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Chapter 451: Breaking the Fangs!

Mo Fan was stunned for quite a long time as he watched the fight.

Nie Dong was the vampire, yet why did it feel like he had encountered a ghost when he was battling against Zhao Manyan?

However, Mo Fan did not just stand there while Zhao Manyan was occupied with the fight against the vampire. He had completed his fiery Star Pattern, and his right fist was fully covered in flames.

Mo Fan's eyes felt like they were burning. He glared at the vampire and threw his fist at the ground angrily.

"Rose Flame: Fiery Fist: Nine Halls!"

The burning energy rapidly surged into the ground. As soon as Nie Dong hurled Zhao Manyan away, the burning pillars with scorching lava burst out from the ground like a giant fire cage.

Nie Dong was about to back away when a fire pillar sprang out from the ground. He dodged to the left, yet he was driven back by another fire pillar. He had nowhere to run. The flames between the pillars washed across him, and he cried out in pain as the fire burned him.

The power of the Fiery Fist: Nine Halls was enough to inflict serious damage to the vampire, who was roaming through the flames, blinded.

Nie Dong ran aimlessly, trying to escape from the fire. He swiped his claws wildly, tearing through the walls of the surrounding buildings. His aimless attacks posed no threat to Mo Fan and Zhao Manyan.

The flames had not dispersed yet, but Zhao Manyan had already finished casting his Intermediate Spell.

"Light Protection: Rampart!"

Zhao Manyan quickly summoned a wall-like light barrier in the direction Nie Dong was running. The vampire slammed into the wall, and skin that was able to withstand the fire was immediately scorched by the light barrier.

Zhao Manyan cast the same Light Element Intermediate Spell again when he saw how effective it was. The second wall made of light appeared in front of Nie Dong, whose skin was further scorched, leaving him in overwhelming pain!

Nie Dong was already injured to begin with. His neck was torn open by Liu Ru, and still bleeding. Otherwise, he would not be so easily suppressed by the two weak Magicians.

For a vampire, losing his blood was the same as losing his power. The amount of blood lost correlated with how weak he was.

Searing marks from the lightning, burned skin from the fire, scorched wounds from the light, blinded eyes, and vaguely hurting fangs. Nie Dong finally realized that he was currently in a pinch...

Luckily, a vampire's hearing was better than normal humans. He was able to hear the sound of cars from the bridge not far away, which helped him to regain his sense of direction.

He turned around and quickly grew a pair of wings leathery wings, his body hidden under the jagged bones of the wings. He quickly flew out from the two light barriers, heading in the bridge's direction.

Mo Fan tried to use Lightning Strike to paralyze Nie Dong, but he was very nimble in his winged form. He weaved his way through the lightning tendrils, dodging them agilely.

The Lightning Strike did not hit him many times, so it was not enough to fully paralyze a creature like the vampire. He was about to draw the Shadow Element Star Pattern under his feet, but gave up when he suddenly remembered that the Giant Shadow Spike was useless against the vampire.

"He's running away! Quick, find a way to stop him!" blurted out Zhao Manyan.

None of Zhao Manyan's Spells had the capability of confining and impairing the movement of an enemy. He could only stare at Mo Fan with a blank face. If he were able to cast five Light Protection: Ramparts in an instant, he could forcibly align the light barriers and use them as a cage.

"Don't worry, he won't be able to escape," Mo Fan's legs glowed crimson, which slowly materialized and wrapped around his legs like a piece of armor.

Mo Fan activated the Blood Tabi and chased after Nie Dong down the empty street.

"The guy is flying and you're running. How are you going to catch him?" yelled Zhao Manyan.

In the meantime, Zhao Manyan was not willing to give up either. He immediately rushed back to his luxurious car nearby.

He inserted the key and ignited the engine. He was about to step on the pedal when he suddenly saw a golden ray appearing above the vampire in the direction the vampire was heading into.

The ray of light split in a crisscross pattern, forming a golden net.

The golden light net suddenly lunged at Nie Dong, who was forced to return to his original appearance when he touched the light that was enchanted with a sacred force...

The light net wrapped around Nie Dong and fell to the ground. The burning effect from the light almost melted through his face!

"AHHHH!!" Nie Dong struggled wildly. His previous smug, proud look was nowhere to be seen, replaced with him shrieking out like a monster with a horrifying appearance.

The other end of the net had gathered into a string, with the Little Loli's fair, tender hand holding onto it.

Lingling was wearing a satisfying smile, like a young but cunning little fox. As a Hunter Master, she had no fighting capacity, yet she was a genius at using tracking and hunting magical items.

The vampire could easily dodge the Light Binding Net if it was used at the beginning of a fight, but the net was cast when the prey was trying to run away in a panic, the vampire had nowhere to escape.

Nie Dong seemed to have captured Lingling's youthful scent, and recalled he had encountered the same scent at the North Country Club before. He sprang in Lingling's direction, hoping to scare her away with his sinister appearance.

Lingling remained in her position. Her wrist had the net of the Light Element tied to it. The vampire had no chance of escaping from the light net.

"Lingling, move aside!" yelled Mo Fan furiously. He had totally unleashed the rage that had accumulated in his chest for a long time!

Mo Fan activated the active power of the Blood Tabi, and as he approached the vampire, he leapt into the air and gave the creature a flying kick to his face!

Using magic might destroy Lingling's Light Binding Net, so the physical power of the Blood Tabi had come just in time. Overwhelming force gathered on Mo Fan's right leg before it smashed into Nie Dong's face, producing a loud crash.

Nie Dong spun in the air within the Light Binding Net, and flew over thirty meters away. A sedan which was parked illegally on the side of the road was smashed into pieces, showing how powerful the kick was!

Two white fangs broke off, dropping to the side of the smashed vehicle.

Nie Dong's fangs were already loose when he bit Zhao Manyan's golden shield, and Mo Fan was aiming his kick right at his fangs!

Once the fangs broke, a vampire was not far away from death, as a vampire had only one way to drink blood!

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Chapter 452: Avenged

After his fangs came off, the vampire had turned into a beaten dog.

His initially well-groomed hair was hanging loosely. The handsome face he was proud of was covered in wounds and bruises. He touched his upper jaw, and when he discovered his fangs were missing, he probed around on the ground in panic.

His eyes had not recovered from the blindness, and the fangs had dropped a great distance away. Even if he managed to find them, he would not be able to put them back!

Nie Dong, who finally realized that his death was approaching, shuddered. He begged Mo Fan to spare his life!

"I will do anything you ask me to do, I'll give you everything I have, too. Please, spare me, and give me back my fangs... Please, I'm begging you, I won't hurt anyone else, as long as you can let me go..." Nie Dong's whole body was severely burned from the Light Binding Net.

Mo Fan picked up the two fangs he desperately needed, his eyes not showing a hint of mercy.

God knew how many innocent lives the vampire had killed in the city. There was no reason at all to spare his life!

