

## Versatile 2451

### Chapter 2451: Pretending to be a Couple

The others had left to carry out their tasks. Hua Yuezhu remained beside Zhang Xiaohou, standing there elegantly.

Hua Yuezhu was an imperial bodyguard, and her job was to protect Zhang Xiaohou. She did not take part in other jobs.

“I’m thinking of visiting the villages to learn more about this place, but if we wear our uniforms, the villages might be afraid of us. I think we should change into some casual clothes,” Zhang Xiaohou suggested.

“Afraid of us? Why would the villages be afraid of soldiers? Are they doing something fishy?” Hua Yuezhu asked quickly.

“Not necessarily. Most civilians are respectful but cautious towards the police and the military. If we talk to them in our uniforms, they will only give simple responses to our questions, and we won’t find the answers we are looking for. If we are dressed casually, they will treat us as passersby. They will act more normal around us, but we will have to distinguish whether what they say is the truth or something they made up,” Zhang Xiaohou answered.

Zhang Xiaohou had investigated many incidents happening in villages and towns when he was in Qinling Mountains. The Magic Association had passed the incidents they could not handle to the government and the military.

Zhang Xiaohou was thus experienced in dealing with locals. He had problems in the past discovering any useful information when he visited the villages and towns in uniform.

The two changed into some casual clothes and pretended to be young travelers.

The village had electricity, but most households had already gone to bed. It was only a little past eight, but there were not many people outdoors.

Zhang Xiaohou was wearing a windbreaker and a warm shirt underneath. The coasts were cold at night, especially in the colder seasons. It was important to wear some warm clothes.

Hua Yuezhu had changed into a pair of jeans and a jacket with open slits. She was wearing a close-fitting sweatshirt underneath.

Zhang Xiaohou had not known Hua Yuezhu for long, and he always saw her in her uniform. She always wore a pair of loose military trousers instead of a skirt.

Her appearance changed as soon as she changed her clothes. She no longer had the heroic and sharp bearing of a soldier; she looked far more sweet-tempered and charming, like a beautiful woman from the city.

“What is it?” Hua Yuezhu was puzzled. She did not understand why General Zhang was looking at her differently.

“It’s my first time seeing you outside of uniform. I think it suits our disguise perfectly,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

Hua Yuezhu thought Zhang Xiaohou would compliment her on her looks. She pulled a long face after hearing his neutral words.

The peninsula must have rarely had any tourists. They did not see an inn or hotel where they could stay for the night.

They found only a house with a stone fence. They went closer to the door.

The house was very old, as its wooden walls had already darkened. It must have been built a long time ago.

“Can I help you?” An old man was smoking cigarettes and drinking tea in the yard.

A dog started barking there. The old man snapped at the dog to stop before looking at Zhang Xiaohou and Hua Yuezhu again.

Zhang Xiaohou scratched his head and said with an awkward smile, “Mister, my friend and I were cycling when we saw this beautiful place. We crossed the wetland and came to take a look, but we couldn’t get back after the tide rose and drowned the trail.”

“Oh, no wonder I have never seen you around before. Are you having a hard time finding a place to stay for the night?” the man asked.

“Yes, we couldn’t find any inn,” Zhang Xiaohou confirmed.

“That’s normal, we rarely have any outsiders. You can stay here for the night if you don’t mind. I’ll ask my son to prepare a room for you. Ugh, do you mind sleeping on the floor? I’ll give you a mattress.” The old man shook off the ashes on his cigarette.

“That will do, thank you.”

“Thank you so much.”

“It’s nothing. Come and have some tea. I can tell you two are tired. Have a seat... my goodness, young man, you have a beautiful girlfriend. Lucky you,” the old man said.

Hua Yuezhu was happy to hear the compliment, and purposely looked at Zhang Xiaohou. She believed Zhang Xiaohou should have said something similar to her before.

“Mister, we saw a lot of factories and fields on our way here. What are they for?” Zhang Xiaohou asked casually.

“They are used to dry salt. What else can they be used for? Most of the villagers here either plant sugar cane or are salt farmers. We manage our own fields and dry the salt. The factories send someone to collect them. They will tell us the price depending on the salt’s quality,” the old man poured them a few cups of tea.

“Is the salt used for food?” Hua Yuezhu asked brightly.

The old man burst out laughing and said, “It sounds like you two are students. There’s a huge difference between edible salt and industrial salt. We are producing sea salt. It is only edible after it’s processed through some complicated methods. The salt we produce is for other uses.”

“Other uses?” Zhang Xiaohou had a feeling he was on the right track.

The old man stopped talking. He obviously did not want to say too much to outsiders.

Hua Yuezhu was impatient. She wanted to ask more, but Zhang Xiaohou stopped her with a look.

The old man was obviously going to be suspicious if they kept asking questions. There must be a reason why he did not answer the question.

Zhang Xiaohou was growing more suspicious of the factories.

Salt might have a lot of other uses, but there were no logistics in place to transport the salt from the peninsula. Were the farmers producing so much salt just for themselves?

“Father, I’ve prepared the room,” a tanned man around the age of twenty-seven spoke up.

“Go get some rest. You two can go around the towns tomorrow. The path you took will only return after several days,” the old man told them.

“Alright.”

Zhang Xiaohou brought Hua Yuezhu to the second floor. The old man’s son was staring at Hua Yuezhu, as if he had never seen such a beautiful woman before.

The old man hit his son on the head and scolded, “What are you looking at? That’s someone else’s girlfriend. You can get your own wife. You say you don’t fancy the girls in our village. Go and look in the cities then, but how are you going to make a living there? You only know how to dry salt!”

“Father, didn’t I stay because I wanted to take care of you? You would be alone if I moved to the cities. I’ve given up a potentially great life just to stay with you,” the young man protested.

The father and son were talking so loudly that Hua Yuezhu could hear them on the second floor. She giggled when she heard them argue.

“They are pretty funny.”

“The old man must know a lot of things,” Zhang Xiaohou said softly.

“How can you tell? I feel like he’s just an ordinary old man.”

“He’s a Mage.”

“What?” Hua Yuezhu was confused. She had not been able to tell that the ordinary-looking old man was a Mage!

Chapter 2452: Catching Dragon King Krill

“How did you know?” Hua Yuezhu was confused.

Zhang Xiaohou smiled, but he did not explain to Hua Yuezhu.

They obviously were not going to go to bed so early. Zhang Xiaohou asked Hua Yuezhu to stay in the room, and left through the back door.

They did not have any reliable leads, and could only collect as much information as they could. He was waiting for Tian Cheng and Tan Feng to report back to him before deciding on their next step.

The information the military had on the Dragon King Ants clearly stated these creatures liked to live close to islands and the land. They did not even have to consider searching the deeper ocean for their nests.

“General, we detected lots of Dragon King Krill around the peninsula, but they seem to have come from other places. Their nests aren’t here,” Tian Cheng said.

Tan Feng shared his findings from the factory. “The factories are rather special. First of all, they are not manufacturing any products with their salt. They have stored all the salt in the factories. Many workers are processing the salt into blocks at night!”

“What are they really up to?” Zhang Xiaohou was even more curious.

Zhang Xiaohou decided to visit the factory Tan Feng had investigated while it was still dark.

