet embers. Su Ping summoned Little Skeleton to join him, before he took out four middle-rank beast-catching rings and prayed for a good result.

"Take that!"

Using his astral power, he hurled the rings at the towering beast.

The Qilin Lion felt offended by the attack and summoned a wall of lava, which crashed down upon Su Ping's position like a tidal wave.

Su Ping quickly pulled the rings back before they were swallowed by the burning liquid.

Welp. I need to subdue it first then. It seems I can't ambush ninth-rank pets so easily.

Together, Little Skeleton and the Inferno Dragon charged ahead to engage the lion, while the Dark Dragon Hound tried flanking the lion by using its superior speed. Meanwhile, Su Ping stayed outside the conflict zone and hid behind the Purple Python.

It didn't take long before the Qilin Lion showed several noticeable wounds all over its body, most of which had been caused by Little Skeleton's unpredictable attacks.

Seeing Little Skeleton fooling their enemy like a pro by teleporting here and there, an idea suddenly flashed in Su Ping's mind.

Will it work if I let Little Skeleton handle the beast-catching rings?

He called Little Skeleton back to try that out right away.

Little Skeleton seemed a bit confused by the order when it was just enjoying the thrill of chopping its quarry. Still, it listened to Su Ping's command soon enough and returned, with its bone blade still dripping more blood onto the floor.

Su Ping handed the rings to the skeleton and told it what to do through their spirit connection.

It took Little Skeleton a while to comprehend the new order, during which the Inferno Dragon quickly went on the losing side after losing Little Skeleton's help; it was being pummeled by the Qilin Lion helplessly.

"Go." Su Ping urged Little Skeleton so the Inferno Dragon wasn't further endangered.

Little Skeleton nodded slightly and disappeared. A second later, it somehow flashed on top of the lion's head, lifted a beast-catching ring, and threw it down.

Ping!

The lion was hopping left and right to find better spots to claw at the Inferno Dragon. Before it could land another hit, its body was frozen solid. It melted into a purple light beam and entered the ring.

"*Whistle* Bull's eye. Nice!" Su Ping smiled in satisfaction.

He immediately pulled the ring back to him to prevent it from falling into the lava below. If the ring was destroyed, the Qilin Lion would get out and his efforts would have been ruined.

Just like the Flame Blood Dragon, the lion had been ensnared by several impressive chains inside a dark space, which would dangerously tighten up as the lion struggled.

Su Ping sighed in relief and put the ring away, before he ordered the Dark Dragon Hound to jump into the lava pool and retrieve the material he was looking for. The hound whined and looked at Su Ping with a pair of watery puppy eyes.

Su Ping told the Inferno Dragon to push the hound into the lava pool instead; the ferocious dragon heeded the order after giving its comrade-in-arms an almost sympathetic look.

The hound saw the dragon's claw coming, yelped in despair, and dived into the lava by itself.

A moment later, it returned to the surface and spat out a stagnant puddle from its mouth that looked like melted metal. Even with enough defensive enchantments, the hound's mouth and tongue were still burned badly.

Su Ping pulled the puddle into his hand and sensed the comforting heat contained inside, before he placed it into his inventory space.

Two more materials, and I can finally level up the Solar Bulwark... He beamed at the thought. After breaking through, my body will finally be strong enough to endure the attacks of ninth-ranked warriors.

He already knew where to find one of the remaining materials which was hidden in another “dragon scale land.” This had left him with only one other material to look for.

Without tarrying, he jumped onto the Purple Python and left this sector behind.

Chapter 192 Dragon Eggs

Since he already knew the way, Su Ping quickly found the inspection checkpoint, then waited for a bit in line, and entered the room he had just left not long before.

“It’s-Mister Su??” Qin Shuhai opened his jaw in shock but quickly recovered. “Did you just go on another exploration?”

“Yeah.” Su Ping nodded.

Qin Shuhai shook his head and decided not to ask questions. It was understandable that someone who had earned a big fortune in the Mysterious Realm would want to keep going.

Su Ping took out his backpack and unloaded its content-two energy crystals extracted from seventh-rank monsters.

Qin Shuhai looked at the items with twitching eyebrows. He was expecting better.

“Well... It seems you didn’t have much luck this time, Mister Su.”

“Afraid so.” Su Ping feigned a disappointed look.

“Don’t worry though. You can always try again and perhaps find more extraordinary treasures, as you did last time.”

“Thanks. That’s what I’m aiming for.”

Several titled warriors in the room gave Su Ping their friendly attention as they had already decided to treat him on fair terms.

However, there were exceptions, such as Lady Feng, who had always doubted Su Ping’s reliability.

“Hmph. That was some serious luck for him to find an Astral Spirit Fruit. Was he aiming to be the lucky dog again? Don’t make me laugh.”

Although the others didn’t quite buy her words. They voiced their support to Su Ping.

“Well, I’d do the same and try my luck in different sectors if I could.”

“Yeah. Luck isn’t something you can predict. Who knows what will happen? You just gotta keep on.”

When the inspection was done, Su Ping headed to the waiting area again, while rejecting several more recruiters coming his way.

He was quite familiar with the “workflow” at this moment. He skillfully made the payment, selected a target sector and teleported there, all the while without needing any guidance.

The flow of time ticked away relentlessly and two more days passed as Su Ping kept enjoying his job. By then, the workers in the inspection room were no longer surprised by his frequent visits in the least.

Qin Shuhai had lost count of the number of times he had seen Su Ping, since Su Ping had always returned after a few hours or even faster after each inspection. They would have seen him as another employee if they didn’t know better.

Qin Shuhai looked at Su Ping’s backpack, which looked rather filled this time. Similarly, all the others paid attention and wondered what kind of items Su Ping had brought back, after being disappointed so many times during those days.

“Please.” Qin Shuhai signaled Su Ping with a smile. They all knew what to do.

Su Ping nodded and unbuttoned the pack.

Thud, thud.

Several boring energy crystals and spotted eggs rolled onto the table.

The inspectors exchanged several confused looks as they wondered whether Su Ping had rummaged through a monster nest. None of them was a professional trainer. They couldn’t tell what kind of Astral Pets would come out of the eggs.

“Um, Mister Su? What are...” Qin Shuhai wanted to figure out what those were before they were sent for inspection.

Su Ping answered without a problem. “Four-Winged Storm Dragons. Ninth rank.” “Dragon eggs?” Qin Shuhai stared at him in surprise. “Three of them??”.

Four-Winged Storm Dragons were only considered to be lesser entities among their dragon-type friends, but they were still genuine dragons, not drakes or some halfbreed. They hardly lost when it came to fighting against something of the same rank. Moreover, those Storm Dragons were adept at speed, something that endowed them with a high survivability rate because they could simply escape if there was something they couldn’t handle.

“Mi-Mister Su, are you perhaps... selling them?” asked Qin Shuhai.

Su Ping looked around the room and saw how everyone was eager to buy the eggs.

“As titled battle pet warriors, you don’t really need these lower ninth-rank pets, right?”

Qin Shuhai chuckled. “That might be correct, but you should know that dragon-type pets are always rare, so nobody would pass up the chance to keep them as secondary pets. Besides, we can always use them as gifts for our younger family members. These things make great pets for pet warriors who have yet to reach our level.”

“I see,” Su Ping pondered, “May I know your offer?”

“Do you want money or other treasures in return?”

“Can I take a look at what kind of treasures I can take?”

With a bit of frustration, Qin Shuhai mentioned the names of several items of equal value.

Su Ping shook his head. “How much for selling them then?”

Qin Shuhai was surprised by Su Ping’s reaction, for he just thought that he had offered pretty good items just then. The armor he offered to Su Ping could block off the attacks of ninth-rank monsters, and yet Su Ping didn’t even give it much thought. “Let me see... For standard market prices, the egg of a ninth-rank dragon-type monster should go for 100 million.”

A muscular worker nearby chipped in by saying, “I give you 120, Mister Su. Can I have one of them?”