"I'll help you bring an end to this," Mo Fan said, turning around and glancing at Liu Ru.

Liu Ru nodded. She stared at the whining bastard, wanting to witness the vampire's death with her own eyes!

The Rose Flame erupted on Mo Fan's palm, and burned fiercely.

The vampire was losing strength continuously. The Light Binding Net already tortured him greatly, and it went without saying that his body would not be able to endure Mo Fan's extremely hot Rose Flame.

Mo Fan tossed the flame at the vampire. To ensure that the vampire would not come back to life again, Mo Fan cast a succession of Burning Bones, making sure to burn the vampire's body to ashes!

The flames grew stronger, already lighting up the entire street blazing red.

The battle had only lasted for a short period of time. A fire truck had made its way to the scene when it first started, but when the firefighters discovered the flames were the doing of a Magician, they parked the truck a nice safe distance away...

Both the police or the firefighters knew there were Hunters in the city, and of the existence of demon beasts hiding among humans. As such, when a battle between Hunters and demon beasts erupted, the police would evacuate the crowd nearby, and seal the area.

Both Mo Fan and Lingling carried a Hunter License with them, and the latter had also contacted the police prior to coming here, thus the incident did not result in a big panic.

The flames burned vigorously on Nie Dong's body. Any ordinary human would have turned into a pile of ashes by now, but Nie Dong was still struggling and groaning in the fire...

They could see that the vampire's body was undergoing a horrendous transformation in the fire. Jagged wings grew out from his back, while his body began to expand. His claws and limbs turned monstrous, with a long tail waving amid the flames.

The Blood Tribes were split into two categories, one consisting of vampires with human lineage. These vampires looked the same as humans when they were not hunting, and would live among humans while obeying a set of rules to prevent themselves from being discovered by the Hunters and churches. The other kind was known as vampiric monsters!

Vampiric monsters were something that the vampires would turn into when they were overwhelmed by evil after indulging in the pleasure of killing, randomly drinking blood, and taking drugs. They would gradually lose their human lineage, and slowly became evil creatures of darkness. They would reveal their true appearances when their true nature was exposed, turning them into monsters!

Nie Dong's transformation into a monster had proven that the guy had been roaming between the boundaries of a vampire and a vampiric monster. If they had not eliminated the guy in time, he would eventually have turned into a monster, leading to a disastrous event with great casualties, as vampiric monsters were mindless killing machines!

Nie Dong, whose appearance had changed beyond recognition, struggled wildly in the flames. The firefighters who were driving the trucks immediately backed away after seeing this.

They were ordinary humans after all, they would not dare to face such a terrifying demon beast!

"Still putting up a deathbed struggle?" Mo Fan observed coldly.

The flames burned even hotter under Mo Fan's control, even containing the Rupture effect. The monster which Nie Dong had turned into was disintegrating in the rupturing flames...

His arms fell off and fell to ashes. His head exploded and more sparks erupted. His body and limbs were scorched by the flames, which could not endure any further.

Finally, Nie Dong collapsed to the ground!

The fire had already spread to half of the street when the terrifying monster finally let out its final breath. The strong evil presence slowly dissipated among the blazing flames.

"Mo Fan, watch out for his soul," reminded Lingling.

"Don't worry, I've got the best tool possible to deal with a dead soul!" responded Mo Fan grimly.

Shortly after the vampire's death, a dark red soul like a little firefly slowly rose up from the flames...

After losing its flesh, the vampire's soul was just a lone spirit without any power. However, Mo Fan's heart was swamped with joy when he discovered the soul.

He was overjoyed; he had finally secured another complete Warrior-level Soul Essence!

Since capturing the Soul Essence of the Mother Scale Skin Phantom, Mo Fan had not obtained any Warrior-level Soul Essence. Even when he was massacring the demon beasts as the Deathbringer of Dongting Lake in the past, the chance of finding a Warrior-level Soul Essence was too slim. The vampires were a somewhat special kind of Warrior-level creature, thus the drop rate of a Soul Essence was significantly higher than that of ordinary demon beasts.

The Soul Essence of the Mother Scale Skin Phantom was sold at a crazy price, and the vampire's Soul Essence had even better quality. He was going to be rich again!

However, Mo Fan found it strange that the Soul Essence was dark red in color...

In the past, the souls that Mo Fan encountered had more of a dark green glow, both humans and demon beasts. The light was a unique trait of the souls, but it was his first time seeing a dark red glow like Nie Dong's soul, and wondered why was that the case...

"Wait!" Lingling stopped Mo Fan all of a sudden.

After the battle came to an end, Lingling seemed worn out and was close to falling asleep.

After the quest was completed, she could finally go home to get the rest she deserved. She was not particularly interested in vampires. She was a Hunter Master after all, thus she had seen all kinds of weird monsters before...

However, when Mo Fan was about to retrieve Nie Dong's unique soul, Lingling opened her eyes wide. Her limpid pupils flickered with irresistible anger!

Her body slightly shuddered, as if she had found the thing she had always been looking for. Apart from the unexpected anger, her face was surprisingly filled with a compulsive excitement too!

Her fierce, compelling excitement was something nobody expected to appear on her adorable face...

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Chapter 453: The Soul with a Different Color

"What is it?" asked Mo Fan.

It was Mo Fan's first time seeing the Little Loli wearing an expression like that. He could not help but feel worried.

Lingling did not hear him. She was simply staring at Nie Dong's dark red soul, which was nothing like the usual green or blue souls Mo Fan had seen before. The eerie red seemed to have placed Lingling under a curse, she was wearing a twisted grin on her face!

Mo Fan could not understand why a ten-year-old girl would suddenly wear such an expression.

Perhaps he did not really understand the Little Loli to begin with; he never knew why she insisted on being a Hunter at the Clearsky Hunter Agency instead of going to school like everyone did at her age. He did not understand how she earned the title 'Hunter Master', when so many Magicians found it extremely difficult to earn the same title, nor did he know why she was so mature and intelligent behind her cute, adorable appearance...

Lingling remained silent. She did not budge when Mo Fan stored Nie Dong's soul inside his Little Loach Pendant. She was deep in thought with her head lowered, and her expression kept on changing rapidly.

"What's going on? Is there something you can't tell me?" Mo Fan placed his hand on Lingling's shoulder after he finished stashing away Nie Dong's soul.

Lingling seemed to be recalling something. When she raised her young, yet mature face, Mo Fan captured a glimpse of hatred from her eyes.

"I've been looking for souls with a different color like this one," Lingling said to Mo Fan grimly.

"Is there anything special about the soul?" asked Mo Fan.

"My last partner disappeared because of a dark red soul like this one," said Lingling.

"Your last partner?" Mo Fan could vaguely recall something, but he could not remember who mentioned it.

Lingling fell silent again, so Mo Fan continued to ask, "Should I show you the soul again?"

"It's fine. I already knew the guy is still hiding somewhere, and I now know the person I should look for to get more information," said Lingling.

