

## Chapter 62: Calling for Help

“Let’s go.”

Li Ying led the way; everyone else followed behind him and guarded the surroundings.

The mountain road near the giant peak was uneven and filled with pits and potholes. Some of them were actual footprints left by giant beasts, while others were pits created by Astral Pets battling. The pits were not filled with rainwater; it was thick, dark blood teeming with germs and emitting a foul stench.

Fan Ganglie and the others were seasoned explorers, and still, they frowned because of the pungent smell.

Su Ping ordered Little Skeleton to stand guard by his side and keep an eye for any sudden attacks.

“This is...”

Not long after he left, Li Ying made a sudden stop. His gaze was focused on a brownish-colored rocky depression on the surface. There was a hand hanging there, and a black metal bracer was covering it.

Fan Ganglie’s expression changed slightly. With a thought, he got the Multi-eared Monkey to move forward and take a look. The Multi-eared Monkey jumped a few times and arrived in front of the hand. It was a severed arm. Fan Ganglie held the arm that the Multi-eared Monkey had retrieved. After looking at it for a while, his expression turned ugly. “This belonged to someone from another battle team. It’s a Black Cloud Gold Bracer; someone who can afford such a good bracer is definitely not weak...”

Lin Mokong, Fan Yujing and the others also recognized the bracer. Their expressions changed. The hand owner was most likely a highly-ranked battle pet warrior or a rather wealthy sixth-rank battle pet warrior. He had actually died there. It was clear that he had encountered a terrifying danger and had no chance of escaping.

Su Ping saw the severed end of the arm. His heart skipped a beat and he said, “Show it to me.”

Fan Ganglie was a little confused. But he still handed the severed arm to Su Ping.

“It’s not like you can recognize this bracer.” Lin Mokong sneered when he saw Su Ping’s seemingly pretentious observation of this arm.

Su Ping picked it up and took a closer look at the severed spot. His pupils shrank slightly, but he returned to normal in an instant. He continued to check the hardness of the arm as if nothing had happened, as well as the completely undamaged bracer. After flipping it around for a moment, he handed it back to Fan Ganglie.

“Did you discover anything?” Fan Ganglie asked. He was quite concerned about Su Ping’s opinion. After all, Su Ping had noticed the latent danger earlier than no one else discovered. Moreover, he had noticed how Su Ping seemed to have turned a blind eye to the harsh environment around him. It was a normal

reaction for experienced settlers, but it was strange for a newbie like Su Ping who had never been on expeditions!

However, everyone had their own secrets. It would be inconvenient to ask him about it, and he might possibly be offended because of it.

“Nothing.” Su Ping looked as calm as ever.

Lin Mokong chuckled.

Su Ping gave him a side glance and suddenly raised his hand.

Pa!

A crisp slap sounded.

Fan Ganglie, Fan Yujing, and Li Ying were all stunned. Lin Mokong was the most astonished. He felt the burning pain on his face. It was unbelievable!

He had just been slapped! Being a highly-ranked battle pet warrior, his status was so high that he could be the captain of a second-rate battle team like Fan Ganglie. And yet, he had just been slapped by a nameless boy?!

After being in a daze for a second, he suddenly came back to his senses. His eyes had turned bloodshot as he quickly drew his saber. “Brat, I’m going to kill you!”

Fan Ganglie and the other two reacted and hurriedly held his hand. Fan Ganglie hurriedly persuaded, “Brother Lin, Brother Lin, let’s talk it over. It’s not good to fight right now, it’s too dangerous here. I’m afraid everyone will die if we draw attention with our inner scuffles!”

Lin Mokong was so angry he was about to explode. He had been slapped. What else could he say?

He had tried his best to unsheathe his saber, but his hand was being held down by Fan Ganglie; he was momentarily unable to pull it out. This shocked him again; he didn’t expect Fan Ganglie to be that powerful. They were both at the seventh-rank, but Fan Ganglie was stronger than him!

Li Ying and Fan Yujing were frightened as well. They broke up the fight and blocked Su Ping and Lin Mokong to prevent them from fighting.

“Brother... Brother Su, let’s talk things out. Why did you hit him?” Fan Yujing looked at Su Ping, who had a calm expression. He was a little anxious. The other party was an advanced battle pet warrior, not someone he could offend.

“That’s right!” Li Ying was also scared out of his wits. He didn’t expect the mild and student-like Su Ping to be so hot-tempered. He struck people on a whim, and he had even slapped a highly-ranked battle pet warrior. Even they had to do their best to be in his good graces.

“He asked for it,” Su Ping said calmly. Although the environment was dangerous and internal strife that was not good for survival, since plots and schemes would eventually emerge, the other party was obviously very prejudiced against him and would take the first chance to trick him in a heartbeat. Since that was the case, there was no need to tread lightly.

Furthermore, he knew that he would be unable to fight even if he made a move; Fan Ganglie and company would definitely pull him back. If he took a step back, he would not be afraid even if they were to fight. It was just nice to know that he could kill this person in case something bad happened.

The easiest way was to kill someone who could threaten him as soon as possible.

“Uh.” Fan Yujing and Li Ying were both surprised to hear Su Ping’s words. Lin Mokong was the one who mocked them earlier, but he dared to hit him just because of that. He was too bold. Wasn’t he afraid of establishing a deadly grudge?

“You!!” Lin Mokong’s blood vessels were about to explode. He tried to pull out the saber with all his might, but Fan Ganglie’s hand was like a pair of steel pincers that kept it in place.

“Brother Lin, it’s Brother Su’s fault. I’ll apologize on his behalf and complete the mission first, all right?” Fan Ganglie persuaded.

Lin Mokong glared at him angrily. He gritted his teeth. He knew that Fan Ganglie would not let him fight with Su Ping. Otherwise, they would all die if they attracted any monsters.

Perhaps the other party had predicted this and dared to attack him. In other words, he had received the slap for nothing!

*“Damn it, all of you deserve to die. Not even the sight of you being sliced and diced would quell my anger!!”* Lin Mokong roared in his heart, filled with violence. His hand was tightly gripping the handle of the blade; he struggled and endured for a while before he slowly released it.

He cast a cold glance at Su Ping and turned around. “I’ll remember this. I’ll take my revenge when we get back to the base!” He said those words on purpose, to give Su Ping a false impression that he wouldn’t do anything during the operation.

Fan Ganglie heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Lin Mokong holding himself back. He said to Su Ping, “Brother Su, don’t be rash. I won’t help you again.”

Su Ping smiled after seeing his serious expression. “Let’s go.”

Su Ping’s nonchalant attitude gave Fan Ganglie a headache. He had no choice but to say, “Let’s go. We have to complete the mission as soon as possible and return to base as fast as we can!”

