

## Versatile 1971

### Chapter 1971: Discrimination and Disturbance

“We’ve been searching high and low for clues and people who know where to find the Night Amethyst, but it turned out that you knew about it all along!” Mo Fan exclaimed, while smacking his forehead.

Lingling and Jiang Shaoxu looked at Mo Fan disdainfully. Since when had he spent time searching for information about the Night Amethyst?

“I don’t believe many people in our homeland know about the Night Amethyst. The person who told you to come to Tianshan Mountain to look for it must be an expert too,” Nanyu said.

“Can you help us find it? Someone’s life is at stake,” Zhao Manyan asked her.

“I can give it a try, but there’s no guarantee. In the past, many Mages used the Night Amethyst as a bargaining chip when dealing with the God of Darkness, in exchange for his power. The Night Amethyst is extremely rare now, since it takes over a hundred thousand years or even millions of years to form. It’s rare to find a place that has been well preserved for over a hundred thousand years. The Southernmost Land is one possibility, and Tianshan Mountain is the other,” Nanyu told him.

“The Southernmost Land...” Zhao Manyan twisted his lips. Did that mean they had to visit Antarctica if they could not find the Night Amethyst on Tianshan Mountain?

He would rather choke Mu Bai to death and force him to swallow his last breath. The Southernmost Land was worse than Tianshan Mountain!

“Next time, if you’re looking for something ancient, you can ask me first. How much have you spent on the information related to the Night Amethyst?” Nanyu said.

Mo Fan turned to Lingling.

Lingling was also Mo Fan’s treasurer. He had given her all his cards. Mo Fan had saved up some money lately. He should have at least a billion by now...

“One or two hundred million,” Lingling said calmly.

Mo Fan almost fell from his chair.

One or two hundred million was enough for him to buy a luxurious mansion with a sea view in a modern city, yet she had spent it on some unreliable information?

Could a piece of information be worth a hundred million?!

“I have bought information from more than a hundred sources, each of which cost around a million. Most of them were information on minerals and crystals, so we might be able to earn some back if we bother looking for them, but that’s largely a waste of time for us. I ended up re-selling the information,

but most people were interested in the rare resources in the Scar of Tianshan Mountain instead of minerals, so I couldn't cover the losses," Lingling went on.

"Lingling... you shouldn't treat my money as mere numbers. I come from a poor family. I had to think twice when I spent over ten yuan on two bottles of water!" Mo Fan winced.

"It's fine, I received some unexpected information too. I'll explain it some other time," Lingling waved it off.

"You can cancel those which you haven't paid for. I can guarantee you that most of the information they have is fake. The truth is, they can't really differentiate between the real Night Amethyst and another thing called the Night Quartz," Nanyu sniffed.

"Mm, you're right; half of the information I received is actually related to the Night Quartz," Lingling was impressed when she heard Nanyu's words.

The fact that Nanyu knew about the difference between the Night Amethyst and Night Quartz indicated she was an expert. Lingling only learned the difference between the two after spending a fortune on the information.

"Lingling, does the money you spent include information on the Totem Beasts? Or is that only the amount you've spent on information about the Night Amethyst?" Mo Fan asked as he suddenly remembered something.

"Of course it was only about the Night Amethyst. The rarer the thing we are looking for, the more expensive its information is going to cost," Lingling said.

Mo Fan began to regret all this. He had been too focused on enjoying his time with Xinxia at the Parthenon Temple. He did not even realize his treasury had blown a hole!

He was planning to buy some magic Equipment, but it seemed like he had to continue on his adventure naked!

Lingling did not seem too bothered about it.

With all the information she had gathered, they could easily earn back the losses from the valuable resources along the way, even if they did not find the Night Amethyst or the Totem Beast.

The next day, Ai Jiangtu introduced them to the group of mercenaries.

Mo Fan summoned Apas and asked her to keep Lingling and Jiang Shaoxu, who both had yet to reach the Super Level, safe.

Apas had spent a long time cultivating on her own. She no longer had a voracious desire for the human world. She was not willing to be Lingling's caretaker at first, but when she heard they were heading to Tianshan Mountain, her eyes flickered with excitement!

She was very interested in this place!

The group of six joined the rest of the mercenaries. The Vice Leader of the mercenary group was an Indian woman. She was tanned and had a huge nose. She was physically fit and had the bearing of a leopardess.

When she saw Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan were with so many women, and how young Lingling and Apas were, she looked quite displeased.

“Well, they have quite a lot of useful information. Don’t worry. If anything happens, we can guarantee their safety,” Ai Jiangtu told the Vice Leader, Kuma.

“I’m more worried about their well-being than safety. My men might obey my orders, but they are also like beasts that might lose their rationality at any second. After all, Tianshan Mountain is a world without discipline and rules,” Kuma did not mind spilling the beans as a woman. She also made it clear that she would not intervene if those kinds of things happened.

“You better remind your men to not court their death,” Mu Ningxue said coldly. She was not fond of Kuma’s attitude.

Kuma raised her brows and burst out laughing like a man. “Interesting, I will remind them!”

Most of the members of the Mailong Private Military Group were men. There were a few women, but they were similar to the Vice Leader. They were just as muscular and tough as the men. Nanyu usually wore neutral outfits and always wore men’s clothes when she was in the wild, but Mu Ningxue, Jiang Shaoxu, Apas, and Lingling were different. They looked just like typical delicate women from the cities. The men could feel their blood rushing after a few extra glances.

“I’ll make you the captain of the ninth team, then. Since there aren’t a lot of members on your team, I’ll assign a few rookies and freeloaders to your team to make it thirteen,” Kuma said.

“Can’t you assign some reliable teammates to our team instead?” Ai Jiangtu asked with a wry smile.

“I can’t help it. We have already broken the rules by letting them join the group. The others won’t say a thing only if your team is mainly full of freeloaders and rookies,” Kuma said.

“Alright,” Ai Jiangtu agreed helplessly.

As everyone thought, the men of the Mailong Private Military Group became restless when Mu Ningxue, Jiang Shaoxu, Apas, and Lingling joined the group.

Some were whistling and uttering filthy words that made the women feel uncomfortable. However, they were not complaining since they had joined the group of mercenaries on a tight schedule. Besides, they could easily get rid of the discrimination and disturbance with their strength if they wanted to.

Chapter 1972: Digested Corpses

The Rift Valley of Tianshan Mountain was not the grassland in front of the group. They had to make their way around a few smaller peaks below Tianshan Mountain and enter a barren land first.

The Mailong Private Military Group had departed quite late. When the group, now consisting of over a hundred people, reached the entrance of the Rift Valley, many Mages had already set up their tents or built temporary huts with their magic.

“What’s going on here? Are these people here to watch the show?” Jiang Yu wondered aloud.

The Rift Valley had only been discovered recently. It had a lot of things valuable to groups who were not planning to go to the Scar of Tianshan Mountain. Normally, people would be competing fiercely for the resources in the Rift Valley, yet they had set up tents outside the valley instead!

“Go and find out what they are up to,” Kuma ordered Tommy, the captain of the third team.

