

Versatile 1711

Chapter 1711: Special Feathers

The Wind of Sorrow was clearly stronger now, yet more Winged Patrol Beasts had gathered outside. Their cries were louder too, and were driving Li Dexin mad.

“The Wind of Sorrow is the Winged Beasts’ protective umbrella. The Winged Beasts have been living in the Qinling Mountains for ages, so their feathers have a special characteristic. When the Wind of Sorrow blows on them, it actually makes their feathers smoother and sharper,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

He already told the group that the Winged Patrol Beasts were not to be underestimated. It was pointless for Li Dexin to drive them away in the first place, as these lesser creatures would gather in numbers once again after the Wind of Sorrow appeared.

Not only were they unharmed in the Wind of Sorrow, they could also use the Wind of Sorrow to gain special abilities. Meanwhile, outsiders had no choice but to hide under the Curtain Trees!

Their level might be the lowest in the Qinling Mountains, but they were afraid of nothing!

A huge gap appeared in the curtains, allowing a strong gust of the Wind of Sorrow to pour through.

A few cuts sliced through the curtains. They were no longer thick enough to shield the area under the Curtain Tree from the Wind of Sorrow. The people behind the curtains immediately woke up from the cold breeze.

“These assh****, they are destroying the curtains so we can no longer hide behind them!” Zhao Manyan snarled.

These Winged Patrol Beasts were one of the most detestable demon creatures Mo Fan had encountered so far. In addition to their annoying cries, they knew outsiders would struggle to survive in the Wind of Sorrow, so they kept tearing the leaf curtains into pieces so they would have nowhere to hide!

The group finally managed to get some rest, yet their scalps were already turning numb because of these annoying pests.

“Is there any way to slaughter them all?” Li Dexin was a hot-tempered man. He could not stand the annoying creatures any longer!

“No chance, they will immediately scatter as soon as we go outside. They will return again after a time. These Winged Patrol Beasts are truly a disgusting species in the Qinling Mountains. Once the scent of their blood spreads after being carried by the Wind of Sorrow up to a dozen kilometers away, the rest of the Winged Patrol Beasts in the local mountains are going to head over right away. These Winged Patrol Beasts are very united in situations like this,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“So killing them isn’t an option, either? Are you telling us we have to bear with their annoying cries?” Zhao Manyan said.

“More or less, which is why I told you not to provoke them. It might take us some time to avoid them, but anything is still better than the situation we are now in,” Zhang Xiaohou said calmly.

“Humph, I don’t believe there’s nothing we can’t do! Rest here, I’ll kill them all!” Li Dexin shouted.

Li Dexin was about to lose his mind to the annoying cries of the Winged Patrol Beasts. He could not care less about the deadly Wind of Sorrow outside. He immediately Summoned his Great Lesser Earth Dragon.

The Wind of Sorrow was inflicting damage over time, so he could withstand the damage if he could finish the battle quickly enough!

Li Dexin was quite powerful, and did not rely on the Great Lesser Earth Dragon. He jumped along the walls and cast a Light Spell to defend himself while channeling his spell. A huge shadow began to descend from the dark sky!

The Winged Patrol Beasts were lesser creatures, after all. They had no chance of escaping an Advanced Spell. The huge area of effect of the Sky Veil soon smashed dozens of the Winged Patrol Beasts to the ground!

The Great Lesser Earth Dragon was even more savage. It could not fly, but its jumping ability was incredible. It reached the highest spot on the cliff and breathed forth a sandstorm in the direction the Winged Patrol Beasts were clustered in!

The Sandstorm Breath and Li Dexin’s Earth Spell worked together, sealing the escape routes of the Winged Patrol Beasts.

Feathers stained with blood sprinkled down from the sky like dust. The ridge that was calm and quiet just a moment ago was soon in a total mess. The remains of the Winged Patrol Beasts were scattered across the trees, the ground, and the rocks. Many fell into the creek and dyed the water red.

Li Dexin had slaughtered the creatures at a shocking speed. The strong scent of blood soon lingered in the air. The remaining Winged Patrol Beasts fled for their lives after losing the will to fight...

“A bunch of flies dares to act impudently in front of me!” Li Dexin harrumphed coldly.

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The battle soon came to an end. Li Dexin withdrew his dragon into the Contract Space and went behind the curtains.

“Major General Li, your arm...” Ling Fei noticed.

Li Dexin glanced at his arm, and was shocked to see a bloody cut across it.

“He was only out there for such a short time!” Advisor Xu exclaimed.

The Wind of Sorrow was growing stronger, and was more harmful to human flesh now. Li Dexin was not constantly protecting himself with magic while he was fighting, so both his arms and his face had severely dried up.

“Healing Magic isn’t effective against these kinds of injuries,” Zhang Xiaohou informed him.

“It’s just some minor injuries, it’s fine. The Winged Patrol Beasts have destroyed the curtains. We should keep going,” Li Dexin huffed indifferently.

The remains of the Winged Patrol Beasts were scattered all over the place, reeking of blood. More Winged Patrol Beasts were going to gather in the area in no time. They could not afford to stay here any longer.

“I can’t guarantee that I can find the next Curtain Tree within three hours,” Zhang Xiaohou mentioned.

“It doesn’t matter, we have three defensive Mages among us. They should have no problem if they take turns to protect us!” Li Dexin declared.

“It’s our only choice now. Let’s go!” Mo Fan said.

Three of the nine people from the Violet Imperial Battalion were adept at defensive spells. They set up magic barriers to protect the group as they ventured deeper into the Qinling Mountains along the narrow path.

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“How long is this wind going to last? Why isn’t it stopping?” Zhao Manyan said.

It was almost daylight, but the Wind of Sorrow was still blowing. The energy of the first defensive Mage of the Violet Imperial Battalion had been depleted. Another Maga had taken over his role, but it was difficult to tell how long she could last. Her three Elements were not all defensive.

Li Dexin insisted the group keep going. Zhang Xiaohou was against the idea, but the guy never took Zhang Xiaohou’s advice seriously.

Mo Fan was not fussed about Li Dexin’s behavior. After all, they were not the ones expending their energy, and had managed to preserve their strength so far. In fact, the Violet Imperial Battalion was providing them with free protection! Otherwise, they would have no chance of going anywhere while the Wind of Sorrow was still around!

Chapter 1712: Is...Is It Out?

The Wind of Sorrow kept blowing. The deeper they went into the Qinling Mountains, the stronger the wind became.

Not long afterwards, the three defensive Mages of the Violet Imperial Battalion had expended all their energy. The group was now struggling to advance.

Piercing cries constantly sounded from the sky, either from the top of the cliffs or behind the trees. Eyes were watching the group from a safe distance, like the scouts of a hostile army.

The cries grew once again, giving everyone in the group a headache.

Li Dexin looked up and scanned his surroundings. He was on the verge of losing his temper again.

Were these creatures not afraid of dying? He had slaughtered a whole bunch of them not long ago, yet they still dared to follow them!

"I'll handle them!" Ling Fei said.

Li Dexin nodded.

Ling Fei's primary Element was Wind, while her secondary Element was Lightning. She cast several lightning strikes, knocking the Winged Patrol Beasts down from the sky.

Ling Fei obviously had a Soul-grade Lightning Seed, and the Winged Patrol Beasts stood no chance against her. It did not take long for her to wipe out the newest group of Winged Patrol Beasts.

However, Ling Fei was ambushed by a Winged Patrol Beast covered in blue-gray feathers as she was regrouping with the others. The cunning creature was hiding among leaves where she happened to pass. The sharp feathers cut her arm before she could react. Fresh blood poured out of it.

It was a common sight when fighting demon creatures in the wild. Even if a Mage's level was significantly higher than the demon creatures, they might still die if they were ambushed by a weak creature at the perfect time. Luckily, Ling Fei was quite experienced in the wild. She managed to react fast enough to prevent the feathers from slitting her throat!

Ling Fei killed the creature anxiously. She checked her surroundings to make sure there were no other creatures hiding nearby before regrouping with the team.

The Violet Imperial Battalion did not bring a Healer, thus they could only treat Ling Fei injuries with medicines. Zhao Manyan immediately realized his opportunity had finally arrived. He told her about the treatment with an insect which he had learned from Mu Bai.

"Are you sure it's going to work?" Ling Fei had a feeling that Zhao Manyan had some ulterior motives.

"It's very effective. It might be a little painful, but it will heal your veins and muscles in a short time," Zhao Manyan said.