Mo Fan was confused. Since Lingling was not willing to share, he did not pursue further. His only choice was to ask Old Bao about it later.

Mo Fan had decided to investigate further. Lingling was his companion, and the little girl had helped him with many things. Most importantly, she was never interested in the rewards, thus he basically got most of the commission from the quests.

Lingling was very keen on doing Hunter's work. Initially, Mo Fan thought Lingling was doing it because of her interest in helping out with the family business, but it seemed like there were more reasons for it based on her strange reaction today.

After settling the matter on hand, he would have to pay Old Bao a visit to learn the details.

Mo Fan turned around and walked toward Zhao Manyan and Liu Ru.

To Mo Fan's surprise, Liu Ru, who was previously covered in wounds and bruises, had already recovered on her own. Not a trace of scars was left on her body.

Looking at her, Mo Fan intentionally wore a calm smile and said, "A vampire can still be considered a human, so you shouldn't think too much about it."

Liu Ru raised her head and glanced at Mo Fan. She could barely withdraw her fangs now. It was difficult to tell if she had accepted the truth that she had turned into a vampire, or she had totally lost hope to begin with. She wore a pitiful smile and said, "Being able to avenge my sister is enough, I don't really care what's going to happen to me."

"Even though I feel like telling you that your sister would prefer you to live a strong and peaceful life, you have made your own choice, and what's done can't be undone. You're no longer the same old you, so I hope you can continue to move forward." Mo Fan tried very hard to find some comforting words.

As a matter of fact, any chicken soup for the soul kind of advice was utterly meaningless. He would never understand what she was going through, since he was not the one involved in the incident.

The smile on Liu Ru's face blossomed, not because Mo Fan's words were resonating with the thoughts she had in mind, but as he had mentioned, she already knew the life she was going to live moving forward, a human life when she could no longer be called one.

She rose to her feet and slowly walked toward the darkness into the distance, heading for the boundaries of the city.

Mo Fan watched her go in silence. He did not ask her to stay, nor did he act like a saint and made a righteous declaration to warn her that he would still exterminate her when she lost her control.

Liu Ru's figure slowly turned blurry as she ventured deep into the darkness. The dark yet endless road would give her enough time to figure out her new way of living. Mo Fan could not provide any assistance to her.

"Are you seriously letting her go, just like that?" Zhao Manyan said with great pity.

"What else do you want me to do? Recruit her as a bed-warmer? I'm more than happy to do it..." said Mo Fan.

"True that, she was already reluctant to disturb your life when she was still a human, let alone now... Forget it, let her be. I only hope that she won't lose her inherent qualities to the greed for blood. Even if she cannot control the urge, she should just come to us instead. How could we ignore our call of destiny?" said Zhao Manyan, which clearly implied that he knew the rumors stating that the Blood Tribe would always be doing something else when they were drinking their prey's blood!

Mo Fan nodded, as he did agree with Zhao Manyan's statement.

Either way, the incident had come to an end. As for the vampire family that Nie Dong had come from, it was beyond Mo Fan's control.

The Hunter Union had already been alerted. They would surely conduct a thorough search in the city, and treat all the people who had died a strange death as possible prey of the vampires in the past. Therefore, the vampire family would most likely keep a low profile for a period of time.

Mo Fan had gotten the fangs he needed, and helped Liu Ru take her revenge. It was basically the best ending he could hope for, and now it was time to hand over the fangs to Huo Tuo.

Initially, Mo Fan was planning to challenge higher-ranked students after getting his equipment. He had already missed the second challenge week, thus he could only climb the rankings in the following month.

He could sell the Warrior-level Soul Essence to earn a huge sum of money, and combined with the money he had received from the previous Commander-level corpse, he should have enough money to get himself a Contracted Beast.

Getting a Contracted Beast was the best way to improve his strength significantly for the time being. With the Contracted Beast, he would be able to climb to a higher rank, and earn more time to cultivate in the Three Step Tower, which would then allow his Lightning and Shadow Nebulas to improve further!

The process of improving strength was like rolling a snowball. Once the snowball started rolling with a push, it would grow bigger the more distance it covered. What Mo Fan needed the most now was a Contracted Beast to give his cultivation that had come to a halt for a while a little push from the back!

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Chapter 454: Lingling's Secre

"Tsk tsk tsk, I didn't expect you would actually get the fangs for me. The Hunter Masters I've hired before couldn't even find a vampire's hair. You have some real skills, I'll give you that, very impressive!" Huo Tuo's eyes flickered when he saw the fangs Mo Fan was handing to him.

Creatures like the vampires were quite rare. If Huo Tuo had not happened to stumble onto one who was bold enough to target a pair of twin sisters in a short period of time, Mo Fan would not have been able to find him even after searching the depths of the skies.

No wonder Huo Tuo was willing to trade for two vampire's fangs instead of the usual expensive fares he charged.

Mo Fan had no clue why Huo Tuo needed a vampire's fangs. He was only concerned about when he could get his hands on the new equipment, so he could challenge the students ranked in the top thirty.

Being placed in the top thirty would allow him to cultivate in the Three Step Tower for three days and three nights. Since Mo Fan had four Elements now, his rate of cultivation would be double that of an ordinary Intermediate Magician on the third-floor of the Three Step Tower. He urgently needed to improve his Lightning Element to level three, and he had spent a great deal of time meditating to prepare himself. All he needed now was a breakthrough with the help of the Three Step Tower.

"So when can you give me my armor? I'm hoping to climb the ranking with it," Mo Fan said to the vampiric old man.

The old man was extremely stubborn when no personal interest was involved, but when he received the fangs, he immediately wore a benevolent and kind countenance.

"Patience, young man. I'll deliver the armor you've been dreaming of into your hands by the next challenge week," said Huo Tuo with a smile.

Mo Fan was finally at ease after the old man had given his promise.

Mo Fan was not in a rush to sell the vampire's Soul Essence. The truth was, Zhao Manyan's family owned a rather reliable marketplace in the city. Zhao Manyan was more than willing to help him sell the treasure, yet Mo Fan thought it was necessary to hold onto the Soul Essence for a while longer after he recalled Lingling's reaction, and he learned what was special about the dark red color of the soul.

Mo Fan could not reach Lingling for a few days, nor did he know what the girl was desperately looking for. His thoughts were totally preoccupied by the strange incident.

Mo Fan paid a visit to the Clearsky Hunter Agency, as he wanted to ask Old Bao for more details. To his surprise, he saw a woman with outstanding curves in a sexy, leather outfit and an attractive, dignified look seated inside, emanating a cold aura.

"Senior Sister Leng Qing, it's a surprise to see you here," Mo Fan greeted Leng Qing in astonishment.

They had not met since the incident at Hangzhou. It went without saying that the incident involving a corrupted Councilman had resulted in lots of work cleaning the mess up. Leng Qing, who was a Vice Elder of the Magic Court, had a lot on her plate.