Su looked that way. “Can you pay right away?”

“Of course!” The man smiled widely when Su Ping agreed.

The others didn’t expect Su Ping to sell the eggs that easily, for they thought Su Ping would have better uses for them. For example, one could use those eggs to train three high-level battle pet warriors in no time, or give them to titled battle pet warriors as a gift.

If someone could control all three dragons and teach them to move as a team, their combined strength would grow beyond their limit.

Qin Shuhai quickly offered. “I’ll buy another one. 120 million. Immediate payment, just like before.”

“I’ll take the second one, Mister Su! 130 million for it!” another man called.

“150!” Qin Shuhai raised his price with an annoyed look. That successfully discouraged more competitors, for 150 million was well beyond the average price for the eggs. They might be valuable, but people still needed a lot of time and resources to raise the dragonets, which would probably cost them three to four times the original expense.

Since no one else was speaking, Su Ping gave the second egg to Qin Shuhai.

That was an income of 270 million deposited to his account.

Damn. If only I could convert the money into energy points...

He had more eggs stashed in his inventory space. Not Four-Winged Storm Dragons, but Thunderstorm Dragons. Though he wasn’t going to take them out for inspection.

Chapter 193 Enemies in a Small World

A Thunderstorm Dragon was an upper ninth-rank Astral Pet, which had overwhelming strength even among all dragon-type pets. While it wasn’t as good as an Inferno Dragon, it could still be placed among the top ten on the “dragon ranking list.”

As for the Four-Winged Storm Dragons, they weren’t even in the ranking list. That was why Su Ping didn’t mind getting rid of them.

“Mister Su, are you selling the last egg?” another titled warrior in the room tried.

Su Ping shook his head. "Sorry but no. I have another plan for it. If you really want it, come and visit my shop someday." This was a perfect chance to make his pet shop known. Of course he wouldn't pass up the chance.

"Your shop? Do you run a company? May I know the name?"

All the others wanted to know Su Ping's usual line of business because they could use it to learn more about Su Ping himself, even though the companies founded by titled warriors were usually for shady purposes like money laundering. "Company? Ahem. It's not really a company. Just a small shop. I sell pet training services, and I also have some pet food for sale. I'm trying to expand the scope of business and perhaps sell pets in the future. This egg will be a candidate."

"A small shop that sells dragon eggs? Ugh." "Can I have your business card?" another worker asked.

"I... didn't bring any, since this wasn't a business trip," Su Ping said, deadpanned, "I'll just tell you my address."

He told the shop's location to everyone without fearing that somebody would investigate him. If a titled battle pet warrior wanted to know more about him, knowing his face and name was enough. Besides, the system would always keep the shop safe from danger.

Su Ping picked up the remaining egg and stepped out of the inspection room.

He took several random turns among the traveling people. Once he made sure no one was stalking him, he carefully placed the dragon egg in his inventory space while no one was looking

He could have "smuggled" all the eggs away, but didn't do so because he didn't want to raise suspicion by always returning with cheap loot. To show his "occasional good luck," those Storm Dragon Eggs were a perfect choice. It wasn't hard to get his hands on the eggs because that mother dragon had been weakened due to the recent pregnancy.

Instead of going to another exploration right away, Su Ping headed to the lounge area and rented a single room to rest.

Those apartments had been built as soon as the Mysterious Realm was discovered, so smart businessmen could earn money from eager settlers. The rent was 100,000 coins for a night, which was pretty crazy. But the money was worthwhile because the houses were all protected by high-level astral barriers that could bar eavesdroppers. Furthermore, there were always powerful settlers stationed nearby as guards.

By going there, Su Ping would both recuperate and to wait out people's suspicion. This way, people would believe that he needed some time to transport the dragon egg away instead of carrying it into another exploration, which would be too strange.

He unslung his backpack, summoned Little Skeleton to keep watch, and fell asleep.

The Mysterious Realm didn't have days and nights. There were always people traveling to and fro, who would work or rest as they saw fit.

Su Ping woke up refreshed. His phone suggested that he had just spent 8 hours in bed, which was just about right.

He retrieved Little Skeleton, who had been giving him that unchanging, blank stare during all these hours, into the pet space. Then he checked out at the apartment managing desk, ordered two bottles of hot milk tea and headed to the teleportation station again.

The waiting area was clearly not as crowded as before. Most of the time, people didn't need to wait to use the teleportation circle.

By the time Su Ping arrived, he only saw one group of people waiting ahead.

He finished his strawberry milk tea while waiting and felt refreshed from the inside.

Suddenly, the man in front of him looked back and gave him a confused look.

"Oh?"

Su Ping checked his face but failed to remember him.

The man's partners heard his voice and looked this way. This time, Su Ping saw two faces he recognized—the old servant who had attacked him at the dragon tower and the "young mistress" from the Tang family. Though he couldn't remember her name.

"It's you..." Zuo Fengqun gave Su Ping a hostile look. He was sure Su Ping would have died if Venerable the Blade had not intervened back there.

Tang Ruyan saw Su Ping and knitted her brows in disgust as if she had seen a cockroach. But she soon looked away and forgot about him. Someone like her had no time to deal with weaklings, according to her line of thinking.

Zhuo Fengqun sneered but didn't move. If Venerable the Blade meant to protect Su Ping, he would not carelessly disobey that decision.

"Insolent worm. You should be grateful that you're still breathing," the old man uttered under his breath and turned away.

Seeing their supervisors doing so, the other guards of the Tang family didn't do anything in particular either.

Su Ping decided not to mind the unpleasant encounter. He didn't have time for that.

Soon enough, Tang Ruyan's group stepped onto the teleportation circle and vanished.

Su Ping waited for his turn, paid the fee and checked the available destinations.

Chapter 194 Sector 83

During those days, Su Ping had cleared out a good number of sectors that had yet to be investigated by other settlers, and successfully secured many treasures for himself.

Among everything he took so far, there were two items he was particularly fond of. The first one was an antique fan that could produce disruptive energy to invade and even destroy the minds of high-level Astral Pets. The other item was a scroll that sustained a foreign space inside, where he could freely safekeep other items or even creatures.

The scroll was not a weapon since it didn't have any offensive properties, but its great value was plain to see nevertheless. There was no doubt that even the richest people in this world would go crazy about it, should they catch wind of its existence.

Su Ping's storage space was unable to keep any lifeforms inside. Having gotten his hands on this scroll was very helpful. Besides, the space inside the scroll was huge. If he wanted, he could hide a dozen adult ninth-rank Astral Pets while still having room to spare.

In comparison, the other treasures he took back were not as brilliant, although they were still valuable. For example, the Force Vest was an armor that could protect its wearer from eighth-rank attacks or below, as well as helping them to stay afloat in the air for a short duration at the cost of the user's astral power. This meant that those who weren't titled battle pet warriors could use it to fly. Albeit slowly.

Of course, this function was pointless in battles.

But in Su Ping's case, he could combine this vest with Astral Telekinesis to achieve high-speed maneuvers and perhaps move faster than common titled warriors.

Other than the armor, he also found many useful weapons that could easily tear through the thick hides of ninth-rank monsters.

I can remember three other valuable treasures waiting to be taken. Two of them were guarded by Beast Kings. They might have already left after all these years but... I'm not taking the risk.

As Su Ping already learned from his many deaths, a Beast King was not only one rank mightier than ninth-rank monsters; it was much much deadlier than that. He would avoid them at all costs. Even the tiniest curiosity could get him killed.

Lucky for me, I know where these Beast Kings live. If I accidentally picked a sector with a Beast King inside, I'll quit right away.

He checked his remaining options, before fixing his attention on the third choice which contained another noticeable treasure. As he learned from his dragon scale land exploration, this item was used for enhancing someone's strength to an unbelievable extent. He had to find it.

Filled with determination, he chose a sector at the end of the list named "Sector 83."

After the familiar feeling of weightlessness, he opened his eyes and saw a forest where the trees appeared several times taller than common trees found in other parts of the world.