"I don't mind the pain," Ling Fei said.

"I admire your determination," Zhao Manyan said.

Being injured was extremely troublesome, especially since many demon creatures were very sensitive to the scent of blood. A bleeding wound was similar to a constant GPS signal for the demon creatures!

Ling Fei was a soldier, so she could not afford to let herself be a burden to the group because of her injuries. The method that Zhao Manyan suggested might sound disgusting, but it was better than letting her wounds bleed!

"The Curtain Tree is just ahead. We can rest there," Zhang Xiaohou informed everyone.

"That's great, as expected of General Zhang! I'm so glad that you're with us," Advisor Xu chimed up.

This Curtain Tree was a lot bigger, with around seven areas shielded by the leaf curtains. The group no longer had to crowd into a small area, and everyone had plenty of space to rest up comfortably.

"Let's take this one," Zhao Manyan said.

Ling Fei nodded. She did not feel it was inappropriate.

Mu Bai had used the same trick to heal Zhao Manyan when Gangma broke his bones in the military town in Egypt.

Since then, Zhao Manyan had asked Mu Bai to give him a few insects that could rapidly heal physical injuries. He had stored them inside his Storage Ring for emergency purposes.

Ling Fei was sitting upright, but she frowned immediately when Zhao Manyan took out a fat white insect. She seriously wondered if he was just messing with her.

However, she bit her tongue and withheld her disgust. It was not too late for her to kill Zhao Manyan with her lightning if his method did not work!

"What are you looking at!?" Ling Fei glared at Zhao Manyan when she noticed him looking her up and down.

"I'm...I'm just admiring. You better prepare yourself, I'm about to start. You can scream if it's too painful. It will make you feel better," Zhao Manyan said.

"Cut the crap, just hurry up with it!" Ling Fei snarled.

She extended her arm out. Ordinary serums were useless against the wound. The special feathers of the Winged Patrol Beast seemed to contain some substances that were preventing the bleeding from stopping.

"My little insect is going in," Zhao Manyan said.

Ling Fei raised her head and closed her eyes.

A moment later, she felt a tingling sensation crawling over her wound. She opened her eyes and noticed the white insect turning the color of her blood.

"It's going in, bear with it," Zhao Manyan said.

"Ah!" Ling Fei already braced herself, but she was still surprised by the sharp pain. She could not help but scream.

The pain was unreal, as if she had been stabbed directly in the heart. Ling Fei thought she would be able to withstand the pain since she was a soldier, yet it was far greater than she had imagined. She almost fainted!

“Hang in there, it will soon be over!”

“Hurry up!”

“Soon, very soon, hey, stop grabbing me... AH! It hurts!”

“Is...is it out?”

“It will stay in your body. Don’t worry, it’s rich in protein. It won’t leave any side effects in your body... can you let go of me now? My skin is red from your nails!”

“Assh***, why didn’t you tell me that disgusting thing would stay inside me!?”

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Bai Hongfei and Yu Shishi exchanged glances with another in the next partition, shielded by the leaf curtains. For some reason, they both blushed at the same time.

Damn, what was Zhao Manyan even doing? They knew he was treating Ling Fei’s injuries, but those that had no idea might think they were doing something shameless in the wild. Their conversation was too misleading!

The shrieking of the Winged Patrol Beasts returned not long after the group managed to get some rest. Their ears almost exploded from the cries.

The group had been dazzled by the magical appearance of the Curtain Tree last time, but this time, they were extremely worn out. They finally had a chance to rest up peacefully without being bothered by the Wind of Sorrow, yet the creatures had returned before they could even catch their breath!

The relentless efforts of these Winged Patrol Beasts seeking their deaths were exactly the same as the rumors had suggested!

“They are destroying the Curtain Tree again! Damn it, I’m going to kill them all!” Li Dexin was about to lose his mind.

Chapter 1713: Luling Rift Valley

The Winged Patrol Beasts seemed to be enraged by the recent bloodbath. They began to attack the Curtain Tree fiercely, not giving the group any chance to take shelter from the Wind of Sorrow.

Li Dexin brought two soldiers with him to engage the Winged Patrol Beasts. He was serious about wiping them out!

The problem was, considering the size of the Qinling Mountains, the numbers of the Winged Patrol Beasts were obviously going to be overwhelming. Even a bunch of Super Mages might struggle to exterminate them!

The curtains were destroyed by the Winged Patrol Beasts, including the ones Zhao Manyan was sheltering behind. He was planning to use this opportunity to make a move on Ling Fei after cleaning her wounds and helping her recover her energy. Ling Fei might have the pride of a soldier, but Zhao Manyan knew most women were only pretending to be aloof. They actually enjoyed being treated tenderly by men.

Unfortunately, even though Li Dexin and the two soldiers were trying their best to eliminate the Winged Patrol Beasts, the creatures were just as angry. They recklessly destroyed the curtains even when their lives were in danger, just to expose the humans to the Wind of Sorrow. The other Winged Patrol Beasts would soon be able to feast on their remains!

“Damn it, how did they find us!?” Li Dexin grunted anxiously.

Killing the Winged Patrol Beasts was easy, but getting rid of them was trickier than anyone had imagined!

They had no choice but to continue their journey in the Wind of Sorrow, but they were in a pinch now that most of their energy had depleted.

“We can’t keep going anymore!” Zhang Xiaohou finally lost his patience.

If they kept following the brainless Li Dexin’s demands, not only would they fail to rescue the person the troopers came for, they would get themselves killed too!

“This goddamned wind will stop eventually!” Li Dexin rebutted promptly

“We are currently on these Winged Patrol Beasts’ radar. Even if we reach the next Curtain Tree, they are still going to attack us! You may leave if you want to bet your lives on the possibility that the wind will stop soon, but I won’t risk the lives of my friends!” Zhang Xiaohou snapped back.

Li Dexin was displeased by Zhang Xiaohou’s attitude. He was about to rebuke him when Advisor Xu stood up.

“We can’t afford to follow the mountain path. The Winged Patrol Beasts aren’t going to give up on pursuing us, either. There’s only one option left: the Luling Rift Valley!” Zhang Xiaohou went on.

Advisor Xu immediately took out a map and inspected it. He said with a troubled face, “The Luling Rift Valley is meandering. It will take us at least three days to reach Mount Baiba. I’m worried about our target’s safety...”

“Let’s split up here, then. You can follow the mountain path while we take the Luling Rift Valley. Do you really think the mountain path is viable under the circumstances? You should be glad we can reach Mount Baiba in four days at this rate!” Zhang Xiaohou said coldly.

“Well...” Advisor Xu was struggling to make up his mind. He looked at Li Dexin.

“Humph, the major general of the Qinling Mountains? Why am I not impressed? It doesn’t even matter if you’re with us or not!” Li Dexin said arrogantly.

“Are you retarded or something? How many times did I tell you not to provoke those creatures? Everyone knows how annoying the lesser creatures of the Qinling Mountains are, yet you still insist on fighting them. It’s your fault that we don’t even have a place to get some rest, and you are blaming me for it!” Zhang Xiaohou snarled.

Zhang Xiaohou normally had an even temper, but he seriously could not tolerate the unreasonable Violet Imperial Battalion commander!

He seriously wondered how the man had achieved his current rank. His existence alone had lowered the average intelligence of the army in the north!

“General Li, we are indeed in a pinch now. Perhaps we should follow General Zhang’s suggestion and take the rift valley instead. It’s better if we can stay out of the Wind of Sorrow. Otherwise, even if we make it to our destination, we won’t have any strength left to protect our target,” Ling Fei spoke up.

Li Dexin harrumphed coldly, then snorted disdainfully, “Whatever you say!”

Li Dexin sat down in a corner silently. He was radiating a violent aura.

Zhao Manyan raised his thumb at Ling Fei and said, “At least you’re the clever one!”

Ling Fei did not respond to Zhao Manyan’s comment. A tanned soldier that had previously left to kill the Winged Patrol Beasts with Li Dexin came over to them.

The soldier glanced at Ling Fei before smiling at Zhao Manyan.

“Spill it out, what’s with the hesitant look? Aren’t you a man!?” Ling Fei said.

“Well, Brother Zhao, how did you treat Captain Ling’s injury? Those creatures were reckless with their attacks. I was injured when I wasn’t paying any attention. The wound isn’t big. It’s only the length of a finger. May I ask Brother Zhao to treat my injury too?” the soldier asked.