Li Ying and Fan Yujing looked at each other and let out sighs of relief. Li Ying was still leading the way. Not long after, they saw some dismembered corpses on the ground. They belonged to the other explorers.

By looking at the scattered limbs, they could estimate that three or four people had died. Lying about there were even some heads infested with tiny worms that had left them beyond recognition.

“Be careful.”

Those corpses were putting Fan Ganglie and company on edge. They were all extremely vigilant.

*Swoosh!*

Suddenly, a colorful smoke signal flew out from a dense forest ahead.

“It’s a distress signal!” Fan Ganglie’s expression changed when he saw this. He immediately moved and said, “Quick!”

### **Chapter 63: Undead Enslavement**

The few of them quickly ran to the place where the distress signal had been sent. Very soon, they arrived at the forest outskirts near the slope. They heard the roars of beasts and strange, ear-piercing shrieks coming from inside. Occasional tremors were telltales of an intense battle being waged.

“Quick!” Fan Ganglie was the first to charge into the forest.

The forest was filled with strange trees, surrounded by a thick death aura; skeletons were scattered all over the place.

Lin Mokong was trying to run slower so that he could fall behind the group; that way he would be able to catch Su Ping unaware to take his revenge. However, he realized that Su Ping was running the slowest, on the verge to be left out of the protection of the group. He cursed the b\*tch in his heart and could only accelerate.

Fan Yujing noticed that Su Ping was the slowest. He was puzzled. He didn’t know what he was thinking, so he lowered his speed to prevent Su Ping from being too far from the team. As a result, the team formation looked like a long line.

After Su Ping and Fan Yujing entered the forest, they saw a large patch of fallen trees. It was a clear sign of battle.

They followed the wake of destruction and ran deep into the forest. Soon, they saw Fan Ganglie, Lin Mokong, and the others. They were supporting two figures. A man and a woman from what they could see. There were a few pets guarding them, while other pets were fighting in front of them.

“Is that... an eighth-rank Magical Corpse Beast?!”

Fan Yujing’s pupils were constricted when he saw the huge figure that the Bloodthirsty Demon Wolf had pounced at. He wore a look of horror.

The Magical Corpse Beast was around seven to eight meters tall. It was like a pile of bones and mountains of flesh lying on the ground. Its entire body was covered in nasty-looking bones. Sharp bone spears or huge arms were constantly emerging from the pile. The way the beast attacked was strange and unpredictable.

“Magical Corpse Beast?”

Su Ping was surprised to see the monster. He took a closer look at the skeleton’s body. A strange expression appeared in his eyes. It was as if... a chef were selecting the ingredients he liked.

At the same time, Little Skeleton’s consciousness was connected to his mind; the thoughts and emotions conveyed were filled with excitement and eagerness. It was extremely active.

Su Ping came back to his senses and comforted it. He followed Fan Yujing and moved closer to where Fan Ganglie and the others were.

“It’s an adult eighth-rank Magical Corpse Beast!” Fan Ganglie’s expression was ugly. He even felt a tinge of regret for having rushed over. He turned to the two people beside him and said, “You two, if you have any pet that can fight, summon it. My Bloodthirsty Demon Wolf alone is no match for it.”

The man and woman were covered in wounds. It was obvious that they had gone through a fierce battle. The man smiled bitterly and said, “This is the only earth-shield pet I have left.”

“My Holy Flame Bird can still fight.” The woman bit her lip, her eyes full of unwillingness. A bird with golden feathers stood beside her. It was an eighth rank Holy Flame Bird. However, its feathers were in a mess; the flames were dim, and there was a ghastly wound close to the ribs on its chest that occasionally spilled golden blood.

Fan Ganglie couldn’t help but take another look at the bird. Even among the pets of the eighth rank, the bird was considered an extremely powerful existence. How could it end up in such a state?

As if he could see the confusion in Fan Ganglie and Lin Mokong’s eyes, the man hesitated for a moment before revealing his true feelings. “This Magical Corpse Beast is not ordinary. It should be close to the advanced eighth-rank.”

“Close to the advanced eighth-rank?!” Fan Ganglie and Lin Mokong’s pupils constricted due to the shock.

Li Ying and Fan Yujing were listening at the side; their faces paled in fright when they heard this. The two of them had already experienced a difficult situation in front of a seventh-rank Astral Pet demon beast, not to mention a monster of the eighth-rank. What a wicked gift!

Fan Ganglie came back to his senses and asked, “Only the two of you remain from the original team?”

The man said with a bitter smile, “We encountered another eighth-rank Bone Dragon on the way here. The group was separated. We might have had a chance to kill this thing if the entire team were here. It wouldn’t be as complicated, since we can’t even escape at the moment.”

“...”

Fan Ganglie and the others were speechless. What kind of luck was this?

Moreover, they had actually encountered two eighth-rank Astral Pets?

“Everyone, you...” The man hesitated for a moment, but he still took a deep breath and looked at the few present seriously. “Why not let your pets stay behind first? If we continue to fight with this thing, all of us will be left behind.”

Seeing Fan Ganglie and the others’ expressions change, the man quickly said, “After we leave, we will compensate you for your losses. We will also reward you. Ye Chenshan won’t go back on his word!”

“Ye Chenshan?” Fan Ganglie was about to fly into a rage when he heard the name. He was shocked.

“You are Ye Chenshan?!”

Li Ying and Fan Yujing looked at him in shock. They were extremely familiar with this name.

“The Settler of the Golden Dragon Medal, Ye Chenshan?” Lin Mokong was stunned for a moment. His expression changed slightly.

“That’s right.” Ye Chenshan took out a Golden Dragon Medal from his bosom and took it back after giving them a glance. He said, “I hope that you can consider it. Time waits for no one. If we don’t leave now, I’m afraid that none of us will be able to leave.”

Fan Ganglie’s expression changed. He looked at the Bloodthirsty Demonic Wolves that were fighting with the Devil Bones in the distance. The wounds on the latter’s body gradually increased. Although the Vampiric Werewolf was a seventh-rank agile pet, it was helpless in front of the Devil Bones Beast. It was like a hedgehog that had nowhere to go. It could only rely on its agility to dodge to the left and right to barely stall the beast.

“All right!” He gritted his teeth and eventually agreed.

If he could get another Bloodthirsty Demon Wolf as compensation, it would make up for his loss. Most importantly, he could also obtain Ye Chenshan’s favor.

Ye Chenshan heaved a sigh of relief, but his expression soon changed before he continued speaking. A large number of skeletons suddenly crawled out from the surrounding ground, blocking their escape route.

“It’s the Undead Summoning!” Everyone had ugly expressions.

Just as they were about to command their pets to break out of the encirclement, the summoned skeletons suddenly moved to circle around them and rush toward the Magical Corpse Beast.