Everyone could tell that Tommy was an experienced Mage. He blended into the groups in no time.

Tommy returned after asking around for a while and reported back to Kuma, “It sounds like landslides are happening in the Rift Valley. They had buried a Hunter Group that went into the Rift Valley half a day ago alive,” Tommy reported to her.

“Are these people so afraid of a little situation? Did they forget it’s Tianshan Mountain, the Land of the Brave?” someone scoffed aloud.

“It’s not that simple. The landslides happen randomly, and they are quite deadly, especially if the people are stuck in the Rift Valley. They have nowhere to run and no chance to stop the landslides,” Tommy corrected him sternly.

“We have so many people in our group. Couldn’t we just build a wall and stop the landslides?” Kuma asked.

“It won’t work. The Rift Valley goes from a higher altitude to a lower altitude, especially in the longer segments. The landslides continuously pick up momentum and more rocks and mud along the way. They will only slow down when the terrain is flat. They would simply bury us all alive,” Tommy said.

“Do these landslides have any patterns?” Kuma asked.

“We can set out now. We will be safe if we reach the canyon before sunrise,” Mo Fan told Kuma.

Kuma, Tommy, and other captains turned to Mo Fan. A proud senior harrumphed, “Where did this rookie come from? Did he have a right to speak?”

Kuma waved her hand to silence Gavin.

“Are you familiar with the landslides?” Kuma asked.

“The landslides are happening because the ice higher up the mountain is melting, thus turning some of the sections in the Rift Valley into a rapid drainage channel. The rapid current picks up the mud, sand, and rocks along the way and eventually turns into landslides. Therefore, we should be on the move when the temperature is still low and there isn’t much sunlight. It’s going to warm up quickly after the sun rises, meaning more landslides are going to happen,” Mo Fan said easily.

“Is that true?” Kuma asked Tommy.

“A few experienced Hunters did mention it as a possibility, but everyone has their own saying,” Tommy said.

“We’ll set out now. He’s one of us now, so we should believe in him... Young man, it turns out that you’ve come prepared?” Kuma asked with a smile.

Mo Fan obviously did not prepare himself. It was part of the information Lingling had purchased! He was not willing to share the information that had cost him a fortune with the others if he did not need their help to clear a path.

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The people of the Mailong Private Military Group headed into the Rift Valley. Humans enjoyed following the crowd blindly. When the Mailong Private Military Group went into the Rift Valley confidently, the rest of the hesitant groups started following them too.

The Rift Valley was not a long narrow path, there were countless forks along the way. It was difficult to tell which path was going to lead them to the higher altitudes. After all, the Rift Valley was incredibly long. No one could determine whether the path was actually going to lead them to a higher altitude, nor could they guarantee the path would be clear. Some might end up in a dead-end after traveling for a few kilometers.

The Rift Valley was like a maze, the paths were meandering and interconnected. People might even circle around and end up in the same spot if they lost their way. They would not know if they were going in the wrong direction.

There was little sunlight to guide them in the Rift Valley. Certain segments of it were deep and narrow. The people could only see jagged rocks around them instead of the sky when they looked up, and had to carry torches to light up the surroundings. Other segments were spacious and clear, like an actual valley with plenty of sunlight and flat terrain. They would think they had reached open land if they could not see the walls of the mountains in the distance.

“Damn it, how the hell do we know which way is the right way?” Gavin grumbled impatiently.

“It should be that way there.”

“Should? I don’t want to go back to the cave full of spider poop again!” Gavin cursed.

The group had just made their way through a cave. It was the only path to go deeper into the Rift Valley. The people who explored the Rift Valley first also mentioned a spider cave along the way, so the group assumed they were heading in the right direction. However, the later paths kept leading them back to the spider cave.

“We can ask the Chinese man. Didn’t he come prepared?” Tommy remembered Mo Fan.

“We’ll set up a camp here and rest for now. I’ll ask him for some advice,” Kuma said.

Kuma asked the group to rest on the spot while she went to the ninth team.

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“Do you know which way we should go from here?” Kuma asked.

Mo Fan glanced at Lingling when he noticed Kuma looking at him. How could he possibly know the answer?

“Just follow the direction the landslides are coming from,” Lingling said.

Kuma initially thought the little girl was kidding, yet she smiled as she realized something, “That’s right, the landslides are happening because the ice higher up the mountain is melting. The landslides are only occurring because there’s a clear path to send them down. Smart!”

“I suggest you not set up camp here,” Lingling added.

“Why is that?”

“I think the cave is full of digested corpses instead of poop,” Lingling replied.

Chapter 1973: Bone-Eating Spiders

“Little girl, my men have already checked the area. I didn’t notice any trace of demon creatures. The spiders have already left,” Kuma said.

“It proves your men aren’t so reliable after all. Did they check above them?” Lingling asked.

“Above?” Kuma was stunned. She immediately went to a wall nearby and placed her hand on it.

Kuma was extremely focused. Her expression shifted after a few minutes. When she looked at Lingling again, her eyes were full of shock and disbelief.

She did not have time to say anything. She quickly returned to her men and yelled, “Prepare for battle!”

“Battle? There isn’t any sign of demon creature near us,” Tommy scanned his surroundings with a puzzled look.

“Yeah, I’ve already checked...”

“Open your goddamned eyes and look up the walls!” Kuma cursed.

The mercenaries finally observed the walls closely.

The Rift Valley was deep, thus there was not much light. The walls were jagged and irregular too, making it difficult to see the higher spots clearly.

“I saw something, it’s above me. Holy crap, it’s the Bone-Eating Spiders!” a mercenary cried out.

The mercenary was standing close to the wall. He even had to twist his head a little to see through the gap. He could see a few dozen Bone-Eating Spiders lining up the wall.

They each had a huge gland on their back. Their tiny heads resembled the menacing faces of vicious women. Their long and flexible legs were attached to the wall. They did not make a single sound, even when they were moving rapidly!

Many Mages relied on the Earth Wave spell to detect demon creatures' presence when they were moving. The vibrations from the ground were useful for sensing the demon creatures' footsteps. The greater their numbers, the stronger the vibration. Therefore, experienced Hunters with the Earth Element would never be surrounded by demon creatures, since their movement was the greatest when they were moving in numbers.

However, these Bone-Eating Spiders were not making a single sound, quietly observing and approaching their prey. It was so quiet that everyone felt a chill running down their spines.

Most importantly, the spiders were great in numbers. The mercenaries had only noticed the demon creatures after they were already so close to them. If they had taken a little longer to notice the demon creatures, they would have been pinned down before they had a chance to set up their defenses!

"They are here too!" another mercenary yelled.

"Vice Leader, there are a lot of them on our side. More than a hundred of them!"

"What's with the panic? Kill all of them! These scum think we are here to feed them, let's show them the strength of the Mailong Private Military Group!" Kuma yelled back.

The mercenaries were indeed well-disciplined. They were busy setting up tents a moment ago, but they had already moved into position. The Earth Mages and Light Mages were on the outer circle while the Mages with destructive spells were in the inner circle. The agile Mages were distracting the demon creatures by moving around. Those who were relatively stronger were attacking at will!

