

Versatile 2301

Chapter 2301: Life-Hanging Flies

(Cough cough!) “What he meant was, the enemies must have been watching us through some special method. If we can get rid of them, the enemies will be as blind as us,” Mi Bai spoke up.

“Yes, you are right. They must be watching us somehow. Thank you Forneus, for relating such a piece of important information to me through others when you weren’t looking at me all the time!” Mason blurted out excitedly.

Forneus my ass! Zhao Manyan almost lost his temper.

It was hard to predict what was going to happen before going into the swamps and the woods. However, the Browns were obviously spying on them.

The Browns knew where they were, yet they had no idea where the Browns were hiding..

They had to go inside the swamps and the woods to learn what the enemy was relying on. The earlier they figured it out, the lower the casualties on their side!

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The groups of scouts the army sent out previously had extremely low rates of survival.

In the end, Brigadier General Blaire had to recommend Lt. Colonel Mason, who had managed to outwit their enemy twice.

As a result, Mason’s men had become the army’s vanguard once again.

As long as the fog lamps were lit up, the army would be able to keep going. The rest would follow where the fog lamps were guiding them.

It was the nature of the environment in the swampy woods. The swamps would devour anyone who dared to enter them alone.

Under the swamps lay the bones of their many victims!

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The swamps smelled strongly of mud and algae.

Whenever the raindrops fell on the rotten plants, the foul smell would rise into the air.

The flies were circling the corpses, whether they belonged to animals, demon creatures, or humans. They were like tiny condors from the deserts, feeding on rotten flesh and preying on dying creatures.

“Those are Life-Hanging Flies. I heard some old people mentioned they are the transformed form of an ancient prophet of dark magic. They roam endlessly in these swamps. If someone is about to die, they will circle above the person. The person will die in less than half a day. No one has ever escaped from the curse!” the man with a nose stud, who was named Cory, informed everyone.

“So you’re saying we are all going to die soon?” Mo Fan looked up and stared at the Life-Hanging Flies circling their heads.

The Life-Hanging Flies had insane numbers. Their regiment had more than a thousand people, yet each of them had a few dozen Life-Hanging Flies circling their heads. It looked like a gray cloud was floating around their heads like their souls were leaving their bodies!

The Life-Hanging Flies had been hanging onto their heads since they entered the swamps.

There were a lot of locals among the Federation forces. They were extremely terrified of the Life-Hanging Flies, considering the Life-Hanging Flies a bad omen.

However, they could not drive the Life-Hanging Flies away. It did not matter if they burned the Life-Hanging Flies into ashes with their magic, since many more would soon come from all directions and gather above their heads.

“Don’t be afraid, we are blessed by the Mother of the Woods. These flies and their curse will never kill us!” Mason proclaimed when he saw his men in low spirits.

“Sir, you have the most Life-Hanging Flies over your head,” a new lieutenant pointed out to him.

“Oh, any Poison Mages here? Can you please figure out what’s going on?” Mason asked after a startled look.

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The numbers of the Life-Hanging Flies kept increasing. Even if the Brown Rebels were blind, they could easily tell where the Federation Army was from the noise the flies were making.

“Mu Bai, is there anything strange about these flies?” Mo Fan asked quietly.

“I can’t say for sure, there are a lot of tiny organisms in this world. They have better alertness and ability to predict danger, like how some animals are able to predict an avalanche, earthquake, or storm...” Mu Bai said.

“Which means we might be in trouble if we keep going on like this?” Zhao Manyan pointed out.

“More or less, these Life-Hanging Flies are very familiar with the swamps. They know where the dangers and traps are, so they have basically placed a claim on us in case some other creatures come and steal their food,” Mu Bai explained from a scientific angle.

Killing and driving away the Life-Hanging Flies was meaningless. They were not the direct cause of death.

They were merely waiting for the living to die. As for why these people died, there had to be something deadly in the swamps.

The Life-Hanging Flies knew what the thing was, but the Federation Army who had just come into the swamps had no idea what it was. The Life-Hanging Flies were merely following their own instincts, but as rumors started to spread, they suddenly became a curse...

“Help, someone, pull me out!” Someone was shrieking like a crow that had fallen into water.

“There’s quicksand ahead, look out!”

“Damn it, I can’t pull my legs out too...”

The group of people who were leading the way were stuck in quicksand.

The quicksand was holding them tightly. Some had already sunken to their knees.

However, they were unable to pull their legs out no matter how hard they tried. They were only sinking deeper!

“Earth Mages, what are you doing? Use Earth Wave!” Mason yelled.

The Earth Mages quickly constructed Star Orbits. Brown Stars spread rapidly across the swamp.

However, the soil in the swamp was abnormal. The Earth Wave that was supposed to alter the structure of the soil was not working here!

“Pull me up, quick, I’m almost out of breath!” someone yelled, just before his head dropped below the surface of the mud.

The mud had climbed over his chin. It poured into his mouth as he finished the sentence.

The man would soon die of suffocation after his mouth was filled with mud.

“What’s going on? Is this mud some kind of bottomless abyss?” Mason blurted out in shock.

“Sir, check this out!”

Cory was a Summoner. He Summoned a creature that resembled a hippopotamus.

A Plant Mage immediately Summoned some vines. They wrapped around the chin and neck of the suffocating soldier while the other ends of the vines were tied to the Hippopotamus Beast.

If humans were not strong enough to drag the soldiers out of the mud, a Summoned Beast might be able to do it.

Cory patted the Summoned Beast on the back.

The Hippopotamus Beast was very strong. It was leaving deep footprints as it gathered its strength.

The Hippopotamus Beast did not let the soldiers down. It soon dragged the soldier who was almost drowned out of the mud.

Unfortunately... his body did not come out with his head!

Blood was pouring out of his neck, which was still stuck under the mud. It was like a little red fountain.

The head tied to the vines fell beside Cory and his Hippopotamus Beast. The terrifying expression on it sent shivers down everyone's spine!

Chapter 2302: The Thing Under the Mud

The large swarm of flies got their wish, and eagerly split into two clouds. One of them dove into the mud to feast on the dead body.

The other cloud lunged at the head and circled the stump like a gathering around a bonfire.

The head had retained the soldier's terrified, wide-eyed expression.

He thought he was saved when the Hippopotamus Beast pulled him out of the mud, but he did not expect it to tear off his neck.

The noise of the flies was utterly annoying, even amid the loud rain.

Mo Fan, Mu Bai, and Zhao Manyan went over to the dead body. Their hearts sank when they saw what had happened.

"Is there really no way we can save them?" Lt. Colonel Mason asked in disbelief.

The lieutenants shook their heads.

The regiment had over a thousand people, and many of them had fallen into the mud. The same tragedy that happened to the first soldier was happening to other soldiers in the swamps.

The mud only covered the ankles of some of the soldiers, yet they still were struggling to pull their feet out.

They were basically dead once their legs sank into the mud!

More Life-Hanging Flies came over to feast on the corpses. They were able to dive into the mud and fly out of it after they were done eating. They would then look for a tree hole in the woods to lay their eggs.

It was true that the Life-Hanging Flies were able to predict one's death!

"Old Zhao, even you can't dig them out?" Mo Fan asked quietly.

Zhao Manyan shook his head.

He was already a Super Earth Mage, yet he was still having trouble altering the structure of the swamp.

Those with half their bodies under the mud felt like their bodies had become one with the swamp. Trying to drag them out of the swamp with force was only going to tear them in half!

