

Versatile 1961

Chapter 1961: Muse Pelina

Mo Fan was a little down after bidding farewell to Xinxia. Little Flame Belle had gone with her mother, leaving him with a snake demoness and a simple-minded wolf. Mo Fan lacked a sense of security without the power from Little Flame Belle's Possess and her two Soul-grade Flames.

Now that he thought about it, he had been relying too much on Little Flame Belle. Little Flame Belle had given his Fire Element the ability to overpower those at the same level as him without him acquiring powerful Soul-grade Seeds and cultivating diligently.

However, it was important for him to grow stronger too! His Fire Element had to improve further since it was his foundation. He also had to tackle the shortcomings of his Fire Element when he was not being Possessed by Little Flame Belle.

Even without the Fire Element, he still had six other Elements. Some of their spells were quite useless since he never practiced them seriously. The enemies he was going to face would only get stronger from here on, so his spells would be even more useless if he did not practice them.

The battle at Xiamen had helped Mo Fan realize that he would never be strong enough. However, if he kept improving, he would be able to do more things!

(Ed. Note: Oi, it's like he has realized he has to be a... versatile mage...)

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The wind was chilly when you were high in the sky. The white clouds were scattered below like sheets of ice, creating a spectacular view. The mountainous folds of the lands under the clouds were visible when the clouds were thinner. The mountains, valleys, and roads had become little wrinkles, scars, and cracks from so high above.

"I didn't think the Parthenon Temple knew such a fascinating route. This is great. I can save some money not buying a flight ticket," Mo Fan laid back on Kris' Steel Griffin and crossed his legs.

Kris was a responsible man. As the purser of the flight, not only did he provide the group with his Steel Griffin, which had outstanding endurance and comfortable hair on its back, he had also set up a magic barrier along the journey to protect his passengers from the wind. The breeze was gentle and soothing.

"It's also my first time taking this route. It's all thanks to Muse Pelina, Priest Dowell, and the rest of the knights," Kris said politely. He was paying great respect to the others who were traveling with them.

The routes for commercial flights had become quite dangerous lately, as demon creatures had moved into the airspace. Nine out of ten flights from Greece to China were canceled, so Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan could only get a lift from Kris since they were in a rush.

Kris was demoted to an Attendant Mage in the Hall of Faith as his punishment. He was currently taking orders from Priest Dowell.

However, Priest Dowell was in Xinxia's faction. He was Fiona's elder brother. The arrangement basically meant Kris was to go on missions for some time as his punishment. He would slowly be promoted again sometime later.

He could no longer be a knight, but the Parthenon Temple had other halls than the Hall of Knights. If he could secure a foothold in the Hall of Faith and be promoted to a Priest, it might actually work out better for him.

A Priest was on par with a Golden Sun Knight in terms of their ranks. However, the Golden Sun Knights usually earned more respect, since they were closer to the Muses. That being said, Priests usually had more authority in their hands since every decision made by the members of the Parthenon Temple had to go through them.

Pelina was a Muse. No one knew which faction she was in, since she had not chosen a side during the election.

Pelina often went out to handle external affairs. She was not interested in the infighting in the Parthenon Temple. When Tata learned Pelina was going to the Scar of the Tianshan Mountain, she paid the Muse a visit and asked her to give Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan a lift when she realized Mo Fan was being forced to stay at the Parthenon Temple for a few more days because the flights to China were canceled.

Tata had agreed to make Kris the Attendant Mage of one of the Priests, just so Mo Fan would leave earlier. It was also a chance for Kris to atone for his mistakes.

Kris was very excited when he heard he had the chance to go on an adventure with Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan. Zhao Manyan had shared their exciting adventures when they were traveling around the world, including the encounters in the Amazon, the Sahara Desert, and at the Pyramids...

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Every man had an adventurous spirit in their bones. Kris had always been obedient to his clan, and had never done anything that overstepped his bounds as he grew up. When he was expelled by the Hall of Knights, he actually felt somewhat relieved, since he could finally do something he wanted!

"Kris, did the people of your clan trouble you after what happened?" a Silver Moon Knight that was serving a Muse among the knights asked.

"Brother William, they just told me not to go back... so I decided to tag along," Kris smiled.

"..." The Silver Moon Knight was left speechless. He let out a sigh and did not say anything.

"It's fine, Kris, we all knew whose fault it was. You didn't have a choice. If you do well in this mission, I can recommend you as a Probationary Priest. I remember you scored perfect grades in the courses for Priests. Why did you end up becoming a knight?" Priest Dowell had high hopes for Kris.

"Well... it was my stepmother's suggestion. She believed being a knight was more fitting for our family's situation," Kris replied softly.

"Kris scored perfect grades in the courses for knights too," William added.

"Impressive, muddlehead! I didn't expect you to be so good at your studies. It's fine; just hang around with us, I can guarantee that you'll be able to make a name for yourself!" Zhao Manyan smiled confidently.

William glanced at Mo Fan disdainfully. "It's already a relief if he doesn't stir up more trouble!"

Muse Pelina glanced at them briefly too, as if she was sharing the same thought. She added since someone had mentioned it, "I'm only bringing you two along because I gave Tata my promise. I hope you two won't bring me any trouble or interfere with my mission. I'm only going to bring you to the Scar of the Tianshan Mountain. Whatever happens after that is no longer my concern."

Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan grinned after hearing Pelina's proud and impatient words.

"She seems to be looking down on us," Zhao Manyan whispered to Mo Fan.

"It's pretty obvious. She doesn't even want to lay her eyes on us when she's talking to us. She's looking into the sky instead," Mo Fan said.

"Damn it, I can't stand arrogant chicks like her. What a pity, Mu Bai has passed away at such a young age. Otherwise, I would definitely ask him to mix some drugs so I could bring her to the Heavens instead!" Zhao Manyan scoffed.

Chapter 1962: The Divine City

"It's just how the female rights organizations are. The people of the Alps Institute were the same when we first visited them," Mo Fan reminded him.

"Yeah, Kris, the Priest, and the Knights, they are being too respectful to her. She can easily feel superior," Zhao Manyan agreed.

"Bear with it, we aren't familiar with the place. We might save a lot of time with her leading the way," Mo Fan said.

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Muses had incredibly high statuses in the Parthenon Temple. Priests and Golden Sun Knights would normally surround the Muses. According to Kris, this Muse Pelina was quite well respected in the Parthenon Temple. She had many supporters in Asia.

“Muse, was there any emergency in Lhasa that you have to go there so urgently?” Priest Dowell asked her.

They had all set out in a hurry. Priest Dowell only knew that his mission was to accompany a Muse to Tibet and China, but he was unaware of the details.

Muse Pelina glanced at Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan, the two outsiders. She was obviously not willing to discuss it in front of them.

Priest Dowell was sensible about that. He realized their mission in the Divine City of Lhasa was confidential.

Dowell had learned that there were many things that the public was unaware of as his cultivation continued to improve, especially after he became a Priest of the Parthenon Temple. The things he had encountered had toppled his understanding of the world. However, despite his astonishment and disbelief, there were things he had to accept, as he had no other choice.

Muse Pelina was not well respected in the Parthenon Temple just because she had a great reputation in Asia. More importantly, she was often sent to other places for secret missions. These missions were usually related to the Magic Associations of the Five Continents, the Heresy Judgment Court, the Main Hunter Alliance, and other top organizations in the world.

Dowell was more experienced with the situation in Greece or the Parthenon Temple as a Priest, but Pelina had obviously encountered more things than him. She had been to Tibet’s Divine City of Lhasa.

The Parthenon Temple was not on very friendly terms with the Chinese organizations, but they had great respect for the Sacred Palace Mages of Lhasa’s Potala Palace. Pelina had a great reputation in Asia mainly because she was close to the Sacred Palace Mages.