"Damn it, why aren't they protecting us too?" Zhao Manyan cursed.

The perimeter of the Earth and Light Spells had included the members of every team except the ninth team. The ninth team was left on the outside. The Bone-Eating Spiders were quite intelligent. They immediately focused on attacking the ninth team when they realized they were stranded.

"We were too slow. We should have moved closer to the middle when they were moving into position. We can only find a spot to hide since they have to maintain their formation. We are on our own," a rookie on the team spoke up.

There were four other members apart from Mo Fan and his crew on the ninth team. Two of them were rookies, one was suffering from high altitude sickness, and the other was a freeloader. Their team was indeed a mess compared to the other teams who were moving in a disciplined fashion.

"Let's head over there. We will have a better view," Ai Jiangtu pointed at a huge rock.

"Won't the spiders surround us if we go there? I think this place is fine. There are walls above us too. It feels safer here," a rookie said.

The rest of the team followed Ai Jiangtu's order and quickly moved to the huge rock with a lot of space around it. The rookie stayed behind, as he was unsure what to do.

The rookie subconsciously looked up and saw four limbs reaching out of a gap along the walls. More limbs poked out in just a matter of a few seconds!

The rookie was horrified. He immediately ran toward Mo Fan and the others.

“The Bone-Eating Spiders live in packs. They stay in packs when they are hunting. They will hide under the sand in the day and wait for their prey to walk into their traps. At night, they will return to the cracks and the caves where they live,” Lingling said.

“Can you tell us something useful? Like the Elements they are afraid of, or their average strength?” Mo Fan complained.

The terrain in the Rift Valley was complicated, especially since the walls had cracks above the group which the Bone-Eating Spiders could climb around on. They did not see any spiders moving on the ground.

It meant that the Bone-Eating Spiders had a habit of attacking from above. They had to evaluate whether their spells were going to destroy the walls, as falling rocks might bury them all.

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More Bone-Eating Spiders showed up. None of them were approaching from the ground. They were all crawling on the ceiling and hanging upside down, forcing everyone to look up.

“Fire!” The mercenaries loosed their first wave of spells at Kuma’s command.

The Bone-Eating Spiders were very agile. They had been rapidly approaching a moment ago, but they immediately withdrew inside the cracks along the walls when the spells were fired at them!

The spells did not kill many of the Bone-Eating Spiders. These creatures were extremely patient. They were hanging above the group and staring at them with their green eyes.

“They are very cunning.”

“Keep going, wait for my mark... now!” Kuma ordered.

The mercenaries were split into different formations, so they could still attack after the first wave of spells. Their main firepower was split into two teams; the second team would take over after the first team was done.

The mercenaries were very experienced in such battles!

Chapter 1974: Camouflaged Demon Spiders

The second wave of spells was deadlier than the first. The whole canyon trembled as their spells landed on its walls. Huge rocks started falling, with several Bone-Eating Spiders among them.



Unfortunately, only a few Bone-Eating Spiders had fallen with the rocks. The Mages who were free to engage at will proceeded to finish those on the ground.

“These creatures have sharp senses,” Gavin said.

“Humph, it’s nothing,” Kuma said disdainfully.

When the falling rocks stopped after a while, the Bone-Eating Spiders remained cautious.

They were different from other species of demon creatures that lived in packs. Most demon creatures would simply lunge at their prey recklessly. A well-trained troop could easily wipe out such reckless creatures with ease.

However, the Bone-Eating Spiders were different. Even though they were crawling above the mercenaries in great numbers, not many Bone-Eating Spiders had pounced to the attack. They had used the cracks in the stones to dodge the spells twice!

It was rare to see demon creatures with such great patience. The mercenaries were unsure whether the demon creatures were taking the fight cautiously, or if they were waiting for something.

“Fire!”

Another wave of spells was fired at the ceiling, and more rocks fell to the ground. The spells also landed on the Bone-Eating Spiders that were hiding in shallower cracks and knocked them to the ground, but the number of Bone-Eating Spiders that fell was still nothing compared to their overall numbers.

“Are they just going to drag this fight out?” Tommy demanded impatiently.

“Should we withdraw from this place for now?” someone suggested.

Kuma also noticed the Bone-Eating Spiders behaving abnormally. She asked her men to move to the open.

As soon as they moved, the Bone-Eating Spiders followed quietly, trailing the mercenary group.

The Bone-Eating Spiders stayed above the group, observing the humans while waiting for their chance to strike, putting the group under immense pressure.

No one liked being stared at by hundreds of spiders. They had to keep looking up to make sure the creatures were not on a wall nearby, since the demon creatures might pounce at them when they were distracted!

“Move to the open, these things can only stay on the walls to the sides once we are in the open. If they dare to follow us out there, we will take them all out!” Gavin declared.

The mercenary group continued forward. There was an opening around six hundred meters away, a huge crack around three hundred meters wide. They could see the sky through the crack, which had rocky cliffs on both sides. The Bone-Eating Spiders would no longer be able to hide in the cracks along the ceiling.

The people of the Mailong Private Military Group were astounded after they traveled for another hundred meters.

The Bone-Eating Spiders behind stopped following them, but the walls along the way were full of them. The walls were covered in eerie lines and sets of eyes that were glittering like the stars.

“Why are there so many of them?” Tommy exclaimed.

The members of the mercenary group began to panic. The Bone-Eating Spiders’ numbers were beyond their expectations. Most importantly, the creatures were staying still instead of attacking them.

“Why do I feel like we are walking right into a trap?” Guan Yu spoke up.

“What do they want? Are they letting us pass because we are stronger? Are they preying on the weaker Mages behind us?” Zhao Manyan said.

“If they weren’t going to attack us, they wouldn’t have shown up in the first place, since we were completely unaware of their existence,” Lingling corrected him.

“This is so stressful. I hate these creatures with hairy legs!” Jiang Yu said. He was getting goosebumps.

Mo Fan began releasing the energy of his Dark Vein into their surroundings, including the blind corners that were blocked by the rocks, making sure there were no high-level creatures nearby.

Mo Fan was not too afraid of the Bone-Eating Spiders. He was worried about some higher-level species hiding in the dark. The mercenary group was going to suffer great losses if it was ambushed.

“AH!” A loud cry of agony echoed in everyone’s ears.

The dark environment was already making everyone uneasy. The echoes of the scream in the canyon further sent chills down their spines.

Their range of vision was limited and the paths were narrow and meandering. The people at the back were clueless about what was going on at the front.

“Back away, everyone! Move backward, go back to where our camp was!” Kuma yelled.

The others quickly retreated to the place where they had been going to set a camp at.

The cries kept going even when everyone was back at the camp. It was obvious that the group had lost someone. He was being surrounded by demon creatures and being eaten alive.

“How many did we lose?” Zhao Manyan asked.

“It sounds like there were three of them,” Nanyu answered, using her Sound Element.

“Seriously? We’ve already lost three? How deep have we gone so far?”

“The species of demon creatures on Tianshan Mountain are cunning and vicious. The whole place is full of danger. No mercenary group that came here is able to guarantee everyone’s safety.”