"If I freeze the whole swamp, it's basically telling the Brown Rebels where we are," Mu Bai said helplessly.

Time gradually passed. The grass patches that were safe to walk on were slowly covered by mud as the water level rose.

The mud was in patches at first, like a wet field with walkable ridges between the sections.

However, the patches joined together as the rain kept falling. The walkable ridges were soon drowned under the mud.

They had no chance of crossing the swamp, and they would be in trouble if they stayed still for too long.

If they moved, they might step into the deadly mud by accident. If they did not move, they were waiting for the mud to devour them!

“Mo Fan, what are you doing? Are you going to bury the head so it can find its peace? I think it would rather want you to dry it out on a tree than be buried under the ground here,” Zhao Manyan scoffed.

Mo Fan lifted the torn head and inspected it carefully, ignoring him.

Mo Fan pointed at the stump of the neck and said, “The head still has a part of its neck under it. There’s some mud here.”

“Damn it, they say those who handle cinnabar are stained red, while those who work with ink are stained black. Don’t you be like Mu Bai!” Zhao Manyan immediately looked away.

“They are struggling to pull their legs out after stepping into the mud, but look at this part of his neck. It was already under the mud, but the Hippopotamus Beast tore him in half because of its outstanding strength,” Mo Fan pointed out.

“Can you please take my feelings into consideration? I have no interest in dead bodies!” Zhao Manyan swore impatiently, not looking.

Mu Bai, however, stuck his face in and inspected the dead body closely.

“The mud is sticky, but it doesn’t make sense that it has such a strong pulling force,” Mu Bai muttered.

“Take a look at this.” Mo Fan turned the head around.

Zhao Manyan went to the side and vomited.

Mu Bai looked closer and noticed something unusual. “Fingerprints?” he exclaimed.

“Claw marks,” Mo Fan corrected. He wiped the mud off the neck and revealed a faint claw mark on it.

“Something is grabbing them from under the mud!” Mu Bai exclaimed.

Mo Fan nodded.

The soil was fine. Mo Fan was also an Earth Mage, and had checked the mud thoroughly.

The mud might be sticky, but there was no way it was strong enough to resist Mo Fan’s Telekinesis or a Summoned Beast’s strength. Therefore, Mo Fan was suspecting that either the Curse Magic was in play, or there was something unusual under the mud.

“Yeah, but I have no clue what it is for now,” Mo Fan said.

“If there’s really something down there, the Life-Hanging Flies might be able to outline it for us,” Mu Bai said.

Mo Fan did not understand.

Mu Bai opened his hand. He was holding a dark blue powder that looked like some Demon-Tracking Powder. It began floating toward the Life-Hanging Flies instead of disappearing in the rain.

“I’ve applied this Blue Fluorescence Bone Powder to the Life-Hanging Flies that are diving into the mud,” Mu Bai told him.

“Smart!” Mo Fan raised his thumb at Mu Bai.

“We should see something soon.” Mu Bai stared at the swamp.

The Blue Fluorescence Bone Powder was a kind of colorful powder that would attach to demon creatures and could not be removed easily. It was an advanced magic powder designed to track down demon creatures. Only skilled herbalists knew how to mix the powder. It was a hot-seller among the Hunters.

Mu Bai was indeed getting better at being a herbalist.

The Blue Fluorescent Bone Powder was effective against spirits, phantoms, and invisible creatures. The powder would make them glow with fluorescence.

They would be able to see the light of the Blue Fluorescent Bone Powder through the mud, unless the creatures were deep in the mud.

“Sir, there’s something in the mud. Ask the soldiers to keep an eye on the dark blue glow,” Mo Fan warned Lt. Colonel Mason.

“What is it?” Mason asked quickly.

“We don’t know, we are still looking for it,” Mo Fan said.

The swamp was as calm as a black lake. There were no strange bubbles or movement on it.

The Black Fluorescent Bone Powder was stuck to the Life-Hanging Flies.

The soldiers could see a faint blue light, which was like glowing sand in the mud. It was the Life-Hanging Flies, feeding on the corpses.

The blue light soon outlined human figures in the mud. The mages above were disgusted by the sight.

However, the soldiers were dumbfounded after seeing the changes made visible by the Blue Fluorescent Bone Powder!

The human figures were moving! They were moving toward the soldiers who had just fallen into the mud!

They had already died of suffocation, yet they were reaching out their arms to grab the ankles of the soldiers who were still alive.

They were like fiends from Hell who were dragging living humans into the mud!

The soldiers were staring at the outlines of the human figures, but their scalps had gone numb just watching them.

It was not some other creatures that were dragging the soldiers into the mud.

It was the dead soldiers, who were dragging down their own friendlies!

Chapter 2303: Skeletal Demon Tree

Were they holding strong grievances toward the others for not saving them when they died, and so they were dragging the others into the mud like vengeful spirits?

“Undead spirits?” the soldiers blurted out in a panic.

“I don’t think so. Even though humans might turn into Undead spirits when they die, the process normally takes some time. They won’t turn into aggressive Undead spirits so quickly!” Mo Fan shook his head.

These were not zombies in an American film, where the people who died would suddenly open their bloodshot eyes and bite others on the neck.

The relationship between dead bodies and Undead was like rice and wine.

It was necessary to seal the rice in an enclosed environment for fermentation. The swamp might be a perfect enclosed environment for Undead spirits to be born in, but it would take longer than a few seconds!

If the people who were dead for only a few minutes would turn into Undead that attacked nearby people, wouldn’t the world be ruled by the Undead by now?

The Undead could only be born under certain circumstances, given the right conditions and time.

The soldiers who were holding the feet of the others were very odd. Mo Fan had no idea what they were exactly.

Cory pointed at the swamp and shouted, “Look, the dead bodies are moving again!”

The dark blue lights were moving. The Life-Hanging Flies were attached to the dead bodies they were feeding on, clearly outlining the corpses with their overwhelming numbers.

The dead bodies in the swamp started gathering in a certain direction after they could not find any targets nearby.

It was like they were swimming under the mud. Over a hundred drowned soldiers soon gathered around an old tree.

The old tree sat above the swamp. The mud had already reached the middle of its trunk. Its branches had odd shapes, and were spread in the rain with wilted leaves dangling off them. The leaves were dancing like evil spirits as the wind was blowing.

The dead soldiers had gathered close to the tree's roots. It was obvious that the tree's roots covered a great area, at least a thousand square meters.

The strange thing was, the corpses did not scatter around the tree messily. They instead resembled the branches of a tree .

If Mo Fan did not think of the blue outlines as dead corpses. The Blue Fluorescent Bone Powder had actually formed the outline of a huge tree under the mud!

It would be an impressive sight if Mo Fan flipped the tree upside down!

"I know what it is!" Mo Fan declared with a frown.

"There's something wrong with that tree," Zhao Manyan agreed.

Mo Fan whispered into Mu Bai's ear. Mu Bai nodded and slowly backed away.

Zhao Manyan seemed quite impatient, yet Mo Fan stopped talking halfway. No one could possibly remain calm after witnessing the deaths of the soldiers.

Lt. Colonel Mason and his men all had pale faces.

Something unknown was reaping the lives of their comrades, yet they could not find any explanation as to what was going on.

No one knew who would be dragged into the mud next. Most important, they would not rest in peace after they died!

"Order!"

Mo Fan's eyes began to change. They were like black starry skies when he used the Chaos Element. A mysterious cold light was glowing deep inside them.