The factory was brightly lit, as many people were still working in it. The old man did mention most people were working night shifts in the factories.

“Why are they tossing the salt crystals into the sea?” Zhang Xiaohou observed carefully.

The workers were throwing the salt they had received from the salt farmers into the sea. Their actions made no sense at all. Why would they throw the salt back into the sea after producing it?

“Someone is operating the machinery. I think that’s a crane!” Tian Feng said softly.

Two cranes appeared on the surface of the sea. Thick steel cables were tied to the cranes, their other ends submerged in the water.

The cranes were loud and efficient. The surface of the sea started splashing.

Something was soon dragged out of the water. It was a closely-fit wire net. The salt-heavy water was pouring out of the net as it was dragged out of the sea.

However, a portion of the water looked strange. It was trapped in the wire net's tiny holes, and was being dragged ashore.

Zhang Xiaohou and his men were stunned.

Are they catching seawater?

Hang on, they were catching the Dragon King Krill!

They were aware of the Dragon King Krill's existence in the sea and knew the creatures liked salt, so they had collected a huge amount of salt produced by the salt farmers and spread it into a certain area.

They were basically throwing bait into the sea and catching all the fish with a net when they reached a certain number!

The water that was wriggling in the wire net was hundreds of Dragon King Krill!

"The wire net is made of Scorched Silver, a special substance that the Dragon King Krill cannot bite through. The residents on this peninsula are more familiar with the Dragon King Krill than the military is!" Tian Cheng blurted out in surprise.

Scorched Silver was one of the rare substances that the Dragon King Krill could not devour. Only the top scholars working for the military knew about it. No one had expected these isolated villages to know such a rare piece of information.

Furthermore, judging from their devices and how adept they were at catching the Dragon King Krill, they were obviously more familiar with the special species than the military!

True masters were indeed found among ordinary folks.

The whole world was terrified after the incident in Luning County was reported, but these villagers already had their own way of dealing with the Dragon King Krill.

"Why are these villagers catching the Dragon King Krill? Don't tell me they are breeding them!"

"So these villagers are up to no good. We'll report them to the military so they can send soldiers here to arrest them!"

Zhang Xiaohou frowned. He rolled his eyes at the two young soldiers who were talking and said, "Don't come to a conclusion so easily before we find out the truth!"

"General, what should we do next?" Tian Cheng said.

"Keep watching them and find out why they are catching the Dragon King Krill," Zhang Xiaohou ordered.

"Affirmative!"

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Zhang Xiaohou was full of doubts when he went back to the old man's house.

The peninsula was not as simple as it seemed on the surface. The old man told him the factories had been buying salt from the villages for many years, meaning they had been catching the Dragon King Krill for quite some time.

The Dragon King Krill had reproduced in plague proportions, and were now threatening the safety of the country's coastline. Zhang Xiaohou had no idea if the villages were responsible for it.

The villages seemed normal. Were they unaware of how dangerous the Dragon King Krill were, or did they really have something to do with the threat posed by the Dragon King Krill?

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Hua Yuezhu was waiting in the room, quite bored. Her eyes glittered as soon as she saw Zhang Xiaohou, and she greeted him with a smile.

"General, I just learned something interesting. You won't believe why the factories are collecting the salt," Hua Yuezhu blurted out in joy.

"They are catching the Dragon King Krill," Zhang Xiaohou said.

Hua Yuezhu gaped at him. Her rare reaction was rather amusing.

Zhang Xiaohou told Hua Yuezhu everything he had seen.

"I see, but I know why they are catching the Dragon King Krill," Hua Yuezhu regained her smile.

"Where did you learn that from?" Zhang Xiaohou asked curiously.

"I stumbled into the old man's son as he was sewing a silver fishing net when I went downstairs to get some water. He's much more simple-minded than his father. I was able to trick him and get some useful information out of him," Hua Yuezhu said.

"Are you sure you didn't do anything else?"

"Of course not!"

Zhang Xiaohou could only smile wryly.

He was making steady progress incrementally uncovering the peninsula's secrets, but Hua Yuezhu had beaten him to it by just abusing her beauty.

"He told me the things they are catching are rich in Sea Silver Granules. These Sea Silver Granules are even smaller than Sponge Granules. They can refine the Sea Silver Granules into Deep Sea Scorched Silver, which is several times more valuable than diamonds on the market. The whole Salt Flower Peninsula is making a fortune from it! They might be living on this island, but many of them own big houses in the cities!" Hua Yuezhu informed him.

Zhang Xiaohou considered her words soberly.

He had no idea if the old man's son was telling the truth. He would have to wait for his men to finish their investigation.

He just hoped everything was as simple as it sounded. Otherwise, this peninsula might be the culprit placing the whole country in danger!

Chapter 2453: The Marine Trench

The next day, Zhang Xiaohou and Hua Yuezhu told the old man they were going to look around the island as an excuse to leave his house.

They regrouped with Tan Feng, who was keeping a close watch on the factory. He told Zhang Xiaohou the same thing Hua Yuezhu had told him last night.

The workers were indeed catching the Dragon King Krill, but they were merely after the Sea Silver Granules in their blood.

What they were doing was not necessarily illegal. They would just have to pay some fines to the Environment Protection Department.

“It seems like the residents on this island have no clue as to how dangerous the Dragon King Krill are. They don’t seem to know the details of the Luning County incident because of their lack of communication with the outside world, nor did they link the Dragon King Krill with any other incidents,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“The villagers and factories are actually doing the country a favor, but the number of Dragon King Krill they have caught is nowhere close to our target,” Tian Cheng added.

It was impossible to estimate the number of Dragon King Krill in the Bohai Sea; they could only estimate the number of Dragon King Krill in every thousand liters of seawater. It was like counting sand, even if they were using the number of Dragon King Krill every thousand liters of seawater as the unit of capacity!

“Tian Cheng, where did the Deep Sea Scorched Silver the villagers are refining come from?” Zhang Xiaohou asked.

The Deep Sea Scorched Silver was a rare substance that the Dragon King Krill could not digest. If the peninsula was only a little canteen for the Dragon King Krill instead of their nest, they might be able to find the Dragon King Krill’s nests if they could find the Deep Sea Scorched Silver.

“It will take a long time for us to track down the exact coordinates. We only have around ten days left,” Tian Cheng had to reply.

The Dragon King Krill ranged widely across the Bohai Sea. Not only would it take a long time for them to learn the places the Dragon King Krill had been to by examining the residue in their bodies, they would also have to cross-analyze a lot of information.

The Deep Sea Scorched Silver could only be found on the seabed of deep oceans. It was definitely not an easy task!

“General, I think we can tell the old man the truth. The old man’s son also mentioned he only knew a little information. His father knew a lot more than him. If we tell him the threat of the Dragon King Krill, he won’t ignore the country’s safety, even if he has some concerns,” Hua Yuezhu spoke up.

Zhang Xiaohou nodded. Their only choice was to be honest with the old man and hope he could provide them with more valuable information!

Nevertheless, they had come to the right place, as the residents on the peninsula were more familiar with the Dragon King Krill and had been catching them for years.

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Zhang Xiaohou brought Tian Cheng, Tan Feng, and Hua Yuezhu with him. They all changed into their uniforms.

The old man was sitting in the yard. He was surprisingly calm when he saw them.