This scene stunned everyone.

“Captain, your pet has accompanied you for such a long time. It’s such a pity to abandon it like this,” Su Ping said.

Fan Ganglie was stunned. He could not help but look at Su Ping. Then, he thought of something and his eyes fell on Little Skeleton that stood beside him. Little Skeleton was emitting a rich dark energy that enveloped its body. At first glance, it looked like a mysterious existence shrouded in black mist.

“This Undead Summoning is yours?” Fan Ganglie was shocked. This was a high-level Undead Pet Skill. Judging from the size of the surroundings, it was obvious that it was extremely familiar with it. It was even more terrifying than an ordinary Undead Summoning!

Su Ping didn’t answer him. He was giving instructions to Little Skeleton to control the skeletons around him.

This was Little Skeleton’s ability. It was the Undead Enslavement. As long as there were skeletons around it, they could be directly enslaved. The strength of its ability depended on the number of skeletons around it. Of course, most of the skeletons were around the Magical Corpse Beast. If Little Skeleton’s spiritual power was strong enough, it could directly enslave it!

That was because the Magical Corpse Beast was also an undead creature.

However, it was obvious that the Little Skeleton was only at the third rank. Although its spiritual power was far stronger than that of a third-rank creature, it was still too difficult to enslave an eighth-rank creature. It could only enslave a sixth-rank creature.

#### **Chapter 64: Full Assault**

“What on earth is that??”

Both Ye Chenshan and the woman beside him gazed at the seemingly tiny skeleton at Su Ping’s feet in great surprise. The encroaching dark energy made it hard to see clearly, but they still saw how the small creature managed to force a great number of skeletons under its command.

It wasn’t rare to find smaller Astral Pets with big power. But this didn’t usually apply to skeletons, whose strength was often dependent on their size.

*“Maybe it’s a special kind adept at spiritual attacks...?”* They wondered with curious looks.

The dark energy cloud around Little Skeleton was rapidly shrinking. Like a whale feasting on schools of shrimps, it absorbed the energy into its dark-colored bones. It then pulled out a sharp bone blade from between its ribs and ordered the controlled skeletons to charge at the Magical Corpse Beast as a team.

Ye Chenshan and his partner were greatly shocked again. Moments before, they thought this particular creature was like a mage who stayed behind protection. They weren’t expecting to see it running toward the enemy with a weapon in hand.

While marching, the random bone creatures reformed into different shapes using the powerful will of resentment lingering behind. Some turned into human skeletons, while some became more Astral Pets. Nevertheless, every one of them looked fearless.

The boney reinforcements madly latched themselves onto the Magical Corpse Beast using their nails and teeth, which helped the Bloodthirsty Demon Wolf to catch a breather. Their number wasn’t their only weapon—each one of them was at least a fifth or even a sixth rank. They could instantly tear the wolf apart if they were to change targets at a moment’s notice.

Infuriated, the Magical Corpse Beast summoned two thick bone whips from its massive body and began using them to swipe the skeletons away.

The attack seemed to be working at first, when many skeletons were shattered to pieces no matter how fast they could move. However, more dark energy would soon emerge from the destroyed bones to patch them up.

Roar!

A horned skeletal tiger jumped onto the Magical Corpse Beast and began randomly chomping off its more vulnerable body parts.

The maddened beast unleashed a barrage of bone spikes from all over its body, which removed the skeletons still attacking it. But it was of no use—in the next second, endless swarms of skeletons joined the front line to overwhelm it with their sheer number.

Snap!

By hiding among the skeleton army, Little Skeleton got close enough to the Magical Corpse Beast and slashed at it.

A deadly blade aura reached the beast like a tidal wave and shattered several of its supporting bones.

“What is—”

Everyone present watched the ongoing battle with a look of disbelief. Especially Lin Mokong, who simply could not believe his eyes.

*That thing is at the upper position of the eighth rank! That Su Ping bastard can handle it alone?!* he questioned in his mind.

Lin Mokong suddenly felt regretful for his earlier actions as cold sweat started to trickle down. More so when he noticed that Su Ping looked completely unruffled in this dangerous situation. What Su Ping showed him until this point suggested that there was probably a powerful clan or organization supporting him from behind the stage. If he ended on Su Ping’s bad side, he would be offending many more people.

Fan Ganglie recovered from his shock first and spoke to Ye Chenshan, “Since Mister Su is so good, maybe we should attempt to kill this Magical Corpse Beast instead?”

Everyone could see that Fan Ganglie had just become greedy after considering the potential reward they could earn from killing the creature, and it was logical. Judging from the creature’s level, whoever finished it off could be directly promoted to a “Silver Wing” settler.

Instead of answering right away, Ye Chenshan checked the young man he had been curious about.

With that kind of age, he originally thought that this young member was only a lowly handyman in the team. He was proven otherwise.

“...Fine. Let’s give it a shot.” He made the decision after looking at Su Ping’s calm stance for a while.

“Got it!” Fan Ganglie sighed in great relief and turned to Lin Mokong. “Mister Lin, please assist us.”

Lin Mokong also recovered from his thoughts and clenched his teeth.

“Fair enough.”

From his pet space, he summoned two Astral Pets—a sixth-rank adult Flame Bird at the peak of its average potential, and an intermediate seventh-rank Six-Armed Gorilla, which was the current strongest Astral Pet he could use.

The gorilla was almost eight meters high when standing. It was full of chunky muscles covered by dark-brown fur. Four of its six arms were carrying weapons, while the remaining two hands had spiky knuckles equipped. It also had a black chain vest protecting its chest area.

By summoning the gorilla, Lin Mokong had revealed his trump card. Thanks to his careful training and well-prepared equipment, this intermediate seventh-rank pet could face enemies of the same rank’s upper stage. Or, it could even keep a lower eighth-rank opponent busy for a while.



“My word...” Ye Chenshan was once again astounded. “That gear should cost at least several million. That’s enough money to buy another advanced pet.”

Seeing Lin Mokong going all-out, Fan Ganglie also decided to provide all he had—a rock-type, lower stage seventh-rank Mountain Mover, and an eighth-rank Azure Quetzalcoatl. This Azure Quetzalcoatl was a half-breed between a dragon-type pet and something weaker. All things said, it was still an eighth-rank battle pet.

“Augmentation!”

Fan Ganglie unleashed astral power from his body and cast four basic augmentation effects of the seventh rank consecutively. Such enhancement was potent enough to make a crippled old man run faster than an Olympic champion.

Apart from those basic moves, Fan Ganglie also applied a special skill to the Azure Quetzalcoatl called Double Team.

Under its effect, the creature would split into two.

This was Fan Ganglie’s core skill which was meant to double the strength of his strongest Astral Pet. The clone was not a simple phantom to trick the senses—it could fight just like the host.