Mo Fan had yet to awaken the Superpower of the Chaos Element, but his eyes would transform whenever he used the Chaos and Space Elements.

Dimensional Magic mainly relied on a person's Will. Focusing and paying full attention were the best ways to control it.

"Overturn!"

Mo Fan wrapped the area of the old tree with his Will and gained control of its order.

The swamp was huge, and Mo Fan's Chaos Element's area of effect was extremely limited. However, after learning where the enemy was, he just had to focus his magic on the area around the tree. He did not have trouble manipulating the order of that area.

The surroundings of the tree started changing. The rules in the area had been modified by Mo Fan's Chaos Magic.

The rain was the first to fall in the opposite direction, rising into the sky instead of falling to the ground.

The wind that was blowing changed direction, too. It was blowing in random directions, like headless flies.

As stronger Chaos Magic descended, the swamp under the tree began behaving strangely too.

Water started rising into the sky like the rain. The thick mud followed, and rose into the sky in lumps, as if they were no longer bound by gravity.

The Domain of Order: Overturn!

The soldiers' eyes widened. They stared at the strange sight with wide eyes. It was like a film being played backward.

"Forneus has blessed us again!" Lt. Colonel Mason almost dropped to his knees.

Mo Fan almost lost control of his Chaos Magic when he heard those words. He took a deep breath and continued to influence the swamp with his Chaos Magic.

More lumps of mud were rising into the sky, revealing the terrifying sight under the mud to the soldiers.

The soldiers gasped when the mud under the tree had been cleared away.

The old tree turned out to be a demon!

Most plants had roots under the ground and soil. The roots would absorb nutrients under the ground to sustain the plants' life.

However, it was the opposite for the old tree. The branches above the surface were its roots. Its trunk, branches, and leaves were under the mud!

Its trunk was stuck into the mud. When the mud disappeared, its trunk, which was made of white bone, was exposed to the air!

Its branches were made of white bone too. The bones had even connected into joints, allowing them to move around freely.

The branches reached throughout the swamp like complicated tunnels under a city.

The leaves were the worst. At the end of the branches were leaves shaped like claws.

Huge bones as the trunk, joints as the branches, and claws as the leaves!

The tree was basically made up of skeletons!

The claws were cracking like the rustling of leaves while the branches were moving wildly, just like human arms. The soldiers almost fainted from shock after seeing its true appearance.

“What the Hells is that thing!?” Zhao Manyan almost vomited again.

Not only did it have a disgusting appearance, it was intimidating to look at!

Chapter 2304: Necromancer

A city might be flourishing, but the filth where the rats were swimming in the sewers would still be quite disgusting when the pipes were dug up.

It was the same for the old tree!

It looked just like an environment-friendly old tree in the swamp, yet when Mo Fan revealed its true appearance under the mud with the Chaos Magic, the soldiers either fainted or vomited after seeing it. It was so disgusting that the people felt like their throats were stuck with bones as they breathed!

The dead soldiers were not moving on their own, nor were they turned into Undead.

They were already dead, but their bodies were stuck on the branches, which was controlling them to drag their comrades into the mud, too!

At first, the claws were grabbing at the soldiers to prevent them from breaking free.

The claws then controlled their corpses like string puppets. The dead bodies were stronger and were able to move around more freely.

The Life-Hanging Flies' job was to decompose the dead so that the Skeleton Demon Tree could absorb their nutrients.

The Skeleton Demon Tree had to control corpses manually, so their movements were as stiff as puppets. After they decomposed into skeletons, they would become part of the Skeleton Demon Tree after their bones were connected to it.

The Life-Hanging Flies were the Skeleton Demon Tree's digestive system!

They were active in the swamp close to the Skeleton Demon Tree. They would quickly reserve a seat on the Skeleton Demon Tree's prey as soon as targets entered its territory.

The people only knew they were close to death when they saw the Life-Hanging Flies. They had no idea how they actually died, nor what happened after they fell into the mud.

The locals treated the Life-Hanging Flies like a curse, yet little did they know, the Life-Hanging Flies were actually the culprit's gastric juices. The soldiers were already inside the culprit's stomach after setting foot into the swamp!

The soldiers who had died not long ago only had small amounts of flesh left.

The Skeleton Soldiers started moving again under the control of the leaves. They sounded like the annoying clanking of a few hundred metallic shelves knocking into one another.

The tree was turned upside down, revealing its true appearance in front of the soldiers. However, it did not seem embarrassed or panicked, as it was controlling its skeleton puppets to stare back at the soldiers instead!

Killing its enemies with traps would leave them confused, but since its disguise had already been torn apart, it did not mind hunting the soldiers directly!

The old tree was able to turn its trunk around. It started spinning like a machine.

Its branches were flung wildly, carrying the skeleton soldiers who were stuck on them.

White bones, bones that still had rotten flesh on them, claws that were moving around freely, and a few hundred skeletons soon formed a huge tornado!

The sight was rather terrifying, yet for some reason, the skeletons were like enjoying a ride on a carousel in Mo Fan's eyes.

Mo Fan shook his head.

Perhaps the old ladies had been showing off their wishes when they were young on the Internet lately, so Mo Fan assumed the dead bodies also had a wish to enjoy a ride on a carousel before their deaths.

But not everyone could remain calm and collected like him in a situation like this. Many soldiers of the Federation were vomiting white froth. Their eyes were full of the creature's ghastly appearance, and they could no longer think of the Magic Orbits. Their minds were filled with the sight of the bones and claws.

"I swear I won't take another look at the monster again."

"I swear I won't turn into a part of that monster even if I die."

"Use your magic and kill it, then! Otherwise, the things you are worried about are going to happen!"

The soldiers dissolved into chaos. Many even stepped into the swamp by accident amid the chaos.

They were scared, and began running for their lives.

They ended up falling into the swamp as they were fleeing for their lives. They would soon become a family if they did not climb out of the swamp in time!

Mo Fan's Chaos Magic was not applied to the whole swamp. It was only active close to the tree, which was surrounded by a spacious swamp.

If every tree turned out to be a Skeleton Demon Tree, they would find themselves in the Skeleton Demon Trees' den. Trying to run away was no different from presenting themselves at the dining table!

Mo Fan's powerful magic was not going to stop his comrades from getting themselves killed. However, he would have to fight these Skeleton Demon Trees with his true strength.

Lt. Colonel Mason was still grumbling. He always repeated the same sentence, "I'm going to kill anyone who dares to move backward!"

Unfortunately, he would struggle to kill everyone that was running away, even if he had a machine gun. The soldiers had completely lost their minds after seeing the monster in the swamp.

"Why would a creature like this be hiding in a swamp so close to the city?" Zhao Manyan wondered.

"What are we doing now?" Mo Fan asked.

"We are fighting a war."

"Exactly, it's part of the enemy's tricks!" Mo Fan harrumphed coldly.

"A...a trick?" Zhao Manyan said with a weird expression, "I would think it's more of a trump card than just a trick!"

Lt. Colonel Mason subconsciously drew closer to Mo Fan and his friends. Forneus seemed to have blessed his three stupid men too. He should be safe if he stayed close to them!

"That thing is too scary. Half of the soldiers have run away before the fighting even starts," Mason spoke up.

"There should be..." Mo Fan was about to say something when he suddenly noticed a dark blue light flickering above the swamp.

Mo Fan grinned. *Just as I thought...!*

"Come, let's go over there!" Mo Fan told Zhao Manyan.