Leng Qing glanced at Mo Fan and smiled faintly. It seemed she had a fairly good impression of Mo Fan.

"Just paying a visit, but I guess I'm out of luck, since no one is here," Leng Qing scanned the old building, which was a mix of a coffee shop and a teahouse, as if each of the things placed and hung, and the sounds they made, were loaded with a lot of memories for her.

"Strange, where did everyone go? Even Old Bao isn't here," Mo Fan wondered helplessly.

"What is it? It looks like something is bothering you?" Leng Qing asked casually.

Mo Fan glanced at Leng Qing, and remembered that this attractive, powerful Vice Elder of the Magic Court was Lingling's sister. Surely, she would know more than Old Bao.

Mo Fan quickly told her how he and Lingling had hunted the vampire down, and emphasized the strange red light that Nie Dong's soul was emitting.

Leng Qing gave Mo Fan a surprised look with glittering eyes, before asking, "Are you sure that the soul has a dark red glow?"

Mo Fan nodded. He could tell that there was something extremely important about it from Leng Qing's reaction, so he pursued the matter further.

The truth was, Lingling was still very young. He could not help but worry when he recalled the slightly twisted expression on her face.

"Lingling told me it has something to do with her previous partner. Didn't her partner die?" Mo Fan probed.

Leng Qing let out a hollow laugh, with a hint of sorrow on her face.

When Leng Qing did not answer his question, Mo Fan asked softly, "Is it something we shouldn't be discussing?"

Leng Qing spoke after a moment of silence, "It's not any secret, it's just that the partner you mentioned... he's someone special to us, as he was our late father."

Mo Fan jaw dropped in bewilderment.

He could tell that the person was extremely important to Lingling, yet he never thought the person was actually her father!

"Lingling has been extremely talented since a very young age. She has a great interest in the art of hunting, so my father brought her along when he was carrying out the non-dangerous quests, and taught her what it takes to be a great Hunter. Lingling has been following him around since a very young age, so he was not only a father, but a teacher, a friend, and most importantly, a partner. This place used to be full of their laughter, and every time they were on a quest, Leng Qing would run around happily, telling everyone about it with her little canine teeth poking out from her grin. The father and

daughter made a good team, and even on some difficult quests, Lingling was able to provide some useful clues to her experienced father..." Leng Qing explained in a gloomy voice.

Although Leng Qing had only vaguely described the relationship between Lingling and her father, Mo Fan immediately pictured the gentle scene of a patient Hunter teaching his smart, energetic little princess.

Lingling was surely an active little elf back in the days, dancing elegantly in the lively Clearsky Hunter Agency.

When Mo Fan first met her, she was already a Hunter Master. She had grown from an innocent little girl to an outstanding, fearless Hunter, and it went without saying that her father had taught her a great deal, and looked after her with tender love and care.

Lingling had only mentioned about her previous partner vaguely, at most. Maybe in her little heart, she had never accepted the fact that her father had passed away!

"So what does the dark red soul do with your father's death?" asked Mo Fan.

"It's most likely the only clue we have regarding the truth, as our father's soul was also dark red when he passed away, as if he was placed under a curse," said Leng Qing.

"I've only seen green and blue souls before. It's true that I've never seen a dark red one before, which means it must be some special kind of death mark?" inferred Mo Fan.

Leng Qing nodded heavily.

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Chapter 455: Secret Tipping Scroll

"But Lingling is still too young, I've been doing some investigations over the past few years, and I've discovered that those who could produce a special death mark like that were no ordinary creatures, to the extent that I didn't even dare to look into it further, as I've begun to feel that something is threatening my life," said Leng Qing sternly.

Mo Fan was astounded. Leng Qing was a Vice Elder of the Magic Court, yet even she could not solve the case despite her power and strength?

What exactly were the things that would produce these dark red souls? Judging from Leng Qing's words, he was clearly aware that Lingling's father was a very outstanding Hunter!

"So about the investigations that Lingling is doing... she is so keen to hunt down demon beasts, and accept all kinds of quests, just to collect more information?" Mo Fan asked.

"Indeed. My identity is rather special, so once I go any deeper, the factions hiding in the dark would start interfering. It's more effective for Lingling to find clues from incidents related to demon beasts. After all,

when I'm involved, things became different. Anything that's related would be wiped clean," said Leng Qing.

Mo Fan frowned. He could tell that the whole thing involved a huge secret.

However, Mo Fan was only worried about Leng Qing's safety. If Leng Qing had mentioned that the factions hiding in the dark would interfere once they investigated too deeply into the matter, didn't that mean Lingling would eventually stumble into them?

"Lingling isn't as simple as you think she is, just let her be. Even if we tried to stop her, she would still do it... she's only investigating the dark red soul, so it's not too big of a deal," Leng Qing said calmly.

"Senior Sister Leng Qing, it sounds like you know something discrete," said Mo Fan.

"Would it make any difference? Doing anything before you're powerful enough would only get yourself killed," said Leng Qing.

Leng Qing did not discuss the topic any further, but Mo Fan was already intrigued.

Mo Fan proceeded to find out more information about Lingling's father, and to his great surprise, her father, Qin Zhan, was a Senior Hunter!

The only time Mo Fan had met a Senior Hunter was during the incident of the Mother Scale Skin Phantom. He could never forget the astonishing sight of the giant blue beast stomping the stadium from above. The Senior Hunter was incredibly dignified, their presence accompanied by an imperious aura and epic background music!

How terrifying was a quest that killed a Senior Hunter without leaving any trace?

As Mo Fan tried to investigate further, he could no longer find anything useful. He was only an Advanced Hunter, thus the information he had access to was fairly limited...

Mo Fan tried asking Professor Qiu Yuhua, to see if he knew anything about the death mark.

The dark red mark was very unique. If he could understand the reason behind the color change of one's soul, he might be able to find more useful clues.

Unfortunately, even someone knowledgeable like Professor Qiu Yuhua was utterly clueless. He just raised his brows and asked curiously, "Since when can a soul be dark red?"

In the end, Mo Fan still could not find any useful information. Left with no choice, he decided to sell the Warrior-level Soul Essence.

There was no point in keeping it, since he was desperately in need of money to get himself a Contracted Beast. It was said that a Contracted Beast was a real money-burning commitment.

The vampire's Soul Essence was sold at a fairly high price: twenty-five million RMB, a huge sum of money.

Combined with the money he had earned from selling the Xuanwu Giant Lizard's corpse, he now had around forty million RMB. Even though the best Contracted Beasts were priced at around fifty million RMB, Mo Fan had no time to wait any further. It was best to improve his strength as soon as possible!

Mo Fan picked his lucky day. He always thought he had the plot armor and the temperament of a main protagonist. If the others were able to stumble upon dragon eggs, ancient phoenixes, or younglings of powerful beasts by only spending the money needed to buy a pigeon egg, his luck should not be any worse.