Man, I found it!

He couldn't tell whether a "sector" was the "dragon scale land" he was looking for, so he was ready to spend a few million coins checking several of them until he reached his mark. He didn't expect to get lucky with the first choice of the day.

He used to name all the dragon scale lands he had explored before, while this one with a giant forest was the "Lush Land." That enhancement item was hidden right there.

This sector looked a lot like an ancient ground described by dinosaur movies, where everything was bigger than normal. The weeds and low bushes were already as big as fully-grown trees, while trees... Su Ping couldn't see their tops from the ground.

Like always, he summoned the Dark Dragon Hound, the Purple Python and the Inferno Dragon to respectively scout ahead or guard him. As for Little Skeleton, he would keep it inside the pet space unless something called for it, so it could take its time absorbing the Skeleton King's bloodline.

Heeding Su Ping's order, the Inferno Dragon concealed its mighty aura and slightly ducked its head so it stayed hidden among the tall grass. The majestic dragon appeared rather funny when acting in such a manner.

The hound soon told Su Ping what it sensed from the environment through their spirit connection. Although, Su Ping was only able to comprehend a part of the information because he wasn't a pet master yet.

Since there was no imminent danger, Su Ping ordered the Dark Dragon Hound to stay alert while it moved forward. Meanwhile, he stayed on the Purple Python's head and hid himself behind several scales.

While training the python, he intentionally told it to ram head-first into enemies frequently. As a result, the scales on its head had hardened quite a bit. Even ninth-rank monsters would need some time destroying them.

These were far from all his cautionary means. Furthermore, the Dark Dragon Hound would constantly keep watch of him with several enchantment barriers at the ready. Adding his Force Vest and the Solar Bulwark, he was confident that nothing could catch him off guard unless a Beast King somehow found him. With the Soul Lantern in hand, spiritual attacks weren't a problem either, as long as he was ready for them.

He was armed to the teeth.

The Dark Dragon Hound was not moving as carefree as before when it recognized the dangerous area in which it used to train. Following Su Ping's order, the hound propped up every defensive trick it could use. There was no Beast King in this sector, though they would be expecting a lot of powerful ninth-ranked opponents.

The journey inside the forest was mostly peaceful until they ran into an eighth-rank monster at the edge; the Dark Dragon Hound and the Inferno Dragon finished it off quickly without causing too much noise.

Su Ping extracted the monster's crystal, took a brief look around the area, and headed to the treasure's location according to what he recalled.

"My Lady, I can't see the stars from here, but according to the lay of the land, it should be... there."

Nine people were standing along the branch of a giant tree. Thanks to the tree's size, the footing remained stable even with their added weight.

The speaker was Zhuo Fengqun, who was currently checking the forest from their vantage point. A beautiful woman was patiently waiting beside him. There was a colorful, eagle-sized bird pet that looked like a small phoenix perched on her shoulder, which was one of her favorite partners.

“The climate is overabundant with oxygen, which must be why the vegetation is unbelievably oversized.” Tang Ruyan checked the map in her hands with a frustrated look. “I wonder how much longer we need to travel to reach our destination.”

Another man in the team spoke up while pointing to the map, “My Lady, my Hermit Sparrow has ascertained our current location. If the map is correct, we can move to this river nearby for easier travel.”

Tang Ruyan examined the said river and frowned again. The river was in the opposite direction of their goal.

“I see. It can’t be helped then. Let’s move.”

Chapter 195 Anima Fruit

Poof!

Following a giant splash of blood, a lower ninth-rank Gold Hare collapsed under the pincer attack of the Dark Dragon Hound and the Inferno Dragon.

The hound happily picked away several slices of hare meat, before it skillfully tore through the creature’s stomach, pulled out an energy crystal, and approached the Purple Python waiting nearby. While sitting behind the python’s sharp scales, Su Ping remotely pulled the crystal to him and stuffed it into his storage.

“Don’t leave any traces,” he ordered his pets using his spirit.

The Inferno Dragon was pretty good at such clean-up work by then. It unleashed some deadly flames from its body and burned up the hare’s corpse within a few seconds, leaving only a patch of charred dirt behind.

They moved on after their enemy had been dealt with. This was a shortcut along a river that would take them to the treasure faster. Only that it was a riskier choice compared to wider paths since there were lots of monsters dwelling both inside the river and along the riverbanks.

The Mysterious Realm became open to the public two days ago. Someone might have already come here when no one was looking. I wonder if the treasure was already taken... Su Ping thought with a grim look.

The Dark Dragon Hound suddenly sent him an alert. Immediately, both the Purple Python and the Inferno Dragon hugged the ground.

Following the hound’s direction, Su Ping looked up and managed to see a tiny dot drifting in the sky.

That’s a... Hermit Sparrow.

Su Ping squinted his eyes and carefully inspected this eighth-rank avian pet which was usually famous for its superior eyesight, even more effective than thermal scopes. Common means of camouflage were useless against it. Although this bird had a huge weakness; it couldn't detect targets with exceptionally low body temperatures very well.

Although, most monsters in the wilderness were "hot enough" for the bird to see, unless something deliberately lowered its metabolism to escape such detection, which was not very likely; only battle pet warriors could think on that kind of level.

Hermit Sparrows are social, which means there are more of them nearby. Or, maybe it's being controlled by a settler... Su Ping carefully assessed the situation while assuming the worst. This was necessary if he wanted to stay alive.

If it has an owner, that man must be within 25 kilometers.

Such knowledge was usually available in academies, though Su Ping still knew it thanks to his survivalist training. At the moment he had another reason to avoid unnecessary battles so as to not to attract troublemakers. He wanted to snatch the treasure and leave as fast as he could manage.

I can't hide from that sparrow. If its master is an eighth-rank pet master, then he or she should already know I'm here...

As Su Ping tried to decide what to do, the bird suddenly dashed away.

What is it doing? Maybe its master is in danger, or...

He pondered and began chasing the bird with his pets.

Momentarily, he arrived at a cluster of dead trees, a place he was quite familiar with.

Without a second thought, he ordered his pets to stay low and head further inside.

The smell of rot in the air immediately reminded him of where he was.

"There's an Anima Fruit growing around here."

Such a fruit was a potent supplementary item for Undead-type Astral Pets because it contained rich undead energy. Low-rank Undead pets might directly evolve by consuming it. The fruit was also a valuable treasure in this sector. Still, Su Ping had only thought about it until then because he had been too focused on getting the main one.

Retrieving the fruit wouldn't be easy, however, as those woods were being guarded by a great many ninth-rank monsters. To make it worse, there was an upper ninth-rank Quietus Wraith watching over the fruit, which was skilled at powerful spiritual attacks that couldn't be defended against easily. Back inside the corresponding dragon scale land, Su Ping managed to kill it after dying a dozen times together with the Inferno Dragon.

He believed that the wraith was an even worse enemy compared to that giant Flame Blood Dragon.

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He lifted an arm and summoned Little Skeleton. The skeleton stayed unmoving for a moment beside his

feet, before it hopped in delight upon sensing the undead energy all around the environment. With his full team in operation, Su Ping slowly entered the woods.

In the middle of the woods lay a patch of empty earth surrounded by towering trees, save for a lone pile of dirt and a tiny tree growing in front of it.

This tree was pitch black from top to bottom, and was constantly coated inside ominous dark mist from which the faint cries of ghosts could be heard.

Two groups of people stood waiting on both sides of the tree, together with several pets of various sizes and looks. The bigger group with nine people had only summoned three pets, but they appeared no less compelling when compared to the other six-men group who had more pets out. "I know the Tang family is well-respected in the base city. But we're not in the city anymore! We found it first, and we'll take it!"

The speaker was carrying a sealed box in his hand, from where tiny swirls of black energy were leaking, either because the box was not tight enough, or whatever was inside could not be fully contained.

With the help of the Hermit Sparrow, Tang Ruyan's group had arrived at a rare Wraith Tree only to find that somebody was already collecting the bounty.