Mo Fan was stepping on the mud. He used the Earth Magic to form something like a surf board under his feet.

He slid forward along atop the mud in a cool manner, like he was not surrounded by deadly bones. He headed deeper into the swamp, where the water was fully covered with algae.

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Mu Bai had restrained someone in a black outfit with his Ice Chains.

The man was wearing a brown bandanna; he was a member of the Brown Rebels!

He was holding a staff with a skull on it. The skull's shape was very similar to the Skeleton Demon Tree. He was the one directing the Skeleton Demon Tree to kill the soldiers of the Federation Army.

Zhao Manyan stared at the man and blurted out in surprise, "A necromancer?"

"Hehehe, it's a surprise to see someone with a brain from the Federation," the necromancer grinned maniacally.

"We've seen through your tricks!" Mu Bai snapped.

"I've already killed forty-five hundred and seventy soldiers! It will soon reach five thousand after I've killed you all! A war is indeed like spring for a necromancer!" the necromancer crowed excitedly.

Chapter 2305: Driving the Necromancer Crazy

“Why does it have to reach five thousand?” Mo Fan asked cluelessly.

The necromancer was stunned. Shouldn't a normal person be angry first?

After all, he was planning to kill everyone here. Shouldn't this guy be worried about his life?

“Well... it's part of my power. Do you know how a furnace works? I need a lot of ordinary material to refine metal with a high boiling point and get rid of the impurities. Most materials burn into ashes as they cannot withstand the high temperature, leaving only the real essence behind. Similarly, I can refine an Undead Essence after reaping five thousand souls!” The necromancer oddly did not mind answering Mo Fan's question.

“What is the Undead Essence for?” Mo Fan pressed curiously.

The necromancer smacked his lips, his fingers constantly moving. He was controlling the Skeleton Demons and bringing them closer.

For some reason, he felt it was inappropriate to kill these soldiers before answering their questions.

“We are in the middle of a war,” Zhao Manyan mentioned to Mo Fan nervously.

“It's fine, you won't leave this swamp, either!” the necromancer said confidently.

“Why are you feeling so confident?” Mo Fan pressed.

“It's very simple...” the necromancer smiled. He slowly lifted his other hand as if it was carrying something.

The swamp shuddered as he lifted his hand higher. The firm ground which comprised the above-ground points in the swamp collapsed into the mud.

The ground the soldiers of the Federation were standing on had collapsed. They could only climb onto the nearby plants and trees.

Little did they know, the trees were the source of the loud movement in the swamp!

Mo Fan did not have to use the Chaos Magic this time. The trees pulled their roots out of the mud themselves. They did not turn upside down, but they still revealed their true appearances to the soldiers.

A single Skeleton Demon Tree was scary enough for the soldiers, let alone a group of them!

The seemingly ordinary trees were like the stem of a carrot. You never knew how big the carrot under the ground was when pulling at the tiny stem!

The Skeleton Demon Trees might be slow, but their branches and leaves could reach hundreds of meters away.

The soldiers of the Federation Army suddenly found themselves in a primitive jungle. The only difference was, the trees were all skeletons. It was a terrifying skeletal forest!

“An Undead Essence is a precious seed used to plant one of these trees!” the necromancer answered Mo Fan’s question excitedly.

Mo Fan nodded. *So that was it...*

This necromancer might be serving the Brown Rebels, but he had also received a lot of benefits from the war in return. He had collected the dead bodies of the soldiers and buried them under the swamp to strengthen his Undead Magic.

No wonder he claimed a war was like spring for a necromancer...

“You must have taken out the scouts sent here by the Federation Army too, which means you are an important general of the Brown Rebels!” Mo Fan deduced happily.

The necromancer, Bucker, was startled.

Was the young man from the Federation Army blind? Could he not see the nine Skeleton Demon Trees across the swamp?

The number of skeleton soldiers in the swamp had already reached over two thousand, not to mention the actual strength of the Skeleton Demon Trees.

Was he not worried about being dismembered by the Skeleton Demon Trees? How come he was asking questions, instead of begging to spare his life?

The young man was simply uttering nonsense!

With his trees and himself guarding the swamp, the soldiers of the Federation Army were only going to offer themselves as sacrifices by jumping into his furnace!

He was a general of the undead, who did not need a single living man to fight for him!

Most importantly, he was a necromancer!

Every battle would have a lot of casualties, which gave necromancers endless room to grow. He would only become stronger with time.

“Sounds like he isn’t surveilling the Federation Army on behalf of the Brown Rebels. He’s just a rather fierce watchdog,” Mu Bai judged.

Mo Fan nodded. *What a pity...*

If the guy had been a scout for the Brown Rebels, it would have been a lot easier for them to break through the enemy’s lines after getting rid of him!

“Watchdog?” Bucker blurted out, his face twisting.

"The fierce kind," Mo Fan added.

*Assh***! Who cares if it was the fierce kind or not... A watchdog?!*

Did they just say I am the Brown Rebels' watchdog?!

"I've killed forty- five hundred and sixty soldiers of the Federation Army! Look around you, do you think you can leave here in one piece?!" Bucker yelled at them.

"I thought you said it was forty-five hundred and seventy," Mo Fan corrected him.

*Assh***!*

Who would remember the exact number? It was not his main concern!

The most important thing was that everyone in the swamp was going to die! He was going to kill every soldier of the Federation Army brutally, regardless of their numbers!

"Perhaps I was focusing too much on explaining what is going to happen to these people..." Bucker took a deep breath.

It was meaningless to be angry at someone who was going to die.

The young man had described him as a watchdog. What about the skeleton soldiers under his command?

"I won't let the Life-Hanging Flies devour you. I will hang you on the trees while you are still breathing, until your blood dries. I will air-dry your bodies and torture you before turning you into skeletons!" Bucker snarled viciously.

"It's still raining, and the wind here is too wet to air-dry our bodies. Our bodies would only be crawling with insects and rot if you hang us on the trees. You should know better since you are a necromancer. How disappointing," Mo Fan chided him again.

The word 'disappointing' echoed in Bucker's ears like a clap of thunder.

He was so mad that he could not breathe properly!

Why had he bothered talking to someone who was going to die soon? He should have just killed them right away so he would not be so angry now!

"Just... die!" Bucker screamed at Mo Fan.

He reached his other hand at Mo Fan like a claw. The Skeleton Demon Trees nearby that were swinging about so wildly immediately whipped their branches at Mo Fan!

Chapter 2306: March of the Mud Crocodiles

Almost every Skeleton Demon Tree in the swamp was stretching their claws out for Mo Fan. It was obvious how much Bucker hated Mo Fan right now.

“Demon Judgment Sword...” Zhao Manyan was about to construct a Light Star Palace when Mu Bai stopped him.

A Super Light Spell like the Demon Judgment Sword would kill the Skeleton Demon Trees instantly, but it would also alert the Brown Rebels that there were Super Mages in this company of soldiers.

The Brown Rebels had Super Mages, too. Once the trio was exposed, they would immediately attract the attention of strong enemy troops.

It was not like they could not afford to expose their strength in this war, but it was not the time. Their goal was to reach the Scorching River and take down Wu Ku!

The Federation Army had yet to reach the enemy’s base in the woods. Whether they could even make it to the Scorching River was still unknown, but the three of them did not want the Brown Rebels to notice them so soon.

“Rock Fang, Fort Wall!”

Mo Fan used his Earth Magic. Star Patterns kept glowing under his feet.