"Zhao Manyan, what is going on there? Why does it look like they are trading some kind of scrolls? Are you guys selling Star Atlas Books?" asked Mo Fan.

When Mo Fan arrived at the Zhao Family's marketplace, he immediately discovered some fascinating stuff.

The auction was very high-class, yet there were not many people around. Most of the items had quickly gone over ten million RMB, thus it was quite difficult for an auction like this to be crowded with people.

However, Mo Fan saw that the hall at the back of the auction was relatively lively, with a huge crowd.

"Oh, those aren't magic scrolls, it's like a lottery," said Zhao Manyan.

"Jackpots? Are you kidding me? Those people are all Magicians!" exclaimed Mo Fan.

"Allow me to explain. Most of the quests listed at the Hunter Union have reliable sources of information, hence the person submitting the quest only needs to sign the contract, and pay the commission, so that the Hunters won't be wasting their time and effort. However, most people will find some clues and traces while they were hunting in the wild, which aren't necessarily reliable. Such information isn't valid enough to be submitted as a quest, so they will store this valuable, yet uncertain information in the scrolls, and sell them accordingly," explained Zhao Manyan.

"Are you serious? Do people actually buy them?" asked Mo Fan.

It was most likely that the information was mere speculations or rumors. Most of the time, people would just share them around, but they were actually selling them like a lottery. Were these Magicians running out of ideas on how to spend their money?

"Brother, we're now in the information age. Surviving alone is not enough for the Hunters, it's all about getting reliable information and tips! You've seen it yourself, the people are lining up to buy them," said Zhao Manyan calmly as he glanced at the crowd at the back of the hall.

"It does sound like a lottery, now that you've mentioned it. If the tip is real, it would be a win, as they would save the money needed to get reliable information or post a quest. But if the information is fake, or outdated, it would be a waste of effort," said Mo Fan.

"Every Magician has some money to spare, and everyone likes the idea of winning a lottery. Besides, these Secret Tipping Scrolls aren't expensive at all. Many people would buy a few in a row, and even if the information wasn't exactly what they were looking for, just treat it as a chance to learn something. If you're lucky enough to buy two scrolls that have relevant information, it's very likely to be a piece of real information. Those who buy them as soon as possible usually have a higher chance of earning a profit!

Which places are showing the presence of Soul Seed Pieces or Soul Seeds? Where are the places that the rare demon beasts have been spotted a number of times? Which places have a strong Elemental presence that is possibly hinting at the existence of some rare materials..." Zhao Manyan went on.

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Chapter 456: Flame Belle

"Many pieces of information are plain rumors, yet after filtering them out carefully, and selling the scrolls at a higher price, most of the Magicians will try their best to put in some accurate details. After all, if most of the information they provide is fake, they can only sell their scrolls at a very cheap price. When it reaches a certain threshold, the marketplace will forbid them from being a tipper. The minimum requirement to become a tipper is the Advanced Hunter rank, while most of the tippers are Hunter Masters. There are quite a few Senior Hunters, too," said Zhao Manyan.

Mo Fan had definitely learned something new.

If the news was from Hunter Masters or Senior Hunters, the information that the scrolls contained would be extremely valuable!

Experts like Senior Hunters would normally carry out the highest-ranked quests, and they would discover the presence of Soul Seeds or demon beasts along the way. Even if they knew there was something valuable, they would not bother wasting their time on it, but it was a waste to simply hold onto the information. Therefore, it made more sense to write down the information on a Secret Tipping Scroll, and sell it to others for some extra cash. Meanwhile, it would also benefit the lower-ranked Hunters who were interested in the piece of information, resulting in a win-win situation.

Therefore, the Secret Tipping Scrolls were indeed quite meaningful!

"Why don't you go and buy a few of them? I'll have them give you a discount," offered Zhao Manyan.

Since Mo Fan was also a Hunter, instead of spending his time on the generic quests from the Hunter Union, he could try his luck through the Secret Tipping Scrolls instead.

"Alright, I'll buy a few, how much does one cost?" asked Mo Fan.

"The price varies, the expensive ones can go up to ten million, while the cheap ones can go all the way down to a few thousand. Tell me your range, and I'll get a few for you," said Zhao Manyan.

"Let's try a few with a price around ten thousand," Mo Fan was fairly rich for the time being, so he decided to try his luck.

"Not a problem."

After all, the marketplace was one of the Zhao Family's property, thus Zhao Manyan did have some special rights here. He quickly got a few Secret Tipping Scrolls for Mo Fan.

The Secret Tipping Scrolls were quite elegant, since their target audience was Magicians, who spent a lot of money on luxuries. After all, a commoner would prefer to spend a few tens of thousand on a branded bag, instead of a piece of information which was not guaranteed to be reliable.

"Open them up yourself," Zhao Manyan managed to get three Secret Tipping Scrolls. All of them were light blue in color, while those that were more costly were silver and gold!

The information provided by Senior Hunters was fairly reliable, so many people were willing to spend a huge sum of money on them.

Mo Fan opened the scrolls and read the contents.

"A Sword-Fin Ocean Demon has been spotted at Huangpu River. There is a higher chance to find it in April."

Zhao Manyan stuck his head closer and burst out laughing, "The Sword-Fin Ocean Demon is an infamous kind of demon beast living in the oceans. Their sword fins are sold with insane prices in the market. The sword fins are an important material to further improve the power of Deathstrike Magic Equipment... The problem is, can we actually find it in Huangpu River? I thought most of them were residing somewhere deep in the Pacific Ocean."

"Fishing? I'm not interested at all. Sigh, what a waste of money," said Mo Fan pitifully.

"It's fine, we still have two more," said Zhao Manyan.

Mo Fan nodded and opened another Secret Tipping Scroll, and subconsciously read it out.

"North Burning Valley, there are signs of a new Flame Belle being born."

"Damn, this is a valuable piece of information!" Zhao Manyan screamed before Mo Fan could react.

"How is that?" asked Mo Fan.

"The North Burning Valley is a very famous Fire Element region in our country, which is very close to Dunhuang. There, you can find a famous demon beast, a creature that is born with the fire of nature, an Elemental Beast... The Flame Belle is considered the rarest among all Elemental Beasts, its value is priceless on the market. However, if anyone were selling a Flame Belle's youngling at an auction, I bet that every famous renowned clan in Shanghai would attend it!" said Zhao Manyan with excitement.

"That serious?" asked Mo Fan in shock.

"Sigh, are you illiterate... well, it's hard to tell if the information is reliable or not," said Zhao Manyan.

"That's my Secret Tipping Scroll, what are you being so excited for?" said Mo Fan unpleasantly.

"F**k me, are you seriously unaware of how special a demon beast like the Flame Belle is? Its strength is more than a few times stronger than that of an ordinary beast... The Elemental Beasts have been the dream Contracted Beasts for Summoners, and this Flame Belle is one of the best Elemental Beasts you could ever find. Simply speaking, if you managed to get a Flame Belle as your Contracted Beast, you're going to be famous! You can easily get into the top ten with the Flame Belle!" said Zhao Manyan.