“But still, it’s too early for people to die here. We didn’t even know how they died. The spiders didn’t move at all.”

“I’ll go and ask,” Ai Jiangtu said.

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Ai Jiangtu went to the front of the group and saw Kuma, Gavin, Tommy, and the captains of other teams had troubled faces.

“Are you sure you saw it clearly?” Kuma asked a mercenary sternly.

“Yeah, I swear I saw it. It was on the ground. I saw something with the silhouette of a huge spider moving on the ground. The three scouts never returned after that,” the mercenary said with a pale face.

“What kind of spiders have the ability to camouflage themselves!? I thought only demon creatures at the Commander-level and above could camouflage themselves!?” Gavin cursed.

“We have underestimated the demon creatures on Tianshan Mountain!”

Ai Jiangtu’s expression sank when he heard the conversation.

*Camouflage...*

In other words, the Bone-Eating Spiders would look exactly the same as the rocks if they stayed still and closed their eyes. People would have no clue the creatures were there even when they passed by.

It was why the three scouts had died!

Chapter 1975: Waiting to be Buried Alive

The group had retreated to their previous spot, and everyone was struggling to calm themselves.

They were currently surrounded by rocks, in addition to the lack of sunlight. If the spiders did have the ability to camouflage themselves on the rocks, the spiders might be everywhere as long as there were rocks nearby!

The mercenaries felt their hair standing on end. Previously, they only needed to look up in case the Bone-Eating Spiders pounced on them from above. However, they now had to constantly keep an eye on the surroundings too, since a Bone-Eating Spider might be lying in every blind corner around them.

The Bone-Eating Spiders also existed in deserts and barren lands, but no one had ever heard of their ability to camouflage themselves. The Bone-Eating Spiders on Tianshan Mountain might have developed the ability due to the harsh environment, or perhaps the species here possessed some ancient lineage. Either way, everyone was trembling with fear after learning the Bone-Eating Spiders’ ability.

The whole place suddenly fell quiet, since the demon creatures might ambush the group from any corner. The Bone-Eating Spiders were not making any noise, nor could the humans hear their movements. The heavy breathing of the mercenaries was making everyone nervous instead.

“Nanyu, can’t you hear their movements?” Guan Yu asked urgently.

Nanyu shook her head.

The Bone-Eating Spiders' movements were too light. The sound of their movements was softer than a fly beating its wings. Humans could hear a fly buzzing because it was beating its wings at a high frequency.

The cunning Bone-Eating Spiders were slow and cautious when they moved around. Nanyu's Sound Element was not effective, unless the Bone-Eating Spiders took the initiative to attack or picked up their pace when they were getting impatient.

"My Dark Material isn't working either. These things don't move at all," Mo Fan said helplessly.

"If there's nothing we can do, we'll just hold our ground as long as they aren't moving," Zhao Manyan said.

The group did not dare to move to spots that they had not checked carefully. Heavens knew if a Bone-Eating Spider was waiting right beside them or under their feet. To their relief, the Bone-Eating Spiders were not completely invisible. They could still see their unusual lines when they were moving on the walls and the rocks.

The Mailong Private Military Group did not have a better idea. The Bone-Eating Spiders showed no intention of attacking them. The Mages managed to kill a few Bone-Eating Spiders that carelessly exposed themselves, but it did not make any real difference.

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A strange rumble came from a great distance. Nanyu, who naturally had outstanding hearing, stood still and listened carefully.

"It's far away from us..." Nanyu murmured.

Nanyu said with a frown after listening to the rumble for a few minutes, "Could it be a beast tide?"

"What are you talking about?" Mo Fan asked with a puzzled look.

"Something formidable is approaching from the distance," Nanyu said.

"How far is it?" Mo Fan asked.

"Around seven to eight kilometers," Nanyu said.

"Seven to eight kilometers? It's none of our business. Perhaps some Hunter Group is being chased around after messing with a pack of demon creatures," Zhao Manyan said.

"It didn't sound like that..." Nanyu shook her head.

Nanyu felt uneasy. She kept listening to the rumble.

Around ten minutes later, Nanyu had a gloomy face. "I think I know what the Bone-Eating Spiders are waiting for," she said.

"Are they waiting for backup?"

"Ai Jiangtu, you must tell the Vice Leader that we have to find a huge slope within half an hour. Otherwise, the landslides will bury us all alive... the Bone-Eating Spiders are waiting until we are buried to dig us out and eat us!" Nanyu said.

The Rift Valley was leading them higher up the mountain. If a landslide poured down in a strong current, it was going to fill most of the canyons, creeks, and paths. The caves and cracks without enough support were going to collapse from impact of the debris.

Therefore, they had to find a tall slope against the landslide to provide them with some cover!

The Bone-Eating Spiders had to be familiar with the occurrence of the landslides. They did not engage the humans because they had figured out an easier way to take them all out. They were simply keeping them in the sections where the landslide was going to crush them all soon!

The Bone-Eating Spiders could easily find shelter when the landslide occurred, but it was not the same case for the humans!

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“What!?”

“The landslide is going to reach here within half an hour? Damn it, why did it have to happen now, of all times?”

“These Bone-Eating Spiders must have used the same trick to kill many of their prey. Otherwise, how could their numbers grow so quickly in a barren land like this?”

Kuma frowned. They did spot a suitable slope along the way, but they had to travel a kilometer back the way they came. However, they had struggled to travel four or five hundred meters. How were they supposed to go back a kilometer? How many Bone-Eating Spiders that were prepared to feast on them would they stumble into?

“There’s no other choice. We must head to the slope now!”

“The ninth team will open a path for us. The other teams will be following behind!” Kuma said.

“Affirmative!”

“Affirmative!”

Zhao Manyan almost lost his temper when he heard the order.

“Damn it, why should we be their spotlights? We all know the path is going to be crawling with the Bone-Eating Spiders!” Zhao Manyan cursed.

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“I’ll lead the way. Stick close to me,” Ai Jiangtu said.

“Be careful, the Bone-Eating Spiders might be only a few meters or even closer to you. You won’t have time to use your magic,” Nanyu said.

“It’s fine, I have good reactions,” Ai Jiangtu said confidently.

“I’ll stay behind him to deal with the creatures in his blind spots,” Mu Ningxue said.

Ai Jiangtu and Mu Ningxue took the lead. The rest followed behind them closely.

The people of the Mailong Private Military Group followed too after the ninth team set out. They moved at a quick pace.

The Bone-Eating Spiders waiting on the rocks finally began to move when the group decided to leave the area.

The creatures were no longer probing them, and obviously knew the humans were trying to escape. They started dropping from the cliffs, cracks, and walls to attack the humans recklessly.

“I’ll deal with them. Keep going!” Mo Fan knew the creatures were not going to watch them leave. His Space Bolts had long been hovering around him.

The Bone-Eating Spiders were dropping from the ceiling and the walls on both sides. Mo Fan’s Space Bolts pierced through them as they were falling through the air.