Rock Fangs jutted out from the mud and crossed in front of Mo Fan, building walls like a fort.

The walls surrounded Mo Fan and even stacked on top of his head to protect him. The skeletal claws had no chance to pry open rock controlled by a Heaven-inferior Seed.

“Rock Fang Thrust!”

Mo Fan Cast more magic extremely quickly. He immediately launched a counterattack after stopping the first round of attacks from the Skeleton Demon Trees.

More sharp rocks rose from the mud, appearing in bundles of ten instead of one by one.

The special effect of Sturdy Strike activated whenever Mo Fan attacked with his Earth Magic. The Rock Fangs had a metallic sheen on them, like they had been refined.

Since the Skeleton Demon Trees were made of bones, they were more or less solid, so the Sturdy Strike was very effective against them!

Mo Fan’s Rock Fangs tore a Skeleton Tree Demon into pieces. Even its trunk was on the verge of collapsing.

The skeleton soldiers stuck on the tree like puppets also fell to the ground. They were charging at Mo Fan angrily, as they could not feel any pain.

Mo Fan’s control of the Earth Magic was outstanding. He decided to stick to the Earth Element when he saw the skeleton soldiers running at him.

“March of the Mud Crocodiles!”

The swamp had plenty of Earth Magic around. The necromancer was not the only person who could abuse the swamp!

Mo Fan poured his Earth Magic into the mud. It suddenly became restless, large black bubbles popping on the surface.

Mud crocodiles of massive size suddenly appeared and surged forward hungrily. Their massive bodies lunged ferociously at the fragile small skeletons!

Their fangs were just as hard as the Rock Fangs Mo Fan had used previously. They were not real crocodiles, being made of mud and stone, but they were just as savage as a real demon crocodile.

Mo Fan had Summoned the Mud Crocodiles, taking control over the swamp with his Earth Magic.

Mo Fan could Summon a school of fish or sharks with a single thought. As for why he chose crocodiles, he believed a group of prehistoric crocodilian wako would look more menacing in the swamp.

The group of wako rushed across the swamp like a marching army. The skeletons might have had an advantage in numbers, but they had no chance of stopping the fierce wako!

Bones scattered through the air as the Mud Crocodiles smashed through the skeletons. The bones fell back into the mud like broken white stones.

"I wonder if you can reassemble your skeletons?" Mo Fan suddenly inquired.

Bucker almost vomited blood when he heard the question.

Reassemble the skeletons?

Those skeletons were not pure Undead creatures. He could not bring them back to life with a spell!

Bucker's main power was the Skeleton Demon Trees, but the problem was that the Skeleton Demon Tree in front of Mo Fan was close to being destroyed. It would die as soon as the arrogant Mud Crocodiles rammed into it!

"You might have destroyed one of them, but do you think you can destroy them all?" Bucker screamed.

The rest of the Skeleton Demon Trees were moving toward Mo Fan. They kept shaking, dropping the skeleton soldiers off like overripe cherries.

There were skeletons everywhere in the swamp now. They completely ignored the rest of the Federation Army, charging at Mo Fan with a strong grudge, like they were going to tear him to pieces.

"Do you need a hand?" Mu Bai asked when he saw the tide of skeletons. They were crawling under the swamp waters too!

"Are you stupid? Shouldn't you go and deal with that necromancer while I'm handling these skeletons?" Mo Fan yelled back at him.

"Uh... right."

Most Mages who relied on Summoned Creatures would stand at the back. The necromancer would likely stay behind his undead, too!

However, Bucker did not seem to care about his position. Mu Bai was unable to tell whether he was stupid or fearless.

Mu Bai moved around a Skeleton Demon Tree. He noticed a shadow moving behind Bucker as he was about to make his move.

Mu Bai attacked right away, without taking a closer look at the shadow.

Bucker grinned coldly.

Mu Bai was using Ice Magic. Bucker cast an Ice Spell as well.

Their Ice Chains clashed loudly in the air as their fragments scattered everywhere.

Mu Bai was quite surprised when he discovered Bucker was a strong Ice Mage.

“Even if you are pretty good, my army of skeletons will soon overwhelm you! But since you want to die so much, I wouldn’t mind taking you out now!” Bucker said viciously.

Mu Bai did not use his Super Magic.

As a matter of fact, Bucker was indeed a strong Mage. He was most likely an important officer of the Brown Rebels, considering how strong his Undead and Ice Magic were.

However, he had decided to take on a regiment of the Federation Army alone, not to mention it was the regiment Mo Fan and his friends were in. He could only blame himself for being unlucky!

A war was indeed like spring for a necromancer, but it was most likely Bucker’s last spring, stumbling into them after the war had only just begun!

“Ice Wings!”

Mu Bai suddenly used a different spell. The ice shattered scattered in the rain turned into sharp ice feathers!

Chapter 2307: Thousand Vines and Magic Ropes

The ice feathers rose behind Bucker like a bird spreading its wings.

Bucker gaped in shock, surprised that a little officer among the Federation troops had such an outstanding control of Ice Magic.

The ice bird spread its wings and drove its feathers at Bucker’s chest. Bucker immediately activated a Seal in his spirit.

White tibia bones sprang out of the mud. They quickly attached to Bucker’s body, white silk filling the gaps between the bones like spiderwebs.

Bone-Stringed Chest Armor!

Bucker did not expect these petty soldiers of the Federation to force him to use his magic Equipment. He was a little curious and confused.

These young lieutenants were clearly a lot stronger than the rest of the soldiers, yet their ranks were so low!

However, it was not that surprising, on second thought.

There had to be some impressive Mages serving the Federation. They would just be ordinary soldiers before they made any worthy contributions. It was a common thing that happened to students who had graduated from reputable schools.

The Aorus Sacred Institute had already declared its willingness to help the Federation. It was not difficult to guess where these young Mages were from, considering their outstanding strength and how close to Banlo City they were.

“You must be students of the Aorus Sacred Institute?” Bucker called out, dusting the icy shards off his armor.

“Close guess,” Mu Bai said, but he did not continue the conversation with Bucker. “Wild Vine Demon Ropes!”

Mu Bai did not give Bucker any time to react, as he was worried other soldiers from the Brown Rebels would soon arrive to back the man up. He had to finish the battle as quickly as possible, without using Super Magic!

Mu Bai’s fingers were long and slim. He adeptly controlled the magic vines and ropes, like a surgeon sewing up a patient’s wounds.

Bucker stared at Mu Bai’s fingers in confusion.

From his perspective, there was nothing on Mu Bai’s hands except for some thin vines. Was he showing off a magic trick?

Mu Bai suddenly flicked his finger. A vine sprang forward like a needle, forming a long arc in the air.

Bucker immediately backed away, but quickly realized the vine was not as easy to dodge as he imagined.

As the vine drew closer, Mu Bai suddenly spread his fingers. The vine immediately spread like a blossoming lotus!

The vines spread in all directions in front of Bucker, who was shocked by the sight before him. It felt like over a thousand hands were grabbing at him!

The vines were blocking his view. They did not just fill up the space in front of Bucker, but the space behind him too, leaving him with nowhere to escape!

“Bind!” Mu Bai clenched his fingers like a fisherman retrieving his net!

The vines tightened like steel cables, slicing Bucker’s Armor into pieces.

Bucker was stuck inside the net, bleeding from the cuts!

“Die!”

While Bucker was trapped, a shadow suddenly dashed out of the reeds!