“Have a seat.” The old man shook off his cigarette ashes, completely unruffled by their appearance.

“Old man, I am sorry for not being honest with you,” Zhang Xiaohou said as he sat down.

“A general at such a young age. It’s been years since I last set foot out of this place. I didn’t expect our country to have such great talents now!” the old man exclaimed.

The others remained standing behind Zhang Xiaohou, instead of taking seats themselves.

The old man’s son ran out of the kitchen and yelled, “Father, what do they want? My father has nothing to do with it. Take me instead!”

“Please don’t misunderstand. We are from the military, not the Environment Protection Department.”

“What are you yelling for? Sit down, they are soldiers. Why are you holding a knife? Do you want to pick a fight with the government?” the old man shouted at his son.

The old man’s son finally calmed down, and crouched down beside the table with a regretful look. He did not even get himself a stool.

He knew what he was doing was not right. He would be in trouble one day, but the day had come earlier than he had thought.

“Old man, do you know about the creatures the factories are catching?” Zhang Xiaohou asked directly.

“Are they related to the recent incident?” the old man asked slowly.

“Mm, they destroyed Luning County. Their numbers are many times greater than what you are catching. Based on our investigations, the Bohai Sea has several thousand times the number of Dragon King Krill found here. Once they gather together and charge at our coasts, they will destroy hundreds of our cities in just a few hours,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

The old man’s wrinkled face filled with astonishment.

The old man definitely did not expect the Dragon King Krill to be such a huge threat!



“I told the people of the factories years ago that those things were dangerous. I was hoping they would report them to the authorities, but everyone was too poor back then. They could finally escape poverty by catching the creatures, yet it still became such a huge problem!” the old man said regretfully.

“It’s not entirely your fault. After all, even the Research Union couldn’t fully examine these creatures, which are so invisible in the sea. We just have to find their nests as soon as possible, and annihilate them before they invade our coasts!” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“How are you going to eliminate them?” the old man asked.

Zhang Xiaohou did not answer the question. The Forbidden Curse was confidential. The military had no plans to disclose it to the public.

The old man understood silently. As Zhang Xiaohou had deduced, he was a Mage. He knew it would be a confidential operation if they had sent a general on the mission!

“It’s indeed difficult to detect these creatures. It was a coincidence when we caught them at first. We didn’t believe there was something in the water at first since they don’t bite wood, living creatures, or the fruits we had planted. We eventually discovered they could eat steel and rocks, and then we thought of making nets with Scorched Silver to deal with them,” the old man explained.

They had only started to fish for the Dragon King Krill five years ago.

They had discovered the Dragon King Krill when all the coincidences came together. Otherwise, they would never have known there were tens of thousands of Dragon King Krill roaming around the peninsula.

“These Dragon King Krill are probably coming from a marine trench nearby. The deepest part of the marine trench has lots of Scorched Silver that we humans would struggle to mine. The strange thing is, even though the Dragon King Krill can’t digest the Scorched Silver, they will still eat it,” the old man went on.

Zhang Xiaohou took out a detailed map of the Bohai Sea and put it on the table. “Old man, can you help us mark the location of the trench?” Zhang Xiaohou asked him.

“I’m afraid it’s difficult to find it on the map.” The old man rolled up the map and gave it back to Zhang Xiaohou.

As Zhang Xiaohou was feeling a little dismayed, the old man stood up and declared, “I’ll bring you there. If I’m not too old to recognize the way, we should be able to find the trench!”

Chapter 2454: Seaweed Forest

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The sky was clear and blue, but the sea was dark and muddy. The seawater close to the land was not very clean, especially since there were many factories and sandy cliffs along the coastline.

The color of the sea slowly turned dark green after they traveled a certain distance.

“We should look for a huge area filled with seaweed first,” the old man said. “If I remember it correctly, it should be ahead of us...”

Tian Cheng regrouped with the troop not long after the old man finished his sentence. The Triumphant Eagle Dragon’s feathers glimmered under the sunlight.

“General, I’ve discovered a huge amount of floating seaweed ahead. There might be dangerous creatures hiding in it. We should maintain our current altitude,” Tian Cheng said.

Zhang Xiaohou looked at the old man. It was extremely difficult to pinpoint a specific location in the vast sea. Even if they had accurate coordinates on the map, finding it was a different story. After all, there were not many reference objects in the sea.

The old man had brought them to the right place without relying on any devices. He was very familiar with the sea.

Zhang Xiaohou was relieved.

Only nine days left until the Forbidden Curse was launched. If the marine trench was indeed the Dragon King Ants’ nest, they would be able to accomplish their mission!

“Head thirty nautical miles east after passing the floating seaweed, and you should see an underwater plain,” the old man said.

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Zhang Xiaohou did not understand what the old man meant by an underwater plain at first, but he was shocked when he saw a huge field of swaying green plants appear on the horizon.

It was hard to imagine finding a green field in the middle of the ocean. The green grasses were obviously not weeds growing out of soil, but green seaweed.

Most algae would grow on rocks, coral reefs, and close to the bottom of the sea, but for some reason, this seaweed was on the surface of the water.

Some of them had even grown out of the water. One might even mistake them for a damp field of grasses at first glance.

“The trench is down there. Many people have no idea there’s a deep trench under here because of the thick seaweed. It’s even scarier than many trenches in the Pacific Ocean,” the old man declared.

The old man also had no idea how deep the trench was. He had only discovered it during a mission when he was younger.

“Mister, is there any place for us to land our mounts? It would be better if we could set a camp there,” Tan Feng asked.

“I can’t tell for sure. There should be submerged reefs around here, but we’ll have to look for them,” the old man said.

“Captain Tong, bring some Shadow and Water Mages and do a quick scout of the area to locate the exact coordinates of the Dragon King Trench and estimate the density and level of demon creatures in it,” Zhang Xiaohou ordered.

“Affirmative!”

“Tian Cheng, look for a suitable spot to set up a camp.”

“Affirmative!”

The troop immediately split up to carry out their tasks.

It was important to set up a camp first. The trench was full of unknown forces. Even if there were no powerful demon creatures in it, They would have to explore it first before going deep into it.

Otherwise, if something happened and they were not prepared for it, the whole troop might die!

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“General, there aren’t any reefs that we can set up a camp on around here. We now have three options.”

“First, we can use an Ice Formation and freeze the surface of the water about the size of a soccer field for our camp.”

“Second, we can use the dragon beasts to set up a camp in the air. The Triumphant Eagle Dragons will take turns holding the vines and build a network of them in the air.”

“Third, we’ll set up a camp under the water. The Water Mages will build a barrier to maintain the oxygen supply. The water isn’t very deep, so we won’t need a high-level barrier.”

Tian Cheng gave a few suggestions and let Zhang Xiaohou make the decision.

Zhang Xiaohou looked at the old man. He was the most familiar with the Bohai Sea. It was wiser to consider his opinions on the suggestions.

“It’s better to set up a camp at the bottom of the sea. The forest of seaweed is like a maze with lots of demon creatures living in it. Building a camp on the surface isn’t safe,” the old man said.

“The bottom of the sea is clearer as there isn’t as much seaweed down there. It’s also easier to react if anything happens, but can these dragon beasts go underwater?”