Chapter 1976: Ambushed by Fierce Spiders

The way they had come from was indeed full of Camouflaged Bone-Eating Spiders. Things were scuttling along the walls on both sides as Ai Jiangtu was running forward rapidly. People would think the walls were covered in mud if they were not looking closely. However, in just a second, the ferocious spiders revealed there would swing their poisonous claws at the Mages that were on the move!

Ai Jiangtu looked around him. Three Camouflaged Bone-Eating Spiders were extremely close to him. He gathered his Will and turned it into three enormous swords, slashing at the creatures and killing them instantly.

Mu Ningxue was right behind Ai Jiangtu, constantly circled by silver frost. She looked like an icy fairy purging evil existences as she was hovering above the ground.

The frost would immediately harden and strike the Bone-Eating Spiders when she pointed her finger. The flesh and blood of spiders splattered and froze all over the place.

“Ai Jiangtu, stop for a second,” Mu Ningxue said.

Ai Jiangtu was just about to enter a narrow path. He immediately stopped when he heard Mu Ningxue’s words.

“Lunar Frost!”

Mu Ningxue held her right arm up at the entrance like a saber as moon-white frost quickly appeared on her fingers. The frost spread from the tip of her fingers to her elbow, turning it into a shiny weapon.

Mu Ningxue swung her arm and fired a glowing slash ten meters wide into the dark passage. The light emitted by the strike lit up the walls as it went past them and revealed the creatures hiding on them.

The Bone-Eating Spiders that were lying in wait on the walls had nowhere to run to. They all turned into ice instantly.

Ai Jiangtu was startled. He had already predicted many Bone-Eating Spiders were lying on the walls waiting to ambush them as he was about to enter the passage, but their numbers were several times what he had imagined. He would have been in grave danger once he set his foot inside the passage if Mu Ningxue had not killed the creatures first.

"I might have missed some. Be careful," Mu Ningxue told him.

"You've done a lot!" Ai Jiangtu said gratefully.

Ai Jiangtu continued to lead the way. He cast Space Rhythm as he was traveling in the passage, and it began to vibrate at a high frequency.

The frozen Bone-Eating Spiders shattered from the vibrations. Their remains fell from the walls and scattered across the ground.

The others quickly followed Ai Jiangtu. The two rookies behind them were dumbfounded.

They initially thought Mo Fan and the others were rookies and freeloaders like them. To their amazement, the group was incredibly strong. Other people had to take on one of the Bone-Eating Spiders at a time and might need extra support from their teammates if they made a mistake, but these young Mages were able to kill a bunch of demon creatures with every spell. The Bone-Eating Spiders did not even have the chance to attack them. They had all died when they were caught by the light of the spells!

Kuma had caught up to them, and complimented, "Ai Jiangtu, your friends are quite impressive!"

The path was now stacked with corpses of the Bone-Eating Spiders. The mercenaries were dumbfounded by the ninth team's strength. They had asked the ninth team to take the lead because they were treating them as cannon fodder, yet the Bone-Eating Spiders had become cannon fodder instead.

They passed the narrow passage safely and reached a narrow creek. Only three people could travel side-by-side along it. The space was extremely limited for the group.

However, the walls of the creeks were high. The Bone-Eating Spiders had long been waiting for them when they looked up, lining up while waiting for the humans to walk right into the trap.

The Bone-Eating Spiders poured down from above like rain. It did not matter if the path ahead was clear, since every Mage in the creek was now under attack.

The Mailong Private Military Group could only stick close together in a straight line, and were vulnerable when standing in such a formation.

"Don't just look above you. Watch out for the cracks on the walls!" the captain of the fifth team reminded everyone.

The walls were not smooth; there were a lot of cracks and crevasses in them. If they took a closer look at them, they noticed the cracks actually resembled the pattern of spiderwebs along the walls. The Bone-

Eating Spiders were thin and skinny, and could easily move inside cracks that were seemingly around a thumb's-width wide. Even the Bone-Eating Spiders that did not have the ability to camouflage themselves were able to sneak up to the Mages without alerting them.

Cries of agony rose once again. They had no idea what was going on amid the chaos. They only saw a few of their comrades covered in blood while being dragged into the cracks when they turned around.

It was difficult to squeeze a human into the cracks because of their bone structure, but the demon creatures were incredibly strong. They forcibly compressed the mercenaries and squeezed them into the cracks. Their blood gushed out of the cracks, resulting in a terrifying sight!

"We have to leave this place at once!" Gavin yelled.

The space was too limited, making it difficult for them to use their destructive spells. To make things worse, the Bone-Eating Spiders were inside the walls just a few meters away from them. Even the strongest Mage would struggle to defend themselves at such close range!

The creek was not too long, but everyone's heart was pounding heavily as the group made it out of the confined area, like they had barely survived.

"There's a rather spacious spot ahead. Let's go, team nine, keep going!" Gavin ordered them.

The Mailong Private Military Group found themselves in an open valley after leaving the defile. The distance between the walls on both sides now ranged from twenty meters to a hundred meters. It was a lot better than the narrow creek despite its irregularity.

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"Take a rest, I'll lead the way," Mo Fan told Ai Jiangtu.

Ai Jiangtu had killed around a hundred Bone-Eating Spiders along the way. He definitely needed some time to catch his breath after using his magic at such high intensity.

"Alright, be careful," Ai Jiangtu agreed.

Mo Fan did not move his feet, moving around with the Earth Wave now. It felt like a speedboat was carrying him around. He spread his arms and wrapped them with lightning. He quickly looked around and fired lightning bolts at every Bone-Eating Spider he could see!

Chapter 1977: Stepping into Danger

Mo Fan's Lightning Element was able to kill the Bone-Eating Spiders instantly. He did not have to worry about being ambushed from his blind spots, since the Dark Vein would alert him whenever he was in danger. He slew every Bone-Eating Spider nearby before they had a chance to attack him.

"Don't lower your guard. There are still a lot of them here!" Mo Fan frowned.



Mo Fan was feeling uneasy because of his Dark Vein's ability to predict danger. The spacious valley was not as calm and safe as it looked.

"Humph, imbecile!" Mo Fan's eyes glittered as he fixed his gaze on a Camouflaged Bone-Eating Spider less than five meters away.

The Camouflaged Bone-Eating Spider was extremely patient, and only revealed its murderous intent once Mo Fan was close enough. Unfortunately, its plan to ambush Mo Fan was not very effective against Mo Fan's ability to predict danger.

The Camouflaged Bone-Eating Spider launched itself at Mo Fan. It went right for Mo Fan's face, like it was going to stab him in the eyes.

Mo Fan reached out his left hand and clenched his fist. He caught the creature firmly in mid-air with Telekinesis.

"Fire!"

Flames erupted between Mo Fan's fingers. The Bone-Eating Spider being held in the air was set on fire too!

The flames on the Bone-Eating Spider burned harshly. It fell to the ground and turned into a scorched corpse in just a few seconds.

"The Bone-Eating Spiders with the camouflage ability are most likely higher-level," Mo Fan told the others.