“Oh, but my trick is only useful on women,” Zhao Manyan said.

Ling Fei turned around and glared at Zhao Manyan.

Zhao Manyan smiled, “I’m just kidding, where is the wound? You look perfectly fine to me.”

“Well...well... it’s here.” The soldier seemed a little embarrassed, but he finally turned around and leaned forward. He slowly lifted the hand that was covering the wound on his right buttock.

Zhao Manyan’s face immediately darkened.

Ling Fei quickly took a quick glance at him. She tried her best to maintain a stern expression as a soldier should. However, she burst out laughing when she saw the weird expression on Zhao Manyan’s face...

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“Houzi, is the Mount Baiba they are going to near the location of the Tree of Vows?” Mo Fan asked.

“Mm, Mount Baiba is quite large. Your destination is on Mount Baiba, too!” Zhang Xiaohou nodded.

“Strange, it’s too much of a coincidence if the person they are trying to save is so close to our destination. Is there something else there, apart from the Tree of Vows?” Mo Fan asked.

“Mount Baiba is the most mysterious place in the Qinling Mountains. Many demon creatures live there. No ordinary person will visit a place like that, but these soldiers of the Violet Imperial Battalion are very clumsy with their decisions. I seriously think they are going to get themselves killed rather than save the person,” Zhang Xiaohou judged.

“They are panicking,” Apas interrupted them as she was trimming her beautiful nails.

“Panicking? Maybe they are just concerned about their target’s safety,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“Perhaps,” Apas replied and proceeded to focus on her nails. It was difficult to interpret what she was trying to say from her indifferent tone.

Chapter 1714: They are both Leaders, But...

The Luling Rift Valley was extremely long. It was cool and moist within. Most Winged Patrol Beasts preferred to roost on certain special trees or in their nests along the cliffs. The Winged Patrol Beasts with a higher status claimed the greater heights, displaying their strength and status.

The group managed to escape the Winged Patrol Beasts’ pursuit temporarily by entering the Luling Rift Valley. The rift valley had a few species that preferred to stay away from sunlight, but who would promptly feast on any Winged Patrol Beasts that dared to enter there.

The Wind of Sorrow was a lot weaker after they entered the rift valley, but the Violet Imperial Battalion did not dare to waste any time, knowing that their time was limited. They quickly followed the path through the valley.

The rift valley was a low point in the mountains, where the water from the mountain streams and the underground springs eventually gathered. The group could see rapid currents flowing through the meandering rift valley like mystical white serpents.

There were plenty of rocks jutting above the currents. Everyone in the group possessed a certain level of cultivation, so they were able to leap between the rocks to advance through the rift valley. Zhang Xiaohou seemed very familiar with the place, and was jumping between the rocks like a nimble monkey. He would occasionally sprint along the walls on either side, too.

Having Zhang Xiaohou around saved a lot of trouble for the group. He had been in the military for many years, and his scouting skills were outstanding. He deftly lured the cunning demon creatures hiding in the surroundings and blocking the group’s path away, ensuring the others a smooth journey.

Zhang Xiaohou was able to deal with the creatures in the rift valley easily. The group was not bothered by a single demon creature, even after traveling for a few kilometers in the rift valley.

“General Zhang is indeed familiar with the Qinling Mountains. If we can maintain this pace, we should be able to reach Mount Baiba in no time!” Advisor Xu complimented him.

Li Dexin immediately glared at Advisor Xu after hearing those words. It was obvious what he was trying to say.

Advisor Xu smiled, not daring to say a further word.

The atmosphere was not as tense while Zhang Xiaohou was leading the group.

In comparison, everyone was on edge when Li Dexin was leading the group. They were on the verge of losing their minds after being tortured by the Winged Patrol Beasts. However, they were now traveling through the rift valley leisurely, as if they were on a scenic tour.

The rift valley did have some demon creatures, but Zhang Xiaohou managed to deal with them by himself. The group only needed to eliminate those they could not avoid.

Their main tactic was to eliminate the demon creatures as quickly as possible, without attracting any attention. They would continue on immediately after clearing the way. They did not stay behind without a reason to do so!

Zhang Xiaohou was extremely familiar with the habits of the creatures in the Qinling Mountains. The number of demon creatures was simply too high, so they could not afford to use destructive spells that might cause a huge scene until they had confirmed that there were no other demon creatures nearby. If they were foolish, the demon creatures would pursue them relentlessly, just like the Winged Patrol Beasts had previously!

“I feel like Zhang Xiaohou is a lot more like a soldier, compared to those people from the Violet Imperial Battalion. You can tell how experienced and well-trained he is from his actions,” Bai Hongfei murmured.

Bai Hongfei had been out in the wild for quite some time, so he knew where Zhang Xiaohou had gotten his experience and his skills from.

“He’s a major general after all! Speaking of which, he did a hell of a job when we were taking on the Black Vatican in Beijiang!” Zhao Manyan spoke up.

“Beijiang? The Black Vatican?” Bai Hongfei was startled, and his eyes glittered.

Bai Hongfei had gone to Beijiang about six months ago. He had heard rumors about the incident that took place in Beijiang from some older Mages, but was unaware of the details. The information about the incident was kept confidential, so not many people knew exactly what had happened.

To Bai Hongfei’s surprise, Zhao Manyan and Zhang Xiaohou were involved in it, and it sounded like they had played an important role, too!

The older Mages had profusely complimented the people who had helped defend Beijiang from the invasion of the demon creatures...

Mo Fan glared at Zhao Manyan.

Zhao Manyan opened his mouth, and was about to say something, but he eventually decided against it.

He had the urge to spill everything. It was such an epic scene and battle! They were up against the Great Pyramid of Giza, but they were told to keep it a secret. He could not even brag about it to others!

“Teacher, I’ve already devoted myself to Fanxue Mountain. I heard about the incident in Beijiang, but I’ve only managed to learn bits and pieces...” Bai Hongfei was eager to learn the truth.

“Speaking of which, Zhang Xiaohou was promoted to major general because of his achievements in Beijiang, too... Why is everyone else getting the benefits when it was us that risked our lives by going into the Pyramid? Shouldn’t the government at least reward us with a badge or a title?” Zhao Manyan grumbled with a sigh.

“Pyramid? Is it true that the Pyramid was there!?” Bai Hongfei was excited, staring right into Zhao Manyan’s eyes.

Mo Fan realized that Zhao Manyan was unable to keep his mouth shut. However, he simply let him be, since Bai Hongfei was not an outsider. However, Mo Fan could not help but remind Zhao Manyan, knowing his personality, “You better filter out the details that aren’t suitable for children.”

“Of course, I understand!” Zhao Manyan nodded. He knew he could not afford to tell the others about the Ancient King and Mo Fan’s Demon Element.

The journey was quite safe, so Zhao Manyan had plenty of time to explain how they had gone from chasing a member of the Black Vatican and tracking down a Red Cardinal to fending off the army of Underworld creatures at the ancient pass. He vividly told them how they protected the Magic Fire Beacons from the Black Vatican on the Great Wall.

In addition to Bai Hongfei, Apas and Yu Shishi were listening too, since they had never heard this tale before. Zhao Manyan was an expert storyteller. They were fascinated by the tale!

Zhao Manyan let out a relieved sigh after noticing the look in their eyes, “Oh my... I feel a lot better now!”

“Why do I feel like you’ve heard that story from somewhere else!?” Yu Shishi twisted her lips. She subconsciously looked at Mo Fan. She was struggling to believe that Mo Fan was such a righteous person. Not only did he look licentious on the surface, he was utterly vile and shameless on the inside, too!

“If I was lying, I will not be able to erect for the rest of my life!” Zhao Manyan swore the deadliest oath possible!

“Teacher, you are truly my idol, I admire you so much! I knew it since the very first time we met! I strongly believe that following you around is going to give me a bright future. I wasn’t wrong!” Bai Hongfei exclaimed to Mo Fan.

“Piss off! Did you forget how smug you were when I was helping you with your graduation?” Mo Fan cursed him back soundly.

Chapter 1715: The Golden-Blue Sparrowhawk

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The altitude of the terrain quickly increased after the group left the Luling Rift Valley. The mountains were lofty and imposing, blocking their view of the spacious valley. One could not help but feel minuscule standing before them.

“We’ll reach Mount Baiba after crossing these mountains,” Zhang Xiaohou told everyone.