The Flying Dragon was able to swim, but it could not fight freely in the water.

The Triumphant Eagle Dragons insisted on staying above the surface. It would be suicide to ask them to go into the water, since they had feathers.

“General, the Triumphant Eagle Dragons have a Tame Level of six stars. They can hunt for food themselves on the islands. I believe no demon creatures would dare to provoke them, especially with the Flying Dragon around,” Tan Feng added.

“I almost forgot, they don’t need us to look after them,” Zhang Xiaohou remembered.

It was fine letting Six-Stars Tamed Beasts roam around freely. They could summon the Tamed Beasts back whenever they wanted.

Therefore, there would be no problem setting up a camp under the water!

“Very well, we are setting up a camp in the water.”

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The area was not in the deep sea. They did not have to go too deep to reach the seabed.

After they set up a barrier, an enclosed area separated from the water appeared at the bottom of the sea. Military devices were set up rapidly.

“Build sensor towers,” Zhang Xiaohou told his men.

Sensor Towers were extremely important magic devices. They would release energy ripples over a wide range that could detect nearby demon creatures.

When they were in the wild, particularly in the Red Zones or Purple Zones, they would encounter countless demon creatures if they were unaware of their whereabouts.

“General, the Sensor Towers are functional. Their range has been set to two and a half kilometers. Do you want us to increase them?” a captain asked.

“How far are we from the trench?” Zhang Xiaohou asked.

“Two kilometers,” the captain declared.

“Does that mean we can detect the demon creatures a kilometer deep into the trench?”

“General, it doesn’t work that way. The energy ripples are emitted in a sphere. It can reach one and a half kilometers into the trench!” The captain showed a diagram to Zhang Xiaohou.

Zhang Xiaohou looked awkward for a moment. “So has it reached the bottom?” he quickly switched topics.

“No, the trench is deeper than we thought,” the captain answered.

“Then we’ll evaluate the demon creatures at a depth of one and a half kilometers into the trench,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“General, from our first scans, there are few creatures in the trench. However, the seaweed forest above us is over ten kilometers long and three hundred meters wide. It has an insane number of demon creatures within it. It has already reached the level of a Red Zone!” the captain informed him.

Chapter 2455: Gloomy Trench

A Red Zone. That was definitely not good news!

The density of the demon creatures was almost at the level of a horde.

Their decision to set up their camp below the seaweed forest was not much different from organizing a disco in a graveyard!

“We’ve concealed the camp. Low-level demon creatures won’t attack us in huge numbers, but we do have a serious problem. If we send out stronger signals with the beacons, the demon creatures will pick up the energy ripples. Every creature in the seaweed forest will learn our location,” the captain informed his general.

The forest of seaweed was above them. Their sensory devices were very advanced, but the beacons were similar to an Element Sensor. It would also be sending their coordinates to the nearby demon creatures if the signal was too strong.

The demon creatures hated those signals. They would show up in huge numbers and kill every human they saw. They would only stop after they destroyed the source of the signals!

“Let’s hope we can find the answer at a depth of one and a half kilometers,” Zhang Xiaohou answered calmly.

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Captain Tong brought some Water and Shadow Mages with him to scout the trench.

They maintained communication with the camp. Even though they could not use communication devices directly, they had other ways to relay information to the camp.

A day later, Captain Tong had finished exploring a kilometer into the trench. His group had encountered creatures that were several times stronger than the sea monsters above at the bottom of the sea.

On the second day, several soldiers were injured. They only managed to reach a depth of fourteen hundred meters.

On the third day, Captain Tong and his men returned with grim and regretful faces.

“Yang Xiajie was carried away into a crack in the trench. We were attacked by sea monsters, too. We had no choice but to retreat,” Captain Tong reported.

“What was the depth?” Zhang Xiaohou asked.

“Sixteen hundred meters. I’ve marked the coordinates of the crack,” Captain Tong answered.

Old Jia, who was in charge of logistics, interrupted after hearing Captain Tong’s report, “General, the sea monsters at the depth of sixteen hundred meters are most likely species of the deep sea. However, we couldn’t explain the strong force that carried Yang Xiajie away at the crack.”

“How much time do we have if we extend the range of our sensor beacon?” Zhang Xiaohou asked.

“Two days at most.”

Zhang Xiaohou frowned.

They only had seven days left. Zhang Xiaohou was still unsure whether the trench was the Dragon King Krill's nest. They could not afford to waste any more time!

"Tian Cheng, Hua Yuezhu, you two stay behind and look after the camp. Tan Feng, Captain Tong, bring the rest of our men and come with me!" Zhang Xiaohou ordered.

The sensor beacon was extremely important to their mission. They would be going blindly into a forest full of tigers if they did not learn the demon creatures' whereabouts in advance.

They now had to explore beyond a depth of fifteen hundred meters in the trench.

"We can fend off the sea monsters, but we won't be able to support you if you go any deeper into the trench!" Tan Feng warned him.

Without any support, their general would die if he was in any trouble. It was too risky!

"General, I'm your Imperial Bodyguard. I have to go with you," Hua Yuezhu reminded him.

"Protecting the camp and updating us with the sea monsters' whereabouts is important to guaranteeing our safety," Zhang Xiaohou told her.

Hua Yuezhu was lost for words.

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They did not waste any time. Zhang Xiaohou led the two captains and the rest of the soldiers into the trench.

Old Man Zhen was worried about their safety, and decided to go with them. Not only was he familiar with the Bohai Sea, he was also an Advanced Mage!

He was one of the founders of the factories that were fishing the Dragon King Krill. However, he had retired after he had a conflict with his partners.

"General Zhang, I was a soldier too. I might have quit being a Mage after some serious injuries, but I should be able to help," Old Man Zhen said sincerely.

"You guys, take good care of the old man."

"Affirmative!"

The group headed into the trench. There was still some faint light when they were several hundred meters deep. They were able to see the walls on both sides.

A marine trench was gloomier and scarier than a chasm in the mountains, not to mention how deep it was.

The deeper they went, the greater the pressure they were under. It felt like they were entering a different world.

Humans revered forests, mountains, glaciers, and deserts, as they had explored most of them.

What about a deep marine trench?

There might be unknown species in the trench. The fear in their hearts kept growing because of their imagination and the sense of unknown.

Their hearts would soon be filled with darkness, fear, and cold.

When Zhang Xiaohou and his men were in Beijiang, they believed their mentality had grown significantly after witnessing the primitive wilderness.

However, he realized the trench was much scarier than the primordial wilderness as he was going deeper into it.

If death was the scariest thing to humans, the feeling of going into a deep marine trench was almost the same as the fear of death. There was nothing but darkness around them.

It felt like they had been abandoned by the whole of mankind!

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“General, Old Jia has extended the range of the sensor beacon. It now can reach twenty-five hundred meters into the trench,” Tan Feng signaled Zhang Xiaohou with a series of gestures.

There was no longer any light at their current depth.

A Light Mage was using magic to light up a limited area, but it had only illuminated a tiny circle, with total darkness outside of it.

Zhang Xiaohou nodded as Captain Tong came over and pointed at a nearby wall.

“This is the marking I left. Yang Xiajie was sucked into a crack around two hundred meters below,” Captain Tong signaled with a worried expression.