“\*Whistle\* This team is pretty good,” Ye Chenshan commented, “Maybe the best amateur team I’ve ever seen.”

But things didn’t go as planned. As soon as Fan Ganglie and Lin Mokong ordered their pets to attack, the body of the Magical Corpse Beast suddenly exploded, sending countless bone spikes into the surrounding area that immediately wiped out the skeleton army.

## **Chapter 65: Lethal Undead Arts**

“Mountain Mover, quick!” Startled, Fan Ganglie quickly told his pet to create several rock walls as their protection. The timely move successfully shielded the group from the flying bone spikes.

By expanding their astral perception over the wall, they saw the Magical Corpse Beast was somewhat smaller than before. That massive attack had cleansed everything in its range except for a small pile of bones.

“That was Necro Blast.” Ye Chenshan grimaced. “Only a Magical Corpse Beast with exceptional aptitude can learn this skill.”

“Go for it!” Su Ping called out to Little Skeleton in a merciless voice.

The “bone pile” broke apart and revealed several skeleton warriors inside. At the center of the group, Little Skeleton stood like a king accompanying its army, while its body was still covered by a creepy dark fog.

Roar!

That was Little Skeleton's Deadly Roar skill. Despite its handy size, Little Skeleton unleashed an outcry more deafening than a thunder. Those who heard the reverberating sound felt their blood was about to freeze up.

This skill wasn't much weaker than a dragon's roar, and was usually enough to scare off common creatures.

The Undead Magical Corpse Beast was not frightened by this, but its movements were halted for a brief moment.

Little Skeleton and the remaining skeletons rushed at the Magical Corpse Beast once again.

Meanwhile, Fan Ganglie and Lin Mokong woke up from the trance caused by the terrifying display and both told their pets to join the fight.

Two Azure Quetzalcoatl beasts spat out lightning bolts and poison clouds that quickly disintegrated the beast's bone structure.

The Mountain Mover created a fissure in the land directly below the beast, still with the hopes of trapping it.

Similarly, Lin Mokong's Flame Bird unleashed balls of burning lava at the target.

The Six-Armed Gorilla used its weapons to physically smash at what it could reach, while using its "free hands" to defend.

Roarr!

The Magical Corpse Beast looked weakened after using the Necro Blast. But, being an entity that was close to the upper eighth-rank, it could still retaliate by shooting more spikes into the sky.

The Flame Bird had one of its wings punctured by a spike and it tumbled down from the air. Seeing this, Lin Mokong quickly sent it back to his pet space.

The Azure Quetzalcoatl was quick enough to evade the spikes, after which it spat another poison puddle at the Magical Corpse Beast which further corroded its husk.

Thanks to Fan Ganglie's precise control, the Azure Quetzalcoatl and its shadow rapidly removed the entire outermost shell from the beast.

Meanwhile, the gorilla stayed in a melee range to attract the beast's attention.

The battle had not been won just yet. Without any forewarning, the bones around the Magical Corpse Beast began pulsing, as if its entire body were breathing.

"This isn't good. It's going to use a Spirit Shock!" Ye Chenshan exclaimed.

Fan Ganglie and Lin Mokong quickly realized what that meant. A Magical Corpse Beast was one of the few Undead Astral Pets good at spiritual attacks, while "Spirit Shock" was one of its infamous big moves.

"Get out of there!"

They failed to pull their pets back in time. A strange energy ripple from the Magical Corpse Beast disrupted the area around its body and rapidly expanded.

Whirrrr!

Even at a distance and with the protection of his astral power, Su Ping still felt his head go dizzy, as if someone had knocked him with a hammer.

He gathered his willpower and forced his mind to stay clear. Fortunately, the shock wasn't directed at him, or he would have fainted on the spot.

"My weak body could be a problem..." Su Ping saw the others completely unaffected and realized he urgently needed to raise his astral power. Right then, his astral power was only at the third rank, which was a level commonly seen in students at the academy.

All the Astral Pets in the immediate vicinity of the effect stopped moving. Little Skeleton too, was spacing out. Its superior willpower was not enough to help it withstand a direct Spirit Shock like that.

More bone spikes flew over, aimed at the currently immobile Astral Pets.

A large bone spike destroyed Little Skeleton's body.

Two of the gorilla's arms were pierced, and its chain vest also had a giant hole in the middle. Luckily, the attack didn't entirely go through its body.

In the sky, the Azure Quetzalcoatl had its neck and wings punctured. Its double had been utterly destroyed.

The Magical Corpse Beast did not stop there. Following the spike attack, it created a black vortex in front of them.

"That's Black Annihilation!" Ye Chenshan uttered.

Fan Ganglie turned pale upon hearing that name. "But that's only possible for ninth-ranked undead types! What's the deal with this thing??"

"Just run!"

Fan Ganglie had completely forgotten about getting a trophy. There was no way he could survive a Black Annihilation, a ninth-rank attack.

Similarly, Lin Mokong hurried to call his gorilla back.

The problem was, their pets were still stunned by the Spirit Shock and couldn't move very fast. They had to get close enough to directly drag the pets back inside their pet space, but that would mean placing themselves dangerously close to the half-finished Black Annihilation.

Wham!

It was too late. The Magical Corpse Beast had sent the black vortex against the Azure Quetzalcoatl.

In its stunned state, Fan Ganglie's partner only had enough time to raise a wing to shield itself.

The astrally-enchanted wing was erased from existence like a thin paper close to the fire.

“Nooooo!!” Fan Ganglie yelled desperately.

Slowly but surely, the vortex engulfed most of the Azure Quetzalcoatl’s body; it could only muster up all of its remaining strength to resist.

The vortex dissipated before it reached the Quetzalcoatl’s head. It did not kill the victim just yet. With most of its body gone, the Azure Quetzalcoatl would soon die unless it received some kind of miraculous treatment.

Fan Ganglie saw his pet giving him a sad and pleading look, yet he dared not go to the rescue, fearing that the Magical Corpse Beast could still use Black Annihilation again.

The beast aimed another bone spike at the Azure Quetzalcoatl’s head.

The Azure Quetzalcoatl sensed its master’s great despair. Losing hope, it slumped down as it waited for the inescapable death—all the bleeding organs exposed on the floor would make sure this would happen in due time.

Clash!

The fast-approaching bone spike was intercepted by a blade aura.

Little Skeleton rejoined the battlefield after reassembling its body, with an even thicker layer of dark energy and a more intense killing intent.

## **Chapter 66: Skillful Block**

“It’s not dead? But how?”

Everybody saw how powerful that direct spike attack was. It basically grounded Little Skeleton to particles. It was commonly believed that a skeleton still needed most of its bones intact to be resurrected.