“We are very close to it then! That’s great!” Advisor Xu exclaimed. The trip was no longer torturous after they lost the harassing Winged Patrol Beasts. Advisor Xu was in a great mood after learning they would soon reach their destination.

It was true that not everyone could trespass into the Qinling Mountains. A team could easily suffer a mental breakdown if they did not have an experienced leader who was familiar with the Qinling Mountains!

The mountains were incredibly high, but the group had no choice but to keep climbing them.

“The Qinling Mountains strictly follow level boundaries. The high-level demon creatures occupy the higher altitudes. We will no longer face the Winged Patrol Beasts at this altitude. Other strong beasts are going to show up soon, however. The Winged Beasts are very united, and they are a vengeful group, too. Therefore, you will only engage them if I give you the permission,” Zhang Xiaohou warned the Violet Imperial Battalion sternly.

He only had to remind the Violet Imperial Battalion, since Mo Fan and his group were strictly following his instructions already. They preferred to save themselves as much trouble as they could, as they had no idea what they would stumble into at the Tree of Vows. After all, it was the habitat of a Totem Beast!

“Don’t worry, we will follow your orders,” Advisor Xu agreed quickly.

“Your words don’t count!” Zhang Xiaohou glanced at Li Dexin sharply.

“Fine, we’ll listen to you! Just hurry up, we are running out of time!” Li Dexin cursed impatiently.

Luckily, Li Dexin had learned his place. He had realized they might actually fail their mission if he kept behaving stubbornly. He had stopped making a scene after the smooth journey through the Luling Rift Valley.

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The mountains were looming above them. The sky was a little dark, as the gray clouds were right above the group’s heads; it felt a little oppressive.

Their view was mostly blocked off by the tall mountains. They could only see endless steep cliffs leading into canyons. They were unable to see the bottom of the canyons, which were deep, meandering, and dark. If they accidentally fell into the canyons, they would find themselves in a giant maze, and struggle to find the way out!

Their vision was restricted most of the time. However, if they accidentally fell into the canyons, the lofty walls would further limit their sight; they would fear losing their way and feel helpless, surrounded by the mountains!

“There are definitely a lot of demon creatures in these mountains. I seriously wouldn’t dare to roam around blindly without someone guiding me!” Zhao Manyan grumbled.

He had the habit of talking to others when he was struggling to stay calm. However, the only response he received was his own echoes.

“Don’t you feel it’s too quiet here?” Zhao Manyan asked when no one in the group responded.

“Silence is never a good sign,” Lingling said.

“I agree.”

“Let’s hurry up and climb higher. It should feel a lot safer when our view opens up.”

The rises and falls of these mountains were extremely steep, and every time they crossed a ridge, they had to travel across a canyon. Zhao Manyan felt uneasy whenever he was surrounded by the mountain walls.

A piercing cry suddenly sounded above them.

The group cautiously halted in their tracks. They lifted their eyes and looked around sharply.

In front of them stood a peak separated from a huge mountain wall. It was almost tall enough to reach the clouds. The group found it hard to see its top.

A long-tailed bird covered in golden-blue feathers perched on a rock sticking out of the peak. Its feathers were perfectly smooth, without a single ripple despite the strong wind blowing at it, as if the creature was wearing gleaming gold-blue armor. The special lines of the feathers formed an elegant curve from the creature’s neck to its tail.

The golden-blue creature on the rock was staring down at the group with a noble, imperious bearing!

“It...it saw us!” Zhao Manyan blurted out.

“I can see that!” Mo Fan snapped.

“What do we do now?” Bai Hongfei asked.

The creature’s level was obviously quite high, judging from its sacred golden-blue coloration and Aura, which slightly exceeded their group. The group could not tell if they had accidentally trespassed into the creature’s territory. They would be in great trouble if that was the case, since they were unable to use their spells properly in the limited space in the canyon.

“Stay calm, these high-level Winged Beasts usually treat height as the boundary of their territory. It won’t trouble us as long as we stay below a certain altitude,” Zhang Xiaohou said calmly.

“Are you sure? Aren’t all demon creatures hostile toward humans?” Ling Fei asked.

“We can just walk past it slowly. Don’t look at it. In their eyes, outsiders, including humans like us, are just some lowly creatures. We should withdraw our Auras and try not to alarm it,” Zhang Xiaohou replied.

“Humph, lowly creatures? It doesn’t look that strong to me, either! Perhaps it can’t even endure a single breath from my Great Lesser Earth Dragon!” Li Dexin exclaimed.

“Stop bringing us trouble, do you want to rescue your target or not? Why do I feel like you are here just to stir up trouble instead?” Zhao Manyan grumbled loudly.

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The group made their way past the peak the Golden-Blue Sparrowhawk was standing on without provoking it.

The Golden-Blue Sparrowhawk kept staring at them, but as Zhang Xiaohou had told them, it was simply glancing down at a few weaklings. It had no intention to attack them. It had an indifferent look as it watched the group of lowly creatures walking through the canyon like a bunch of monkeys, observing them until they slowly faded into the distance.

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Bai Hongfei could not help but ask after they left the Golden-Blue Sparrowhawk’s view, “What level was that creature?”

“Judging from the altitude it was keeping, it was at least a Great Commander-level creature,” Zhang Xiaohou told him.

“Great Commander-level... it’s not really that strong.”

“If the Wind of Sorrow is blowing, Winged Beasts are two or three times stronger than usual. They might only be Great Commander-level creatures when we aren’t in the Qinling Mountains. However, if we are in the Qinling Mountains, they are still a threat to us! Besides, there’s more than one around here!” Zhang Xiaohou pointed out.

Chapter 1716: The Skycloud Realm

The group finally arrived at Mount Baiba after crossing the mountains.

Mount Baiba was made up of countless peaks. The mountains were special because each peak was actually isolated from the next, with their tops soaring into the clouds!

These mountains were covered in ancient vegetation, so when the group reached the vicinity of Mount Baiba, they did not see exposed peaks of various heights, but vines dangling in the sky!

The thick branches of the trees in the dense woods extended from one mountain to the cliffs of another. The plants of these hundreds of mountains intertwined with one another, forming a floating forest!

The spectacular natural scene was hidden deeply in the Qinling Mountains. It was difficult to imagine something like it without seeing it in person. The plants were at the same height as the clouds, while the mountains were like pillars connecting the sky and the ground. The group could see tiny colorful dots circling the tree and flower-covered cliffs when they looked up. They were none other than the demon sparrows, hawks, and monster bees of different levels residing on the mountains...

“Mount Baiba is a paradise for winged beasts. From the bottom of the Qinling Mountains to the Sacred Waterfall at the top, the higher the altitude that the creatures are residing at, the greater their status is in these mountains. Many tribes of demon birds come here at certain seasons to pay homage to the Emperor of Feathers!” Zhang Xiaohou glanced thoughtfully at Mount Baiba, which was only revealing the tip of an iceberg.

Zhang Xiaohou had been to Mount Baiba many times, yet he was still impressed by the breathtaking sight every time he was here.

“The Emperor of Feathers?” Yu Shishi was confused.

“An old man living close to the Qinling Mountains told me this. The winged beasts are very strict with their social classes. The heights they occupy directly reflect their status. They are restricted to that altitude even when flying. Ones that break the rule will be punished by the Emperor of Feathers!

“It is the creature with the highest status among the winged beasts. It isn’t just the ruler of the Paradise of Winged Beasts on Mount Baiba, it also rules over the winged beasts in the mountains both north and south of the Qinling Mountains, one with great authority,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“That’s crazy! I never heard of that before,” Zhao Manyan admitted.

The soldiers of the Violet Imperial Battalion focused to listen to Zhang Xiaohou’s explanation, too.

Mount Baiba was clearly beyond their experience. The cliffs below the clouds, the floating woods covering the sky, and the flying creatures circling them alone were shocking to them. Most importantly, the blue sky felt so close to them. It was not exaggerating to describe the scene as a utopia in the Qinling Mountains!

“The Emperor of Feathers is different from the demon creatures that keep expanding their territories. It strictly orders the winged beasts under its lead to stay within the boundary of their habitat. The flying creatures are actually very powerful, yet they rarely take the initiative to attack other species, including humans. We are used to paying attention to the species that keep invading our lands, so many people assume that the flying creatures of the Qinling Mountains are weak and not much of a threat to us. The military also thinks the Qinling Mountains are insignificant when compared to the West Ridge, the Dongting Lake, and Shengnongjia. However, our view changed completely when we first discovered Mount Baiba!” Zhang Xiaohou said firmly.