Zhang Xiaohou asked everyone to stay on alert as they continued deeper.

The strange thing was, they did not sense any force from the crack this time. This left them feeling even more uneasy.

“I’ll go inside. Wait outside here,” Zhang Xiaohou signaled to his men.

The others immediately spoke up against the idea. Captain Tong said, “Yang Xiajie is already dead. If anything happens to you inside it...”

“Did you confirm he’s dead in person?” Zhang Xiaohou asked sternly.

Captain Tong hesitated. Yang Xiajie was still alive when he was sucked into the crack!

However, how could he possibly be alive still after he was separated from the group?

“We can’t abandon him if we haven’t confirmed he’s dead. We can retreat temporarily, but we can’t give up on saving him.”

Zhang Xiaohou’s crisp gestures reminded Captain Tong of the code of conduct of his troop!

**Chapter 2456: Deep Demon Abyss**

The crack was very narrow. Zhang Xiaohou had to turn his body sideways to fit inside it.

The strange thing was, the bone-piercing cold disappeared after he swam into the crack. He no longer felt the strong water pressure, either. He felt like he was floating in the air.

He could still feel the buoyancy from the water. It felt like he was flying through a rift.

The inside of the crack was pitch-black. Zhang Xiaohou could only rely on a magic ring to light up the path ahead.

Zhang Xiaohou felt like he was currently at the bottom of an abyss. A strange sense of suffocation was pressuring him from all directions.

*(Tap tap!)*

Zhang Xiaohou was constantly tapping on the wall, sending out a military code.

He was tapping at a certain rhythm. Only those who were with him in Beijiang knew the code. He could not make any sounds with his mouth, and could only use the code to tell Yang Xiajie that help was on the way.

*(Tap tap tap, tap tap-tap!)*

Zhang Xiaohou soon received a similar response from the distance!

He was overjoyed. Yang Xiajie was still alive and was responding to him!

Zhang Xiaohou immediately picked up his pace. He wriggled his body like a fish, dodging the sharp rocks in the crack.

The space finally broadened a little, but the seawater still felt non-existent. Zhang Xiaohou felt like he was on a planet that lacked gravity.

He shone the magic ring around his surroundings to light up the area.

However, he felt like his skin was stabbed with countless ice needles when he could see the things around him. He felt a shiver in all his muscles!

*This... Impossible!*

Zhang Xiaohou was dumbfounded.

He saw Yang Xiajie, but his body was already dismembered. His remains were floating about, scattered in the little cave.

If Zhang Xiaohou had not seen Yang Xiajie's head spinning slowly in front of him, he might even have thought it was someone else's remains.



Something else sent a chill down Zhang Xiaohou's spine.

He was hearing the taps again!

*(Tap tap tap, tap tap-tap)*

The unique code that belonged to his troop in Beijiang was extremely clear in the enclosed space!

Zhang Xiaohou's lost his last hope when he heard the taps. He thought Yang Xiajie had just been killed a moment ago after responding to his taps. He had come a little late!

Zhang Xiaohou could not feel the water pressure and cold from the seawater.

However, his body was shivering!

The code he had sent meant 'help is on the way'.

The response he received was 'help, I'm right here', which only Yang Xiajie would know!

It was not like something was mimicking Zhang Xiaohou's taps!

He had no idea what he was up against. Yang Xiajie had already been dead for some time!

—

—

A figure swam out of the crack around one and a half kilometers inside the trench.

Tan Feng, Captain Tong, and the others were relieved when they saw Zhang Xiaohou was back unharmed.

"General, where's Yang Xiajie?" Tang Feng asked.

"He's dead. I brought his remains back," Zhang Xiaohou shook his head.

"Are you injured?"

"No, but... forget it, we should keep going," Zhang Xiaohou did not mention what he had seen in the crack.

He could not explain what had happened. He also had a clearer understanding of why people were afraid of the deep sea. It was not the kind of ugly, sinister, and hideous fear that struck one's heart directly. It was slowly permeating his bones like something cold. It would slowly take away his senses and cause him to lose himself. When the fear thoroughly engulfed him, he would feel suffocated and be overwhelmed by despair!

Zhang Xiaohou could already feel his body trembling in fear. He did not want to tell the others because it would not do them any good.

"It might be a powerful creature. Stay on alert at all times and prepared for battle," Zhang Xiaohou reminded them.

"Affirmative!"

Death was not really unacceptable for the troop. However, their will would be crushed if they knew how they were going to die...

—

“General, we are picking up traces of demon creatures at a depth of twenty-five hundred meters. Most of them are Commander-level creatures,” Tan Feng informed him.

“No wonder the sea monsters in the seaweed forest are avoiding the trench. It turns out to be the territory of powerful creatures!” an old captain murmured.

“Avoid them,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“Affirmative!”

The troop continued to dive deeper. They did not dare use any Light Magic. They could sense huge shadows moving not far from them, even though everything was pitch-black. The ripples and waves from their movements were making everyone feel uneasy.

Luckily, the creatures did not have an outstanding vision, either. They were mainly relying on unusual movements of the water to sense any intruders. The troop just had to control their movements to remain undetected.

“General is a lot more experienced than us.”

“We didn’t alert any of the creatures even after going five hundred meters deeper.”

“General Zhang was a scout, too! He’s better at avoiding demon creatures than Captain Tian.”

Tian Cheng was an expert at tracking down demon creatures and searching for their traces through analyzing the clues they left behind, but Zhang Xiaohou was better at penetrating enemy territory, concealing his presence, and avoiding demon creatures.

Captain Tong was a scout, too. He had played the same role as Zhang Xiaohou had when he was still working in the field, but Captain Tong had been attacked by sea monsters after reaching a depth of fifteen hundred meters.

Captain Tong could not help but blame himself. If only he was better at avoiding the demon creatures, Yang Xiajie would still be alive now!

—

“General, we’ve reached a depth of two thousand meters.”

“General! The camp has picked up the heartbeats of a Ruler-level creature!”

“Where is it?” Zhang Xiaohou frowned.

“It’s moving very quickly. It’s heading right at us!” Tan Feng signaled urgently.

The rest of the troop was astounded. This trench was indeed a terrifying place. It had a Ruler-level creature in it!

Normally, Ruler-level creatures avoided the shallow seas. Even though the troop was inside a trench, it was not that far from the land.

A Ruler-level creature could easily inflict massive destruction on the land!

“Stay calm, and fire a bait to lure it away!” Zhang Xiaohou ordered.

Sea monsters were generally stronger than equivalent demon creatures on land. The creatures in the sea were roughly three times stronger in the water!

Even though the troop had killed Ruler-level creatures in Beijiang before, it was a different story stumbling into a Ruler-level sea monster in its territory!

### **Chapter 2457: Undersea River**

The cold water in the trench was surging around them. The troop stuck close to the wall of the trench. Their hearts were pounding so heavily it felt like they were about to jump out of their throats.

It was the Ruler-level creature!

The creature was not all that huge, but it was emitting cold lights resembling swords in the dark, as if countless swords without hilts were sticking out of it. The strange light added an extra hint of spookiness to the world at the bottom of the sea.

The bait had already been released. It contained pure Soul Energy, a rare material of the Undead Element. Most high-level demon creatures were interested in the energy, as it could help their souls grow stronger.