The Camouflaged Bone-Eating Spiders were obviously stronger than the brown Bone-Eating Spiders in terms of speed, strength, and defense. Mo Fan had to put in extra effort to kill the Camouflaged Bone-Eating Spider. He could not kill a bunch of them with a single spell.

"Let's go. The mudslide is getting closer!" Nanyu said uneasily.

She could hear the mudslide speeding up. It meant the steep terrain that the flood was passing through had sped it up!

Time was running short, yet the Bone-Eating Spiders were still blocking their way. If they did not reach the slope in time, the mudslide would bury them all. Even if they were lucky to survive, the Bone-Eating Spiders would be the ones to dig them up.

The people felt chills running down their spines when the thought crossed their minds.

Mo Fan began killing the creatures more decisively. His high-tier Intermediate Spells were extremely effective in this battle. He did not have to rely on Advanced Spells when the Bone-Eating Spiders were nearby, nor did he have to use weaker spells that were ineffective when his spells were on cooldown.

The journey was relatively smooth. The ninth team had almost reached the end of the valley, yet they kept hearing cries of agony and Gavin's furious roars from behind.

"Team nine, what the hell are you doing? Why are there so many Bone-Eating Spiders along the way?" Gavin cursed.

“Look out under your feet!”

The mercenaries had spread out a little after there was more space to move around. They were maintaining some distance between themselves to support one another when needed.

However, some of the members suddenly disappeared while they were running. Their formation suddenly had a lot of gaps. The people began to feel uneasy.

They were hearing strange noises from the ground. Nanyu was at the back of the team and looked behind her, seeing claws reaching out from the ground. The claws were hidden in unnoticeable spots. They would grab onto the mercenaries' legs firmly as they were passing by.

Those who failed to activate their magic Armor in time were stabbed in the chest and the ribs by the spiders, before being dragged into the ground in the blink of an eye!

“What’s happening? We just passed by those spots, but they didn’t attack us! Why did they attack the mercenaries instead?” Zhao Manyan blurted out when he saw the mercenaries were under attack.

They had been clearing a path for the group. The mercenaries were following the same path too, but the Bone-Eating Spiders had let them pass and attacked the mercenaries behind them instead!

“They are choosing their targets. These things realized they couldn’t afford to mess with us, so they chose to attack the weaker mercenaries!” Lingling answered.

“It’s likely that Mo Fan’s is too intimidating. He has slain too many Camouflage Bone-Eating Spiders,” Jiang Yu agreed.

“Mo Fan, come back! You’re getting too far ahead,” Jiang Shaoxu quickly called out to Mo Fan, who had already gone quite a distance ahead.

Mo Fan noticed the group was falling behind. He was about to curse the mercenaries for moving slowly when he saw them being dragged into the ground.

“Damn it, the Bone-Eating Spiders are under us too!” Zhao Manyan cursed.

“Why do I have a feeling we have fallen into a spider cave? We are stuck in multiple layers of spiderwebs!” Jiang Yu murmured.

The spiders in a forest would only build thin spiderwebs. Some insects that were slightly bigger could easily break the spiderwebs by flying through them. However, it did not necessarily mean the spiders could not trap the insects. Those careless insects would simply overlook the spiderwebs since they were too thin, and the spider silk would then stick to their wings. When they realized they were struggling to beat their wings properly, they would fall into the spiders’ traps. The further they flew, the more they were entangled by the spiderwebs. They would eventually be worn out and be stuck to a seemingly thin spiderweb.

The group was like prey that was slowly walking into a spider’s trap. They were not yet stuck in a spiderweb, but they were stepping into a trap that the spiders had long set up. The more they panicked, the more dangerous their situation was!

“Mo Fan, how did you detect the Camouflage Bone-Eating Spiders? Can you warn the others?” Ai Jiangtu asked.

“It’s tricky. I can’t detect them if they aren’t hostile to me,” Mo Fan answered helplessly.

The ability of Mo Fan’s Dark Vein to predict danger was his greatest trick in this situation, but the Bone-Eating Spiders had stopped attacking him. If the creatures stopped being hostile toward him, he could not detect them with the Dark Vein.

It was similar to a signal. When something was posing a threat to Mo Fan, the Dark Vein would immediately capture the signal and warn Mo Fan by making his heart beat faster, his pores expand, his muscles clench, and his skin turn cold. How could the Dark Vein warn him when the Bone-Eating Spiders were not even attacking him?

There was also another scenario when the Dark Vein would alert Mo Fan beforehand: when there was something nearby that could kill Mo Fan in an instant!

Unfortunately, the Bone-Eating Spiders were not strong enough to trigger the Dark Vein’s ability!

Chapter 1978: Shaking Off the Enemy

The Mailong Private Military Group had no choice but to charge forward, even when they knew the claws of the spiders were everywhere under their feet. Some of the mercenaries were tenacious. They would rather sever their own legs than be dragged into the ground by the Bone-Eating Spiders!

The mercenary group lost a few more people in the valley. The slope they were looking for finally showed up ahead after they all made it through the valley.

The slope was similar to a narrow path on the edge of a cliff. The steep cliff rose up and parted ways with the path leading deeper into the canyon.

The group quickly climbed up the slope. The Bone-Eating Spiders were long waiting for them, as if they knew their plan all along. The side of the cliff was crawling with spiders. It looked like a sinister brown agate from afar!

“They are trying to block our path!” Tommy snarled.

“We have to clear a path with brute force,” Kuma harrumphed. She quickly ran to the front of the group and overtook the ninth team.

The Vice Leader was going to lead the way to clear a path up the slope, which was now full of spiders hanging on it like a vineyard.

Kuma was a Plant Mage. She fired red seeds onto the ground, which grew rapidly as soon as they touched the dried rocks. They turned into huge Flesh-Eating Morning Glories in just a few seconds!

The Flesh-Eating Morning Glories blossomed continuously, as if they were growing in fertile soil. Flesh-Eating Morning Glories were able to swing their stems and roots around. When they picked up the scent of the Bone-Eating Spiders, countless fangs immediately surfaced on the thin and long-stemmed flowers in circles. The Flesh-Eating Morning Glories could devour several Bone-Eating Spiders at once.

“Follow the Vice Leader!”

“Follow the Vice Leader!”

The Mailong Private Military Group did not break from its formation even after losing a few members. They had been through many situations where comrades who just had a laugh with them a few moments ago suddenly turned into dead bodies. The mercenaries all possessed a strong will to survive. They followed the path that Kuma cleared with the Flesh-Eating Morning Glories and charged toward the slope with high morale.

“We have to go higher. Otherwise, the mudslide will bury us!” Nanyu declared.

“Watch our backs, you useless pricks!” Gavin snarled.

Gavin did not care whether they were strong, he was only concerned about the outcome. The ninth team had failed to do their job properly when clearing the path in the valley, and members of his team had died because of it.

Ai Jiangtu had a good temper, and actually tolerated it. He knew it was meaningless to argue among themselves when their lives were at stake.

The ninth team was at the back of the group again. The Bone-Eating Spiders that were appearing from the cracks and walls were trying to keep them busy.