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Kris’ Steel Griffin was an impressive Summoned Beast. Its endurance as a mount easily stood out among the other Summoned Beasts there. It could even wrap itself with a harmless aura which ensured it was not attacked when crossing other demon creatures’ territories.

High endurance, great speed, and an aura of harmlessness. Not many Summoned Beasts could tick off all three criteria, not to mention Kris’ Steel Griffin was also a Commander-level creature!

The Flying Creek Snow Wolf was not suitable to be used as a mount. Mo Fan would only ride him when he was in a hurry. The main reason for that was that the wolf species was extremely invasive. Their presence would spread for a great distance even if they were just passing by other demon creatures’ territories. The hot-tempered demon creatures would race to intercept the Flying Creek Snow Wolf and interrogate him.

The distance between Greece and Lhasa was almost half the width of Asia. A normal flying creature would be worn out after covering half a country’s distance while carrying them, let alone flying across so many countries and territories of demon creatures in a single flight...

That being said, it was Mo Fan's first time hearing that the high-level Mages had a certain route that they would use to fly around. It allowed them to travel between countries and through the demon creatures' territories safely. Only certain people knew about the route, and it was not disclosed to the public.

"Kris, how good is your Steel Griffin's memory? For someone who has difficulties staying in one place and often visits the Parthenon Temple like me, it's quite troublesome to take the planes. Can you memorize this route for me?" Mo Fan asked Kris softly.

He had always had problems with international flights, and since he was currently a thorn in many people's eyes, he did not want others to learn his whereabouts easily. If he could learn the special route, he would have another option to travel between countries!

"Well... I can draw it for you if you really need it, but please don't tell the Muse. Only she has access to the route. I will be in great trouble if they learn I leaked it," Kris answered softly.

"You can remember it after we've traveled across so many countries, mountains, deserts, and forests?" Mo Fan blurted out.

"Perhaps it's because I'm good at my studies. I can remember the places we've been to, I just need a little more time to recall the details and draw them," Kris confirmed.

"Sick, as expected of a genius!" Mo Fan raised his thumb at Kris.

Mo Fan was a geography idiot. He actually thought the Middle East was part of Africa when they were flying over it. There was no way he could remember the route himself!

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They were unable to fly to the tall mountains directly as they were arriving at Lhasa. The Steel Griffin had to fly to other areas with a lower altitude so the team could reach Lhasa on foot through a side entry.

The air was slightly thinner up in the mountains, but it was clean and refreshing. It was similar to the air in the Alps. It was Mo Fan's first time in the Western Regions of China.

They finally arrived at the reputable Divine City, sometimes called the City of the Gods.

Lhasa was famous across the world. Many of the top organizations in the world held their meetings in the Divine City. China had two such powerful organizations: one was the Magic Palace of the Imperial Mages, and the other was the Potala Palace, with its Sacred Palace Mages. The Imperial Mages focused on matters inside the country, while the Sacred Palace Mages focused on matters across the world.

The Sacred Palace Mages worked closely with the Parthenon Temple, hence the members of the Parthenon Temple never acted superior in front of the Sacred Palace Mages.

"Wait for me here, I'll need to pay a trip to the palace. We will depart for the Scar of Tianshan Mountain in three days," Muse Pelina said.

"Muse, do we have to wait here too?" Silver Moon Knight William asked, clearly wanting to go with her.

“You are covered in dust, just wait at the mountain foot,” Pelina ordered him.

“Affirmative!”

Pelina went up to the palace alone. The knights were resolute and upright, and simply stood in place without going anywhere. Their imperious bearing immediately attracted the attention of the tourists on the plaza, who began to whisper among themselves.

One had to admit that the knights of the Parthenon Temple were very eye-catching. The specially-made coats of the Blue Star Knights and Silver Moon Knights were oddly imposing, making any other Mages standing beside them look like lowly beings.

“Let’s regroup with Lingling and the others,” Mo Fan said.

“Oh my, those people even went to take photos with them. Are they really that ignorant?” Zhao Manyan was speechless when he saw people taking selfies with the knights.

Chapter 1963: Flirting

No wonder so many people admired the knights of the Parthenon Temple. It was not so obvious when they were at the Parthenon Temple, but when they went somewhere else, they looked completely different from the ordinary people, as if they had come from the heavens.

If the knights were already so outstanding, the Servants and Muses whom the knights escorted were basically like angels. Mo Fan could not help but reevaluate his impression of Muse Pelina, who was walking up the stairs leading to the Palace while holding her skirt in one hand.

“Mo Fan, I finally know why people keep looking down at us. We look no different from street thugs. We aren’t giving people a good first impression! We don’t have a bunch of well-trained lackeys in bright outfits beside us to set off our brilliance. Everything needs something to set off their brilliance through comparison. We should start gathering our followers so we can attract attention wherever we go,” Zhao Manyan observed while fondling his chin.

Mo Fan strongly agreed. They were used to being free and going places on their own. No one really treated them seriously.

Meanwhile, the Muse of the Parthenon Temple was accompanied by her own knights and a Priest! She would stand out even if her looks were ordinary.

Mo Fan glanced at his phone and saw a message from Lingling. “Lingling told us to wait for them at the plaza.”

“We can examine the problem with our appearance while waiting for them!” Zhao Manyan believed it was a priority they needed to address.

There were many tourists at the plaza, chattering among themselves. A few knowledgeable ones realized the knights were from the Parthenon Temple.

“They are knights from the Parthenon Temple, no wonder they look so noble!”

“Perhaps some authority has just gone up the mountain. I saw a woman just now.”

“Maybe she is the person they are escorting!” The Hunters were discussing things right beside Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan. They immediately stared after Pelina, who was fading into the distance.

“There are Silver Moon Knights. She must be at least a Muse!”

“Silver Moon Knights... are they strong?”

“Our Hunter Group wouldn’t be able to defeat a single Silver Moon Knight,” an old Hunter with a beard declared firmly.

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There were fewer clouds in the mountains, and the sky looked oddly blue as a result. It was as bright as a sapphire.

Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan were bored of waiting. They went from examining the problem with their appearances to flirting with the female tourists on the plaza.

It was easy to tell the difference between locals and tourists in Lhasa at a glance. The people could easily tell Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan were different from the members of the Parthenon Temple. They soon blended into the group of tourists.

“We just came here. We aren’t sure where to go yet, so we came to visit the Potala Palace first. However, it seems like something happened recently, as they are not letting visitors go inside. What a letdown,” a lady with short hair complained.

“You just graduated?” Zhao Manyan asked.

“Yeah, this is our graduation trip. How about you two?” another cheerful girl who had tied her hair up asked.

“What a coincidence, we are here for our graduation trip too,” Mo Fan said.

“Ah? such a coincidence indeed. Which school are you from?” the short-haired girl asked.

“We are from Pearl Institute.”

“Pearl Institute? That’s a famous school!”

“It’s alright.”

“Speaking of which, you remind me of someone.”

“Are you referring to the winner of the World College Tournament, Mo Fan?”

“Yeah, you two are so alike.”

“Many people told me the same thing. I’m quite frustrated actually. I’m stuck under his brilliance,” Mo Fan said with a wry smile.

“Aren’t your boyfriends worried about you? You’ve come so far for your trip,” Zhao Manyan asked. It was one of his little tricks.

As he thought, the girls giggled embarrassedly and said, “We don’t have a boyfriend, except for her, but we don’t really like her boyfriend, including her.”

Zhao Manyan nodded. He glanced at the girl who had a boyfriend and noticed she was the fairest, most mature, and the best-looking among the girls. To Zhao Manyan’s surprise, Mo Fan had long set his eyes on her. The girl was already laughing after being teased by him.

Zhao Manyan twisted his lips. Mo Fan was no longer adhering to his bounds. He was already quicker at making his moves!