Little Skeleton did not give them any more time to wonder. After unleashing another ferocious howl, it lunged at the Magical Corpse Beast, blade raised, while red sigils like blood veins coursed through its bones.

This was the bloodline power of a Skeleton King.

The Magical Corpse Beast felt threatened by Little Skeleton’s display. It roared back and hastily shot out more bone spikes to stop Little Skeleton from approaching. But Little Skeleton was just too agile at the moment. It skillfully evaded all the attacks by either jumping or using its blade to parry.

Rarrw!!

Once again, the Magical Corpse Beast began drawing dark pulses of energy to channel another Spirit Shock.

“This is bad. It’s doing it again!” Fan Ganglie and Ye Chenshan wanted to warn Su Ping to back off.

While maintaining his cold look, Su Ping sent another order to Little Skeleton.

Huraaaa!

It was Little Skeleton's Deadly Roar skill this time. At soon as the skill went off, the effect of Spirit Shock arrived, trying to disrupt Little Skeleton's consciousness again. However, Little Skeleton seemed completely unaffected this time. It kept running toward the Magical Corpse Beast at full speed.

"It resisted the Spirit Shock??" Fan Ganglie pointed out, "Don't tell me that skeleton has higher spiritual potential than that eighth-rank Magical Corpse Beast?"

"That can't be," said Ye Chenshan, "If so, it should have stayed behind to attack the enemy using spiritual attacks instead of charging ahead. Maybe it used some kind of special move to block off the skill."

Deadly Roar was a pretty common skill that was easily found in tutorial books. Just like other similar skills, it was mainly used for intimidation. No one had noticed any defensive effects.

Ye Chenshan glanced at Su Ping again; he kept a neutral attitude.

"He knew this would work? Who is he, really?"

"Kill it!" Su Ping remotely ordered again.

He discovered this extra effect of Deadly Roar when traveling inside the Chaotic Realm of the Undead. Of course Deadly Roar was not intended for defense. However, using the skill would somehow fill Little Skeleton up with uncontrollable violence and rage, which could in turn neutralize the invasive effect of the Spirit Shock.

Even so, Su Ping still had to tell Little Skeleton to use Deadly Roar at the exact moment, down to a single millisecond, for this to work out. To practice, he spent a long time facing off a ghost monster that only knew how to use spiritual attacks. And even so, he could only succeed about 7 times out of 10.

The Magical Corpse Beast was halfway through another Black Annihilation. Before it could finish the skill, Little Skeleton was already upon its face. A simple slash was enough to destroy the incomplete vortex in the making.

Next, Little Skeleton jumped onto the Magical Corpse Beast and began randomly chopping it at lightning speed. Its sharp bone blade cut through the beast's outer shell like a knife meeting butter. Within seconds, large pieces of bones and chips were blown off.

The Magical Corpse Beast shrieked in pain and created a giant bone claw from its body to capture Little Skeleton, which was completely useless against Little Skeleton's rapid moves.

The beast suddenly huddled into a ball and began rolling, hoping to crush Little Skeleton.

The ground quaked as the giant bone ball madly twirled and bumped around, during which Little Skeleton was nowhere to be found.

Fan Ganglie and Ye Chenshan feared that they would become the next target if Little Skeleton was killed. They would have escaped already, if they had not seen Su Ping still watching the battle with a plain look.

“Hey—hey, should we help out? We can’t just stand here...” the woman accompanying Ye Chenshan anxiously spoke to Su Ping.

Lin Mokong and Ye Chenshan followed suit and all gave Su Ping a questioning look. They had to admit that Su Ping was their most dependable helper at the moment.

Su Ping didn’t answer. He was too busy keeping an eye on the Magical Corpse Beast.

Rarrw!!

The rolling beast bellowed in great pain.

It slowly came to a halt as black fog seeped out through its shell and slowly covered it up.

The others stared at Su Ping again, not sure what exactly was happening.

Su Ping breathed a sigh of relief and finally looked away from the battlefield. He gave the woman a friendly smile to thank her for her willingness to assist, before talking to Fan Ganglie, “It’s done. Almost. You should pick up your Azure Quetzalcoatl. Maybe it can still be saved.”

Fan Ganglie gave the Magical Corpse Beast an uncertain look. He couldn’t see anything because it had been completely engulfed by the fog.

He saw his Azure Quetzalcoatl still struggling on the floor. With clenched teeth, he moved closer so he could drag the creature back into his pet space. Meanwhile, his Mountain Mover acted as his cover.

## **Chapter 67: Rideable Puppet**

The condition of the Azure Quetzalcoatl didn’t look good. Without getting first-aid from a masterful doctor, it would soon end up in an Astral Pet grave.

Fan Yujing glanced at the fog warily. “Mister—Mister Su, did your skeleton get it under control?”

He stopped addressing Su Ping as “buddy.” It would be extremely odd to call someone who just displayed terrifying strength in this way.

“Sort of, yes.”

From what he sensed through the spiritual connection, Su Ping could tell that Little Skeleton was absorbing the Undead energy left behind by the Magical Corpse Beast.

Earlier, Little Skeleton excavated a small hole on the body of the Magical Corpse Beast and dived in, in order to evade the “bowling ball attack” and easily tear the beast apart from the inside. Even the outer shell of the beast was unable to withstand its bone blade, let alone its vulnerable innards. That was to say, if this thing had any innards.

“Should we go there and finish it off?” asked Li Ying. He didn’t do so yet because he sensed something creepy coming from the fog.

Su Ping shook his head and took out the bottled Fire Dragon Fruits. "Has anyone seen a Fire-tailed Blood Fox around here?"

Fan Yujing and Li Ying were taken aback by the question. They didn't think Su Ping still had this matter in mind after what just happened.

"A Fire-tailed Blood Fox?" Ye Chenshan frowned. He decided to play it safe with Su Ping for the moment. "No, I'm afraid we haven't. That thing in your hand is pet feed for fire-type pets, right? Are you here to capture the fox?"

"The fox is supposed to belong to someone in this team. I'm here to help them search for it." Su Ping seemed disappointed.

"Help?" Ye Chenshan widened his eyes. *He's not a member of their team? Makes sense... If he was, I would have heard of him.*

"Thank you, Mister Su..." Fan Yujing just felt overwhelming gratitude filling him up. A moment earlier, he thought Su Ping was going to abandon their task.

Su Ping simply gave Fan Yujing an unamused look. *Come on, I'm not helping YOU. It's the goddamned system forcing me.*

"First profanity alert."

*Forget it.*

"If you're looking for a Blood Fox, I think I saw its footprints somewhere," the woman beside Ye Chenshan spoke up. She didn't seem sure about her decision because she didn't want to accidentally provide false clues.