He had dealt with the Qinling Mountains for many years, but the more he learned about the Qinling Mountains, the more unfathomable he felt the mountains were.

“So you were promoted to major general just because the safety level of the Qinling Mountains were reevaluated?” Li Dexin harrumphed coldly.

The safety level of the Qinling Mountains had indeed changed a few years ago. There was never a major general stationed at the Qinling Mountains before. The person-in-charge was only a brigadier general in the past, but the army had now appointed a major general to keep an eye on the Qinling Mountains. Many people assumed the role was deliberately set up for someone with a formidable background.

Not many people knew the truth, since they had never been to the Qinling Mountains!

Zhang Xiaohou’s role was extremely important, but others did not think highly of it. However, that did not bother Zhang Xiaohou. He was determined to stick to his responsibilities in the Qinling Mountains, regardless of his rank. The Ancient Capital had suffered great losses during the calamity, so it desperately needed a few years of peace. Zhang Xiaohou would not allow the flying creatures of the Qinling Mountains to cause any trouble while the Ancient Capital was recovering!

Luckily, the leader of the flying creatures was keeping an eye on its subordinates, too. He just needed to keep an eye on a few species with rather hot tempers to keep the peace!

“Mount Baiba is broken into different levels. The lowest level is the Vine Canopy Level that we are seeing right now. The Vine Canopy Realm is slightly higher than the majority of the Qinling Mountains. We can see most of the Qinling Mountains once we are at the Vine Canopy Level,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“Those trees are only the lowest level?” Mo Fan blurted out.

“Yes, we aren’t able to see the higher levels from here!” Zhang Xiaohou answered.

“So what is the level above it?” Yu Shishi asked.

“The Ashwood Wind Layer. It is made up of a few dozen mountains covered in Ashwood Forests. The reason it’s called the Ashwood Wind Layer is because the Wind of Sorrow doesn’t stop blowing at that altitude, and it’s a lot stronger than the Wind we encounter in the Qinling Mountains. Lesser creatures aren’t able to endure it. Only the more powerful winged beasts can fly in it,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“So there are only powerful creatures at the Ashwood Wind Layer?” Bai Hongfei asked.

“Mm, only powerful creatures!” Zhang Xiaohou confirmed.

“Is there a level above it?” Mo Fan asked.

“Yes, but I have only heard about it from rumors. It’s called the Skycloud Realm,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

Lingling immediately pulled Mo Fan aside and whispered to him after hearing that name, “Jiang Xia mentioned the Skycloud Realm. He said that the Tree of Vows is the ancient tree connected to the Skycloud Realm!”

“So that means Jiang Xia and Yan Shi reached the highest level of the Winged Beasts’ paradise in the past, and brought a seed of the Tree of Vows back and established the Enforcement Union?” Mo Fan speculated.

“More or less, Jiang Xia didn’t really tell me the details. It looks like we will have to climb the mountains,” Lingling said.

“But, if it’s the paradise of the Winged Beasts, will we actually find the Deer God here?” Mo Fan said.

“It might be the paradise of the Winged Beasts, but there should be other species, too. I believe we are on the right track,” Lingling said confidently.

Lingling had read a lot of ancient records that briefly mentioned the Deer God. Many of them were related to the Qinling Mountains, but Lingling could not tell for sure, since the information was never verified. Only people that had been to the Skycloud Realm like Jiang Xia would know the precise location of the Deer God!

“Mm, a mystical place like this does fit the sacredness of a Totem Beast...” Mo Fan nodded.

They were very close to finding a Totem Beast!

They were very close to reaching the Super Level!

Chapter 1717: The Battle on the Vine Bridge

“Speaking of which, how are we supposed to climb up the mountains? Won’t the winged beasts attack us if we tried to fly up?” Advisor Xu inquired.

The person they were looking for seemed to be at the Vine Canopy Layer, but from what Zhang Xiaohou knew, that did not necessarily guarantee that the person was still alive. The Vine Canopy Layer might be the lowest level, but it had a lot of powerful creatures, too!

“Come with me, I know a safer route. We will part ways when we reach the Vine Canopy Layer,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“Thanks for your help, General Zhang!” Advisor Xu said.

Zhang Xiaohou led the group to another mountain. The native creatures only cared about creatures at the same altitude or higher, and did not bother wasting their time on the creatures below them. The group had no trouble moving around in the woods beneath their territories.

“This mountain is covered in vines, we can climb along them. Remember, you can only fly as a last resort!” Zhang Xiaohou warned them.

The group followed Zhang Xiaohou along an extremely thick vine. The vine was so huge that they could even stand on it. Some of the vines even formed a path through the air when they were tangled up.

The vines did not cover only a single mountain. Some were a few hundred meters long, and extended to a greater height on another mountain, allowing Mo Fan and the others to walk across them to the next mountain while slowly climbing their way up!

“The vines end here.” Bai Hongfei halted in his tracks. He had already reached the edge of a cliff.

They were currently at the top of a mountain, a relatively short one among the peaks nearby. It felt like they were still at the bottom when they looked up, as if they were not making any progress.

Mount Baiba had too many peaks soaring into the clouds. They were still a great distance away from the Vine Canopy Layer!

“Leave it to me,” Ling Fei stepped forward. Her eyes emitted a strange blue flicker of light.

Ling Fei murmured softly, like she was communicating with nature. The vines that had stopped at the top of the mountain began to grow toward a taller peak nearby.

The vines wriggled along the mountain like serpents. They wove together rapidly and formed a long vine bridge connecting two peaks around four hundred meters apart. A deep canyon lay between the mountains, and they felt overwhelmed as they tried to walk on the swaying vine bridge.

The stronger Wind of Sorrow blew through the vine bridge. A Maga of the Violet Imperial Battalion immediately set up a shield of Light to protect the group.

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A stronger gust of the Wind of Sorrow swept across the vine bridge when the group reached midway. The Light crumbled instantly, exposing the group to the fierce wind!

It was not the end of their misfortune. The Wind of Sorrow was only the entrée for the outsiders. A bunch of flying creatures had noticed the humans sneaking into their paradise!

The sound of the beating wings became clearer. It only came from above at first, but the loud noise soon surrounded them. Most awkwardly, the group was stuck on the vine bridge with limited space to move around.

“Didn’t you say they wouldn’t attack creatures at a lower altitude? We haven’t reached their altitude!” Zhao Manyan shrieked when the fliers showed up.

“These are only the lesser fliers. They are from below the Vine Canopy Layer!” Zhang Xiaohou replied.

“What should we do now?” Zhao Manyan asked.

“What else can we do? Screw them, I’ve tolerated them for too long!” Mo Fan rolled his sleeves up in annoyance.

There was indeed nothing else the group could do except engage the creatures!

“Can’t we fight them after we reach the next mountain?” Zhao Manyan yelled.

“Sure, you can try negotiating with the creature with colorful feathers right above you!” Mo Fan replied agreeably.

Was he stupid? These creatures had obviously launched their attack now because they knew humans were unable to fly and were vulnerable to the Wind of Sorrow. How brainless was Zhao Manyan!?

“Telekinesis!”

Mo Fan made his move right away. He gathered his Will on the rocks nearby and forcibly dragged them out.

The mountain was some distance away, but the reach of Mo Fan’s Will was impressive, and he continued to accelerate the rocks he had grabbed. The rocks were like missiles by the time they arrived!

The many different flying creatures about beat their wings rapidly. They were very nimble in the air, and the rocks only managed to hit a few of them. It was quite a surprise to Mo Fan, since his accuracy was on point most of the time.

“Brother Fan, they are more agile than ordinary Warrior-level creatures because of the Wind of Sorrow. You will have to limit their movements to land your attacks on them!” Zhang Xiaohou exclaimed.

Mo Fan’s Telekinesis was more than enough to handle Warrior-level creatures, but he did not expect these flying things to be so quick after using the Wind of Sorrow.

Mo Fan had no choice but to use stronger spells to take them out!

“Space Rhythm: Time Stasis!”

Mo Fan cast a Space Spell again. A huge rhomboid loomed over the area.

The rhomboid greatly slowed down the creatures within it, like they were moving in a pool of mud. Mo Fan was quite adept at utilizing the Time Stasis. The Winged Beasts nearby were moving significantly slower, as if they were suddenly caught in slow motion.

“Try dodging this!” Mo Fan harrumphed coldly.