Mo Fan could tell that this Flame Belle was indeed very powerful judging from Zhao Manyan's reaction. The problem was, how did he know if the piece of information was reliable? Don't tell him that he had to pay a visit to the area around Dunhuang City?

"I'm quite interested in this Flame Belle. Do you have any way to obtain more information about it?" Mo Fan asked quickly.

Mo Fan had heard of Elemental Beasts before. If a Summoner could sign a contract with an Elemental Beast, they would obtain a boost for the respective Element too.

For example, since Mo Fan's primary Element was Fire, if he managed to get a Flame Belle as his Contracted Beast, his Fire Element would either become stronger, or have some special burning effect.

"Simple, spending lots of money... there are filtered Secret Tipping Scrolls that you can get, which are more expensive than the normal ones. If you bought all the ones related to the valley close to Dunhuang City, and if many of the tips are correlated to one another, the pieces of information might be stating the truth," said Zhao Manyan.

"How much money would I be spending? This is only to get the information!" said Mo Fan speechlessly.

"It's basically gambling. If you think the information is right, you should not just buy more of them, instead, you should buy all of them! Once you've proven that it's real, you will have fewer competitors compared to the quests that were submitted to the Hunter Union. All you have to worry about is how you're going to get it. In my opinion, this Flame Belle is perfect to be your Contracted Beast, since your Rose Flame is already extremely violent among the flames, and with the boost from your contract with the Flame Belle, your flame is going to be insane, pretty much unmatched among flames that aren't Soul-graded!"

As a matter of fact, Mo Fan was fairly intrigued.

Many students in the school had Fire Soul Seeds, thus his Rose Flame alone no longer granted him an edge. If he could further improve his Fire Element with a Contracted Beast, it would be the perfect outcome!

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Chapter 457: Forming the Team

"You can raise the Flame Belle, every time you feed her a Soul Seed Piece in her youth, there's a higher chance that she would develop a Soul-grade flame as she ranks up. By then, your Contracted Beast is going to be terrifying; even Advanced Magicians would be scared to fight her!" Zhao Manyan became more excited the more he spoke. It was clear that he too had not expected Mo Fan's Secret Tipping Scroll to contain information about a Flame Belle!

These Secret Tipping Scrolls were truly a great place to find a fortune!

Frankly speaking, Mo Fan was not too interested in the Contracted Beasts that were auctioned in the marketplace. It felt like they were not as useful as his Swift Star Wolf. It would be a waste of money if he could not get a significantly stronger Contracted Beast after spending forty million RMB.

As such, the Flame Belle that Zhao Manyan had mentioned was quite ideal... If he was planning to get one, he wanted to get something great!

He finally decided to spend the money. He had to get all the information he could about the Flame Belle!

The community of the Hunters had lots of rumors being shared around every day. Most of the rumors were traded in the Hunter Union, yet some special places would also provide valuable information. Similar to the inns in the milieu of Wuxia tales, where cultivators always discussed and traded the rumors they heard, the Hunters also had their places of gathering too...

Zhao Manyan seemed to be quite an expert about things like this. He quickly sent his men to these places to search for the information, and let Mo Fan buy the Secret Tipping Scrolls from specific locations, to see if he could find anything related to the Flame Belle.

"My money is getting used up at a crazy rate considering I'm only buying a few lines of words..." In the room, Mo Fan felt his heart aching as he glanced at the scrolls piling up on the table in front of him.

The truth was, it did feel like a lottery. The only difference was, he would know if he had won the jackpot, but he needed a huge sum of money for it...

"This piece of information is valuable. This group of Hunters trespassed into a Flame Belle's territory when they were looking for a Soul Seed, and were fiercely attacked by the Flame Belle. This means that the Flame Belle is very cautious and hot-tempered, which makes sense if she was about to give birth," said Zhao Manyan.

Mo Fan had learned a great deal about the North Burning Valley from the scrolls, including the places where the Flame Belle was active. Not many Hunters would be hunting around the area, as not everyone could handle the extreme heat.

However, Dunhuang was one of the go-to places for Hunters to search for treasure, as there were lots of ancient artifacts waiting to be discovered, even though the place was roaming with demon beasts.

"We've now learned the location, the path to take, the danger level and the treasure waiting for us. What we lack is an on-the-spot investigation," said Mo Fan.

The Secret Tipping Scrolls had provided lots of extra information. If they were actually planning a visit to the Burning Valley, the information would save them lots of trouble. After all, the place was located in the demon beasts' territory, and it would be troublesome for humans without any tricks.

"So you've decided to go, with only the information we have?" asked Zhao Manyan curiously.

"Just a field trip, it won't bring any harm to us, just treat it as a training..." said Mo Fan.

"Don't mention the word 'training'," said Zhao Manyan with a long face.

"HAHA, I remember that the North Burning Valley isn't far away. If we fly to Gansu and skip Dunhuang City, we should arrive at the North Burning Valley fairly quickly. The trip won't take more than half a month. I'll have plenty of time to rest up to prepare myself for the second challenge week for next month!" said Mo Fan.

"You seriously do whatever comes to your mind," Zhao Manyan said helplessly.

Most Hunters would spend some time preparing themselves so they would not return empty-handed. Only a few like Mo Fan would set out for an adventure straight away.

That being said, it was more practical to visit the place than trying to find clues from the unreliable pieces of information.

"I wish you all the best then. I hope you'll bring a Flame Belle back, and crush all students at the Pearl Institute's Main Campus!" Zhao Manyan gave Mo Fan his blessing.

"Wish my ass, did I say I'm going alone?" said Mo Fan, raising his eyebrows.

"Crap, don't tell me you're thinking of dragging me along, too?" Zhao Manyan asked in surprise.

"What do you say?"

"..."

Mo Fan had finally learned the meaning of 'a turtle shell defense' during their battle with the vampire. The adventure would be significantly less dangerous with Zhao Manyan tagging along. It was obvious that finding the child of a Flame Belle was going to be a difficult task. Mo Fan did not think he could handle it without the help of some elites.

After a series of intimidation and bribery, Mo Fan finally convinced Zhao Manyan to come along.

Zhao Manyan was not a fan of involving himself in dangerous situations, yet considering his cultivation had been stagnant for quite some time recently, he might somehow benefit from the trip.

After all, if it were too dangerous, they would just give up and come back. The journey would not take much time at all.

"Just the two of us isn't enough, we should look for more people, someone that we can trust," said Zhao Manyan sternly.

Going to the North Burning Valley was no joke; it would be naive to rely on themselves. They needed a team that could fight, defend, retreat, and flee!

"I've asked Lingling, and she seems quite interested, we'll bring her along," said Mo Fan.