Since Mo Fan had already selected his prey, the rest of the girls were all his. It had been a while since he last had a 4P.

Zhao Manyan always followed a certain routine when picking up chicks. However, as he was planning to have a deeper conversation with the girls, he noticed a few familiar figures approaching them.

“Mo Fan, Lingling and the others are here,” Zhao Manyan warned Mo Fan.

“Got it,” Mo Fan did not treat it seriously. He had already learned where the girl was staying. He just needed to get the girl’s room number. “Oh, don’t you misunderstand, she’s my little sister. Where was I? Oh, if a man keeps suspecting what you are up to all the time, he is obviously insecure and lacks confidence. It’s tiring to have a relationship with someone like him, so you’ve made a smart choice by coming to Lhasa even though he was against the idea. You will enjoy yourself more here...”

“You sound quite experienced?” the girl giggled.

“A little...” Mo Fan chuckled.

“Mo Fan, Lingling and the others are here,” Zhao Manyan warned him again.

“Oh, Lingling, you and Jiang Shaoxu should head to the Hunter Union to collect some information first...” Mo Fan finally turned around to make Lingling leave.

Collecting information had always been Lingling’s job. Even though Tianshan Mountain was located in Xinjiang, Lhasa was still the place where the most information in the Western Regions was gathered.

Mo Fan’s smile froze as soon as he noticed a gorgeous, pale-skinned woman standing beside Lingling.

“Let’s go collect some information,” Mu Ningxue was like her usual self. The icy aura around her prevented anyone from going closer to her.

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They already planned this trip when Mo Fan was still at the Parthenon Temple. Only Lingling and Jiang Shaoxu would join them on the adventure.

To Mo Fan’s surprise, Mu Ningxue had come too!

Besides, judging from her tone, she had obviously seen Mo Fan flirting with the girl after they arrived at the plaza.

Mo Fan wondered if kneeling on a washboard would convince Mu Ningxue to forgive him. Either way, Mu Ningxue did not say a single word to Mo Fan that day. Their relationship had gone back to the first step.

Mo Fan was helpless. Not only did he fail to get the girl's room number, even Mu Ningxue was not letting him into her room. He had no choice but to cultivate in the cold night by himself until the next day.

Chapter 1964: An Extremely Dangerous Person

"Xuexue, why are you here too?" Mo Fan asked.

"I'm worried Tianshan Mountain might be too tough for you guys. Also, I was able to achieve the Advanced Level because of the presence of the Ice Magic here. It's useful for me," Mu Ningxue answered.

She finally spoke normally to Mo Fan the next day. Mo Fan let out a relieved sigh.

Mu Ningxue was well aware of Mo Fan's personality, so she was not too bothered by it...

"Tianshan Mountain is your place of blessings," Mo Fan nodded.

Mo Fan remembered Mu Ningxue had come here alone to train herself when she was disqualified from the national team.

Mu Ningxue had never slacked off her cultivating while at Fanxue Mountain, but she still needed experience too. She had decided to tag along when she heard Mo Fan was planning to visit Tianshan Mountain.

There were not many streets in Lhasa, and they finished touring them after a while. The ancient slabs were full of markings left by the believers when they knelt and pressed their heads to the ground. The faith and dedication of the believers in Lhasa were not necessarily inferior to the believers of the Parthenon Temple.

The rain started falling out of nowhere when Mo Fan and Mu Ningxue while walking on the streets.

Known as a daylight city, Lhasa usually had sunlight for more than eight hours every day. It was rare to see a downpour start out of nowhere. The locals on the streets seemed quite pleased with it, but the vendors doing business with the tourists were annoyed.

"What's going on? Is this daylight city turning into a downpour city instead? It's been raining a lot more these last few days," a vendor grumbled.

Mo Fan was buying a cup of juice for Mu Ningxue from the man. He chuckled when he heard the vendor's complaint, "I thought the people always prayed for rain here. Shouldn't you be happy now that it's raining?"

"You only pray for rain when there's a drought. The weather here is balanced. Having too much rain isn't necessarily a good thing, do you understand? Besides, it's very strange, since this is already the fifth rain in the last month. It's rare for it to rain even once during this season in the past," the vendor said sourly, glancing at Mu Ningxue, who was waiting on the street. He raised his eyebrows and said, "Lad, quite a beautiful girlfriend you got there. She looks like a fairy out of a drawing."

"Mister, how sweet of you. How much do two of these cost?" Mo Fan asked.

"Fifty."

"Holy crap, why don't you rob people instead?"

"Are you buying or leaving?"

"Watch your words, are you seriously a businessman!?"

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Mo Fan bought an umbrella. He and Mu Ningxue did not want to grab too much attention by using their magic to keep the rain away. It was a rare chance for Mo Fan to walk under the rain in a beautiful foreign land with Mu Ningxue, so Mo Fan was not bothered about the umbrella, which the vendor sold him for sixty yuan.

The rain poured down heavily, and the pedestrians quickly ran to seek shelter. Mo Fan and Mu Ningxue walked along on the huge slabs. They saw a skinny figure in a monk's robe after turning a corner. The man was on his knees praying in a certain direction, like he was expressing his gratitude to the Heavens for blessing them with the rain.

He remained unmoved as the raindrops fell on him, and was not bothered by the tourists running past him.

The rain grew heavier, but the man did not rise to his feet. It felt like he had turned into a statue after he knelt on the ground and pressed his head to the ground, like time had frozen in his view.

"What's wrong?" Mu Ningxue asked when she saw Mo Fan stopping in his tracks.

Mo Fan fixed his eyes on the man for a long time. A puddle gradually formed under his feet. The puddle was covered by a layer of darkness, but Mo Fan was actually its source.

"I don't know, I have a strange feeling." Mo Fan shook his head.

Mo Fan purposely took a closer look at the man as they walked past him. The man happened to turn his head around too...

The man did not lift his head after he was done praying, and was in a very strange stance. He only turned his face to the side and looked at Mo Fan from the corner of his left eye.

When Mo Fan saw the man's face and eyes, the Dark Vein in his body started flowing rapidly. A strong chill spread inside his body before it was released from his pores.

The man stayed in the strange posture for some time while Mo Fan was staring at him. Their gazes were fixed on one another's eyes.

Mo Fan felt his hair standing on end!

The man also seemed uneasy a few seconds later. He put his head down and returned to his initial posture.

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Mo Fan and Mu Ningxue reached the end of the street, and quickly made their way to the middle sector of the main street.

"What's wrong?" Mu Ningxue asked when she noticed Mo Fan had still not recovered from the encounter.

"I have a Dark Vein in my body. It's something the Dark Moon Crystal gave to me. It has integrated my Dark Material and made my Shadow Element stronger. It also granted me some special abilities. One of them is the ability to predict danger," Mo Fan told Mu Ningxue as she held his arm.

"Predict danger? That's a great ability, what did you notice back there?" Mu Ningxue persisted.

"That man in a monk's robe. I don't know why, but the Dark Vein sensed a great danger from him... and he seemed to be aware of my ability to sense his aura too," Mo Fan told her quickly.

"I didn't sense any hostility from him toward you. Why did you think he was dangerous?" Mu Ningxue was confused.

Mo Fan and the man in a monk's robe were acting strangely on the street, like two arch-rivals had stumbled into one another in public. The atmosphere between them was so cold that even the rain was freezing.

Yet they clearly did not know one another!

"Yeah, it's why I'm puzzled. He wasn't hostile toward me, but my Dark Vein kept warning me. The man seemed like he was worried that I might see through him too..." Mo Fan went.

"Is there a chance you two have met before?" Mu Ningxue asked.

"No, he's obviously not after me. My Dark Vein is just telling me that he's an extremely dangerous person. It's urging me to stay away from him," Mo Fan answered quickly.