Lt. Colonel Mason had been hiding behind the reeds for some time. He came out of cover when he saw Mu Bai had overwhelmed Bucker.

“Leave him alive...” Mu Bai tried to stop Mason, but the guy was hacking at Bucker with a burning Axe mercilessly.

Bucker was astounded by all this, not expecting Mu Bai’s magic to be so strong. Not only did the ordinary-looking vines break through his defenses, but they had also trapped him in a net.

Most importantly, he did not expect someone to be hiding behind him!

Bucker had placed all his attention on Mo Fan and Mu Bai, especially the former, whom he wanted to cut into pieces desperately.

As for Lt. Colonel Mason, Bucker had never thought of the petty and weak man as a threat.

“Die!” Mason yelled angrily, like he was having a final showdown with the enemy after a few hundred rounds.

The burning Axe was Mason’s Deathstrike Magic Equipment. He had also imbued it with his Wind Magic. Even though it could not match Mo Fan or Mu Bai’s spell in terms of strength, it did have an impressive appearance!

The magical vines shredded Bucker as he tried to dodge the burning Axe. He was soon covered in wounds.

He did not have a choice. The magic vines had wrapped him up like a sticky rice dumpling. He had no chance of defending himself!

“This is for killing my men!” Lt. Colonel Mason howled, venting all his fear and frustrations on Bucker.

Bucker was already wounded beyond recognition, yet his eyes were still looking in another direction.

He knew he was going to die, but his Undead would not disappear just because of his death.

His Undead were driven by hatred to get their revenge. If he died, the Undead who were bound to him by a Soul Contract would swiftly devour his soul and go berserk.

He had so many Skeleton Demon Trees and skeleton soldiers. They would destroy every living creature within five kilometers once they went berserk!

A strange lightning strike fell from the sky. It struck a Skeleton Demon Tree and rapidly split into a few dozen lightning chains.

Even the slightest spark from the chains was enough to disintegrate the skeleton soldiers, let alone those who were directly caught by the lightning.

The strange lightning chains killed half of the Undead within seconds. Their bones scattered across the ground like tumbling building blocks.

Bucker was dumbfounded by the last sight he saw before losing his last breath!

Not only was the pale Mage stronger than expected, but the annoying kid seemed to possess extraordinary power, too...

Who exactly are they? Why was my Gear and Undead Magic unable to withstand a single blow from them?

Bucker died in disbelief and confusion. The swamp gradually reclaimed its peace.

Lt. Colonel Mason was still taking out his anger and frustration on Bucker's corpse. The rest of the soldiers slowly approached him after they saw the enemy had been taken out.

"Sir, you've killed an important person of the Brown Rebels!"

"So he's a Necromancer, we should have guessed it earlier!"

"Will the Undead suddenly climb to their feet again?"

The soldiers had not really been involved in the battle. The skeleton soldiers were only going after Mo Fan.. The rest of the soldiers simply ran as far away as they could.

Chapter 2308: Savage Bull Riders

"An Advanced Necromancer could already use the swamp to kill so many Federation soldiers," Mo Fan sighed.

He was seriously worried about the Federation.

The Federation Army had reacted too slowly. The army they had gathered within ten hours after the war broke out was lacking in strength and discipline. On the other hand, the Brown Rebels had clearly come prepared. The Frenzy Liquid had also turned them into heartless murderers.

An Advanced Mage could normally only kill a few hundred weaker Mages at most. Only strong Advanced Mages could kill a thousand enemies.

Even if a Necromancer had the advantage of the environment and the element of surprise, it was still impossible for him to kill four thousand people by himself. It meant the Federation's soldiers were no different from common militia.

They just had to watch how the soldiers reacted to learn the truth. Their first reaction when they saw the Skeleton Demon Trees was to flee for their lives, instead of putting up a fight.

The more they ran, the deeper they sank into the mud. Their only outcome would have been dying of suffocation under the mud and being turned into the Necromancer's skeletons!

"The Brown Rebels must have a lot more people like him. I wonder how many soldiers the Federation Army will have left after we pass through the woods and the swamp!" Mu Bai rubbed his temples.

The three of them had to use Advanced Magic to take down Bucker.

The enemies surely had scouts in the vicinity. They must have reported to their superiors that the enemy troop had three Advanced Mages.

It was like playing a game of Land Battle Chess. A player would probe the enemy with their expandable pieces when they had no idea what the enemy's pieces were. However, they would keep an eye on the pieces that ate their Platoon Leaders.

{TL Note: Land Battle Chess is a Chinese board game similar to Stratego.}

The player would send a piece higher than the rank of a Platoon Leader next.

The trio did not want to expose their strength too early, as it would only alert the Brown Rebels that a strong enemy piece was getting closer to their flag, and they would respond by sending out stronger troops and pieces. A few regiments a thousand strong would be enough to wear them out.

Unfortunately, the Federation Army was unreliable. It had already suffered great casualties before the real battle took place!

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"Are you done with the headcount?" Mo Fan asked Lt. Colonel Mason.

"I did, we only have around two hundred men left... Hang on, shouldn't you be the one doing the headcount? Shouldn't I be asking you that question, since I'm the commander?" Mason realized.

"Fine, I won't ask the question, but you will fend off the skeletons when they come again," Mo Fan acknowledged.

Lt. Colonel Mason immediately lost his airs. "Our superiors have asked us to cross the swamp. We have to keep going," Mason sighed.

"Of course, for the better future of the Federation!" Mo Fan nodded cynically.

"But there are obviously a lot of enemy soldiers waiting for us ahead. If these are the only men we have..." Mason said.

"Can't you request backup? You can send Bucker's head back. Someone should recognize him. I don't think he's just a nobody," Mo Fan hinted.

"Yeah, I did something impressive! I killed an enemy general who massacred four thousand of our soldiers!" Mason blurted out excitedly.

Mason was immeasurably pleased with himself. It did not matter how it happened, but he had indeed killed the Necromancer with his own hands, so he could claim all the glory!

Mo Fan could not be bothered with claiming the glory. It was more important to protect his cover.

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As Mo Fan suggested, Lt. Colonel Mason sent Bucker's head back to the main camp.

A full division around twenty thousand people strong had entered the swamp. It seemed like the main force of the Federation Army had chosen to advance through the swamp after Lt. Colonel Mason eliminated the Necromancer. However, the assault troops no longer had enough Mages to scout the path ahead.

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As Mo Fan thought, Bucker's head was surprisingly valuable. In just a few hours, a huge troop of Savage Bull Riders hurried into the swamp!

"Who's Lt. Colonel Mason?" the captain of the troop demanded haughtily.

"I am!" Lt. Colonel Mason reply.

"Here is your medal. You are now in charge of our troop of Savage Bull Riders. The Division Commander wants you to find the enemy's base!" the captain of the troop of Savage Bull Riders said arrogantly, like he was giving Mason an order.

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"A troop of Savage Bull Riders? Does that mean I now have a troop of magic riders under my command?" Mason was surprised by his sudden good fortune.

Tamed Beasts were quite valuable to an army. Few Mages in an army would be granted one.

Most Mages were not good at covering long distances, especially the Elemental Mages without movement spells. Traveling long distances would only wear them out eventually, let alone having to look out for ambushes while they were not protected.

Only Intermediate Mages who had been in the army for some time were qualified to own a Tamed Beast. Riders in an army were the real elites!

Mason had gone from being cannon fodder to leading a regiment of a thousand Mages, and now had a troop of elite Riders. He was rising through the ranks at an incredible pace!