Lingling was their intelligence capsule, and also an experienced Hunter. With her in the team, it would save them a lot of trouble.

"Mm, mm, we need someone to do the planning. Our operation will be more efficient with her help," Zhao Manyan agreed.

Zhao Manyan was fairly impressed by Lingling after the incident of the Mother Scale Skin Phantom and the vampire hunt. She was surely better than those unreliable old Hunters.

Mo Fan dialed a number and asked for Zhang Xiaohou.

If there was anyone he could trust, Zhang Xiaohou was surely top on the list. Zhang Xiaohou was courageous, honest, and smart when facing demon beasts. If it weren't for his help when dealing with the Xuanwu Giant Lizard and the Giant Poisonous Centipede, they would not have been able to carry out their plan. Those were Commander-level creatures, yet Zhang Xiaohou was bold enough to agree to it. He would not blink if Mo Fan asked him to come along to the North Burning Valley.

In addition, Gansu happened to be right beside Xiayi, thus Zhang Xiaohou could easily meet up with them.

"We also need a Healer. The Burning Valley is infamous for its danger level. There's a high chance we might lose a limb or break a leg there. Casualties are inevitable without a Healer," emphasized Zhao Manyan.

"Do you think Healers are like cabbages, that you can simply grab from the streets?"

"How about Bai Tingting, have you asked her?"

"I haven't seen her since I've come back to school, I should pay her a visit some time... You have broad connections, aren't there any Healers that you can trust?" said Mo Fan.

"Unfortunately, no, apart from those Buddhas from my family, but there's no way I can afford to bring them along," said Zhao Manyan.

Healers were luxuries for every group of Hunters. The adventure they were planning was fairly unique, hence they could only invite those that were trustworthy. How could they possibly find one that fit the criteria? Bai Tingting had not returned to school since the incident.

"Our group isn't as complete as those experienced groups, so we definitely need a Healer. Without one, we should just call it off. It's good if we get it, but it won't bring any good if we're dead," Zhao Manyan said seriously.

Mo Fan felt a headache too. Healers were the hardest to find in the world, but the more he learned about the Flame Belle, the more he wanted one to be his Contracted Beast...

"By the way," a sudden thought crossed Zhao Manyan's mind. He tapped on Mo Fan's shoulder and asked, "Isn't your sister Xinxia a Healer, whose primary Element is the Healing Element, and secondary the Psychic Element? Unlike demon beasts, those Elemental Beasts are not necessarily hostile toward humans. With your sister's Psychic Element, we could easily convince them to let us pass, which would make our adventure a lot easier!"

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Chapter 458: Dunhuang

When Mo Fan heard the suggestion of bringing Xinxia along, his first reaction was to shake his head.

"You clearly understand her situation; how is that even possible?" said Mo Fan.

"You have the Swift Star Wolf. He could carry her around, and even look after her safety. The Burning Valley isn't the safest place to go to, and I was thinking about asking you to find a Psychic, too... Magicians with Psychic Element are scarce as well, and most of them wouldn't be willing to go with us," said Zhao Manyan.

The girl's impaired movement would not be too much of a deal. With Mo Fan's Summoned Beast carrying her, it was actually safer than walking on her own.

"Even so... she has spent most of her time in school. She won't have any experience when it comes to dealing with demon beasts." Mo Fan was still reluctant.

"Alright, I know you don't want to place her in danger. That's just my suggestion, you're the one making the call," said Zhao Manyan.

"Mm, we'll send all the information to Lingling. She will know what we lack and what we should be doing next better than us," said Mo Fan.

...

To Mo Fan's relief, Lingling was not too obsessed with the dark red soul. She was well aware that her father's death was something unusual, so she could not afford to be overly hasty.

Lingling had returned to her normal behavior, and her eyes flickered when she heard that Mo Fan was planning an adventure to the Burning Valley.

Dunhuang was famous in their country, as it was the habitat for many ancient demon beasts, those with the purest lineage and longest history. It was also the most brilliant milestone of their country's Magic Civilization. Hunters always went there to search for the ancient civilization, and those that were lucky would discover a huge amount of artifacts or equipment...

Unfortunately, the Dunhuang region had long become the demon beasts' habitat, especially the infamous and savage Sand Tiger Horde.

In the south, the One-eyed Magic Wolves were described as savage, and posed a huge threat to mankind, yet they were relatively insignificant compared to the Sand Tiger Horde. The Demon Tiger species had always been domineering and barbarous...

The Burning Valley was located to the east of the Dunhuang region, in the barren sands of the Gobi Desert, where loess swept across the sky, not to mention the extreme heat and hot winds. Even Hunters in foreign countries knew about the place.

The Burning Valley was included in the Dunhuang region, and apart from Dunhuang City, which Mo Fan was familiar with, the Dunhuang region was a lot bigger, occupying almost half of the Gansu province. The Burning Valley was in fact located close to Gansu's Jiayuguan.

Mo Fan had limited geographical knowledge, yet he immediately came to an understanding when Jiayuguan was mentioned, having a clearer picture of where the place was.

Although the Dunhuang region was fairly dangerous, there were still cities established in certain parts. They could simply fly to Dunhuang Airport and head north-east to their destination, the Burning Valley.

Lingling had been making preparations for the past few days. It seemed like it was her first time going to the desert too, and she looked excited to go on the adventure to the barren sands.

As a matter of fact, Lingling's father had told her stories about his adventures in the Dunhuang region. She had imagined how the place would look since she was young, and the incident with the dark red soul made her miss her father more, so she decided to visit Dunhuang when Mo Fan told her the plan.

Mo Fan was extremely lucky to have Lingling as his partner. The other experienced Hunters would take a huge part of the commission, whereas, in Mo Fan's case, he had full control over the rewards. According to Lingling's explanation, once her fighter grew stronger, they would be able to take on higher-ranked quests!

Mo Fan spent a few days at school before he got a response from Lingling. It appeared that she was almost done with the preparations.

"I've looked into it. We'll have to cross a place known as the Drifting Sand River if our destination is the North Burning Valley. The Drifting Sand River is basically some kind of boundary, and if we don't cross it, we'll have to come into contact with Dunhuang's overlord, the Sand Tiger Horde, which is quite unrealistic..." Lingling showed the map she had drawn out for them.

The map strictly followed the standards, with markings about the density of demon beasts. Such details were extremely important for Hunters, as they were basically dead if they trespassed into areas with a high density of demon beasts.

"How do we cross this Drifting Sand River? If someone managed to get into the North Burning Valley and saw the Flame Belle, there must be some way to cross it."

"The Drifting Sand River is occupied by the Elephant Sand Soldiers, a kind of Earth Elemental Beast that has been around for hundreds of years. These Elephant Sand Soldiers aren't particularly strong on their own, but they always stay in herds. They are densely packed across the entire Drifting Sand River, and are the biggest challenge to Hunters who are planning to visit the North Burning Valley!" Lingling swiped her hand across, and an illustration of an Elephant Sand Soldier popped up on the screen.