It was said that this tree only produced a single fruit over the course of 1,000 years, which was used for greatly enhancing Undead-type Astral Pets. The Tang family did have many young members who used such pets, so they wanted to retrieve the fruit for their own use. The growth of their future generation was critical.

"Since you know who we are, I suggest that you hand it over," Zhuo Fengqun responded steely. "Even if you manage to get away with it, I doubt you'll live long enough to keep it."

Chapter 196 Special Skill, Glaze Bulwark

"Whether we can take this treasure away with us is none of your business. Still, don't you think that what you're doing would leave a stain on your Tang family's fame?!"

The strongly built man was furious.

He was not alone. The other five teammates with him were all clenching their fists in anger.

Zhuo Fengqun put on a colder look. "Are you sure you want to settle this the hard way?" "Feng Zhuoqun, are you thinking about bullying us?"

The burly man's face turned deathly pale. "You are a titled battle pet warrior but I haven't earned the title of the 'Fist' for nothing! That pampered young lady over there is your future family head, right? If a battle is what you want, then I will drag her down with me even at the cost of my life. What do you think of that?"

Zhuo Fengqun squinted.

Standing next to him, Tang Ruiyan raised her eyebrows. "No one in the Tang family is pampered. I am a seventh-rank battle pet warrior but I have fought against titled battle pet warriors before. I don't think... you're qualified enough to drag me to die with you yet!" she stated calmly.

The burly man grinned with bitterness. He was infuriated by her words. "Is that so? Naturally, the Tang family would invite titled battle pet warriors over to be your training partners. However, I don't think they would demonstrate their true strength. They most likely lost to you on purpose so that you would be so happy after beating them. Do you honestly think you can compete against a titled battle pet warrior? You are at the seventh rank. It would only take me a second to kill you. You wouldn't even have the time to summon your pets!"

Tang Ruyan pulled a long face. "I think you have some misunderstanding about big families. Maybe other families are just the way you described, but in our Tang family, the way we are trained... Well, those that were like delicate flowers born in a greenhouse have long perished. Titled battle pet warriors can release astral powers externally. You can condense that astral power to kill your enemies directly and you can do that while you're a hundred meters away. But since I know this, I can be prepared in advance. I don't think you can hurt me given the mastery of your astral powers. Haven't you heard about the three special skills of the Tang family?"

The burly man seemed to be a bit scared.

As it was a family that influenced several base cities, the Tang family was vastly rich and had many powerful warriors working for them. The Tang family was most famous for three special skills. Those long lost skills had been obtained by the Tang family from an ancient location in a space fracture.

One of the three special skills was the Glaze Bulwark.

It was said that with this skill, a person's defensive capabilities could be greatly enhanced. A titled battle pet warrior that had learned this special skill could easily defeat other ordinary titled battle pet warriors. That was what made the skill intimidating.

This was a special defensive capability. One of the other two skills had offensive capabilities and the last one was used to create disguises. Both were highly effective.

Tang Ruyan went on casually, "I'm not that smart and only 23 this year. I have only reached the fifth level of the Glaze Bulwark. That being said, the Glaze Bulwark coupled with my astral power shield will be more than enough to fend off your external release of astral powers."

She sounded humble but she looked far from that. Instead, she appeared to be quite indifferent and contemptuous. Evidently, she despised this titled battle pet warrior.

For seventh-ranked battle pet warriors, titled battle pet warriors should be people to look up to, entities that they could never surpass.

However, for a blessed talent like Tang Ruyan, she would become a titled battle pet warrior sooner or later. What she desired was to become the most powerful among the titled battle pet warriors, someone like Venerable the Blade, or someone stronger than titled battle pet warriors, a legendary battle pet warrior...

"The fifth level..."

The burly man was taken aback by her words.

He had heard about this well-known Glaze Bulwark. There were seven levels in total. When a person reached the seventh level, that person could withstand a strike from a titled battle pet warrior just relying on physical strength alone. Not even an armor-piercing bullet or a rocket could inflict any harm!

Tang Ruyan had reached the fifth level at such a young age. She was freakishly smart!

When she reached the seventh level, she was able to compete against the more powerful titled battle pet warriors!

She was a blessed talent, wasn't she?

She was trained to be the future ruler of her super family!

The burly man smiled a bitter smile. He knew that it would be hard for him to kill Tang Ruyan, since she had reached the fifth level of the Glaze Bulwark. Besides, Zhou Fengqun was there to protect her. He wouldn't stay with arms crossed watching her being attacked.

How pathetic this was... A titled battle pet warrior couldn't even kill a seventh-rank battle pet warrior!

Tang Fengzhuo was proud of Tang Ruyan. He cautioned the burly man, "Fist, you must know what to do now. I suggest that you don't let your greed blind your eyes."

The burly man took a deep breath and stared into Zhuo Fengqun's eyes. "I understand that the Tang family is rich and influential. That being said, to snatch treasures away from me is just your wishful thinking! I may not be able to harm you and vice versa. You cannot harm my life if I want to leave!"

Without wasting any time, he pulled open the space in front of him. Two horrifying creatures whooshed out from the space. One was a ninth-rank Winged Thunder Viper which was of the sub-dragon species. It was horrifying and was good at using skills in the thunder family. The Winged Thunder Viper could generate venom as well. This was a difficult pet to deal with.

The other pet was of the demon family. The human-like being was surrounded in darkness and it held a saber.

Human-like pets had great potential. They could practice fighting skills. Even at the seventh-rank, the human-like pets could compete against other pets of the ninth-rank. That meant that human-like pets were very intelligent!

"Charge!" the burly man bellowed. At the same time, he told his teammates to retreat using their pets as cover.

"Do you think you can escape?" A glint of coldness rose in Zhuo Fengqun's eyes. He also pulled open his pet space with a swift motion. Three pets came out; all of them were at the ninth-rank!

Being a title battle pet warrior from the Tang family, even his secondary pets were at the ninth rank. His strongest pet had reached the intermediate position of the ninth rank, an aggressive pet of the demon family.

The three pets ran to different directions.

At the same time, Zhou Fengqun took action. The astral powers inside him suddenly burst out to the open and formed a blade that was used to stab at a young man's pet.

Bang!

The seventh-rank pet had little time to react before its head was crushed!

That was what made titled battle pet warriors horrifying. They didn't have to dirty their own hands. They could easily kill advanced battle pets by just relying on their astral powers.

"Senior Feng, join the fight so we can deal with them quickly. Leave no one alive," Tang Ruyan turned around and said to another old man who was wearing a grey mask and hat. His appearance was simple and inconspicuous.

It was because of this old man that Tang Ruyan had dared to explore this land.

She wouldn't have taken this risk if Zhou Fengqun was the only one protecting her. After all, this land was perilous. Besides, the teams that came here might have many titled battle pet warriors on board. One titled battle pet warrior as a guard was not enough to safeguard her life.

Chapter 197 Looting

"Sure."

The aged man named Senior Feng muttered that word from underneath his mask. He waved his hand and a swirl emerged in the space in front of him. From within leaped out a shadow.

Whoosh!

The dark shadow moved quickly, like a dash of lightning. In an instant, the dark shadow had pierced through an eighth-rank beast. Blood was spilled out. The dark shadow didn't stop there. It rushed toward the burly man who was running away.

The burly man heard the noise. He turned around, only to be startled.

In a hurry, he unsheathed his saber and he mobilized his astral powers which formed a shield as he wielded his saber to fend off the dark shadow.

This stunning saber was a treasure in itself. The air was stirred up by the saber and the ripples in the air extended to more than 10 meters!

The dark shadow moved to the side with agility and dodged this cut. The dark shadow pressed forward toward the burly man with increasing momentum.

The burly man's first strike fell short but he didn't have time to fix this. This fact frustrated him but he didn't sit still to wait for death. He raised his other hand and punched at the dark shadow the moment it was near.

The burly man was titled the "Fist."