The captain of the Riders glanced at Mo Fan beside Mason and ordered him, "You, do the headcount!"

"Oh. You, do the headcount!" Mo Fan delegated to the man standing beside him.

The man was a squad leader. He had been following Mo Fan since the battle of the Cold Storage Fort. That being said, he was also among the soldiers who had been fleeing for their lives just a short time ago.

"I ordered you to do it! We are Riders! Each of us is stronger than a little soldier like you, do you understand?" the captain of the Riders snapped.

The captain did not dare take over Lt. Colonel Mason's role right away, but he did not mind teaching Mason's assistants a lesson.

Normally, only a full bird Colonel or a General was worthy to lead a troop of Riders, yet they were assigned to a Commander who had only risen through the ranks via luck. It was a humiliation to the Riders!

"My rank is the same as yours, isn't it?" Mo Fan raised his brows. He did not show any respect to the captain as he displayed his newly-issued captain's bars.

"You!" The captain was about to snap his whip at Mo Fan.

"Calm down, I'll do it myself. Now that we have a troop of Riders, I believe we can clear the darkness of the swamp ahead and claim our victory before the next dawn!" Lt. Colonel Mason intervened.

Whether Mo Fan was possessed by Forneus or not, Lt. Colonel Mason had witnessed how Mo Fan took on the Skeleton Demon Trees all by himself. He did not dare step on Mo Fan's tail, and he had even given a battlefield promotion to the three of them!

That being said, he did not want to offend the troop of Riders, either!

Their Captain Benson was currently taking orders from Lt. Colonel Mason, meaning that his rank was merely equivalent to Mo Fan, Mu Bai, and Zhao Manyan, since the three of them were brevet Captains directly taking orders from Lt. Colonel Mason, too!

As for the rest of the Riders, they were a rank lower than Mo Fan. Mo Fan might not have the right to order them around, but he could just ignore them!

Chapter 2309: Zhao Manyan, the Spotlight

It was dark by the time the army was done setting up tents to rest for the night. Pushing forward at night was no different from killing themselves.

The army would advance in the morning. If they could find the enemy's camp, they would have to fight the army of the Brown Rebels before night tomorrow.

The influence of the Frenzy Liquid on people's minds grew stronger as the rain kept pouring down. Even the slightest conflict might provoke Mages into fighting one another to the death, regardless of which side they were on.

The most ideal outcome was to start the battle before it was dark tomorrow!

A kilometer ahead of the swamp was a jungle of Moss-Coated Trees. Their trunks stuck deep into the firm ground, yet their branches spread across the wetland either above the surface or under the water.

These Moss-Coated Trees did not break easily. They were strong enough to be used as stepping stones. The soldiers were resting on them.

The troop of Savage Bull Riders had four hundred men and four hundred and fifty Savage Bulls.

Savage Bulls were a common species in swamps. Their hides looked like pitch-black glass. The sticky mud and soil could not stick to their smooth skin, allowing them to move and swim freely in the swamps.

The Savage Bulls were lying in the mud resting, while their Riders were sitting on the trees in silence.

Meanwhile, Lt. Colonel Mason was greeting every Rider passionately, despite being their new superior. The Riders looked down on him even more.

“Do you have a plan? I wouldn’t want my Riders roaming in the swamp and the woods aimlessly. We will only fall into the enemy’s traps,” Benson said.

“Well...” Mason was lost for words.

What plan could he have? His only plan was to murmur Forneus’ name and charge forward recklessly!

“The enemy has Necromancers. I don’t think Bucker is the only Necromancer they have. I’ve checked the nearby swamps and picked up traces of Undead,” Mu Bai spoke up professionally, looking at his report.

“Which means we might be fighting Undead tomorrow? It doesn’t matter, those Undead are no different from a pile of reeds in front of our Savage Bulls,” Captain Benson scoffed.

“We have discussed this with Lt. Colonel Mason. The enemy clearly has better scouting ability than we do. I’m betting they are using the Undead hiding under the mud to keep an eye on us,” Mu Bai went on, as if Benson had not spoken.

The Undead were able to conceal themselves perfectly under the water. They could sense living creatures’ movements in the swamp without showing themselves.

Bucker had given Mu Bai the clue about how the enemy knew their whereabouts at all times.

“I see, it sounds like not all of you are idiots,” Captain Benson snorted.

“We have to move when the sun rises. Once we deal with the Undead that are watching us, the enemy won’t have any idea which way we entered the woods from,” Mu Bai went on calmly.

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Mu Bai’s speculation was on point. The Brown Rebels had hidden Undead in the swamp. These particular Undead were only good for scouting.

While everyone else was resting, a man wearing a raincoat and emitting a faint glow walked into the swamp.

He was grumbling while murmuring the Sacred Chant of Light Magic. “Damn it, why do I have to do this filthy work?” Zhao Manyan cursed.

He swept his finger across the air. A cluster of glowing orbs of Light circling his finger turned into tiny fairies before Zhao Manyan fired them into the swamp like bullets.

The little Light Fairies with transparent wings dove into the mud and tracked down the Undead hiding in the swamp. The Light Fairies turned the Undead into sludge in no time.

Zhao Manyan kept moving deeper into the swamp. He did not want to do the same thing again tomorrow, and decided to get rid of all the Undead in the swamp.

He finally realized something after he went deeper He stopped, turned around, and stared at the unfamiliar woods behind him. His expression fell.

“Did I f**king forget to leave markings so I could follow them back to the camp?” Zhao Manyan swore in agitation.

“This is bad!

“Is this the right way?

“Why do these trees look exactly the same!?”

“Hello? Are there any Undead that are still alive? I’m not going to kill you. I just want to ask for directions!”

—

It was past midnight. Mo Fan stared in the direction of the swamp sternly, like a father who had no clue where his naughty son had gone for the night.

It was normal for Zhao Manyan not to come home if they were in a city.

However, they were in the middle of a deserted swamp. It was not like the guy was going to sleep with a female lizard, right?

“Did he bump into the Brown Rebels?” Mu Bai asked as he came over. He was obviously confused when Zhao Manyan had yet to return to the camp.

“Unless the Brown Rebels are all women,” Mo Fan answered blithely.

“Do you think he might have encountered an expert of the Brown Rebels? After all, we have shown a little of our strength. The Brown Rebels will no longer think of us as some weak scouts,” Mu Bai commented.

“It’s not like it’s your first day knowing Zhao Manyan. He would have run if he stumbled into a strong enemy,” Mo Fan pointed out.

Zhao Manyan was very good at guaranteeing his safety and running away.

Even Mo Fan was not confident of defeating Zhao Manyan. How strong would an enemy have to be to stop Zhao Manyan from escaping?

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It was almost dawn, and Mo Fan was dozing off. His eyes sprang open when he heard quiet movements nearby.

A man in a raincoat was heading his way. He glared at Mo Fan angrily.

"I've been gone for so long. Shouldn't you guys be worried about me instead of dozing off here?!" Zhao Manyan yelled at him.

"Mu Bai and I had a long discussion. We both agreed on the possibility that you got lost," Mo Fan replied.

Zhao Manyan blushed and snarled, "Nonsense, I went to scout the enemy's base!"

"Since when are you so proactive?" Mo Fan asked in disbelief, eyebrow raised.

"Take a look at this!" Zhao Manyan tossed a torn flag of the Brown Rebels to the ground.

Mo Fan took a quick look and saw that it was indeed the flag of the Brown Rebels' base!