"An extremely dangerous person..." Mu Ningxue repeated the words.

Mo Fan and Mu Ningxue continued on their way. They did not mention the man again.

Mu Ningxue wanted to visit the Sacred Palace, but it had been closed to the public recently, and the two could only walk around its perimeter. However, several wings with a sacred light suddenly appeared

from the Potala Palace. The wings looked like heavenly spirits descending from the sky when they were extended fully.

Mo Fan took a closer look and saw a few Sacred Palace Mages were flying out of the Potala Palace, like there was an emergency!

Chapter 1965: Judicator of the Heresy Judgment Court

It was obvious that the Sacred Palace Mages had impressive cultivation, and their speed matched it. They had already reached the plaza after a flash of light from the Potala Palace. They were scanning their surroundings cautiously, like they were searching for something.

Mo Fan looked up and saw Muse Pelina among the Sacred Palace Mages. She was riding a mystical beast that was able to race through the air, further setting off her grand appearance.

“This way. How bold of him to come to the sacred city! We can’t let him escape this time!” a Sacred Palace Mage with a thick ponytail said.

“There are too many locals and tourists around here. We should be careful,” a female Sacred Palace Mage in her forties corrected him quickly.

“Let’s find him first!”

Four Sacred Palace Mages split up into different directions and spread out like four light rays along the axes from the Potala Palace. The crowd gasped in astonishment.

The Sacred Palace Mages usually kept a low profile. They would normally land on the plaza and walk up the mountain to show their respect for the sacred palace unless there was an emergency, so it was rare for them to use such spectacular and stunning magic in front of the people.

For some reason, Mo Fan subconsciously looked back at the street he had just come from. His instincts were telling him that the Sacred Palace Mages were looking for the man in the monk’s robe!

Muse Pelina did not move out with the Sacred Palace Mages. She slowly descended to the plaza, landing before the Priest and the Knights.

Priest Dowell had been waiting for her there calmly all along. He and the knights bowed immediately as she returned. “Is there anything we can do for you, my lady?” Priest Dowell asked.

“We never thought that guy would be bold enough to come to the sacred city. He actually came so close to the Sacred Palace!” Pelina exclaimed.

“Who are you referring to?” Priest Dowell was clueless about the situation.

Pelina did not explain the details. Another figure was moving rapidly up the stairs nearby. Their actual body had already reached the plaza, leaving a whole bunch of afterimages behind.

The figure stopped close to Pelina. It was a man in a European monk's robe, embroidered with gold. He had a commanding air about him.

"So many powerful Mages!" Mo Fan exclaimed.

It was quite rare to see even a few Advanced Mages in public in most cities, let alone Super Mages. However, Mo Fan had already seen so many powerful Mages within a short period of time around the sacred palace. He was rather impressed, especially since it was his first time in Lhasa.

"Judicator, are you sure he's less than a kilometer from the Potala Palace?" Pelina asked quickly.

"I'm very sure," the man whom Pelina referred to as a Judicator responded.

"Will he do something extreme?" Pelina asked.

"Our duty is to arrest or purge him before that happens!" the Judicator declared.

Mo Fan was not far from the group. He could hear their conversation clearly.

Mu Ningxue asked softly, "Judicator... isn't that the title for someone of the Heresy Judgment Court?"

"Mm, why are the people of the Heresy Judgment Court here?" Mo Fan agreed with her.

The Holy Judgment Court and the Heresy Judgment Court were more powerful than the Magic Associations of the Five Continents. The Holy Judgment Court was responsible for watching over every Mage, including members of the Black Vatican.

The Heresy Judgment Court's scope of responsibility was more mysterious. Ordinary people would never come across the Heresy Judgment Court. However, Mo Fan happened to be on the Heresy Judgment Court's watchlist!

The man in a golden monk's robe referred to as a Judicator suddenly turned around and stared at Mo Fan like an eagle, as if there was some strange connection between them.

Mo Fan was displeased by that. People had been staring at him weirdly two times in a row within a short period of time. It felt like something on his face was telling people he was a vile person, even though he was actually a Five Good Youth.

{TL Note: Five Good Youth is Internet slang in China. It is used to describe young people who are good at five things: studies, beliefs, work, discipline, and behavior.}

The Judicator came over to Mo Fan and asked him directly, "Who are you?"

"What do you mean by that? Why are you only asking me, when there are so many people on the plaza?" Mo Fan snarled.

According to Old Bao's friendly warning, the people of the Heresy Judgment Court were all monsters. The old man had asked Mo Fan to stay out of their way if possible. The Holy Judgment Court would stick to the rules, still since they were supervised by the governments and Magic Associations of the Five Continents in the world. As for the Heresy Judgment Court... so far, no organization had dared to oppose them!

“You are Marked,” the Judicator said in an overbearing tone, like he was interrogating a criminal.

“What do you mean?” Mo Fan snapped defiantly in return.

“You have a Marking from the Heresy Judgment Court,” the Judicator explained sternly.

“You’re saying that I have a criminal record in the Heresy Judgment Court?” Mo Fan swore.

“You can think of it that way. It makes you suspicious,” the Judicator declared confidently.

Mo Fan’s expression darkened immediately.

Screw the Heresy Judgment Court!

When he handed the Cold Prince to the Holy Judgment Court, the Holy Judgment Court and Heresy Judgment Court promised to clear his record as long as he did not use destructive power that defied the laws of magic anymore.

A marking?

Mo Fan seriously had no idea when the people of the Heresy Judgment Court had left a Mark on him tagging him as a ‘potential criminal’!

The Marking had worked like a charm. The Judicator instantly recognized him as a problematic person, and stared at him like he was some kind of heretic. The Holy Judgment Court and Heresy Judgment Court could not even keep their promises! What right did they have to stand at the top of the world?

“I’m going to talk to your leaders!” Mo Fan harrumphed coldly.

Those scumbags! Mo Fan had yet to question the Holy Judgment Court and Heresy Judgment Court about how the Cold Prince had escaped and ended up being assassinated. Did they have any idea how many soldiers had died in Beijing when they were fending off the Cold Prince and his men? Weren’t they ashamed to face the heroic spirits of the dead?

“If you weren’t here to disrupt my judgment, the other heretic wouldn’t have had a chance to escape!” the Judicator stated coldly.

The Judicator only knew that Mo Fan had a Marking on him. It did not necessarily make him a true heretic. He would not waste his time on someone like Mo Fan without an order to purge him from his superiors. However, the Judicator was unable to locate the real heretic accurately because of the marking Mo Fan had. The man might have already escaped by now.

Mo Fan lost his temper instantly!

No wonder Old Bao reminded him not to cross paths with the Heresy Judgment Court. The people of the Heresy Judgment Court clearly did not have sound minds!

Not only did they fail to keep their promise and wipe his records, they even blamed him for failing to find the actual person because of their own Marking!

Mo Fan was f**king speechless about the retard’s logic!

Chapter 1966: Suspected Heretic

“Are you going to blame me for distracting you if you are having trouble pooping too?” Mo Fan asked the Judicator sincerely.

“Watch your tongue!” the Judicator snapped.

“Why don’t you mind your own tongue first? Let’s put aside the question of why I still have a Marking left by the Heresy Judgment Court for now. Even if I do have a Mark, have I done anything that breaks the rules of the Heresy Judgment Court!?” Mo Fan demanded in return.

“Having a Marking makes you suspicious, so it’s necessary to question you! Who exactly are you? Reveal your identity at once, and stop wasting my time!” the Judicator demanded sternly.

“Oh? That’s the last thing I’m going to do!” Mo Fan declared stubbornly.

The Judicator’s face immediately darkened.