Fistfighting was his advantage. He had studied an ancient fistfight skill. At this moment, a strong force was gathering on his fist; even the air around it moved at a curve. Muffled noises were being generated out of thin air.

This move was even more horrifying than when he used his saber!

Bang!

Since the dark shadow was close, it could no longer dodge this strike; it landed squarely on the dark shadow. However, the punch went through the dark shadow in the next second. At the same time, with a loud sound, a fist print with a diameter of seven to eight meters appeared on a huge tree behind this shadow!

The print left on the tree trunk was deep. The tree shook, even though it was large as a towering hill. Some leaves fell to the ground.

That isn't real?!

The burly man was terrified. He believed he had an acute perception. How did his judgement fail with the dark shadow?

He used his astral powers to lock on his target. He was completely unable to tell if that was an illusion or not!

Soon, he remembered an extremely rare skill, energy clone! That was a rare and mysterious skill of the advanced level. With that skill, the pet could fool most surveillance and identification skills. The clone was even more realistic than an illusion. Relying on spiritual force alone would be hard to tell the true from the fake.

He felt some fatal danger coming at him from behind. The burly man turned around. Darkness came over his eyes. He couldn't see what that was. Out of instinct, he raised his saber to fend off the strike. But in the next second, he was knocked away and smashed into the fist print left on the tree. A human print was added to the fist print.

The burly man crawled up. He looked up and finally recognized the dark shadow that attacked him.

"A Devil Shadow, at the upper position of the ninth rank??"

The burly man was frightened. Devil Shadows were pets of the demon family, quite the aggressive sort. It was like an assassin, with strong disguising and hiding abilities. The Devil Shadow was stunningly fast. Most of the beasts would be killed and eaten up by the Devil Shadow before they could catch a sight of it.

After the burly man recognized that pet, he looked around from the corner of his eye. His team had collapsed. His two pets had been blocked; they had been completely overwhelmed by Zhuo Fengqun's three pets.

At the moment, the others around Tang Ruyan had summoned their pets as well to attack the burly man's teammates.

A violent turbulence caused by astral powers caught the burly man's attention. He noticed someone standing next to Tang Ruyan. The burly man felt extreme fear when he saw that man's appearance and focused on the coldness in his eyes. He suddenly recalled a man with a horrifying influence.

Demon Feng!

He was a famous titled battle pet warrior. He was less powerful than Venerable the Blade. That being said, other titled battle pet warriors saw Demon Feng as someone that shouldn't be provoked. He was called "Demon Feng" but in private, people preferred to address him as the "Lunatic Demon"!

He worked with the Tang family. The burly man didn't know he was there!

"That lunatic..." The strong-built man gulped. His heart was trembling. He could get away if he only had to deal with Zhuo Fengqun. However, since the Demon Feng was there, that had become impossible. The burly man regretted his decision.

If he had known, he would have given up this treasure.

But what had been done could not be undone. He wished he could give up this treasure in exchange for his life but the Tang family might not accept at this point.

Naturally, he would not be so naive as to think that his begging would bring an end to this incident. Silencing people and murdering people would always go hand in hand. Since the Tang family had started this fight, killing all the enemies would be the best choice to protect the Tang family's reputation.

All those thoughts came to the burly man's mind in an instant. He turned ghastly pale. The Devil Shadow was coming at him again. He ground his teeth in hatred. He summoned two more pets that were at the upper position of the seventh-rank. One of the pets was of the stone family. It began to build earth shields as soon as the pet came out. Three thick stone walls were erected to protect the man.

Pff, pff!

The stone walls were penetrated as soon as they came into being. The Devil Shadow focused its strikes on one point.

"Give up the treasure and we can spare your life." Senior Feng floated over and stood in the air. He looked down on the strong-built man who had been forced to a dead end. The look in Senior Feng's eyes was cold and his tone calm.

The burly man raised his head and looked into Feng's eyes. All of a sudden, the former burst into laughter but that was a sad and dreary laugh. "Nicely done! What goes around comes around! Well, tough luck for me! But do you think you can take away this treasure? You wish!!"

Astral powers were gathered in his hand. He was planning to crush the box.

A glint of coldness rose in Senior Feng's eyes. Astral powers were poured down. Due to the huge pressure, even the ground caved in as if something tangible had been laid on the ground

With a bang, the box flew away from the burly man's grasp.

He was taken aback. The astral powers he had mobilized were dispelled in an instant. The box was in his hand and he was over a dozen meters away from Senior Feng. However, Senior Feng's astral powers had reached the target within a second and stopped what the burly man was trying to do!

"Are you... at the upper position?"

The burly man looked awful.

Senior Feng waved at the box that had been hoisted up in the air and said to the man coldly, "I am deeply sorry, you found out about this truth a moment too late. Greed is what killed you."

The box that should have flown to Senior Feng's hand suddenly dashed to another direction.

Senior Feng was stunned stiff.

This sudden change was a complete surprise.

Senior Feng had been focusing on the burly man for the most part. He would have reacted as soon as the latter used astral powers. However, the burly man behaved and didn't try to take the box back. Naturally, Senior Feng believed the box was flying toward him.

But it wasn't.

The box was going out of his reach. Senior Feng's expressions changed. He rose to the situation. Coldness oozed out from his eyes. Astral powers were released to envelop the box.

The moment the astral powers were about to touch the box, a small black shadow appeared right next to the box. The shadow seemed to have a human shape. Then it vanished, together with the box.

Chapter 198 You!

"Who's there!"

Senior Feng flew into a violent fit of rage.

A deep blue strand of astral powers surged out of him like a hurricane, and things within a five thousand meter range appeared on his mind within an instant; soon enough, he saw three beasts crouched behind him near some towering trees.

When he had a clear sense of one of the pets, calm as he usually would be, he could not help but feel fear.

"Inferno Dragon!"

Senior Feng did not expect to see a rare dragon at this place. Inferno Dragons were among the best three dragons on the blue planet. But other than the Inferno Dragon, the other two beasts were less eye-catching. The Dark Dragon Hound and the Purple Python were both middle-rank beasts. Only those two were a bit different. They seemed to be larger than usual.

Tang Ruyan was checking on some piles of dirt on the ground which she had found strange, as if something were hiding there. She turned around at once when she heard Senior Feng's angry voice, only to find him burning with rage.

Tang Ruyan stared blankly at him for a moment. When she came back to her senses, she dashed over. "Senior Feng?"

Senior Feng kept his focus on the three beasts. Those three beasts from different species were not wild beasts. They were someone's pets. He cautioned Tang Ruyan, "Beware. We're not dealing with a regular guy."

He had not seen that person yet but someone with an Inferno Dragon pet could not be some simple boy.

Tang Ruyan was surprised to see Senior Feng acting so serious. She looked around, highly vigilant.

The burly man, who was still stuck in front of the tree, did not expect there would be another sudden change in this incident. Someone was lurking nearby, attempting to take the treasure away from the Tang Family.

The burly man forced a smile; this was an opportunity to vent his anger. He threw a look at Senior Feng. Since the latter had shifted his focus away from him, he worked up some strength and ran to another direction.

"Do you think you have a chance?"

Senior Feng glanced at the burly man coldly. At his command, the dark shadow behind him dashed away. This time, the dark shadow ran even faster than before. In the meanwhile, two clones were generated.

The three dark shadows reached the burly man in an instant and pierced his body like three sharp blades.

The burly man, in a fit of fear, wielded his saber and his fists. However, since the three dark shadows were too fast, none of his strikes found a target. Soon, the burly man lost control of the situation. To make it worse, Zhuo Fengqun also went and joined the fight.

"We are from the Tang Family. Who are you? Dare you show your face?!"

Senior Feng paid no heed to that burly man; the man was as good as dead for him. But the person with the Inferno Dragon was giving some pressure. He put his guard up.

The other Tang Family guards had taken care of the burly man's teammates. They approached Tang Ruyan to protect her.