Did Zhao Manyan really spend the whole night looking for the enemy's camp? How unbelievable!

"You're insane! We can go straight to the enemy's base!" Mo Fan raised his thumb to Zhao Manyan.

"Humph, don't assume that you know me that well!" Zhao Manyan straightened up proudly.

He turned around and snatched the pack of jerky from Mo Fan's bag. He drank a mouthful of water before devouring the jerky.

He was starving after being away for the whole night.

He was also too ashamed to tell Mo Fan he had actually lost his way. He had found the enemy's base by chance!

Chapter 2310: Director of the Cultivation Factory, Mo Fan!

An unreliable teammate he had fought alongside for a long time, who might still carry a grudge once in a while, was exactly what Mo Fan thought of Zhao Manyan.

Zhao Manyan had accidentally found the enemy's camp, which sped up their advance significantly.

The enemy's base had around fifty thousand soldiers. The Federation Army sent seventy thousand soldiers to take down the enemy's base and reclaim their side of the Scorching River.

A huge battle would soon occur that day.

The Riders were the main firepower after the first wave of cannon fodder. They would be charging right into the enemy lines after finding the enemy's base. Enemies would be everywhere when the time came. The trio did not dare lower their guard, even with their outstanding capabilities.

“Are you sure it’s this way? We might be walking into a trap!” Captain Benson was very suspicious of Zhao Manyan’s discovery.

“I’ve gotten rid of the enemy’s Undead. They won’t know we are coming. Just stop worrying and follow me. I’ll cut my wrist and kill myself if you don’t see the enemy’s base in the next hour,” Zhao Manyan answered confidently.

“Fine!”

The troop of Savage Bull Riders was advancing faster than their previous troops. They had lower numbers too, so it was easier for the soldiers to keep up with the three.

They did not encounter any resistance along the way after getting rid of the Undead scouts.

After all, the Brown Rebels did not want to fight the Federation Army in the swamps, except for the Necromancers who had a slight edge over other Casters.

The Savage Bull Riders crossed the swamp quickly. They were no longer looking at cattails and reeds, but the lush and dense trees of a tropical forest.

The rainforest close to the Scorching River was divided into several layers. The highest layer was the Wind-Gathering Layer, consisting of the canopy of the trees. The tops of the trees were almost touching the lowly-hanging clouds, and many birds resided on the trees there. They were not affected by the upcoming battle between the two armies.

The middle layer was the Leaf Umbrella Layer, made up of trees with relatively huge leaves. The trees were connected by vines, allowing people to walk over them.

The lower layer consisted of shrubs and flower clusters, but were still taller than humans. Therefore, going into the woods was no different from prying through the reeds in the swamp.

The Leaf Umbrella Layer made it difficult to tell the direction. It was possible to hide a whole city of civilians in the woods, let alone an army of a few tens of thousands of men.

Fire was the most effective weapon when fighting in a forest. They did not have to worry that the fire would spread out of control, since the forest was surrounded by swamps and rivers, as the whole place was soaked wet because of the never-ending rain. The flames would fizzle out in no time.

The Brown Rebels had established their base and defenses in the woods some time ago. The Federation Army did not necessarily have an advantage, even if it had twenty thousand more men than the enemy’s army, if they were charging into the enemy’s territory without a plan.

Either way, Mo Fan and his crew did not really care whether the Brown Rebels or the Federation Army won the battle. They just needed the Federation Army to fight the Brown Rebels and keep them busy so they had a chance to sneak closer to Wu Ku.

“Do you see that? They are under the trees. They have surrounded their base with a huge circle of spiky shrubs and some magic Formations,” Zhao Manyan said, pointing ahead of them.

They were currently standing on top of an ancient kapok tree. They could see a corner of the enemy’s base from their angle, but the thorny shrubs had formed a sturdy wall around the base.

“We won’t be exposed easily if only a few of us are crossing the shrubs, but if we are sending Riders in, they would quickly trigger the traps and magic Formations,” Zhao Manyan went on.

“We will lose our direction in the shrubs. If the enemy keeps us in the shrubbery, we are no different from animals in a trap!” Mu Bai was familiar with the uses of the foilage.

Mo Fan scanned the area. It turned out that the highest layer was the only possible way for them to infiltrate the enemy’s base.

They had to use the cover of the canopy and move between the trunks. If they fought the enemy on the ground, they would suffer great casualties!

The information they had was very important. It would decide the Federation Army’s approach in taking down the enemy’s base.

“We can try to cross from above here, but we have no idea if they are expecting us...” Mo Fan pointed out.

“Do you think my Savage Bulls can transform into apes?” Captain Benson scoffed.

“It’s going to be difficult. After all, our soldiers aren’t that strong on average. We’ll lose a lot of firepower if the riders abandon their mounts,” Lt. Colonel Mason said.

“First the Wind Warships, next the Undead in the swamps, and now the walls of thorny shrubs. Why is our enemy’s intelligence and execution always better than ours?” Zhao Manyan swore.

Somehow, the Brown Rebels were more like the well-trained army of a nation, while the Federation Army only consisted of a bunch of useless militia in a revolution!

“It’s common for a Federation to have this problem, since it’s a combination of a few countries. They have yet to finalize many things. On the other hand, the Brown Rebels are also the Yellows, who planned on going independent. They can easily match the strength of a below-average country in South America,” Mu Bai showed off his outstanding knowledge.

Mo Fan frowned.

The enemy had a clear advantage over them. The Federation Army’s numbers did not matter anymore.

If the Brown Rebels beat the crap out of the Federation Army here, how were the three of them supposed to cross the Brown Rebel’s base, which had fifty thousand men in its regular army?

“The Savage Bulls have sturdy and smooth skin. I believe the thorny shrubs won’t hurt them at all, right?” Zhao Manyan inquired.

“Of course, but we are the only Riders here. You’re not thinking of asking us to take the lead as cannon fodder, are you?” Captain Benson spat.

“Can’t you ask for more Savage Bulls?”

“These are everything we have. The other troops with Riders are the Brutal Lizard Riders, and the Damp Bird Skyriders. The Brutal Lizard Riders will only show up when we are fighting the enemy’s main force,

while the Damp Bird Skyriders are our army's trump card. They won't be able to help us in this assault, since they are more valuable to the army than we are!" Benson stated grimly.

"Doesn't our army have high-level Summoners? We just need a few of them to Summon a Beast Tide to push forward with your troops and take down their defenses," Zhao Manyan asked.

"You will have to ask your commander to request for Summoners, but I wouldn't put too much hope on it if I were you. Every Advanced Summoner and above is at least a general in the army. They won't want to fight in the front line. If our troop hadn't made a mistake, do you think you would have the chance to order us around?" Benson replied disdainfully.

"Summoners, summoners, Oh Forneus, please grant us a few powerful Summoners!" Mason prayed.

Zhao Manyan was doing the same thing as Mason, since he did not have a better idea.

However, he quickly turned to Mo Fan after he recalled something.

"That's right, you're a Summoner. How many Summoned Beasts can you Summon with your Beast Tide?" Zhao Manyan asked him.

"If they don't have to be Commander-level creatures, I think I can Summon between five to six hundred of them," Mo Fan admitted.

Zhao Manyan and Mu Bai gasped.

Five to six hundred! Does he own a factory that cultivates Summoned Beasts or something?!

The proud captain only had around four hundred men in his troop, yet Mo Fan could already Summon a couple hundred more creatures than the troop's size!