"Really? Where did you see them?"

"There's a slope around the woods up ahead." She pointed in a certain direction. "But the footprints were left a long time ago. The scent was long gone."

"Now that I think about it, she's right." Ye Chenshan nodded along.

Su Ping looked that way and kept the information in his mind. "Thanks."

"It's us who should be thankful." The woman smiled. "Nice to meet you. I'm Luo Guxue from Team Polaris. May I know your name?"

"Su Ping."

"Su Ping?" Both Luo Guxue and Ye Chenshan failed to find this name in their memories.

Even so, they had more than enough reason to keep the name in mind. Someone so brilliant would soon get recognized by all the other teams out there.

Fan Ganglie had retrieved his pet in time to hear their conversation. His Azure Quetzalcoatl would either die or survive with a serious disability at this rate. Learning about the Fire-tailed Blood Fox did nothing to cheer him up.

He looked at Ye Chenshan, who returned a knowing look and placed a hand on his shoulder.

“Mister Fan, I never go back on my promises. Rest assured.”

“For real? You’d give me another Azure Quetzalcoatl? But that’s an eighth-rank Astral Pet.”

Ye Chenshan smiled and turned to Lin Mokong. “Your wounded Flame Bird and the Six-Armed Gorilla too. I’ll take care of their medical expenses.”

Lin Mokong was briefly shocked, before he quickly thanked Ye Chenshan. He could afford the treatment of his pets, but saving the money was even better.

Lastly, Ye Chenshan addressed Su Ping politely, “Thank you for your help, Mister Su.”

“You’re welcome.”

The black fog around the Magical Corpse Beast was dissipating, causing everyone to look that way.

Like water drawn by a sponge, the fog retreated inside the beast’s body; it remained motionless, without showing any energy signatures.

Crack!

Little Skeleton emerged from an open wound and looked around the area using a pair of hollow eye sockets with crimson flames burning inside. Its dark bones were further blackened by the dark energy swirling around it.

The others felt a sudden chill down their spines when Little Skeleton looked their way, as if they were being inspected by something a lot deadlier.

Su Ping ordered Little Skeleton to use the Puppet skill, which Little Skeleton learned the other day.

Unlike the Undead Enslaving, this skill required some time to work. The dead Magical Corpse Beast was the perfect material to make a puppet.

Upon receiving Su Ping’s command, Little Skeleton pumped more dark energy out of its body, which sank into the corpse below.

The energy slowly repaired the Magical Corpse Beast’s broken bones. A few minutes later, the Magical Corpse Beast twitched; the members of the group almost yelled in fear.

“Calm down. It’s a puppet now,” Su Ping comforted them.

“A puppet??”

They all knew about this commonly-seen skill, usually available to high-level Undead creatures. But they never believed Su Ping’s skeleton was potent enough to turn the mighty beast into a puppet.

Following Little Skeleton’s instructions, the Magical Corpse Beast slowly stood back up.

A puppet created this way was always one rank lower than when it was alive. Moreover, the puppet user could only control something three ranks higher than itself or below. Right then, this “Magical Corpse Beast Puppet ” was only an upper seventh-rank creature.



As for how Little Skeleton pulled this off as a third-rank Astral Pet... Its superior aptitude had made it possible.

The restriction of “three ranks higher at most” was a conclusion drawn by federal educators. The best potential of this skill was in fact, unknown.

“Now we have something to ride on.” Su Ping walked to the Magical Corpse Beast first.

Seeing him, the others followed behind, albeit more carefully.

“You need to find a Fire-tailed Blood Fox, right? We’ll go with you,” said Ye Chenshan.

Su Ping agreed without a second thought. He knew that Ye Chenshan was probably tagging along so that they didn’t have to return on foot while their pets were wounded.

By using the Magical Corpse Beast’s speed and Luo Guxue’s guidance, they soon reached the aforementioned footprints and began their search for more traces left by the fox.

Su Ping took out the Fire Dragon Fruits and squashed them up. This way, he could use the smell of the fruits to attract fire-type Astral Pets. This space fracture was mainly occupied by beasts of the Undead-type, so they didn’t have to worry about attracting unwanted creatures.

The others were amazed by how Su Ping made such a costly preparation just to find the fox.

A few hours later, they reached the edge of a high cliff, where they found more tracks. Fresh ones.

## **Chapter 68: Nether Stone**

Fan Ganglie followed the pawprints until he reached the edge of the cliff.

“Don’t tell me—”

“I saw trails left by other creatures. Maybe something’s chasing it. With nowhere to go, it jumped off,” said Ye Chenshan.

Fan Yujing and Li Ying didn’t look pleased. The journey had cost them dearly. And Fan Ganglie’s most precious Astral Pet had almost been killed. If the Fire-tailed Blood Fox had already died at the bottom of the cliff, all the time and effort would be for nothing.

Su Ping slowly scanned the area and also noticed the messy remains that suggested a fight. There were bright-red fur remains and broken bone chips everywhere.

He jumped off from the Magical Corpse Beast and looked below the cliff, while not forgetting about keeping an eye on who was behind him. The others in the group probably would not push him off, but he preferred to err on the side of caution.

There was nothing to look at. It was nighttime.

“Did anyone bring any flare sticks?”

Everyone had stepped down from the Magical Corpse Beast to check what was beyond the cliff. It was Li Ying who took out several flares from his backpack and handed them to Su Ping.

Su Ping popped one and tossed it away. Using the falling light source, he could see the brownish cliff wall, some small plants growing on the wall, as well as strands of red fur randomly tucked between pointy rocks.

He also caught a glimpse of a strange object somewhere, but failed to recognize it since the flare was dropping too fast.

He threw another in the same direction. This time, he successfully found the object to be some kind of irregularly-shaped stone with dark-golden sparkles on its surface. It was lodged inside the wall.

“Is that gold ore or what?”

This place was supposed to be uncharted. Finding valuable minerals was no surprise. In fact, this was why settlers loved their job—by finding a gold or uranium mine, they’d become richer than most of their peers overnight.

Naturally, Su Ping would love to bring such a nice trophy back. But there was no way he could climb down there and excavate the ore all by himself. He needed help.

Besides, his storage space was too small to contain too many unrefined minerals. His best option was to ask an Astral Pet to transport them back in bulk.

Fan Ganglie tossed a stone over the cliff and listened, but no one heard the final drop.

“Li Ying, send your earthworm down there. If the fox is dead, I want to see its body.”

Li Ying nodded and ordered his pet worm to start digging.

Su Ping was still unhappy about the situation. If their target was dead, it meant he had failed his mission.

A moment later, Li Ying opened his eyes and exclaimed happily. “I found it. It’s alive!”

“Really? It can’t fly. How did it survive the fall?”