The Cold Ray Ruler’s gills released something like ink, which spread rapidly through the water.

However, the water started freezing before the ink could spread far away. The black ice spread like vines through the trench, forming different shapes similar to coral and seaweed.

It continued to grow through the water and was within inches of an old captain with a scarred face.

The captain stayed still on the wall. He would expose himself if moved now, and he would also place the others in danger.

A sharp black icy branch stabbed the old captain in the leg. He clenched his teeth and his face contorted in pain, but he remained unmoving.

Tan Feng was extremely worried. The black ink was obviously permeating the old man’s body. His whole leg had turned black and its flesh was corroding now!

The old captain's lower leg soon only had bones left. Tan Feng wanted to help the old captain, but the man shook his head slightly. He did not want the whole troop to be slaughtered by the Ruler-level creature because of him!

"It's going after the bait!" Captain Tong signed.

Tan Feng and the old captain both let out a relieved sigh.

Tan Feng swam to the old captain and sliced his rotted leg off, immediately using Light Magic to scorch the wound and stop the bleeding.

"I can't heal you right now. How do you feel? Can you move?" Tan Feng asked.

The old captain forced a smile. "It's fine, losing a leg won't affect my movement since I'm a Shadow Mage, don't worry."

Luckily, the poison had not spread very quickly. The poison of certain Ruler-level creatures could spread throughout a victim's body in mere seconds!

—

The troop continued to dive deeper. To their surprise, the bottom of the trench was incredibly spacious.

It was not the same as falling down a well into the cave at the bottom. It felt more like they had just passed through a dark tunnel and entered into a world at the bottom of the sea.

There was no sand or sediment on the ground, only a hard crust. Some of the spots were as smooth and glossy as metal.

"General, the water around here seems to be flowing," Tan Feng signed, looking around.

Zhang Xiaohou could also feel it. Normally, the water at a great depth would have very little movement. The water down here should feel very still and unmoving.

Unexpectedly, the water at the bottom of the trench was flowing.

In contrast, the water in the trench was still when they were descending it.

"A river at the bottom of the sea?" Old Man Zhen, who had been quiet for some time, suddenly transmitted his voice to everyone with the Psychic Element.

A river at the bottom of the sea...

The phrase alone was conflicting. After all, the sea was a body of water itself.

However, Old Man Zhen's description suited the situation perfectly.

The water in the trench was placid with strong water pressure, but the bottom of it was like a spacious river flowing rapidly in a certain direction.

"Where is it going?"

"If the water here is flowing, it means it's connected to somewhere else."

“General, should we keep going? The current here is stronger than normal rivers. We have no idea where it’s going to bring us,” Tang Feng signed.

Zhang Xiaohou had a grim face.

They had come here to look for the Dragon King Krill nest, but after a few scans, the numbers of Dragon King Krill were lower than they had expected.

Most importantly, the strange things that happened so far had nothing to do with the Dragon King Krill!

It was hard to tell what was going to happen if they went any further.

“Old Man Zhen, we haven’t found the Scorched Silver you mentioned,” Zhang Xiaohou messaged.

“It’s definitely from around here, take a look at this!” Old Man Zhen answered.

Old Man Zhen pointed at the rapid current under them and fired a white ray into it. Tiny crystals immediately sparkled in the current.

The undercurrent had a mystical silver glow, like a ribbon covered in silver crystals flowing in the darkness.

“The current is full of Scorched Silver. It might not be the Dragon King Krill’s nest, but the river is clearly connected to another area of the sea. We should be able to find the answer if we head up-current and look!” Old Man Zhen told them.

“The force of the current could grind a mountain to the ground. How are we supposed to swim against it?” Tan Feng protested.

“Captain Tong, test it with the purple liquid,” Zhang Xiaohou ordered.

They were looking for Dragon King Krill. They should confirm the local density of the Dragon King Krill first.

Captain Tong released the purple liquid used to identify the Dragon King Krill. It spread slowly through the water. However, the rapid current of the undersea river immediately diluted the purple liquid that reached it.

The water in the trench had completely changed color.

As they shone a light into their surroundings, the outlines of the Dragon King Krill nearby were revealed. They were carrying hints of silver crystals inside their bodies. They had thought the silver crystals were being carried by the river, but it was the Dragon King Krill that had been carrying them!

“General, look at the river!” Old Man Zhen pointed out.

Zhang Xiaohou shifted his gaze and saw countless Dragon King Krill flowing past them inside the river!

If they had not used the purple liquid, they would have had no idea the river held so many Dragon King Krill.

Some of the Dragon King Krill had ended up in the trench. They had to be the Dragon King Krill that had made it out of the trench and were attracted by the Salt Flower Island fishermen.

However, most of the Dragon King Krill in the river had Scorched Silver in their bodies!

The sparkles Old Man Zhen had noticed were actually the Dragon King Krill, but their bodies were transparent.

#### Chapter 2458: The Demons at the Bottom of the Sea

“Wait here, I’ll take a look in the river,” Zhang Xiaohou ordered the others.

The river might have a huge amount of Dragon King Krill, but they were obviously swimming to another area within it. It did not mean their nest was nearby.

“Isn’t that too dangerous? The Cold Ray Ruler might return any time,” Tan Feng signed, protesting the move.

“So I need you all to lure it away.”

They were running short on time. Zhang Xiaohou had no time to hesitate.

He activated his bracelet, which encapsulated him with a mysterious light. It attached to him like glowing Armor, and significantly reduced the force of the current.

Zhang Xiaohou dove into the river. It was obvious the water there somehow had a higher density. He felt like he was being hit by enormous objects. His bones might have broken if he had not had the glowing Armor protecting him.

The Dragon King Krill were obviously not interested in living humans. They followed the current and swam past Zhang Xiaohou. Some of them even avoided Zhang Xiaohou on purpose when they swam by.

The Dragon King Krill soon became invisible once more. Zhang Xiaohou knew he was surrounded by the strange creatures, but he felt no difference when swimming against the current.

The glow of his Armor could barely light up the path ahead. The Scorched Silver was also sparking under the light. Zhang Xiaohou felt like he was traveling through a starry tunnel. The path ahead was pitch-black, while his surroundings were filled with stars. He could not see the end of the path.

“Where are these Dragon King Krill coming from? And where are they swimming to?” Zhang Xiaohou murmured to himself.

It was a long path. The current did not weaken in the slightest. Zhang Xiaohou had no idea how far he had swum, and he had lost contact with his men. What lay ahead and where it was leading to were still unknown.

He was merely holding on with his will as a soldier. He had totally lost track of time.

“Don’t tell me I’ve swum to the deep sea. How is the river so long?” Zhang Xiaohou began to doubt if the river had an end. He was thinking of turning back.

He decided to clench his teeth and kept going a little longer.

The silver sparkles suddenly grew denser. Zhang Xiaohou quickly took out a glowing orb from his Space Bracelet.

He threw the orb ahead. It released light rays in all directions, lighting up his surroundings, and giving Zhang Xiaohou a sense of warmth at last.

He was still surrounded by the glossy black rocks of the river, but he noticed something huge with a bright sheen around three hundred meters ahead.

Zhang Xiaohou thought he had encountered an enormous creature of the deep sea. He was getting spooked when he realized the thing was not alive.