Seeing this, Muse Pelina came over. She explained when she saw the tension between the two, “Judicator, this is Mo Fan, a family member of one of our Candidates.”

“You’re Mo Fan?” The Judicator had a weird expression, like a doubtful bailiff who had stumbled into a repented criminal.

The Judicator did not interrogate Mo Fan any further after learning his identity.

It was obvious that the Judicator was after the real heretic. If the Judicator had been polite, Mo Fan might have considered pointing him in the right direction. He believed they were after the man in the monk’s robe. However, after witnessing their attitude, Mo Fan was suddenly unsure of which side was the real heretic now.

After Judicator Maule left, Muse Pelina inspected Mo Fan with glittering eyes.

“Judicator Maule mentioned there was someone who was blatantly walking around and another who was hiding in the dark. It turns out that you were the one blatantly walking around. You are truly a problematic guy,” Pelina said in an unfriendly tone.

“Is the wind stronger for those in a higher position? Why do I feel like none of you up there has a sound mind?” Mo Fan responded promptly.

Pelina ignored Mo Fan’s sneer.

Priest Dowell was worried the conflict would escalate further at this rate. He quickly switched the topic, “Muse Pelina, did something serious happen? Why is a Judicator of the Heresy Judgment Court here? Mo Fan has been with us all the time. I don’t think he has done anything that has crossed the line?”

Pelina slowly shifted her gaze away from Mo Fan. If the Heresy Judgment Court was keeping an eye on Mo Fan, she believed it was no longer necessary to keep everything a secret, and stopped avoiding the topic. She explained, “Do you know how the Heresy Judgment Court judges whether a person is a heretic?”

"I'm not familiar with the process. Please enlighten me," Priest Dowell said respectfully.

"The power that humans use is referred to as magic. Since the beginning of the Magic Civilization a few thousand years ago, we have developed our own system, consisting of the White Magic, Dimensional Magic, Elemental Magic, Dark Magic..." Pelina went on.

These were common schools of magic. Every person who studied for nine years in magic schools would know that.

"We are aware of that," Priest Dowell nodded.

"I suppose you also know there is power beyond the scope of the Magic Compendium after you reach the Super Level. They are usually described as the Forbidden Arts," Pelina said.

"I have heard a little about that," Dowell said cautiously.

"The category of the Forbidden Arts has the highest classification. The Magic Associations and various organizations are experimenting with Forbidden Spells to make them a new magic tier in the Magic Compendium, or a new Element in simpler words. There's also another category in the Forbidden Arts, called the Evil Arts. The Heresy Judgment Court goes after every Mage who practices the Evil Arts," Pelina informed them.

Mo Fan understood Pelina's explanation. The Heresy Judgment Court had been after him because of the Demon Element. Luckily, Old Bao and some mysterious people on his side had fended off the pressure. Otherwise, it would not have been as simple as tagging him as a suspicious person.

There were Mages who were maintaining peace in this world. Mo Fan was obviously at the edge of destroying the world's peace!

"There's another category above the Evil Arts, called the Disastrous Arts. The Magic Association and Holy Judgment Court usually handle people who practice the Evil Arts, but the Heresy Judgment Court will arrest and purge those who practice the Disastrous Arts. Not only are the Disastrous Arts not included in the Magic Compendium, those arts are so powerful that they might threaten the peace of society and result in great casualties. People who practice the Disastrous Arts are like devils blending into the crowd. We can't predict when they will reveal their true form. It might be in the wild or the middle of a crowd... if it's the latter, it will definitely be a bloodbath," Pelina continued.

Disastrous Arts!

They had never heard of them before. Even Priest Dowell only knew about the Evil Arts.

"I've come to the Sacred Palace to help the Heresy Judgment Court and the Sacred Palace Mages purge a heretic. The Disastrous Art in the heretic's body is already out of control. A village in the Tibetan Plateau already fell victim to it; the whole village was wiped out. The heretic tried to take his revenge on a branch of the Asia Magic Association, but the Sacred Palace Mages stopped him in time. He is now taking his anger out on the Sacred Palace and has been active around here lately," Pelina finished.

"Taking revenge on a branch of the Asia Magic Association and threatening the Sacred Palace... That heretic is out of his mind!" Dowell exclaimed.

“Otherwise, why would they be treated as heretics?” Pelina purposely glanced at Mo Fan as she was talking. It made Mo Fan extremely uncomfortable.

“What about Mister Mo Fan?” Dowell could not help but worry.

“He only has a Mark that makes him a suspect, but Judicator Maule ended up wasting his time on him because of the Mark. It prevented the Judicator from locating the heretic. There are so many people in this city, so finding him is going to be difficult,” Pelina explained.

“No wonder Judicator Maule was picking on Mo Fan, but it’s not entirely his fault,” Dowell murmured.

Mo Fan’s lips twisted. It seemed like he had gone too easy on the Holy Judgment Court and the Heresy Judgment Court. He would not bother handing them half a member of the Black Vatican again even if they were kneeling before him!

They had taken all the credit for his achievements to help stabilize their authority and earning the compliments of every magic organization. Meanwhile, Mo Fan remained a potential heretic. What in the world!?

Chapter 1967: The Rift Valley of Tianshan Mountain

It was extremely rare that Mo Fan had a chance to have a little walk in the rain with Mu Ningxue. It was supposed to be romantic. Mo Fan had already imagined the positions he was going to use later, but instead he had found himself entangled with a series of troublesome matters.

Mu Ningxue was still worried about the Marking on Mo Fan after they went back to their inn.

“It sounds like the Heresy Judgment Court isn’t going to let you off the hook easily. They are still keeping an eye on you,” Mu Ningxue said.

“Those hypocrites!” Mo Fan snarled.

“I heard the Heresy Judgment Court has a powerful seal they can use to track down heretics and execute them no matter where they tried to escape to,” Mu Ningxue said.

Mu Ningxue was still worried about Mo Fan’s Demon Element. The Demon Element was just too powerful. It was difficult to avoid unnecessary casualties when using it. Judging from the Heresy Judgment Court’s attitude toward Mo Fan, they would immediately mark him as a real heretic as soon as his Demon Element took an innocent life.

There would be no escape once Mo Fan was considered a heretic. The Heresy Judgment Court was cruel and merciless. It had played a huge role in purging Saint Wen Tai!

Even someone like Wen Tai could not escape the Holy Judgment Court and Heresy Judgment Court’s execution. How could Mo Fan possibly stand a chance against them?

Mo Fan was fortunate that the Red Cardinal of the Black Vatican, the Cold Prince, had taken the blow for him. Otherwise, he would have had nowhere to run to once his execution was decided on.

The Demon Element did not originate from a proper source. Many magic organizations had forbidden it. Commander Lu Nian had continued to experiment on it after it was banned by the Magic Association. He ended up creating a few monsters, but the powerful Forbidden Art somehow ended up in Mo Fan's hands, and had merged perfectly with his Double Innate Elements to create the Demon Element.

Based on Pelina's explanation, Mo Fan's Demon Element was indeed considered a Forbidden Art!

"The power of the Demon Element is indeed a huge problem." Mo Fan let out a sigh.

"It's not your fault either, you only did it to save us..." Mu Ningxue grabbed Mo Fan's hand.

Mo Fan did not have a choice when he acquired the power of the Demon Element. He only did it to save himself and the others.

Mu Ningxue was clueless about where Mo Fan's power came from before, but after learning the truth, she could not help but feel sorry for him.

When they reached the inn, Lingling, Jiang Shaoxu, and Zhao Manyan were discussing something in the teahouse on the ground floor.

Mo Fan raised his eyebrows and asked, "Did you find something?"

"Yes! According to the information that was leaked from the Sacred Palace, there's only one entrance to the Scar of Tianshan Mountain. As long as we find the entrance, we can keep going into the Rift Valley and reach the Scar of Tianshan Mountain, no matter how terrible the weather is," Lingling said.