“There’s a cave down there, I saw the fox inside.”

“A cave, huh?” Su Ping wondered how long the poor creature had been waiting there.

“Quickly, get us there.” Fan Ganglie looked thrilled after that.

“Of course. I’ll tell my earthworm to dig a tunnel.”

Soon, the worm creature released some acidic body fluid to uncover its path until it was big enough for humans to pass through. By following the downward slope, they were able to reach the said cave.

Or, it was not really a cave. At least Su Ping would only see it as a small burrow in the wall.

The Fire-tailed Blood Fox was resting in its depths. Upon sensing intruders, it immediately went into a battle stance. Though it quickly calmed down when it recognized Fan Ganglie and Fan Yujing.

“Thank goodness, there you are,” Fan Ganglie smiled slightly. At least he completed his task.

The fox affectionately nudged Fan Ganglie. Fan Ganglie was not its master, but they were close friends nonetheless.

Su Ping checked and found no fatal injuries on the fox apart from some scratches. Good news for him.

“It used those vines creeping on the wall to slow down while falling, I think.” Ye Chenshan looked above.

Su Ping remembered the pointy stone which could also be used as a stepping stone. Then he spoke to Li Ying, “I saw exposed minerals up there. Tell your earthworm to make another path so we can check it out.”

“Mineral?”

Everybody was glad to hear such a thing. They could earn big money if they got their hands on gold or even something better.

“Let’s do it!” Fan Ganglie urged.

Li Ying complied and gave the order to his pet, which dug another tunnel in the cliff. The tunnel ended up where a sturdy object was buried in the wall. It was something several meters in both length and width, like a really massive boulder.

Fan Ganglie found a small device and began scanning the object.

“Uranium... 0.002%. Gold, 2.902%. Silver...”

Such disappointing readings.

The device was meant to detect the element composition of the object. However, none of the displays was above 5%, which meant this thing was nothing too useful.

As they wondered what such a large object was doing there, Little Skeleton suddenly put both hands on it and eagerly stroked its surface as if it really wanted it.

Su Ping quickly realized that the unknown object might be something useful to Undead-type pets.

“System, do you know what this is?” he asked in his mind.

“Affirmative.”

“Nice. Tell me.”

“Appraisal cost, one hundred energy points.”

*Crap.*

Su Ping checked his balance, which was a little less than 700, and decided to pay the price.

“This is ‘Nether Ore’, a compressed form of Undead energy. When refined, it will produce a Nether Stone. You may use it as an enhancement tool, or as a currency to trade with residents in the Realm of the Undead.”

“Nether Stone, huh? Just like spirit stones?”

“You may put it that way.”

“System, can you refine it?”

“Affirmative.”

“Awesome. Can you—?”

“One hundred energy points.”

“...”

## **Chapter 69: Return**

Ye Chenshan moved closer to read the device, before he spoke up with a disappointed look, “I’m afraid we don’t know what this is. Maybe it’s valuable, maybe not. I’d say it’s just a cluster of random metals.”

Such things were everywhere in space ruptures. Settlers who discovered them could bring them back to the Federation for inspection and earn a fortune if they proved to be of great use. Otherwise, it would only be a waste of their time.

“We should get a sample and bring it back then,” Luo Guxue suggested.

This was a logical decision and no one had a problem agreeing to it. They could learn the nature of the unknown mineral this way and come back to get more later.

Su Ping didn’t want his energy points to go down the drain because he had already spent 100 points to identify the mineral. The Federation was going to take everything at this rate; he might earn some compensation for the discovery but that wouldn’t be worth it.

“Can I have it?” His words attracted everyone’s attention.

He basically told the others that the unknown mineral was in fact, useful in some way. But he didn’t have a choice. Since the specialized device failed to tell what this was, he believed that not even the Federation would have an idea about what the material was, which meant people might let him keep it.

“Do you know this thing?” asked Fan Ganglie, curious.

Su Ping shook his head. “No. But my Astral Pet detected Undead energy from it, which means I can use it to feed my pet. If it’s okay, can we remain here for a few days so Little Skeleton can fully absorb the energy?”

That was partially a lie. As long as he played dumb, the Federation would not blame him even if they later recognized the true value of the material.

His excuse went through because Little Skeleton was undeniably the only Astral Pet present who could use Undead energy. Still, people weren't precisely eager to stay in this place any longer than necessary just to keep Su Ping company. They had gone pretty far into this space rupture and already encountered that eighth-rank Magical Corpse Beast. Nobody knew what else could make an appearance.

Without minding their attitude, Su Ping simply told Little Skeleton to start "eating." He didn't actually plan to remain behind until the energy was fully taken. It was just that, he didn't want anyone to get suspicious.

His act worked out just fine. Seeing Little Skeleton drawing energy from the strange stone, the last bit of doubt vanished from the group.

All things said, they still didn't understand why Su Ping would tarry in this dangerous area for days. They saw Su Ping pretty keen on keeping this stone for himself and couldn't help wondering what else was hidden inside it. Usually, they'd trust the Federation's device. If the device failed to tell anything, it was unlikely for a common shopkeeper to know more. However, Su Ping had shown them too many secrets for them to have this lingering belief.

Still, they had nothing concrete to stop Little Skeleton from feeding. They couldn't make any use of the Undead energy anyway. While materials helpful with pet growth could earn them some merit should they bring them back, they had no reason to take this one from Su Ping after what he did.

"So this is just an element stone full of Undead-type energy, right?" asked Luo Guxue.

Fan Ganglie put a hand on it and nodded. "I think so. Though element stones are usually smooth and good to look at. This crude one is just a raw element ore."

"I have no objections about Mister Su keeping it," Fan Yujing claimed.

Fan Ganglie nodded again. "Same here. Mister Su helped us reach our destination after all."

Ye Chenshan also spoke up with a smile, "Then it's decided. I'll let Mister Su make the decision. Just a piece of advice though, taking several days here can be risky. Since you have that puppet to help, shall we carry the stone back first?"

"Yeah... We'd better get out of here," Fan Ganglie agreed.

Su Ping saw all the others thinking along those lines and nodded as well. "All right."

Fan Ganglie sighed in relief and told his earthworm to enlarge the tunnel so they could carry the Nether Ore back to the surface. Then they found some ropes to bind it onto the Magical Corpse Beast.

After making sure the fox came following, the group retreated. Just like before, Li Ying moved farther ahead as a scout. Meanwhile, Ye Chenshan summoned another pet good at detecting danger as an extra layer of safety.

On their way, they would evade everything that looked strong and kill all other easier prey. The most dangerous enemy they ran into was a lower, eighth-rank bug monster, which was easily maimed by Little Skeleton, the Magical Corpse Beast and the Flame Bird working together.