No one was more violent than Mo Fan in a fight. He pointed his finger at the sky after casting Time Stasis on the fliers, completing a Lightning Spell in an instant. A bunch of lightning strikes descended upon the area without any regular pattern.

The Wind of Sorrow boosted the fliers’ speed, but it did not grant them sturdier flesh. The lightning strikes boosted by Mo Fan’s Lightning Tyrant instantly turned them into ashes after he restricted their movements!

“Such a remarkably strong Lightning Element!” Ling Fei was a Lightning Mage too, but she was still shocked when she saw how Mo Fan was brutally slaughtering the various Warrior-level flying creatures.

She would need to land her Lightning Spell on the fliers a few times to kill them, but Mo Fan was able to kill the Winged Beasts instantly with only one shot. It immediately changed her impression of him. After all, even the highest-quality Soul-grade Lightning Seed was unlikely to kill the Winged Beasts with a single spell!

“He does have a few tricks up his sleeves,” Li Dexin admitted softly.

Mo Fan was only able to handle the fliers from one direction. He managed to stop the ones coming from above, but the rest of the creatures began to attack the humans from different directions. These Winged Beasts were not small at all; the vine bridge would soon collapse if it took a few more hits from them!

“Pick up the pace, they are trying to break the vine bridge!” Ling Fei led the way, waving her hands around. She was controlling the vines so they would grow toward the other mountain.

“Another bunch of them are coming from that direction!”

“Same here!”

The group was being flanked from all directions on the vine bridge. It was the worst possible place to be attacked. Mo Fan was already killing the creatures crazily fast, yet he still failed to fend off the others that had shown up in great numbers!

“The other side of the bridge is collapsing!” Bai Hongfei yelled.

A bunch of the more intelligent creatures were using their sharp claws on the thick vines extending out from the previous mountain. They were trying to cut off the vine bridge!

“It’s fine, I can fly!” Zhao Manyan summoned out his golden Wing Magical Equipment. He was planning to fly to the next mountain after the vine bridge collapsed.

“Brother Zhao, don’t! If you show your Wings, the creatures will treat you as a flying creature. You will catch the attention of the more powerful creatures at a higher altitude. If you cross the height they are at, they will chase you relentlessly!” Zhang Xiaohou blurted out.

“What the hell? Are you telling me that I can’t fly around with my Wings?” Zhao Manyan complained.

“Winged beasts are very strict about their territory, like tigers on a mountain! One won’t care about birds flying across its mountain, but it won’t allow jackals and wolves to trespass into its territory! The same principles apply to these winged beasts. You can pass through the mountains and woods in their territory, and they will just turn a blind eye to you, like the Golden-Blue Sparrowhawk we stumbled into. But if you fly in their territory, they will assume that you’re challenging them. The whole tribe will come after you, as you are defying the pride of their tribe!” Zhang Xiaohou stated.

Zhao Manyan immediately had a headache. The vine bridge was going to fall soon. Did he have no choice but to fall into the bottomless canyon if he was not allowed to use his Wings?

Even an Advanced Mage was going to fall to their death at their current height!

“I’ll bring Lingling over first. The rest of you, hang in there,” Mo Fan decisively constructed the Star Pattern of the Space Element when he realized the pinch they were in. He wrapped his arms around Lingling and Apas before casting Blink.

He could reach the opposite mountain by casting Blink twice!

“Damn you, bring me along too!” Zhao Manyan cursed when he saw the sprinkles of dust circling Mo Fan.

Mo Fan did not give Zhao Manyan the chance to tag along. Bringing another person along would greatly reduce the distance the spell could cover. He was only able to cast Blink twice in the time available!

Zhao Manyan cursed when Mo Fan left with the two young ladies. He had never seen anyone neglecting their brothers so thoroughly for the sake of women!

“Brother Zhao, you should withdraw your Wings first. Otherwise, we are going to be in serious trouble. You don’t want the whole flocks of fliers chasing after you!” Zhang Xiaohou reminded him.

Zhao Manyan helplessly withdrew his Wing Magical Equipment. He glanced at the vine bridge that was being cut off when he realized he could no longer feel the vine bridge with his feet.

“Crap!... f**k meeeeeeeee!” Zhao Manyan screamed as they began to fall.

“Grab the vines! Hold on tight!” Ling Fei yelled.

Chapter 1718: The Great Demon of Mount Kunyu

Everyone automatically grabbed the vines. Ling Fei forcibly extended one end of the bridge to another mountain and quickly tied it to a sturdy boulder while she was falling!

The vines turned into a huge swinging robe, tossing the group to the mountain that Mo Fan was heading to, right through the fierce Wind of Sorrow!

The members of the team took turns slamming into the wall of the mountain. Luckily, the vegetation along the wall provided them with some cushioning, preventing them from smashing their faces into the wall hard!

The flying creatures had no intention of letting the outsiders go. They headed for the mountain right away!

“Meteorite Fist!”

Mo Fan stood at a higher spot and threw a punch into the sky.

Meteorite Fists fell from the sky as the fliers approached the mountain, pouring down like rain. The Warrior-level creatures were intimidated by the powerful spell, and did not dare come any closer.

“Quick, let’s go!” Zhang Xiaohou climbed up the vines and quickly regrouped with Mo Fan.

The others did not dare stay any longer, the beasts were too terrifying. They could not wait to shake them off!

The group discovered a cave on the mountain, which seemed to be occupied by some demon creatures. However, the group could not care less about the creatures in the cave under the circumstances, and ran right inside. If the Winged Beasts dared to chase after them, they would die horribly when they were no longer being helped by the Wind of Sorrow!

The cave was pitch-black, but it was out of the Wind of Sorrow's reach. The group felt a lot better after being tortured by the Wind in the open!

"Are they coming after us?" Zhao Manyan turned around and asked Bai Hongfei while running at the front of the group.

"It doesn't seem like it. I can see them circling outside the cave!" Bai Hongfei answered.

"I've never encountered anything more annoying than these Winged Beasts!" Zhao Manyan swore.

The cave was not very deep, and they soon reached its end. Bai Hongfei was extremely cautious. His eyes were glittering in the dark as he scanned the area carefully, in case some demon creatures suddenly showed up in the dark.

"Be careful, a place like this is usually occupied," Bai Hongfei warned everyone.

Bai Hongfei had just finished his sentence when there was a spark of lightning deeper in the cave. The group was nearly blinded by the arcing flash!

A moment later, Mo Fan walked over, dusting off his hands. He smiled when he noticed everyone staring at him, and explained "There was a huge leopard in the cave. I just got rid of it with my lightning. We can get some rest here and continue our journey once the other creatures are gone."

"Damn it, it's already so difficult, and we haven't even reached the Paradise of the Winged Beasts yet!" Zhao Manyan grumbled.

"The person you're trying to rescue is pretty impressive, managing to come so far on his own. Who is he?" Mo Fan asked casually.

"I can't tell you!" Li Dexin replied coldly.

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The fliers were almost gone by the time the group had recovered their energy.

Zhang Xiaohou told the group that if anyone actually used their flying ability, either the Wing Magical Equipment or the Wind Wings when they were outside, the native fliers would guard the entrance until they saw their dead bodies. They would not leave so easily.

He repeatedly reminded the group that flying was prohibited!

The group continued to climb the mountain after shaking off the annoying creatures. The Vine Canopy Layer was finally within their reach.

The vines were extremely dense, like a green island floating in the sky. When they entered the Vine Canopy Layer, it felt like they had arrived at a huge jungle full of primordial trees, where a person could easily lose their sense of direction!

Mo Fan looked around himself and examined the many vines, one looking just like another. He turned around and asked Li Dexin doubtfully, "Are you sure you can find where the guy is?"

The place was basically a maze built with trees and vines. It was extremely difficult to stay on course. How could they possibly find their target in a place like this?

“We have a way to track him down once we are close enough to him!” Ling Fei answered firmly.

“Alright, we shall part ways here then,” Mo Fan said.

“Won’t be seeing you again,” Li Dexin answered.

“I have to say, I really have the urge to blurt out cursing at people like you. We were kind enough to bring you here, yet you can’t even say a single ‘thank you’?” Zhao Manyan was very displeased by Li Dexin’s attitude.

“He’s a soldier too! Why should I be grateful to him? We are on a mission!” Li Dexin said.

“Brother Zhao, forget it, let’s go,” Zhang Xiaohou said. He could not be bothered wasting his time on someone like Li Dexin.