"So we just have to find the entrance?" Mo Fan asked.

"Mo Fan, you never did your homework, do you!?" Jiang Shaoxu grumbled.

Mo Fan scratched his head awkwardly.

"The Scar of Tianshan Mountain is at the boundless layer of thick snow and ice. The mountains are irregular, making it difficult to pinpoint the location of the Scar of Tianshan Mountain. Even those who found it before have to look for it again. Many have died while looking for it. In addition to that, the altitude of the Scar of Tianshan Mountain is exposed to strong winds that even Mages can't withstand. Those with outstanding cultivation can still be trapped forever on the mountain once they use up all their energy," Mu Ningxue explained.

Mu Ningxue had been to Tianshan Mountain. She clearly remembered everything about the place.

"One more thing! The demon creatures on Tianshan Mountain are great fighters. Warrior-level and Commander-level creatures are everywhere, and Ruler-level creatures are pretty common too!" Zhao Manyan added.

"The Scar of Tianshan Mountain is the most dangerous place on Tianshan Mountain. Even the lesser creatures there are at the Commander-level. It's one of the reasons why the Scar of Tianshan Mountain is called the Graveyard of the Strong. The Commander-level is only the weakest level. Every human who goes there is basically delivering themselves to the demon creatures like takeaway," Jiang Shaoxu added.

Mo Fan dropped his jaw as he scanned everyone's face.

Why did it feel like he was the only one who was clueless about the situation in the Scar of Tianshan Mountain?

The weakest demon creatures are at the Commander-level...

The Scar of Tianshan Mountain was beyond terrifying!

"What about the entrance to the Scar of Tianshan Mountain?" Mo Fan asked.

"The entrance isn't really a secret. As a matter of fact, someone found it only a month ago. A group of adventurers discovered a rift valley. They keep climbing in the rift valley with no visible ends. They eventually reached the Scar of Tianshan Mountain after passing layers of barren ground, meadows, alpine, and a valley of glaciers!" Lingling said.

"Just like that?"

"That is very important. Putting aside the danger in the Scar of Tianshan Mountain, it's highly possible that we will have to withdraw empty-handed if we can't locate the Scar of Tianshan Mountain. It's quite surprising that someone found the Rift Valley that serves as its entrance," Mu Ningxue said.

Those who had been to Tianshan Mountain knew the Scar of Tianshan Mountain was a never-ending topic. Many explorers had searched for it. Some had grown a lot stronger after visiting it, yet many were buried forever under the snow. Apparently, a town on Tianshan Mountain was full of posters of the people who had gone missing on the mountain. The town was populated by the family members of those who had gone missing. Some had waited for ten or twenty years, and eventually settled down at the foot of Tianshan Mountain.

Mo Fan did not do his homework researching the legendary snowy mountain. Otherwise, he would have treated the trip more seriously!

"There's one more thing. We've gathered some information related to the Totem Beast. Someone once spotted a flying beast with mystical wings hovering above the ridgeline of Tianshan Mountain. We've contacted the person, and he will trade us the clues. We'll meet up with him once we arrive at the town," Lingling said.

"We've also heard rumors about a sacred tiger on Tianshan Mountain. This sacred tiger is closely related to one of the Sacred Totem Beasts above the level of the Black Tortoise. This information cost a lot of money, but it seems quite reliable after comparing it to the information we have," Jiang Shaoxu said.

Mo Fan nodded. He said sternly after some time, "It sounds like you two have collected a lot of information, but did you learn anything useful about the Night Amethyst?"

Lingling and Jiang Shaoxu exchanged glances.

Jiang Shaoxu replied with an awkward face, "Well... there was too much exciting information related to Tianshan Mountain, but the Night Amethyst is rarely anyone's concern, so there isn't really much information about it."

Lingling nodded in agreement.

“So... you totally forgot about it?” Mo Fan asked knowingly.

“That’s not the case! We can still ask around now, or we can wait until we are at Tianshan Mountain,” Jiang Shaoxu replied a bit too quickly.

“I seriously think Mu Bai should just close his eyes and rest in peace,” Mo Fan sighed, eyeing the two of them.

Chapter 1968: Coincidental Encounter

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Mo Fan did not continue staying in Lhasa, since the retarded Judicator might blame him if and when he failed to track down the heretic.

After saying goodbye to Kris and Priest Dowell, Mo Fan, Mu Ningxue, Zhao Manyan, Jiang Shaoxu, and Lingling headed for Tianshan Mountain. Muse Pelina was planning to visit the same town, but Mo Fan and his crew had no intention of waiting for her. They could just go on their own since they now had some clues to follow.

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The town of Hope was located at the southern foot of Tianshan Mountain. It was very different from some of the outposts nearby, since it consisted of wooden huts that the people who had come to look for their missing family members had built along a river. It had gradually developed from a village into a town. People who were planning to visit Tianshan Mountain would drop by because of its convenient location. It eventually turned into a point of departure for groups of adventurers, explorers, mercenaries, students, and people who came to train themselves.

The town did not have many locals. Most of the people came from other places.

When Mo Fan and his crew arrived at the town of Hope, they realized the town that had made a name for itself due to Tianshan Mountain was a lot bigger than they had thought. It was almost half the size of Bo City!

Mo Fan initially thought the town would be like a typical outpost, where the houses were built with simple materials and the streets full of vendors selling magic serums, equipment, magic ores, information, and people recruiting new members for their teams...

“This place is surprisingly lively. The town at the foot of a mountain is more bustling than the marketplace of most cities,” Zhao Manyan observed.

“Why aren’t these people afraid of being killed?” Mo Fan had to ask.

“Tianshan Mountain is huge. It’s split into different layers by altitude. Not everyone is aiming for the Valley of Glaciers. The other layers have lots of undiscovered treasures too,” Lingling informed him.

Only Advanced Mages and above were strong enough to enter the Valley of Glaciers. The town had at least a few thousand Mages, but not many of them were in the Advanced Level.

However, it was obvious that the Mages did not come here to play. Their overall strength and morale were more impressive than Mages in most other places.

“Hey, did you three bring the national team’s badges?” Jiang Shaoxu suddenly asked.

“Yeah, they are quite useful. They can help us track where everyone is,” Zhao Manyan confirmed.

Mu Ningxue had brought hers, too, storing it in her Space Bracelet. She took it out after Jiang Shaoxu reminded them.

The badge was made of a special material. The badges contained pieces of a single stone that was imbued with the Psychic Magic, granting the badges the ability to display one another’s presence through the strength of the light they were emitting.

If the badges were too far apart, they were not very effective, and they could only point in a rough direction, like a compass. However, the badges would definitely glow when they were within a certain distance.

The badges were custom-made, and every member of the national team would have one. Even though they had already graduated and the World College Tournament was over, everyone still held on to their badges and treated them as a souvenir.

“Why is it glowing? Is it because we are close to one another?” Mu Ningxue was puzzled.

“No, it’s someone else,” Jiang Shaoxu said.

“Someone else?”

“You’re saying that someone from the national team is nearby?” Mo Fan asked, looking around.

“Mm, let’s follow the light and see who the person that is bold enough to come to Tianshan Mountain is,” Jiang Shaoxu smiled.

They had not expected their badges to light up. The members of the national team had parted ways after the World College Tournament. Only Jiang Shaoxu, who was so obsessed with Totem Beasts, had stayed in contact with them. Even Jiang Yu, who used to be quite close to Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan, was nowhere to be seen. He must have moved on with life.

Their team had won the World College Tournament. Almost every member on the team was supported by a powerful faction, not to mention the honor and fame gained by winning the World College Tournament. Their victory had basically given all the members of the national team a bright future.