The ranks of their foes began dropping as they approached the outer edge of the space fracture zone. But they still remained highly cautious because high-rank Astral Pets could well hide among weaker ones to ambush them.

They finally felt their tension ease when looking at the exit just up ahead.

There were other settler teams gathering there, who were spooked for good when they saw the Magical Corpse Beast running in their direction.

The ruckus lasted until the beast disappeared into the fracture.

“I’m not seeing things, right, guys?” a settler wondered out aloud, “That’s a Magical Corpse Beast of the eighth rank.”

“Someone’s riding it! Who are those people?”

“I think I saw Ye Chenshan up there.”

“Ye Chenshan from Team Polaris? Maybe that’s their leader’s pet?”

...

The appearance of the Magical Corpse Beast aroused more panic at the temporary campsite.

Seeing so many people giving them odd looks, the others in the group all grew embarrassed. Though this was to be expected since the Magical Corpse Beast was way larger than common mounts used by average settlers. Besides, it sure looked dangerous.

Several guards hurried to the scene, then returned to their posts when they saw who were riding the beast.

“Let’s go.” Without waiting, Su Ping told the beast to move on, causing many settlers in their way to quickly back off in either fear or respect.

Most people recognized Fan Ganglie and Ye Chenshan. Soon, they started exchanging gossip.

On heavy but fast steps, the Magical Corpse Beast soon moved out of the camp area.

The group was once again on guard because it was still possible to run into powerful Astral Pets in this Class B barren area. They picked the shortest route so they could reach the base as soon as possible. Since most settlers used this path, wild Astral Pets all knew to stay away, apart from a few ferocious ones that were always looking for trouble.

After eliminating a few more fourth or fifth-rank ferals, they finally saw the lights of the settlers’ base welcoming their successful return.

## Chapter 70: Invitation from the Academy

Unsurprisingly, the defensive deployments around the main base—including several missile launchers and laser cannons—were all aimed at the Magical Corpse Beast.

The guards saw friendlies sitting on the creature and asked everyone to hold their fire. Though they still had to thoroughly check the returning group's settler badges so they didn't accidentally invite spies who were being controlled by hostile Astral Pets. Such tragedies occurred several times when either Beast Kings or low-rank parasites planned to infiltrate the base. As the second line of defense protecting the base city, they had to ensure security.

Once checked that everything was in order, the guards silently kept Su Ping's name in their minds. There weren't many settler teams who possessed such powerful Astral Pets as mounts.

"I'm sorry sir, but you have to put your partner back inside your pet space," a guard politely spoke to Ye Chenshan, when he thought the giant creature belonged to Team Polaris. "Large-sized pets aren't allowed to walk freely in the facility."

Ye Chenshan cleared his throat. "Ahem, Mister Su, the man's right, I'm afraid. You should leave your puppet outside for the moment."

Several guards looked at Su Ping in great surprise. They thought this particular young man was a kid from some rich family who was tagging along to gain experience.

But... Not even a "rich kid" would be able to summon an eighth-rank pet without having the strength to control it.

"There's no need." Su Ping shook his head. "I'm turning in this thing to get some merit."

The Magical Corpse Beast was Little Skeleton's puppet and could not go inside his personal pet space. Since he couldn't keep it with him in the base city, it would be better to get rid of it.

Besides, he didn't need such a burdensome creature to help him fight when he had Little Skeleton. And it wasn't like he planned to fight Astral Pets in the barrens often. Supposing he had to return some time in the future, he might just find a dead pet and make another puppet out of it.

The others, however, couldn't quite accept his decision. Everybody would absolutely like such an awesome mount to show off. Why would they hand it over to the Federation?

Fan Ganglie even tried persuading Su Ping, who did not listen at all.

After ordering the puppet to place the Nether Ore on the ground, Su Ping told Little Skeleton to cancel the puppet effect. As soon as the Undead energy was taken away, the Magical Corpse Beast turned into a pile of bones.

The others couldn't help but feel their hearts aching upon seeing Su Ping giving up such a precious tool. Yet they couldn't do anything about it.

A transportation team in the base came and took all the bones and the Nether Ore further inside.

“Goddammit. Such a waste...” Fan Ganglie mumbled.

The others more or less knew that Su Ping was not with them. As a shopkeeper usually stayed in the base city, he didn’t have much use for the Magical Corpse Beast anyway.

While waiting for the inspection results to come out, Ye Chenshan excused himself first. “Guys, since everything’s done, I’ll report back to my team.”

“All right.” Fan Ganglie and Li Ying nodded back. “Good luck, man.”

Su Ping also showed his courtesy. “See you next time.”

“I’ll find time to talk about your compensation in a few days.” Ye Chenshan walked away.

No one objected. They knew someone like Ye Chenshan wouldn’t keep them hanging.

Before leaving, both Ye Chenshan and Luo Guxue asked to exchange contact information.

“This is where I work in the base city,” said Luo Guxue, as she handed Su Ping her business card. “If you’re interested, I hope you can come to our academy. With that kind of skill and potential, you’ll be benefiting a lot of upcoming battle pet warriors and enriching our future.”

Su Ping read the card and found the name on it to be familiar. It seemed this “academy” was where his sister was attending. Luo Guxue was a senior professor.

“I’ll think about it.”

Lu Guxue thanked everyone politely and went away after Ye Chenshan.

A moment later, the report of the prize they delivered came back. They had earned 1.6 million merit points in total.

That was a big number, according to what Su Ping learned from Fan Ganglie the other day. As he remembered, the merit points for killing a first-rank was 10, second was 50, third was 100. Then the price would climb in folds from here. A thousand, ten thousand... until it reached 500,000 for a seventh-rank kill.

As for eighth-rank pets, even the weakest one was worth at least a million. The Magical Corpse Beast was an intermediate eighth-rank, so 1.6 million was a very reasonable result.

However, Fan Ganglie didn’t look happy upon seeing the result. “Damn. They settled the payout based on an ordinary Magical Corpse Beast.”

The Magical Corpse Beast they took back was absolutely not “ordinary” when it could use Black Annihilation, a ninth-rank skill. As Fan Ganglie believed, they should be rewarded double. But they couldn’t argue anymore because the corpse couldn’t prove anything. No one suggested a second inspection. It just wouldn’t work out.

Su Ping didn’t have any problem with the result at all. The merit points could get him enough rewards already.



Also, he was registered as the killer of the beast in the end, as agreed by everyone else. The single record had boosted Su Ping from a recruit all the way to the Silver tier.

The next tier would be Gold, which required him to earn a total of five million merit points.

Above Gold were honored settlers who could hunt down ninth-rank enemies, which meant over 10 million merit points for each kill. Just like titled battle pet warriors, honored settlers were the most respected individuals on this planet.