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Zhang Xiaohou led the rest of the group up the vines after parting ways with Li Dexin and his men.

It was impossible to tell the right way to go up Mount Baiba. The only method was to find a location where they could see a higher spot nearby and slowly climb toward it. Every time they reached the highest point, they would see a magnificent mountain or woods standing before them!

Luckily, the mountains at the Vine Canopy Layer were interconnected by the towering vine trees. They no longer had to expose themselves to danger while traveling between the mountains. They had finally shaken off the annoying lesser beasts of the Qinling Mountains!

“I swear I’m going to beat the crap out of that Li Dexin once I reach the Super Level. Where were his manners!?” Zhao Manyan grumbled.

“We won’t be seeing him again. Just forget about it. I just wonder who they are trying to save. It sounds like he’s quite interested in and familiar with this place,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“The Ashwood Wind Layer is coming up. Leaving aside the powerful creatures residing on the Ashwood Trees, how are we supposed to deal with the Wind of Sorrow?” Lingling brought up.

“I have no idea. I have never been to the Ashwood Wind Layer either!” Zhang Xiaohou admitted, scratched his head.

“Mo Fan, look over there,” Zhao Manyan stood on a high point, pointing at a giant purple tree in the distance!

“It’s higher there, are we going to climb that tree to the Ashwood Wind Layer?” Bai Hongfei asked.

Mo Fan stared at the ancient tree standing out among the forest giants that Zhao Manyan was pointing at. His face gradually filled with astonishment!

Under the sunlight, the giant purple tree was sprinkling mystically under the blue sky. It was supposed to be a dazzling sight, yet Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan were lost in thought.

“What is it?” Bai Hongfei and Yu Shishi were confused. They had no idea why the two were behaving like this.

“The Great Demon of Mount Kunyu!” Lingling exclaimed when she saw the giant purple tree.

Chapter 1719: Helping One Another

The tree had retained its sacred brilliance. Back when Mo Fan had first witnessed the elegance of the godly tree, he mistook it as a blessing from nature. He assumed the godly tree had existed to protect something, yet everything was merely his imagination. It did not exist to fulfill a sacred duty. It was merely following the core principle of nature, the law of the jungle!

“It’s the Giant Purple Linden... I didn’t expect that demon to have escaped all the way here!” Mo Fan clenched his fists, fixing his gaze on the Giant Purple Linden standing there aloofly.

“Didn’t Yan Shi kill that thing? Are you telling me the paradise of the Winged Beasts has another one...” Zhao Manyan said.

“It had nine trunks. Yan Shi and the Moon Moth Phoenix managed to destroy eight of them. It only has its final trunk left,” Mo Fan said.

“No wonder that thing doesn’t look as astounding as the Giant Purple Linden we stumbled into, only a ninth of it is left,” Zhao Manyan murmured.

Even with only a ninth of itself left, the Giant Purple Linden retained its majestic appearance. It was like a godly tree in the woods of the Ashwood Wind Layer, soaring into the sky together with the mountains nearby.

“Do you know what that is?” Zhang Xiaohou was surprised. It was Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan’s first time in the Qinling Mountains. Why would they know that tree?

The purple tree was clearly one of the main trees of the Ashwood Wind Layer. It served as a pillar, together with thirteen other Ashwood Trees. It must have been here for a long time!

“That thing is a demon!” Mo Fan briefly explained their encounter at Mount Kunyu to Zhang Xiaohou.

Zhang Xiaohou was astounded after hearing about the series of events at Mount Kunyu.

“I was here half a year ago. Another troop tried to climb the purple tree to make their way up, but we soon lost contact with them. We had no idea how they died until now!” Zhang Xiaohou exclaimed.

The purple tree had given Zhang Xiaohou a strong impression when he saw it for the first time. He immediately recalled the fate of the troop after learning its true identity.

"It's very likely that the demon has eaten them. It nurtures itself with fresh blood. I remember it wasn't looking so good when it ran away from Mount Kunyu. It must have absorbed the nutrients of many things after hiding in the Qinling Mountains," Mo Fan said.

"We can't let it live any longer. Once it regrows its trunks, it will move to somewhere close to a human city. Many people will end up as its food if they don't realize what it is," Lingling said.

It was hard to recall the terrifying series of events at Mount Kunyu. If it wasn't for Yan Shi, the half-Forbidden Mage who had sacrificed everything to stop the demon, it would have dragged countless innocent lives from Yantai into the abyss of death!

"Mo Fan, don't you think something isn't right? Why would we stumble into it again here?" Zhao Manyan said sternly.

"It's not a coincidence. I'm afraid this place was once the Great Purple Linden's old nest. Yan Shi and Jiang Xia must have discovered its existence here in the past when they brought back the Tree of Vows to the Enforcement Union," Mo Fan said.

"That makes sense!" Zhao Manyan nodded.

Lingling twisted her lips. *Wasn't it obvious? Did they really have to analyze it so seriously just to reach such an obvious conclusion?*

"I bet it won't be easy to fight that thing, right?" Yu Shishi asked.

Even though the Great Purple Linden had lost eight of its trunks, it was still exceedingly strong, even with only one trunk left. They also had to take into consideration the Winged Beasts residing on it, too!

"If the Violet Imperial Battalion was still around, they might be able to distract the Winged Beasts for us. It might be a chance for us to get rid of the Great Purple Linden!" Mo Fan said.

If they were only up against the Great Purple Linden, they might actually stand a chance. The Great Purple Linden was a great threat. They would only feel at ease after killing it.

They would also fulfill Yan Shi's last wish by killing it!

"Why can't we forget about it? Can't we avoid it by climbing another tree?" Zhao Manyan sighed.

They suddenly heard a soft movement while they were deep in thought.

Apas was the most alert in the group. Her glittering eyes immediately stared at a shrub a hundred meters away.

The sound had come from the brush, and it was getting closer!

A tanned face suddenly poked out from the shrub. The man scanned the area alertly. He was overjoyed when he saw Mo Fan and the others.

"You are all here, what a relief!" The tanned soldier jumped out from the shrub and headed toward them.

Mo Fan was confused. Why was a soldier of the Violet Imperial Battalion here? He saw them taking a different path. Didn't they already part ways?

"Why are you here? And how did you find us?" Zhao Manyan asked.

"I'm good at tracking. Basically, the others are currently in trouble, so I was hoping that you could lend us a hand," the tanned-face soldier said.

"Are you kidding me now? We already brought you here without asking a single cent in return, your leader acted like it was going to cost his life just to thank us, and now you're asking for our help now?!" Zhao Manyan nearly exploded.

"What happened?" Mo Fan asked calmly.

"Captain Ling Fei was eager to rescue our target. She ended up provoking a bunch of Skyice Winged Beasts. They are currently stuck in a tree cave. The Skyice Winged Beasts keep using their Ice Magic. They are trying to trap us in the tree... I managed to escape with the Shadow Element," the tanned-face soldier admitted.

"You guys are not familiar with the Qinling Mountains, yet you are still so clumsy and careless. It was only a matter of time before you found yourself in a situation like this. The Skyice Winged Beasts aren't easy to deal with. We have other matters to attend to. You should ask Major General Li Dexin to figure out a plan himself," Zhang Xiaohou said.

"General Zhang..." The tanned soldier did not expect Zhang Xiaohou to reject him so decisively.

"Did you find the person you're looking for?" Mo Fan asked.

"We did, but..." The soldier was lost for words. He was obviously not good at expressing himself. He also privately agreed that Li Dexin had overdone himself along the journey.

"We'll come with you, but we are risking our lives to do it. Once the others are safe, I will need you all to do us a favor," Mo Fan said.

Mo Fan did not expect the Violet Imperial Battalion to show up just when he was thinking about them. Speak of the devil...

The truth was, Mo Fan knew there was no way Zhang Xiaohou would leave them to die, especially since he was a soldier, just like them!

However, if they were going to help, they had to ask for a favor in return! With the help of the Violet Imperial Battalion, they might have a chance to destroy the last trunk of the Giant Purple Linden!

"Not a problem, it's our duty to be helping one another in the wild!" the soldier agreed right away.

The tanned soldier immediately led the way back. He was quite impressive as he wove through the trees and vines. It was easy to lose track of him if they did not pay attention.

"Yu Shishi, isn't the Giant Purple Linden closely related to the Moon Moth Phoenix?" Mo Fan asked as he recalled something.