Mo Fan, Zhao Manyan, and Mu Ningxue had all reached the Super Level without being supported by any faction and cultivating on their own. If they had reached the Super Level, the others with a solid foundation should have grown stronger too!

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The group of five walked down the main street while following the light of the badge.

The street was crowded, and the light of the badge gradually grew brighter. It was flickering at a higher frequency too, almost shining continuously.

“We are very close.”

“It should be the man in a brown shirt.”

“Damn, how can you tell?”

“Are you blind? He’s right in front of you. Don’t just stare at the badge.”

Zhao Manyan looked up and saw a man with a tanned face in a brown hemp coat. The mink scarf around his neck enhanced his haughty demeanor.

He was standing there staring at Mo Fan and the others as they were approaching him, his face blank.

Most importantly, he was holding a badge from the national team in his hand too. He had also noticed that someone on the national team was nearby.

“Oh my, isn’t that Captain Ai?” Zhao Manyan exclaimed.

“Why is it you... the four of you are all here?” Ai Jiangtu was stunned. He did not expect to bump into four fellow members of the national team in a place like this!

“Say nothing, let’s find a place and have some drinks first!” Jiang Shaoxu was overjoyed.

“Well, I’ll bring you all to meet a few people first,” Ai Jiangtu agreed.

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The atmosphere was a little weird as everyone took their seats.

The table had eight seats. Mo Fan, Zhao Manyan, Jiang Shaoxu, and Mu Ningxue were sitting on one side, and opposite them were Ai Jiangtu, Nanyu, Jiang Yu, and Guan Yu.

They were all staring at one another with wide eyes!

“Is this like an annual gathering after we’ve all graduated?” Jiang Yu was the first to break the silence.

“How would we know you guys came to Tianshan Mountain?”

“We didn’t expect you to be here either!”

“HAHAHA, I bet the Heavens have gathered the members of the strongest team here because we are about to set the Thames on fire.”

It was a great coincidence that they had bumped into one another in Tianshan Mountain.

Both sides finally explained what was going on after laughing about it.

“Basically, our advisors invited us to the capital to give the students a lecture, so we decided to hang around for a bit. Old Ai told us he’s planning to take some time off from the military to train himself. Jiang Yu, Guan Yu, and I had the same thought. We heard something about a Rift Valley in Tianshan Mountain recently, so we all agreed to come here,” Nanyu explained with a smile.

Chapter 1969: Snow Lotus of the Scar

Nanyu was a calm person, but her eyes were obviously brimming with joy.

They had not met one another since the World College Tournament, yet fate had brought them all to Tianshan Mountain.

The eight of them were almost the whole team!

The rest of the team were either incompatible with them or were in opposing factions. It would not be a coincidental gathering if they were here too...

“A powerful Mage must visit Tianshan Mountain at least once!” Ai Jiangtu sounded quite obsessed with Tianshan Mountain.

Many people were obsessed with Tianshan Mountain, but they were a little hesitant at first due to how mysterious and dangerous the place was. However, they felt more confident now that everyone was here.

“When are you guys heading out?” Zhao Manyan asked.

“If only you had come here earlier! The four of us have already joined a group of mercenaries. After all, we aren’t familiar with the weather, wind, terrain, distribution of demon creatures, and how we should react during an emergency. Just collecting information isn’t enough since we all lack experience,” Jiang Yu sighed.

“It’s not a bad idea to follow a group around.”

“Why don’t you all join the same group then? They are still looking for members. We’ll ask the leader to arrange for us to be on the same team. Following an experienced group will save us a lot of trouble,” Nanyu encouraged them.

Their cultivation did not really matter if the environment was terrible. What mattered was their experience and their ability to adapt to circumstances.

“It’s a long journey through the Rift Valley. It’s necessary for us to stick with a group,” Lingling said.

If they had not stumbled into Ai Jiangtu and the others, Lingling had also been planning that they join a bigger Hunter Group. Nanyu’s choice of a more disciplined and well-trained group of mercenaries was not a bad idea either!

“At least three thousand Mages have gone into the Rift Valley, but I bet only a few made it to the end. It doesn’t matter, since they can still obtain valuable resources along the way,” Guan Yu spoke up.

Guan Yu occasionally glanced at Mu Ningxue as he spoke, but he had noticed that Mu Ningxue was sitting very close to Mo Fan. Their skin was almost touching.

Only lovers would sit so close to one another!

Guan Yu knew his chance of building a relationship with Mu Ningxue was slim to nothing ever since Fanxue Mountain had been established, but he still felt uncomfortable when he saw Mo Fan and Mu Ningxue acting so intimately.

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Mercenaries were similar to Hunters, but mercenaries were usually more organized, like actual military. Their members were usually fairly fixed.

Hunters were more casual and freewheeling. They were constantly on the move, chasing after quests with handsome rewards. Ai Jiangtu was used to the military, so he preferred to join a group of mercenaries instead of a Hunter Group.

A group of mercenaries would normally be considered elites among the Hunters. The mercenary group Ai Jiangtu had chosen was ranked in the top three in Asia. It had around a hundred and ten members, split into ten teams.

Mo Fan and his crew were assigned to the ninth team of the Mailong Private Military Company. It turned out that Ai Jiangtu was quite close to the Vice Leader of the mercenary group. Without that connection, it would be unusual for a mercenary group with fixed members to bring in so many strangers at once.

“The Mailong Private Military Company... even a renowned organization based in Dubai has come to Tianshan Mountain. It’s going to be bustling on the mountain!” Zhao Manyan exclaimed.

The Mailong Private Military Company was reputable throughout Asia. Its members were strong and reliable. The jobs they took were not just quests submitted by the Hunter Alliance. They were even hired to fight in some of the wars in the Middle East!

Zhao Manyan was quite at ease after joining the mercenary group.

“I heard the Mailong Private Military Group has its own city in the Middle East?” Jiang Shaoxu asked him.

“Yes, they do have their own city. They collect tax from the residents just like a normal government, but their main focus is still on mercenary jobs and exploration. They have been sponsored by the Liden Royal Family to explore the Scar of Tianshan Mountain. The Liden Royal Family wants to make a name for themselves, but they are also looking for the Snow Lotus of the Scar to treat their queen’s illness,” Ai Jiangtu told the rest of them.

“The Liden Royal Family is quite wealthy and imposing,” Zhao Manyan exclaimed.

“Your family is here too. They have hired one of the top Hunter Groups in our country,” Guan Yu mentioned to him.

Zhao Manyan twisted his lips. He did not comment on the topic.

He had no clue what Zhao Youqian was up to. The man had hired one of the most expensive Hunter Groups in the country!

It was not like they were traveling to the moon to raise their flags on it.

“What illness is the queen of the Liden Royal Family suffering from?” Mo Fan asked. He had heard something about the queen from Xinxia.

Tata did not let Xinxia use her Spell of Resurrection because she was hoping Xinxia would reserve her remaining energy for the queen, earning the Liden Royal Family’s support.

Both Xinxia and Izisha had tried to cure the queen’s illness, but it was beyond their capabilities!

“It’s not really an illness... but she has reached the end of her lifespan. Not everyone can live for a hundred years. Some people have already reached their limit in their fifties or sixties. It’s not that complicated,” Jiang Yu said.

Mo Fan only realized the truth after hearing Jiang Yu’s words. No wonder both Izisha and Xinxia were unable to do anything about it!

Even the Spell of Resurrection was not going to save someone who had reached the end of their lifespan. The Spell of Resurrection did not make a person immortal. It was not going to work for someone who was dying a natural death!

“I know a thing or two about the Liden Royal Family. The queen isn’t on friendly terms with her first grandson. She wants her youngest grandson to be her successor. She even wrote it into her will, but her youngest grandson is still in his mother’s womb. She will only give birth half a year from now. A kid who isn’t born doesn’t have the right to be her successor. If the queen can’t live until her little grandson is born, all her wealth will fall into her first grandson’s hands,” Zhao Manyan told everyone.