Senior Feng could tell that the three beasts were not leaving. Instead, they were getting closer. It surprised him to find that someone could be this bold and arrogant. He felt dread because of this person.

A young man's voice sighing was heard coming from the Purple Python.

"Enemies do walk a narrow path..."

If you didn't look carefully, it would appear as if the Purple Python could speak.

Tang Ruyan and the other guards saw the three beasts. All of them were appalled when they cast their eyes on the Inferno Dragon.

Inferno Dragons were so rare and precious that not even the Tang family had one!

It was one of the three best dragons but this kind was extremely rare. Money alone was not enough to buy an Inferno Dragon. There were only a few of them in the entire world. The Tang Family couldn't buy one even if they wanted to. They had to be blessed with great luck to come across one!

Tang Ruyan was both surprised and wary after seeing the Inferno Dragon. She secretly activated an astral power shield to cover her body and assumed a combat position.

Senior Feng stared at the Purple Python. When he checked closed, he sensed another presence on the head of the Purple Python; that presence stunned him.

That was someone... he was familiar with it.

He couldn't remember where he had met that person but it had been a recent encounter.

"What a coincidence. We meet again."

The scales on the Purple Python's head shrank down a bit, revealing Su Ping. He smiled as he glanced over the crowd.

Tang Ruyan and the guards who had been on high alert were surprised when Su Ping revealed himself.

They had met this person when they first entered the Mysterious Realm.

Is he that hothead?!

Tang Ruyan didn't know what to say.

She had thought that this person had to be a titled battle pet warrior from a powerful background. After all, Senior Feng had taken action. The person who had just made a display of power belonged to the titled battle pet warriors category. He must be extremely confident to be able to snatch the box away from Senior Feng.

How could she have known that it was the young man Su Ping who was behind all this?!

There came a noise and then a miserable cry from afar. Under the concerted attacks from the Devil Shadow and Zhuo Fengqun, the burly man had finally collapsed. The Devil Shadow crushed his neck and ripped his head off.

Before he passed away, the burly man punched Zhuo Fengqun, who turned pale because of the serious injury.

The Devil Shadow ate up the burly man's head and flew back to Senior Feng. Zhuo Fengqun moved back to Tang Ruyan's side after this man had been taken care of. Zhuo Fengqun noticed that something was off as soon as he arrived. He was frightened to see this Inferno Dragon among the three pets.

Soon, he noticed Su Ping who was sitting on the head of the Purple Python. That realization stunned him.

“You!”

Senior Feng pulled a long face. He knew he had detected a familiar presence. He didn't notice this punk sitting on the Purple Python at first. He couldn't believe that it was this punk who had snatched the box away, nor did he foresee that the punk who couldn't even pass the second dragon bone had an Inferno Dragon!

That was to say, this punk must have stopped voluntarily as he climbed the dragon bones.

Tang Ruyan had a similar realization; her pretty face was covered in ice. No matter who Su Ping was, given his age, he definitely wasn't stronger than Senior Feng. She could tell right away that this Inferno Dragon had just reached adulthood.

The Inferno Dragon was one of the best dragons. That being said, because of the limitations on its rank, the Inferno Dragon could not display its full strength.

She found it ridiculous that this person didn't run away after he had snatched the box away. Rather, he had the guts to walk up to them. He was simply suicidal!

However, his action alerted them. This person was acting boldly. There might be an ambush set up! “Which family are you from?” Senior Feng asked.

Su Ping grinned. “You're about to die. You don't need to know.”

Senior Feng and all the others were angered by those words.

“You're so full of yourself!” Zhuo Fengqun, who was still catching his breath, heard Su Ping's words. “Punk, you were lucky we didn't kill you at the plaza. You would have been long gone if it weren't for the fact that Venerable the Blade came to your rescue. Since you're here to seek your doom, let me grant your wish!”

Su Ping smiled but the look in his eyes was frigid. He didn't leave because he wanted to get back at the Tang Family for the slap he took at the plaza!

He couldn't harm the Tang Family outside because a battle would put him at the center of attention. But, things were different inside the Mysterious Realm.

Chapter 199 Fallen Titled Warriors

Without wasting time playing around with words, Su Ping gave his pets the order to kill.

Sensing Su Ping's killing intent, the Inferno Dragon took a step forward while fully exposing its aura. It had spent too much time in “stealth mode” so it was raring to go.

The dragon had reached adulthood not long before, but right then, the eagerness for blood emanating from its form was just as strong as that of an experienced dragon who had gone through countless battles.

Similarly, the Dark Dragon Hound also went into full concentration. Without Su Ping telling it to, it applied five protective barriers on the Inferno Dragon.

These, added to the Inferno Dragon's own scales and flame coat, produced a similar level of defense found on upper ninth-rank dragon-type pets.

Zhuo Fengqun and Senior Feng faltered slightly after seeing the Inferno Dragon's body almost shining like a rainbow.

Pet warriors usually didn't teach their pets too many defensive skills, unless a pet worked as a defender in the team. Defender pets couldn't even spit out five different types of barriers at the same time. They would have a difficult time getting through the dragon's protection, that much was certain. "What's the deal with that dog??" someone yelled in protest. "I've never heard of a Dark Dragon Hound going on the defense!"

The Inferno Dragon bellowed, sending its threatening will against its enemies; this could instantly knock out any creatures with weaker mentalities.

Senior Feng and Zhuo Fengqun flinched yet again as they were both shocked by the dragon's roar. They had previously believed that this dragon had not grown enough to scare true battle pet warriors yet.

Tang Ruyan had always been a brave child in the family who had received much specialized training during which she would deal with dragon-type opponents or even Beast Kings up close. And yet, she also felt dangerously affected by the Inferno Dragon's intimidation.

Some of their guards were spacing out with trembling legs as they could no longer think clearly.

"The dragon tower... That felt almost exactly like the will inside the dragon tower," a man uttered.

Of course it did. Thanks to Su Ping, the Inferno Dragon had spent most of its childhood right inside the dragon tower while constantly being frightened by the ancient dragon king's soul. It could not fully copy the dragon king's aura, but it was close.

The Inferno Dragon belched out a fire beam while its enemies were left wide open for an attack.

Senior Feng immediately unleashed a spirit shock around him.

"Wake up and move!"

The spirit shock successfully snapped people out of their stunned state.

Zhuo Fengqun quickly stepped in front of Tang Ruyan to protect her. But as soon as he moved, he saw something black flashing past his eyes.

"What is—"

His astral perception was constantly monitoring the area, which meant that nothing making an approach would escape his detection. However...

"This thing can teleport!"

Zhuo Fengqun felt cold sweat all over his skin when he saw a small skeleton close to his face. Out of instinct, he coated his body under a sturdy astral power barrier, while at the same time he unsheathed his sword. But Little Skeleton was faster. Enchanted with dark energy, its bone blade easily tore through Zhuo Fengqun's personal weapon like a knife through butter.

Zhuo Fengqun watched with widened eyes as the black blade loomed closer.

His astral barrier had zero effect. The bone blade sank into his skull and split his head into two halves without slowing down in the least.

Everyone around him stared agape as a giant splash of blood announced the death of one of their strongest members.

A titled battle pet warrior, killed in a second.

Zhuo Fengqun was only a lower ninth-rank warrior, but he was still at the ninth rank. People thought he should at least put up some resistance.

Tang Ruyan saw the split head falling at her feet and her legs failed her, sitting down due to fear. Though she still managed to force herself to stay calm.

Without a second thought, she immediately brought up her pet space and summoned all the pets she had brought with her, which included two upper eighth-rank pets and a lower ninth-rank one. These were all rare pets given by her family, with the ninth-rank pet being her main attacker.

Fallen Angel. Demon-type.

The creature sure looked like an angel if one didn't mind the dark-violet mist drifting around its black form, and those black wings.

The Fallen Angel flapped its four pairs of wings and slowly descended in front of Tang Ruyan, while carefully gazing at the Inferno Dragon with its pitch black eyes. It held two weapons in its hands—an antique-looking sword and a chain made from dark, heavy metal, both of which had been found in a space fracture.