“If we can kill the Giant Purple Linden and take its leaves, the Moon Moth Phoenix can skip the cocoon phase and turn into a moth straightaway,” Yu Shishi confirmed quickly.

The Moon Moth Phoenix and the Giant Purple Linden were one another’s nemesis. The last Moon Moth Phoenix had given Yu Shishi a second chance at life. She was more than willing to avenge the last Moon Moth Phoenix by taking out the Giant Purple Linden. On top of that, the Sacred Linden Leaves of the Giant Purple Linden were even more nutritious than the leaves of the Moon Mulberry Trees to the Moon Moth Phoenix!

“Are you saying that the little guy can turn into a mature Totem Beast right away?” Mo Fan blurted out in surprise.

“I believe she is still a phase away from her stronger form. You can think of her as a little Moon Moth Phoenix,” Yu Shishi said.

“That’s not too bad, she would be at least a Ruler-level creature, right?” Mo Fan said.

“Yes,” Yu Shishi nodded.

“That means our Fanxue Mountain will soon have a Ruler-level Totem Beast as a guardian!” Mo Fan exclaimed.

Apart from Hangzhou, which was protected by the Black Totem Snake, were there any other cities that were looked after by a Totem Beast?

Yu Shishi had settled down in Fanxue Mountain, so the Moon Moth Phoenix was clearly going to treat Fanxue Mountain as her home too!

“Let’s kill it! We have to kill the Giant Purple Linden. We’ll get rid of it while it’s still weak!”

Yan Shi had left the Giant Purple Linden with serious injuries. The demon was at its weakest point now. However, judging from how its leaves had regrown after moving to the Qinling Mountains, the Giant Purple Linden was slowly recovering from its injuries.

Once it regrew all nine of its trunks, it would be impossible for them to kill it!

Therefore, they had to take out the Giant Purple Linden here. It was going to drop lots of valuable loot!

Perhaps the loot would be enough for them to achieve the Super Level, even if they failed to locate the Tree of Vows.

“They are just ahead,” the tanned soldier called out.

Mo Fan’s thoughts were preoccupied with the Giant Purple Linden. He only realized the vegetation in front of them was covered in thick ice after collecting his thoughts. Even the breeze was chilly!

“Their numbers are going to be trouble,” Apas reminded Mo Fan.

Mo Fan looked at Zhang Xiaohou, wondering if Zhang Xiaohou had a plan in mind.

“The Skyice Winged Beasts normally have a leader. I’ll lure their leader away while you help the people escape. Don’t even bother fighting them,” Zhang Xiaohou told him.

Chapter 1720: The Person Rescued is Actually an Old Friend?!

Zhang Xiaohou was the expert when it came to dealing with winged beasts. Mo Fan knew what his longtime friend was capable of, so he was not too worried about letting him lure the Skyice Beasts away by himself.

The group followed Zhang Xiaohou's instructions. The tanned soldier brought them to the tree hollow. The tree itself had already turned into a small mountain of ice. The people inside were going to die from the cold in less than half a day.

Li Dexin had only asked the tanned soldier to look for Mo Fan and the others because they were left with no choice!

Luckily, Mo Fan and his crew had not gone too far. Otherwise, the whole platoon of the Violet Imperial Battalion would have been wiped out before they could rescue their target!

More cries were heard. At times, they noticed huge birds with icy and transparent bodies flying past the tree through the gaps between the leaves.

Mo Fan's group was hiding in the shadows of his magic. The Shadow Element was perfect for concealing their presence in a complicated environment. These low-level Skyice Beasts had no chance of detecting their presence.

The Skyice Beasts flew away after they failed to notice anything unusual in the area.

Some time later, loud cries were heard coming from the dark woods. The Skyice Winged Beasts were enraged suddenly. They began to stream away in a certain direction!

Their cries faded into the distance. Mo Fan asked Apas to keep an eye out. He only withdrew his Shadow Magic after he was sure the Skyice Winged Beasts were gone.

"Zhang Xiaohou seems to have lured them away," Zhao Manyan said.

"Brother Xiaohou is impressive when it comes to keeping demon creatures at bay," Bai Hongfei praised him.

Having outstanding strength might be impressive in the wild, but the ability to perfectly distract demon creatures was the most important for a team!

"Enough talk, help me with the ice," Mo Fan said.

The ice was very thick. It felt like they were digging into a mountain even when they were using powerful spells. Mo Fan was using all three Soul-grade Flames, while the others were casting their spells to get rid of the ice as quickly as possible.

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They finally broke through the layer of ice. Li Dexin and the men who were trapped in the tree cave had not given up, either, and had kept attacking the ice from the inside.

"I thought you were going to leave us to die," Li Dexin said.

"Can't your mouth say anything pleasant?" Mo Fan was utterly speechless.

"So what? You want me to thank you?" Li Dexin said.

"Forget it, we weren't doing it for free, anyway. Let's leave this place and find a safer spot. The Skyice Beasts should be on their way back," Mo Fan snorted.

Li Dexin's face darkened at the mention of the Skyice Beasts. He obviously had enough of them. He quickly went back into the tree cave to escort their VIP with the outstanding military background out respectfully.

Mo Fan was surprised to see Li Dexin acting so humbly. He looked into the tree cave, curious to see the important person who the Violet Imperial Battalion had come all this way to rescue.

A skinny figure walked out from the tree cave, their face covered in dirt and hair disheveled. The person was wearing a military jacket from the Violet Imperial Battalion, but the clothes inside it were torn and rugged. He wondered how long they had been trapped here for.

The person went past Mo Fan and abruptly looked up. Her glittering eyes fixed on him.

Mo Fan was startled too!

The person might look like a savage, yet Mo Fan was able to recognize her instantly!

"Jiang Shaoxu! It's you!" Mo Fan yelled, pointing at her.

"Mo Fan! Did the Heavens arrange for us to meet here?" Jiang Shaoxu was shocked too. She did not expect to stumble into Mo Fan in a place like this.

"Holy crap, you vixen, why...why are you here? My gosh!" Zhao Manyan shrieked when he saw Jiang Shaoxu.

Was the world that small? Why would they stumble into her in a place like this?

Speaking of which, they had not seen Jiang Shaoxu since they came back from the Taklamakan Desert, nor had they contacted one another.

"You know each other?" Li Dexin was surprised.

"We were on the national team together!" Jiang Shaoxu said.

"Let's leave this place first... we'll talk later..." Mo Fan was struggling to believe this, yet now was not the time to have a little chat. Zhang Xiaohou was still risking his life to buy them time.

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The person the Violet Imperial Battalion was trying to save was Jiang Shaoxu!

It was definitely a surprise to them. Mo Fan immediately asked about it after they found a secluded spot.

Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan understood after asking Jiang Shaoxu what she had been up to.

It turned out that Jiang Shaoxu had never stopped looking for her brother Jiang Shaojun after the incident in the Taklamakan Desert. She had learned about the existence of the winged beasts' paradise from the clues left by her brother, which pointed to the existence of a noble Totem Beast around here.

She had been exploring the Qinling Mountains for a long time, and finally found her way up to the winged beasts' paradise on Mount Baiba.

Unfortunately, her capabilities were limited. She ended up being trapped by the winged beasts, despite being extremely cautious. She had no choice but to use a heirloom artifact of her clan to ask for help!

"The Violet Imperial Battalion is here just to save you! You must have a formidable background!" Mo Fan exclaimed.

Mo Fan remembered Zhao Manyan mentioning Jiang Shaoxu's formidable background when they were still on the national team. However, Mo Fan did not know the details. Jiang Shaoxu never told him about her family, either.

"It's good to see you two here. If I can't find my Mr. Right in the future, I shall choose between you two," Jiang Shaoxu smiled.

She was very happy, not only because she was saved, but she was glad to bump into Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan again. It was always interesting to go on an adventure with them!

"What? What did you just say?" Li Dexin suddenly yelled.

"I promised them on behalf of General Li..." the tanned-face soldier said softly.

"Am I in charge or you? Did I ever say I would help them kill the demon tree?" Li Dexin grunted.

"But they did help us!" The tanned-face soldier felt wronged.

"I can find a way out without their help. Our mission is to escort Miss Jiang back. It's our duty to stick to our mission!" Li Dexin said.

Jiang Shaoxu glanced at Li Dexin before turning to Mo Fan, "Are you planning to do something?"

For some reason, Jiang Shaoxu's eyes were glittering. She seemed quite excited for someone who had been trapped by demon creatures for days.