“The Snow Lotus of the Scar can extend a person’s lifespan. Rumors say it can make a person live at least three to five years longer, up to ten years at most, so the queen is willing to spend a fortune to hire the Mailong Private Military Company,” Jiang Shaoxu said.

“That’s fine, they can look for the Snow Lotus of the Scar while we look for our Totem Beasts,” Zhao Manyan said.

“What Totem Beasts?” Nanyu asked with glittering eyes.

Zhao Manyan put on an awkward face when he realized he had carelessly spilled the beans.

“We are here to look for a Totem Beast,” Jiang Shaoxu explained quickly. She believed there was no need to keep it a secret.

“The Sacred Tiger of Tianshan Mountain?” Nanyu asked sharply.

“You know about it?” Jiang Shaoxu was surprised.

“Did you forget? I’m very interested in our ancient heritage, and the most mysterious heritage of our country is the Totem Beasts!” Nanyu said confidently.

Chapter 1970: The Gift from the Sacred Tiger

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The Rift Valley in Tianshan Mountain had appeared less than half a month ago, yet Mages from all over the world had already gathered at the foot of the mountain. The Town of Hope was bustling like never before. Some of the opposing factions were even cursing at one another on the streets when most people were asleep at night. They were deciding places and times to settle their disputes.

Lingling began analyzing the information she had bought from the vendors on the streets.

Lingling established a dataset to link all her information every time she was on a new mission, so that she could filter the facts out of the pieces of information she had gained from a variety of sources.

Not every piece of costly information was accurate. There were usually discrepancies between the information from different sources, so she needed more sources to verify the validity of the clues.

Lingling did not have a lot of information on the Night Amethyst. If it weren’t for Asha’ruiya’s help, they would be trying to find a needle in a haystack.

There was a lot of information and rumors related to the Totem Beasts. Many Mages had no idea Totem Beasts existed, but there were a lot of tidbits related to the Snow Tiger, the White Tiger, and the Sacred Tiger of the Scar.

China had many powerful species of demon creatures, and the demon tigers had always been at the top. Some of the infamous tribes were the Dunhuang Demon Tigers, the Tianshan Demon Tigers, and the Kunlun Demon Tigers.

The Tianshan Demon Tigers and Kunlun Demon Tigers were both strong species. The Tianshan Demon Tigers were able to use Ice Magic and were mostly white as snow. Their white fur gave them an aloof and imperious demeanor.

The Sacred Tiger of the Scar was the King of the Tianshan Demon Tigers!

Unfortunately, it was extremely difficult to spot the Sacred Tiger of the Scar. Even finding its trail was an extravagant hope, let alone meeting it in person.

“Rumors say the Sacred Tiger of the Scar is friendly to humans. It would stroll through the Scar of Tianshan Mountain around the end of autumn every year. It would gift the first person who saw it. Some people grew a lot stronger because of the gift from the Sacred Tiger of the Scar!” Lingling said.

“Friendly to humans? Does that mean the Sacred Tiger might be a Totem Beast?” Mo Fan asked.

“Mm, it’s rare for a powerful demon creature to be friendly to humans. This Sacred Tiger of the Scar might be closely related to the Totem Beasts. It might even be a Sacred Totem Beast itself,” Jiang Shaoxu said.

“Lingling, are you sure the gift from the Sacred Tiger of the Scar is real? I heard people mentioning it at the bars in Lhasa. It’s a ridiculous idea,” Zhao Manyan spoke up.

“It’s real,” Nanyu declared.

“How do you know it’s real if no one has ever seen the Sacred Tiger of the Scar before? How can you be so sure that it’s the Sacred Tiger’s doing? I doubt the Sacred Tiger is like a random NPC in the Rookies’ Village who gives players a luxurious gift after they talk to it,” Zhao Manyan protested.

“Someone has received the gift before, someone whom we are familiar with. His current status and achievements are closely related to the Sacred Tiger of the Scar,” Nanyu stated firmly.

“Who is it?” Jiang Shaoxu asked.

“Chairman Shao Zheng!” Nanyu declared.

Everyone was startled, especially Mo Fan, whose eyes flew open.

Shao Zheng!

“Are you serious? Chairman Shao Zheng is someone who received a gift from the Sacred Tiger of the Scar?”

“Why have I never heard it from him?”

“Now that you mention it, I did read in his biography that he spent three years on Tianshan Mountain. He didn’t get much attention before the age of twenty-five. However, after he left Tianshan Mountain, he had made incredible progress and became one of the highest authorities in our country,” Jiang Yu mentioned.

“Chairman Shao Zheng did mention the changes that Tianshan Mountain brought him many times when he was younger. He also mentioned the Sacred Tiger of the Scar often over the past twenty years. Many people strongly believe the Sacred Tiger of the Scar and its gift are real because of him,” Nanyu said.

“No wonder Shao Zheng asked us to do our best to look for the Totem Beasts. It’s because he was also blessed by one!” Mo Fan realized.

“However, many people died after coming to Tianshan Mountain because of that legend over the last twenty years, so he stopped mentioning his past here,” Nanyu finished.

“I see. It’s currently around the end of autumn, too. Tianshan Mountain will soon be entering its coldest season,” Mo Fan noticed.

“It’s exactly when the Sacred Tiger of the Scar might show up. No wonder the top organizations across the world are here!” Zhao Manyan nodded.

“I believe the Blazing Song Hunter Group the Zhao Family hired is after the Sacred Tiger of the Scar too,” Guan Yu said.

“Why would they bother chasing rumors around instead of focusing on making money?” Zhao Manyan shook his head, like he had no interest in learning the state of his family.

Guan Yu knew Zhao Manyan had faked his death. He could easily guess it was because of his family, so he did not continue the topic.

Guan Yu used to hang around with Zu Jiming, Nanrong Ni, and Mu Tingying, but he was no longer on friendly terms with them after something happened. He had drawn closer to Jiang Yu, Ai Jiangtu, and Nanyu instead, since he was at the capital most of the time.

He had basically given up on his wrong way of life and turned to a better one. The others were not worried that he would leak the secrets about the Totem Beasts and Zhao Manyan still being alive.

Shao Zheng’s personal experiences had further increased the credibility of the rumors about the Sacred Tiger of the Scar. Mo Fan had been through similar situations where he was gifted. The Fruit of the Vow was a gift that possessed similar effects to the Blessing of the God’s Seal. These things were even more appealing than valuable resources to Mages. Mo Fan’s strength was outstanding mainly because of the unique effects of the Blessing of the God’s Seal on his Lightning Element. Otherwise, he would have to struggle to beat people with a higher cultivation than he had.

Speaking of which, Mo Fan still had not consumed the Fruit of the Vow. He initially planned to give it to Xinxia, but since he was the only person that could consume it, he had to find a time to enjoy it. Zhang Xiaohou, Jiang Shaoxu, Bai Hongfei, and Zhao Manyan had all received their benefits. He wondered what special blessing he would receive from it.

“You said you are looking for the Night Amethyst. Why are you interested in such an ancient and evil thing?” Nanyu asked.

“You know about the Night Amethyst?” Mo Fan’s eyes widened.

Not even one person in a group of ten thousand would have heard of the Night Amethyst before, let alone know its traits, yet Nanyu was right on point!

Nanyu explained with a smile, “The Night Amethyst is the God of Darkness’ favorite, like how dragons love shiny jewelry, gold, and agates. You came to the right place if you’re looking for the Night Amethyst. If there’s still a place where the Night Amethyst can be found in the world, it will only be the Valley of Glaciers that has existed for millions of years!”