Each of these treasures was as valuable as a ninth-rank dragon-type Astral Pet. The Fallen Angel had cost Tang Ruyan greatly to gear up and care for. Naturally, it was her best partner. By using the available treasures, this Astral Pet could easily fend off intermediate ninth-rank enemies. Or it could simply run away, as long as it wasn't going up against a Beast King.

Owning such a pet was the reason why Tang Ruyan remained confident and proud among her peers. The Fallen Angel was strong enough to assassinate titled battle pet warriors if necessary. It was all thanks to her superior spirit level that allowed her to control a pet two ranks higher than herself. Everyone in her family had recognized her as a true genius because of it.

Next to her, Senior Feng had also recovered from his shock and quickly summoned three giant pets, including a ninth-rank, sub-dragon-type Wyrms Worm that looked like a monster earthworm over a hundred meters in length.

The worm sank into the ground, moved under Tang Ruyan's position and swallowed her.

Seeing Tang Ruyan protected, Senior Feng ordered his two remaining pets—an upper ninth-rank Tempest Dryad and an apex ninth-rank Hell Marauder—to engage the Inferno Dragon.

As soon as the Tempest Dryad reached the ground, it created countless vines and whips to ensnare the Inferno Dragon.

The Hell Marauder was a humanoid, demon-type pet adept at raw strength attacks. While covered under intense hellfire, it charged at the Inferno Dragon holding a sharp lance.

The Dark Dragon Hound raised several barriers around itself and lunged against the incoming plants. The dark flames around its body and several fireballs it summoned made quick work of the greens.

Plants were naturally vulnerable to fire, not to mention that the hound had learned how to unleash black hellfire, which was several times deadlier than common fire. The Tempest Dryad's traps were of no use.

Senior Feng grimaced as he had just recognized the fireballs; it was an extremely rare fire-type skill only available to highly-trained fire-type pets. But as far as he could see, that hound was of the demon-type.

"His pets are way too strange. Kill their owner first!" Senior Feng quickly thought of the better option and gave the order to his Devil Shadow.

The Devil Shadow acknowledged the command and disappeared into its own shadow to prepare the assassination. By doing this, it could approach its target undetected and destroy the enemy leader in an instant, which was a very common tactic Senior Feng often used in battles.

However, as its shadow reached the Purple Python, a smaller shadow suddenly appeared out of nowhere and slammed into the ground.

The point of impact exploded, after which the Devil Shadow was forced to escape from its hiding place. There was a large, bleeding gash behind his back.

Little Skeleton's jaw creaked open as if it were grinning. The air around its body became blurry as an indistinct but large silhouette appeared behind its back.

Roar!

It was the Deadly Roar skill, which had been amplified by Little Skeleton's double.

Those present sensed an even worse will invading their minds, one that appeared to be more forceful than the Inferno Dragon's. Even Su Ping's Purple Python flinched slightly upon hearing Little Skeleton's sonic attack. It had spent quite some time with Little Skeleton during its training, and yet, it could never get used to it.

The Devil Shadow almost felt its very soul shivering in fear upon seeing Little Skeleton's projection. It immediately turned tail and ran.

Before the Devil Shadow could hide into its own shadow again, Little Skeleton teleported next to it and slashed again. This time, the giant shadow behind Little Skeleton also moved in sync and unleashed a powerful blade aura that seemed to be cutting through time and space.

The Devil Shadow was frozen in place upon seeing the attack coming.

Crash!

Its entire shoulder was sent flying by the blade attack. The great pain snapped it out of its daze, as it scrambled back to Senior Feng's side, shrieking in fear.

Senior Feng wasn't showing any particular reaction after seeing his pet escaping in defeat, because he was too shocked to do so. Seeing Su Ping's skeleton had reminded him of the day when he encountered a Beast King for the first time.

No. This was worse than that.

"What on earth is that thing...?"

Little Skeleton didn't give Senior Feng any time to ask questions. In the next second, it teleported next to him and raised its bone blade.

The tingling sensation on his forehead reminded Senior Feng to quickly do something. Desperate, he asked his Devil Shadow to carry him and evade the attack.

Senior Feng could no longer persuade himself into looking at Little Skeleton again, for he feared that the strange shadow would keep making him lose spirit.

That "teleport attack" reminded him of a deadly assassination skill wielded by certain Beast Kings. Although, he knew that the strange skeleton was not a Beast King, or he'd be dead already.

Across the distance, Senior Feng gazed at the place where Su Ping was staying while his mind swelled with fear, anger and hatred.

"I don't know where you came from... But I can't let you live. It's either you or me today!"

Using his astral power, he unleashed a sharp energy spike and hurled it at Su Ping.

Su Ping was hiding behind the python's scales. He had moved to a safer spot as soon as the battle started.

The spike crashed into a scale and successfully punched a small hole in it. But it had lost most of its momentum in the process. Upon reaching Su Ping, it was stopped by the barriers cast by the Dark Dragon Hound.

Senior Feng grimaced as he sensed the feedback of his attack. He just realized that he had underestimated the hardness of the python's scales. Without them, Su Ping would have been badly wounded.

After a quick decision, Senior Feng prepared a secret art only known by the direct descendants of the Tang Family.

"Soul Siphon!"

From his eyes, a puff of black smoke emerged and headed Su Ping's way.

"You're going down today!" Senior Feng yelled madly as he controlled the spiritual assault remotely. "You can't be an upper ninth-rank battle pet warrior, or the whole world would have already heard about it. And if you're below that level, I can kill your spirit!"

The smoke passed through the Purple Python's scales and the hound's barriers, before it sank into Su Ping's head.

But as soon as it went inside, it crashed into another golden barrier. By spending a large portion of its energy, the smoke charged through the barrier, only to get trapped inside a strange lantern, which rapidly drained it.

After that, the smoke successfully slipped out of the lantern and saw the core of Su Ping's spirit just ahead.

However, before it could go for Su Ping's spirit, the bright image of a golden bird suddenly came up and howled.

The deafening bird call combined with the blinding light dissipated what remained of the smoke.

"*Cough* ARRRRRGH—".

Outside, Senior Feng began bleeding through his eyes and nostrils. He madly clawed at his face uncontrollably.

Meanwhile, Little Skeleton was already upon him again. While his pet—the Devil Shadow —was too scared to act.

Poof!

A quick and simple cut removed Senior Feng's head from his body.

Losing their pet contract, the Devil Shadow's survival instinct got the better of it as it escaped into the distance.

The Tempest Dryad saw its master's corpse. It let out a saddening cry, then it created a flowerbed that engulfed Senior Feng's body before it sank into the ground and disappeared.

The Dark Dragon Hound joined the Inferno Dragon to fight against the Hell Marauder together, while Little Skeleton turned to face the remaining guards of the Tang Family.

Chapter 200 Imprison

Seeing two of their strongest clan members dead cold on the floor, none of the other guards could think rationally. They only told their pets to randomly attack the Inferno Dragon to no avail.

Of course they would want to run for their lives. However, as Tang Ruyan's sworn guardians, they knew for a fact that desertion would only earn them a fate worse than death.

Those eighth-rank guards combined with several ninth-rank pets was a considerable force in the Tang Family. And yet, their effort was pointless to Little Skeleton, who swiftly diminished their numbers.

In a matter of minutes, the battlefield quieted down as all the guards lay still. Only the Inferno Dragon, the Dark Dragon Hound and the Hell Marauder were still wrestling.

The Hell Marauder was an apex ninth-rank Astral Pet just like the "Flame Blood Dragon Boss." Furthermore, its lance seemed to be a mystical weapon of great value as well. Even with many barriers, the Inferno Dragon still suffered a few wounds under the lance's assault.

Thankfully, the Inferno Dragon had great self-regeneration properties as a dragon-type pet, so it had yet to back down.

The Hell Marauder didn't run away after losing its master. Instead, its primal killer instinct kicked in as it made up its mind to eliminate every living creature in sight.