They no longer had to rely on Nanyu’s hearing, as the entire Rift Valley was shaking now. The Mailong Private Military Group was under a lot of pressure. They wondered if the oncoming flood was going to be upon them in the next second!

The Mailong Private Military Group worked even harder to eliminate the Bone-Eating Spiders. The blood of the spiders was pouring down the slope like a stream and formed a pool of gore at the lower ground. Their remains rolled down the slope and piled up at the bottom.

Overall, the Mailong Private Military Group was quite strong. The Bone-Eating Spiders found them unstoppable. The low-level Bone-Eating Spiders had no chance of even slowing them. They were already eighty meters above the lowest ground.

They stood on the slope and looked back at the canyon and the valley. They thought the landslide would be similar to a river flowing into the canyon. It would follow the structure of the canyon, but the flood’s momentum was crazier than everyone had imagined. It was like a steel magic dragon ramming into the walls and leaving the area in ruins. The canyon was now twice as big!

The mudslide was getting closer. Luckily, the ninth team made a final push and claimed a higher location, or someone might have been caught by the destructive landslide.

—

Everyone felt like they had temporarily lost their hearing beneath the deafening noise the mudslide was producing.

The flash flood swept past like a terrifying dark brown dragon, and everyone witnessed the utter destruction it brought. They were relieved they had reached the slope and cleared a path forcibly in time.

“How terrifying!” Jiang Shaoxu exclaimed.

She had thought the mudslide would just be an ordinary occurrence before, but after witnessing its destruction, she realized how minuscule she was. Even those with outstanding cultivation had no chance of surviving it.

“These Bone-Eating Spiders are very cunning. They retreated immediately when they figured out the mudslide wasn’t going to bury us. They left quicker than a falling tide!” Zhao Manyan noticed.

“They know how to abuse their advantages and avoid unfavorable situations. They chose to wait for their next prey patiently when they weren’t confident enough to take us down. The spiders just need to rebuild their spiderwebs when a powerful creature runs through them. They just need to be patient,” Lingling said.

The threat posed by the Bone-Eating Spiders had been beyond everyone’s expectations.

After doing a quick headcount, the Mailong Private Military Group had lost around ten people. They had remained in formation while they were clearing a path on the slope, which minimized the losses. Their main losses were in the valley where the Camouflage Bone-Eating Spiders dragged some of their members into the ground.

There was nothing they could do about it. If it weren’t for the mudslide, they could still have saved their comrades. They would not abandon anyone if they were still alive, but they were left with no choice with the terrifying flash flood coming right at them!

“We’ve encountered so many obstacles, and we are only at the barren layer. Won’t the situation and demon creatures at the higher altitude be a lot worse?” Guan Yu spoke up. “The Mailong Private Military Group is quite impressive. If it was some other group with a weak mentality, the Bone-Eating Spiders might actually have dragged the battle out until we were all buried under the ground.”

Chapter 1979: Gambling in the Mercenary Group

Cunning and vicious were the first impressions that the demon creatures on Tianshan Mountain had left on those visiting it for the first time.

“I thought only the demon creatures in the Valley of Glaciers would pose a threat to us. I didn’t expect it to be so dangerous,” Zhao Manyan admitted.

The Bone-Eating Spiders were not even considered a high-level species on Tianshan Mountain, but they knew how to use the environment to hunt their prey. They were able to feast on their enemies even though they were weaker!

It explained why so many powerful Mages had died here. The creatures in the lowest layer of barren ground were already so cunning!

—

The Mailong Private Military Group checked their casualties and settled themselves. They continued on their way after the mudslide had passed.

Mercenaries usually had a stronger mindset. They were used to losing comrades when they were on a mission, and did not have time to mourn the dead. They were reflecting and reevaluating Tianshan Mountain instead. Losing more than ten people in the layer of barren lands meant the group would not have many members left by the time they reached the Valley of Glaciers.

“Walden, go get some clean water from the tenth team so we can treat our wounds,” Ai Jiangtu asked one of the rookies.

“Sure,” Walden nodded.

Walden was a European in his twenties.

He went to the tenth team, which was managing the resources and supplies of the group, like food, water, medicine, devices, and one-use magic equipment.

When Walden arrived, he saw three old mercenaries gathering together to make a deal while smoking.

“I must say, that kid is extremely lucky. I won’t accept it; I bet he won’t survive the next encounter!” Li Yu from the tenth team said.

Li Yu gave the amount he lost on the bet to Xu Luoqing.

Xu Luoqing received the money with a smile. He said, “Honestly, I didn’t expect those on the ninth team to be so strong. The spiders would have dragged Walden and Heeto into the ground if they weren’t around.”

Walden was standing right behind them. He blushed with anger when he heard their discussion.

Not only did these old mercenaries order him around like a slave, they actually bet on whether he was going to survive when he finally had a chance to go on a mission with the group. Did the guy called Li Yu want him dead just so he could win the bet?

“What do you mean? Is my life so insignificant in your eyes?” Walden blurted out angrily.

The mercenaries were surprised when they saw Walden was right behind them.

However, they were not too bothered by it. Xu Luoqing said with a smile, “It’s nothing serious. We were just fooling around.”

“Fooling around? You sound like you can’t wait to see me die!” Walden snapped.

“Walden, stop acting like a brat.”

“I’m a brat? Even though I found out you were betting on my life, you claimed that you’re just fooling around?” Walden cursed.

“It’s nothing serious, we’ve bet on every rookie’s life. A rookie like you is nothing but a burden to the group. You have no uses apart from providing us with some entertainment, so stop making a scene and piss off back to your team,” Li Yu said disdainfully. He had never treated Walden seriously.

Walden trembled in anger after hearing the words.

Xu Luoqing asked, “Walden, why are you here?”

“I’m here to get some clean water,” Walden said.

“Here, take it,” Xu Luoqing said.

“I will tell the Vice Leader about it. You must apologize to me,” Walden said angrily.

“Go tell her then. If you’re the kind to complain to your mother after being bullied at school, you should just stay home and let your mother look after you. You shouldn’t become a mercenary... Right, Xu Luoqing, how much was I going to bet just then? I’m going to bet three times that amount. If he can survive the next encounter, I’ll pay you three times the amount. Do you dare to accept it?” Li Yu yelled.

“Sure, I’ll take it!”

“Three times? Li Yu, you’re seriously playing with fire. Fine, I’ll take it!”

“Walden, you better work harder for the sake of this bet.”

“Can I bet he’s going to die instead?”

“Aren’t you taking it too far? Baby Walden is getting angry.”

The older mercenaries enjoyed making a fuss out of everything. Walden could not bear staying with them any longer. He left furiously with the clean water.

There were a lot of people addicted to gambling in the mercenary group. The losses the mercenary group had just suffered did not stop them from entertaining themselves. Walden heard them mentioning other bets even as he was leaving.

“By the way, the other bet we agreed on; everyone is going to give whoever that f\*\*ks the silver-haired beauty five times the amount we’ve bet. Does it count?”

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“Of course, it’s more interesting than betting on Walden’s life,” Li Yu agreed.

“But you saw how strong that Lightning Mage was.”