It was a huge silver vein, stuck between the black rocks in the river!

The silver vein was extremely large. It not only extended into the distance, but it was also hidden deep into the wall, like a silver vein in the middle of a tunnel.

The silver vein was obviously natural, but it was unlikely humans could mine it at such a great depth. It was a shame, as the Scorched Silver could be used to forge a lot of magic Equipment.

The vein had a hole in it. The strong current was coming out from the hole and forming a spiraling vortex between the hole and the river.

“Could the hole lead me to the Dragon King Krill nest? If that’s the case, the Forbidden Curse won’t be able to kill them all. The vein is a natural shelter for them...”

“No, that’s not right. The water is still flowing, meaning the cave is connected to somewhere else...”

Zhang Xiaohou had no intention of giving up after coming so far.

The number of the Dragon King Krill was obviously increasing. Zhang Xiaohou had a feeling he was getting closer to what he was looking for.

He swam into the hole decisively.

At the same time, a strange shadow with wriggling tentacles was reflected on the smooth surface of the Scorched Silver. Zhang Xiaohou would not have noticed there was something behind him if he had not seen the reflection.

The long tentacles whipped at Zhang Xiaohou like the tails of a serpent.

Zhang Xiaohou immediately rolled away and completed a Water Spell to construct a barrier in front of him. The Water Curtain compressed the nearby water into a tough wall.

However, the tentacles repeatedly slammed on the barrier and destroyed it in no time.

Left with no choice, Zhang Xiaohou could only stick closely to the rocks and slam his hand on them. The rocks began to move strangely, and turned into pillars slamming into the creature.

The creature let out a piercing screech. It was unlike anything Zhang Xiaohou had heard on land.

Zhang Xiaohou could finally take a closer look at the creature after the pillars knocked it away.

The tentacles were like seaweed, each as thick as the trunk of a ten-year-old tree. They were flexible and strong.

The creature was hiding behind its tentacles. Zhang Xiaohou could not see it clearly.

Zhang Xiaohou initially thought it was something like a squid, but the creature gradually withdrew the tentacles to its side.

A tall and aloof figure stood before him. It resembled a female titan with blue skin and a tiny head.

He could only see the upper half of its body.

The lower half was made of strong and hideous tentacles. They were growing out of the female's waist, moving around like a dress flapping under the water.

It was definitely not an elegant sight. The creature was ugly and hideous. Even though its body resembled a woman, it felt more like a ghost deep in the sea. Its appearance was unacceptable to a human!

The monster suddenly reached out one of its tentacles and tapped on the wall with a pattern that only Zhang Xiaohou understood.

(Tap tap, tap!)

Zhang Xiaohou's eyes widened in disbelief!

Chapter 2459: It's a Trap!

It was the monster that had killed Yang Xiajie!

Not only that, it was also mocking Zhang Xiaohou with his troop's special code!

Zhang Xiaohou was brimming with anger, but he did not dare act recklessly.

There was no record about this species on the land, nor had the Shoreline Alliance ever published any information about a human-resembling demon creature with tentacles.

What strange ability had allowed it to learn his code from Yang Xiajie?

Its tentacles were extremely powerful. Yang Xiajie must have been torn to pieces by the tentacles!

The monster from the deep sea was obviously trying to stop him from entering the silver vein. It was something that the monster wanted to keep hidden from humans.

Zhang Xiaohou was extremely nervous, able to sense the creature's powerful Aura. It was like an icy abyss. He already had goosebumps before the fight even started.

(Tap, tap, tap!)



The hideous monster was still tapping the rocks with a tentacle. However, the code was different this time!

Zhang Xiaohou obviously knew what the code was. To his surprise, the terrifying creature was signaling him, 'General, run!'

Run? Is the monster asking me to run away?

Zhang Xiaohou was shocked.

The monster was enraged, and its ugly face contorted all of a sudden. It was expanding and contracting simultaneously.

Its other tentacles wrapped around the tentacle that was tapping out the code on the wall, as if they were punishing a betrayer among them!

The tentacle bled after being whipped, and green blood began oozing out of it.

Zhang Xiaohou was puzzled when he saw the monster hitting itself, but he soon came up with a possibility.

The monster must have devoured Yang Xiajie's soul and memory if it knew the secret code!

Yang Xiajie's soul and memory were fighting back fiercely, even as they were being converted. The tentacle that embodied Yang Xiajie's lingering will was signaling him to run away!

The monster was extremely dangerous!

The monster let out a fierce roar. The tentacle that was warning Zhang Xiaohou was torn into pieces by the other tentacles, similar to Yang Xiajie's body.

The sight shocked Zhang Xiaohou and filled him with rage!

Not only had the monster killed Yang Xiajie, it had even trapped and tortured Yang Xiajie's soul.

The monster spread its tentacles!

The tentacles moved past Zhang Xiaohou and continued to spread further away. They swept past his head and body, but did not attack him. They continued to extend to their maximum range.

Zhang Xiaohou was soon surrounded by the tentacles. He could no longer see the silver vein and the rocks.

It felt like he was stuck in the intestines of an enormous creature!

Zhang Xiaohou tried using some destructive magic, but he could not break through the tentacles.

The cage of tentacles soon changed into different colors. Zhang Xiaohou saw the ground under his feet turning into a green field full of flowers.

Above him was a forest with colorful trees dangling upside down. Its leaves were scattered in the air like a magical scene!

The monster's stomach had turned dazzling and colorful. Zhang Xiaohou knew the sea monster had the ability to trap their target in an illusion.

The poisons of many species in the sea made humans hallucinate. The vivid colors in the illusions were one of the obvious signs. People who were trapped in the illusions would have doubts about the simplicity and ugliness of the real world.

Zhang Xiaohou's heart sank.

The monster turned out to be a creature that was good at attacking one's spirit and mind. It would place its prey in a beautiful illusion and tear them to pieces while they were lost in it, just like what it had done to Yang Xiajie!

"General! General!" a voice echoed in Zhang Xiaohou's ears.

Zhang Xiaohou turned around and saw Yang Xiajie standing behind him. He no longer had his old body. He was now made up of colorful leaves.

"General, you have to stop the Forbidden Curse. Stop the Forbidden Curse!" Yang Xiajie kept repeating the same sentence.

Zhang Xiaohou stared at the man who had appeared in his illusion. He was clueless about what to do.

Was it Yang Xiajie's lingering soul, or was the monster purposely using it to trick him?

"Please believe me, the monster might have devoured my soul, but it still needs some time to convert it. You came just in time to hear my last words.

"You must stop the Forbidden Curse at all costs. It's a trap!

"We can't underestimate the sea monsters' intelligence! General, you have to trust me!

"It's a trap!"

Yang Xiajie kept repeating the warning. He knelt in front of Zhang Xiaohou. Zhang Xiaohou could even see the begging expression on the face made up of leaves of different colors.

Zhang Xiaohou looked at Yang Xiajie.

He believed everything he saw was not real. It was an illusion the monster had placed him in, but his man who was living his final moments in the form of a soul... was he part of the illusion to trick him, too?

A huge tentacle suddenly struck Yang Xiajie heavily, and Yang Xiajie broke into pieces once again. The lifeless leaves scattered in the surroundings.

Zhang Xiaohou's face was blank.