Little Skeleton approached a dead ninth-rank pet it had just killed and channeled some dark energy into the corpse. The corpse twitched and climbed up, before it recklessly charged at the Hell Marauder without holding anything back.

Little Skeleton teleported between several corpses and resurrected them to join the battle.

Those enslaved bodies could not do much damage to the Hell Marauder, but slowing it down was enough, since the Inferno Dragon and the Dark Dragon Hound indeed needed a breather right then.

Together with its new "teammates," Little Skeleton also joined the fray, giving the Hell Marauder more pressure.

Seeing the futility of it, the Hell Marauder bellowed in frustration; it knocked the Dark Dragon Hound aside and dashed into the woods to escape.

Su Ping didn't ask his pets to give chase since catching an apex ninth-rank pet on the run wouldn't be so easy. Besides, he needed his pets to protect him when the Quietus Wraith had yet to show up.

The ground quaked as soon as the battle settled down. The Wurm Worm emerged from the ground while howling in pain. There was a large slit wound along its belly, from where the Fallen Angel had just emerged. It appeared that the Wurm Worm had also lost its mind when Senior Feng was no more. It tried to digest Tang Ruyan instead of protecting her.

Before it could even start, the Fallen Angel used its sword to tear a hole through its body to get Tang Ruyan out.

The worm tumbled on the ground for a few seconds and also disappeared under the surface, never to show up again.

Under the protection of her pet, Tang Ruyan landed on the ground and breathed in the fresh air she needed after spending so much time inside the worm. But she choked upon seeing all the dead bodies scattered around her.

Her loyal guards, all lying still in pools of their own blood.

They... they're all dead? A terrible thought crossed her mind as she quickly looked around the area, but without finding Senior Feng or any of his pets. He escaped? That can't be...

Senior Feng had been a respected and loyal member of her family for decades. She didn't think he'd abandon her.

She searched again and managed to see the familiar form of Senior Feng close by, but it was only a headless corpse.

She felt cold from head to toe all of sudden. While waiting inside the worm, she assumed several bad outcomes. And yet she had never seen this coming.

The terrible pressure exerted by the Inferno Dragon suddenly came upon her. She looked up and saw the wounded dragon gazing at her with unrelenting malevolence.

Further ahead, she saw the Dark Dragon Hound, the Purple Python, and most importantly, Su Ping, who looked completely unharmed.

But... how come?? Tang Ruyan couldn't believe the reality around her anymore. Our two titled warriors together didn't leave a scratch on him? Oh dear... Senior Feng is an upper ninth-rank veteran. He has three overpowered pets under his command. They lost against... a boy?

"It's your turn," Su Ping called out to her with a casual look.

Tang Ruyan felt all of her hair stand on end upon hearing those merciless words. Just a few moments before, she had regarded Su Ping as an insignificant worm she could freely step on. Everything had turned to be the opposite.

She took a deep breath.

"Who are you, and why do you hate us so much?"

Tang Ruyan no longer trusted her eyes. She had believed that the young man over there was some kind of ancient monster who was using a human body.

Su Ping maintained his usual, carefree look. "As you see, I'm just a random guy. And no, I don't have anything against you. I want something, so I take it by force when necessary. Just like what you were doing to the other group a while ago."

Tang Ruyan clenched her teeth. "Will you let me go if I promise not to get back at you for this? I can even offer compensation."

"No." Su Ping's answer was quick.

Tang Ruyan made a quick and desperate decision. She sobbed while unbuttoning her clothes, allowing Su Ping to look at her smooth skin.

"Please, I'll agree to anything if you let me live. Anything..."

No one would believe it that the young mistress of the famous Tang Family who would resolve to allure her enemy.

But she didn't have another choice at the moment.

Su Ping almost sneered at that. "Nice clothes. But I don't need them."

Tang Ruyan stopped her actions and gave Su Ping a look of disbelief.

I'm talking about MY BODY you slowpoke! "Ack, um, but are—aren't you interested in taking me with you??" she spoke while acting like a "damsel in distress." She decided to make it plain to successfully get through a "slow guy" like Su Ping.

“Oh yes, of course I’m interested.” Su Ping nodded with a smile.

“Wonderful! I’ll do anything and everything you ask, as long as—” “Dismiss your pet first.”

Tang Ruyan stopped moving. Her Fallen Angel was her last means of protection. Something told her that her pet was no match against Su Ping after seeing that Senior Feng had been so easily murdered. But she didn’t want to give up completely yet, because she thought of the likelihood Su Ping ended exhausted after the fight. She might just have a chance to get away.

“Well, what are you waiting for?” Su Ping urged.

Tang Ruyan smiled. She had never been someone who would readily submit.

“Sure.”

She opened her pet space and pretended that she was going to follow Su Ping’s words. But instead of going inside the pet space, the Fallen Angel lunged at Su Ping.

Meanwhile, another two pets emerged from her pet space, including a Gale Wolf she usually used for faster traveling.

Su Ping simply told Little Skeleton to engage the enemy, for he was well prepared for such a situation.

From his many deaths, he had learned that a battle was not won until the heart of his enemy stopped beating. The cost of being careless was dear, and he wasn’t going to repeat that mistake.

Tang Ruyan might be smart, but she was far from the level of cunning seen on monsters he had encountered before.

Like a flash of lightning, Little Skeleton reappeared in the Fallen Angel’s path and slashed using its blade.

The Fallen Angel reacted in time by raising its sword, from where a disruptive energy wave rose to disorient Little Skeleton’s spirit.

It was completely ineffective since Little Skeleton had already strengthened its spirit resistance to an unbelievable extent by absorbing the power of a skeleton king.

Two blades clashed, resulting in the Fallen Angel’s trusted sword to crack.

The Fallen Angel checked its damaged sword in surprise, then it saw Little Skeleton’s towering shadow and pulled out its other weapon, which was a metal chain capable of restraining the biggest of foes.

Little Skeleton flashed away to evade the attack. But no matter how it moved, the chain would always follow it.

Since running was pointless, Little Skeleton chose to allow the chain to catch it instead. Its body shattered to pieces under the pressure as if the chain had squeezed it up.

However, the broken bone pieces gathered and reassembled before they reached the ground.

With both weapons unavailable, the Fallen Angel took a direct hit this time.

Meanwhile, the Inferno Dragon and the Dark Dragon Hound went for Tang Ruyan while fully displaying their mighty aura to suppress her.

Tang Ruyan's pets had gone through specific training back in her family grounds, aimed at raising their mental resistance. Though this was pointless when Su Ping's pets could use the same level of repressive will as the ancient dragon king.

Within seconds, Tang Ruyan's pets had been either killed or badly wounded. Also, Su Ping made sure to break the Gale Wolf's legs so she wasn't able to get away.

All of Tang Ruyan's augmentation skills and healing arts were useless.

She felt true despair after seeing that all of her pets had been subdued or overwhelmed by Little Skeleton. She had always had the belief of having made great achievements at quite the young age, which meant she had more than enough time to aim for higher levels in her family. But the cruel truth had taken her dream away. She was going to die young.

Su Ping took a moment admiring the woman's sad look and took out the "storage scroll."

Upon receiving his astral power, the scroll became alive and released an irresistible pulling force that dragged Tang Ruyan away.

Losing their connection, her pet instantly fell into dismay. Soon enough, Little Skeleton knocked the Fallen Angel senseless and put an end to the fight.

Su Ping used his astral perception to peer inside the scroll; he saw Tang Ruyan looking around the empty area in panic.

"Where am I?? Is this your prison? Why don't you kill me?" she said when she sensed Su Ping monitoring her.

"Not yet. We'll find time later so you can tell me about your clan."

Without waiting for Tang Ruyan's further response, Su Ping pulled his attention away.

He had become an enemy of the Tang Family, which meant they'd have more unpleasant encounters in the future. He needed to learn about them to better deal with them, while Tang Ruyan was a perfect tool for that purpose.