“Yeah, I did. I think we should increase the amount to seven times instead. What do you think?”

“Seven times it is!”

“HAHAHA, not only am I going to have an enjoyable time, I’m going to make a fortune out of it too,” a voice exclaimed.

—

Walden was shaking in anger. Those old mercenaries had no ethics whatsoever.

He returned to the team with the clean water. He looked at Mo Fan and wondered whether he should tell Mo Fan what he had just heard.

Walden shook his head after a brief thought. He should just ignore them. It was not like he could interfere with their bet.

He could not even stop them from betting on his life!

“I’ve got some clean water,” Walden said.

Ai Jiangtu took the water. He asked when he saw the odd look in Walden’s eyes, “Did anything happen?”

“No... nothing,” Walden shook his head.

Walden went to the side. However, Mo Fan approached him out of nowhere.

Everyone could tell that Mo Fan was the silver-haired beauty’s boyfriend. Walden was amazed by how beautiful the woman was when he first saw her. He knew that many in the mercenary group were drooling over her.

“What’s wrong with the guy who’s sick?” Mo Fan asked.

“You mean Parker?” Walden said.

“Mm, it seems like he’s in great pain,” Mo Fan said.

“We initially thought he’s suffering from altitude sickness, so we decided to bring him along. His body might adapt eventually, but we didn’t think it would take him so long to recover,” Walden said.

“Doesn’t the group have medics?” Mo Fan asked.

“We do, but they should be looking after the injured now. Parker is a rookie like me. They won’t care about him unless he’s dying,” Walden sighed.

Chapter 1980: Unknown Cause of Death

“Your face is pale. Did the Bone-Eating Spiders scare you?” Mo Fan asked Walden.

“No... not at all,” Walden replied, shaking his head.

“It’s going to be a dangerous trip, but don’t worry, you will be safe as long as you stick with us,” Mo Fan stated, slapping Walden on the back.

“Oh, let’s hope so,” Walden said. He subconsciously looked at Mo Fan as he left.



As a matter of fact, he was a little touched by Mo Fan's words after being humiliated by the older mercenaries. However, he had a feeling that he should not treat everyone's words too seriously. In a dangerous place like Tianshan Mountain, it was quite likely that a man would run away just like the others when there was any danger, let alone protect him. Everyone knew how to talk pretty!

—

The only good thing about the landslide was they now had a much clearer idea of which way they should be going.

The landslide had come down from the higher layers. They just needed to follow its trail!

After waiting half a day, the landslide turned into ordinary flowing sand and rocks. It might have changed the ground along the way, but the Rift Valley remained. It would not be sealed off by the landslide, nor was it going to just disappear after the landslide filled it up.

"I believe the Rift Valley is closely related to the flash floods. Tianshan Mountain has had strong undercurrents flowing within it for a long time. The Rift Valley has been around a long time too, but it was buried underground. The recent mudflows must have broken through the ground and cleared a path to the Rift Valley!" Lingling declared after a thorough analysis.

"Yes. It's unlikely such a spectacular valley would suddenly appear out of nowhere," Nanyu agreed with Lingling's speculation.

Valleys and streams were the result of constant rain and flowing water. The flash floods must have occurred countless times before they finally opened up an entrance into the Rift Valley.

Therefore, the Rift Valley would surely lead them to the Valley of Glaciers.

The Valley of Glaciers had a deadly wind that even the strongest Mages would struggle to defend themselves from. It was like a natural magic barrier established around Tianshan Mountain to stop outsiders. However, if they headed for the Valley of Glaciers through the Rift Valley, they could avoid the deadly wind. Most importantly, it would lead them to the Scar of Tianshan Mountain!

No wonder countless Mages across the world had come to Tianshan Mountain. Even though their cultivation was not too impressive, they could still enter the treasure vault in Tianshan Mountain by taking the right path!

—

The barren land fell silent after the mudslide had passed. The group had discovered some corpses buried under the ground along the way. Even the creatures of Tianshan Mountain had not all found shelter from the mudslides.

Tommy, who was scouting the path ahead, called out, "There are some corpses here!"

"Is there anything special about them?" Gavin said.

"They are humans."

"Oh, that's pretty normal."

Tommy glanced at Kuma and added, "These people didn't die to the landslide. They managed to find a shelter like us, but they still died to some unknown cause."

"Maybe the demon creatures killed them," Gavin said impatiently.

"I didn't see any wounds or injuries, either."

"Maybe it's poison," Kuma ventured.

"Mm, I think so too. If they died in the same direction we are heading in, it's likely that we'll encounter the same thing!" Tommy agreed.

Corpses were not scary to the mercenaries. Every path to some kind of treasure would have dead bodies along it. The dead might provide hints. If the bodies were torn to pieces, it indicated they had encountered some ferocious beasts. If the corpses only had bones left, it meant there were species that fed on them. If the bodies were in good condition, it was likely they were poisoned to death, or they had died to some other strange cause. These clues served as warnings to those who were taking the same path!

—

The group marched past the corpses. The ninth team was toward the back of the group and only saw the dead some time later.

Lingling was performing like an expert. She immediately put on a pair of gloves and a mask before inspecting the dead.

When Walden and the others on the team saw the little girl running toward the dead bodies curiously, they all had strange looks on their faces.

Lingling was not bothered at all. Every corpse contained a lot of information. The path ahead of them had too many unknown factors, whether it was related to nature or the demon creatures. Even if Mo Fan and the others were strong, there might be problems which they could not overcome with strength alone. Their group had so many people. How could they possibly guarantee everyone's safety?

Therefore, it was extremely important to collect information. Every useful bit of data they gathered from the mysterious reaches of Tianshan Mountain might be the key to preventing some uncontrollable tragedies.

"Did you find anything?" Mo Fan asked her.

"It's strange..." Lingling's sentence made Mo Fan's heart skip a beat. "Judging from their clothes, they should have reached the Meadow. There is moss and grass on their clothes."

"If they already left the barren land and reached a higher layer, why would they come back here and end up dead?" Nanyu said.

"What's the cause of death?" Mo Fan asked.

"They died of suffocation, but I couldn't find what was causing it," Lingling answered.

"Poison?"

"I have considered it too, but if it was poison, they should have stayed in the Meadow. They should be looking for an antidote nearby if they had the slightest common sense," Lingling said.

"Is there a chance they were poisoned in the Meadow and the slide brought them here?"

"There isn't any signs of the mudslide on them. I'll collect some samples. Let's keep moving. We might have to see what's ahead to figure out the real cause of death," Lingling told them.

"Maybe they were too weak?"

"Probably not, one of them is a strong Advanced Mage."

"There wasn't any trace of a fight, which means their deaths had nothing to do with their strength..."  
Nanyu realized.

"The group has already gone ahead. Let's hurry. If anything happens, the Mailong Private Military Group will deal with it first," Ai Jiangtu said.

"Old Ai, is that the actual reason why you joined the mercenary group, so they could be our meat shield?" Zhao Manyan smiled.

"You're talking too much," Ai Jiangtu answered quietly.

"Hehe..."