A trap? It was a trap? What is Yang Xiajie trying to tell me?

"Xiajie, I can feel your pain. I want you to rest in peace. I promise I'll kill the monster to free your soul!" Zhang Xiaohou swore.

“No, I’m not in pain. I don’t have any regrets. The sea monsters are extremely intelligent. You should not underestimate them. I’ll use everything I have to stop this monster from attacking you. You will learn everything once you go inside the silver vein!” Yang Xiajie shouted. This time, his face had appeared on another tentacle.

Chapter 2460: I Like It More!

Zhang Xiaohou stared at the face on the tentacle.

The colors around him suddenly disappeared, as if someone was using a giant eraser to rub away the colors. It felt strange and unreal.

The tentacles surrounding Zhang Xiaohou soon returned to the monster.

The monster’s face kept switching. Yang Xiajie’s face even appeared several more times.

The monster started fighting itself. The tentacles were tearing one another apart, and green blood was spraying everywhere.

Zhang Xiaohou’s eyes glittered. He was confirming whether he was still stuck in an illusion.

A demon creature that was good at fooling one’s mind would purposely create a surreal illusion to trick their prey into believing they were freed from the first illusion. It was like waking up from a dream, but in reality, they were still in the middle of a dream.

Zhang Xiaohou was not a weak Mage who could be tricked easily. He had his own way to identify whether he was in an illusion.

It was real! Everything he saw was real!

The monster had indeed devoured Yang Xiajie’s soul and memory. It was trying to understand human constitutions, plans, and abilities, but the owners of the souls and memories would fight back during the process.

As a result, Yang Xiajie kept interfering with the monster’s actions. He even sent a signal back to Zhang Xiaohou while he was in control.

Zhang Xiaohou knew Yang Xiajie’s body was already torn into pieces. The remnants of his soul were fighting back, but he was not going to last for long.

Yang Xiajie would soon be converted. However, he was still fighting with the last parts of his soul.

Zhang Xiaohou saluted Yang Xiajie. He rushed into the silver vein with the limited time Yang Xiajie had bought him.

What was the monster hiding in the silver vein? He was told not to underestimate the sea monsters’ intelligence. What were they up to?

*The camp at the bottom of the sea...*

Countless Wild Lightning Gulpers had formed a deadly lightning web outside the barrier, surrounding the camp.

“There are too many of them. We can’t hold on for much longer!”

“Call them back. We have to retreat to the surface...”

“I’m calling the dragon beasts. We have to go now!”

The scales of the Wild Lightning Gulpers were releasing strong arcs of lightning. When their entire bodies were flickering, they would fire a lightning bolt strong enough to penetrate rocks.

They had come from the forest of seaweed above the camp. Hua Yuezhu had asked Old Jia to increase the range of the signals by a dozen kilometers to look for Zhang Xiaohou.

Unfortunately, not only did they fail to locate Zhang Xiaohou, they ended up attracting the sea monsters for dozens of kilometers around the camp.

“Triumphant Eagle Dragons!”

The group cleared a path to the surface. The Triumphant Eagle Dragons flew close to the water and snatched everyone into the sky!

The Triumphant Eagle Horses quickly soared into the sky. Several seconds later, a terrifying thunderstorm burst out of the sea and created a huge wave several hundred meters high. It almost swallowed the soldiers and dragged them back into the water.

“The General’s Flying Dragon...”

The rest of the Triumphant Eagle Horses had regrouped with them.

The imperious Flying Dragon also flew toward them, but it did not stay for long. It beat its wings and flew into the distance!

“Is...is it leaving the Bohai Sea?”

“It’s heading toward the Pacific Ocean!”

“Does that mean the General is really dead, which sets the Flying Dragon free?”

The soldiers circled in the sky with grim looks on their faces.

Tan Feng and the others were initially waiting at the bottom of the sea, but Zhang Xiaohou’s life signal was lost not long afterwards.

Tan Feng immediately asked the people in the camp to expand their search range, but they still failed to locate Zhang Xiaohou’s signal after increasing the range of the search by several dozen kilometers.

The Cold Ray Ruler appeared just as Tan Feng and the others were about to go after Zhang Xiaohou. They had almost died in the trench.

The camp Hua Yuezhu was guarding was also attacked by the sea monsters from the seaweed forest after the strong signals attracted them there. They regrouped with Tan Feng and the others and were forced to retreat.

“We have to ask for backup. We must find the General dead or alive!” Hua Yuezhu shouted.

“The Flying Dragon has been set free. I’m afraid it proves that...”

“What does it prove? It’s just an animal that has betrayed its master!” Tan Feng snarled. “Remember, we can retreat temporarily, but we can’t give up on our men!”

On a stranded island surrounded by reefs, a man whose skin was swollen after soaking in water for too long was lying on a rock. Half of his body was still in the water, but he was too tired to move.

He crawled with all his might and rolled over to move out of the water.

The sun rose and fell. The man’s body had already dried out under the sun.

A strong wind suddenly came from above. Zhang Xiaohou opened his eyes and saw a huge pair of wings blocking the sunlight. The figure slowly landed beside him.

The little island did not have enough space for the creature. Zhang Xiaohou put on an ugly smile when he saw the creature.

“Are you so fond of me, even though we have only spent a few days together?” Zhang Xiaohou had to ask.

The Flying Dragon opened its mouth and dripped some of its saliva onto Zhang Xiaohou. His wounds began to heal slowly.

“How long did it take you to find me?” Zhang Xiaohou asked it.

The Flying Dragon scratched two lines on the rock.

“Two days? And you didn’t rest throughout the journey?” Zhang Xiaohou asked in surprise.

Considering the Flying Dragon’s endurance and speed, it would have no trouble flying a circle around the world’s equator if it flew for two days without taking any rest.

“Can you bring me to a nearby city as soon as possible?”

The Flying Dragon lowered its head so Zhang Xiaohou could climb onto it.

After Zhang Xiaohou sat properly on the Flying Dragon, it spread its wings and headed east swiftly.

Zhang Xiaohou could only smile wryly when he realized Hawaii was the closest city!

It was out in the middle of the Pacific. He had somehow ended up in the center of the Pacific Ocean!

It was roughly nine thousand kilometers from the Bohai Sea to the center of the Pacific Ocean!

Zhang Xiaohou would never have believed it if he had not experienced them in person. The things that Yang Xiajie had told him were absolutely ridiculous.

Zhang Xiaohou found a telephone booth.

Zhang Xiaohou had no time to treat his wounds, nor did he have time to organize his thoughts. He could only think of one person under the circumstances.

The call was picked up.

Zhang Xiaohou took a deep breath.

“Brother Fan.”

“Are you still alive?”

“Barely,” Zhang Xiaohou wore a wry smile and said, “Brother Fan, I need your help.”

“Say it.”

“It might be a little crazy,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“I like the sound of that,” Mo Fan said.

“In three days, our military will cast an Ice Forbidden Curse on the Bohai Sea to eliminate a huge threat, but we have to interrupt the Induction and stop the Forbidden Curse!” Even Zhang Xiaohou could not believe what he was saying.

The other end fell silent. Zhang Xiaohou knew how ridiculous he sounded. He also knew no one else could help him.

“I like the sound of that even more!,” the man on the other end finally said!