"Force our way across?" Mo Fan was a simple and violent man.

"Don't even think about it, even an army can't do it. The Hunters who made it to the North Burning Valley aren't elites, but they've used some undisclosed methods to cross the Sand Drifting River... I've tried at least twenty different scenarios, and none of them would work. The only way, and probably the safest way, is to find a Psychic," Lingling said sternly.

Zhao Manyan immediately nodded. A Psychic was too important when journeying across these Elemental Beasts' territories. Many groups were willing to offer half of their loot to a Psychic to join their party, which clearly implied how important a Psychic was in the Dunhuang region.

The rarity of a Psychic was only second to a Healer. Most of them could not be found among the Hunters, as they were kept safe by renowned families, or hired as an 'official' by the Magic Associations.

Their party had nothing to offer a Psychic, so Lingling's immediately suggested that Mo Fan should bring Xinxia along.

Xinxia was the only candidate for the adventure. First, her Psychic Element would guarantee the safety of their journey, and second, her primary Element was Healing, another insurance for the group's safety.

However, Mo Fan was willing to give up on the plan rather than putting Xinxia in danger.

"I've already told Sister Xinxia about it, she's very willing to go." Lingling had already acted before reporting.

Mo Fan could only smile wryly.

Speaking of which, the Elements that Xinxia had awakened were too unique. Not only did she awaken the Healing Element, she even awakened the Psychic Element as her secondary Element. She might not have any fighting capacity, but she was no doubt a hot prospect for many parties. Countless factions in Hangzhou had been trying to recruit her!

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Chapter 459: Sand Howl Tigers!

In the evening, Zhang Xiaohou also gave his response. The guy had made it clear that he would be there, even if it meant him being disciplined.

Zhang Xiaohou was all clear, so all that was left was his decision about bringing Xinxia along.

At night, Mo Fan was just about to call Zhang Xiaohou to stop preparing, as he had decided to call off the adventure. Unfortunately, Xinxia had given him a call instead.

Mo Fan knew if it were something he needed, and if Xinxia could help, she would not hesitate to help him, even if it meant placing herself in danger by going to the Dunhuang region.

However, Mo Fan was not willing to do so. He was already self-reproving that Xinxia's movement was impaired. If something were to go wrong with her, he would never forgive himself.

Mo Fan told Xinxia his thoughts.

"Brother Mo Fan, you've been taken good care of me for so long, so I can do whatever I want without worrying too much. If you insist on not letting me go, I'll listen to you, but when I heard about your accident last time, I felt so sad. I've saved many people with my Healing Element, but I can't do anything

for you. All I could do is worry and pray for you. I want to be by your side, I want to be closer to you. I don't want to wait somewhere alone by myself, and left in meaningless, deep regret when something happens and I won't be able to help you in any way..." Xinxia's voice was soft, yet firm.

Xinxia was born with a gentle character. Her impaired movement made her look pitiful, but Mo Fan knew she was bright and strong on the inside. When she was abandoned in the supermarket during the calamity of Bo City, if she actually accepted her fate, she would not have hidden inside the cold fridge when the chances of her surviving were so slim.

Mo Fan felt Xinxia's words knocking some sense into him. He had focused too much on protecting Xinxia, not allowing any foul air to drift closer to her sacred body.

Maybe it was true that he had protected her from the wind and rain like a big tree, but he had also blocked the brilliance that belonged to her, and the scent she wanted to emit for him...

After a long pause, Mo Fan finally agreed that he should respect Xinxia's decision. She was willing to be protected because of her trust and respect of him, yet she was even more willing to stay by his side and contribute more.

As Mo Fan nodded and agreed that Xinxia could come along, her pleasant giggle came from the other end of the call, clearly anticipating the adventure.

Because of her situation, even training was impossible for her, let alone any adventure in the wild. Her impaired movement gave her a strong desire to go out and see the world, the vast skies and lands. She was not weary of her familiar environment, it was just a natural yearning.

After hearing Xinxia's laughter, the last hint of worry in Mo Fan's heart gradually dissipated. Being able to experience the desert, which was completely different from the south, was most likely a luxury for the girl. He should not lock her up, but fulfill her dreams as much as possible...

Mo Fan had basically decided on the team members: the intelligence capsule Lingling, the fearless forward Zhang Xiaohou, and the super support Xinxia.

Zhao Manyan had also brought along a trustworthy Magician, also from the Zhao Family, called Chen Yi, an Earth Magician.

The desert was filled with Earth Elemental power, followed by Fire Element. Even though Zhang Xiaohou's secondary Earth Element fulfilled the basic requirement of needing an Earth Magician, it was safer to bring another Earth Magician along.

Chen Yi was Zhao Manyan's cousin, a student from the Imperial College's Main Campus. When Zhao Manyan was busy collecting information about the Burning Valley and the Flame Belle, she heard that Zhao Manyan was going to the Dunhuang region, and she immediately recommended herself.

Zhao Manyan had made it clear that she would probably not get any reward for going with them, yet Chen Yi was still keen to tag along. Considering that his cousin was ranked fairly high in the Imperial College's main campus, and was a reliable person too, Zhao Manyan decided to put her name down for the party.

If Zhao Manyan thought she was trustworthy, Mo Fan was willing to trust her, too. That summed up the members of the party, a party of six.

The party did not consist of many people, yet it was good enough to be called an elite party. Even if they could not find a Flame Belle's child, they would still benefit from the trip to the Dunhuang region. The best way for Magicians to improve was by training themselves in demon beasts' territories.

The party of six made their respective preparations according to Lingling's arrangements. A bunch of young, hot-blooded Magicians was on their way to Dunhuang.

As soon as they arrived in Dunhuang, they were immediately welcomed by the unique charm of the barren lands.

Looking ahead, there was nothing but yellow sand extending into the horizon. The hills in the desert were brown and stacking on top of one another, with varying heights.

Unlike the flatlands in the southeast, the lands here were split into different layers. As they were moving along, the bright sun would suddenly disappear as the place ahead was covered in a shade that their eyes were not used to. As they raised their heads, they would discover it to be a fault, extending in both ways like a wall, while the path ahead was right above it!

Even though the whole party consisted of Magicians, not everyone had the ability to teleport around. They were riding the Wind Camels raised by the locals, and slowly approached the infamous Burning Valley!

The distance was not far, yet for some reason, the density of demon beasts skyrocketed after they passed the first fault!

The locals referred to the fault as the boundary line, and the direction that Mo Fan and his crew had come from was considered the territory of Dunhuang City, where the safe zone was established. However, if they crossed the boundary line and ventured deeper, they would find themselves surrounded by danger.

Many kinds of creatures resided in the Gobi Desert, its rich Earth and Fire Elements resulted in a huge amount of Elemental Beasts, and on top of that, the danger posed by the ruler species, the Sand Tiger Horde, across the area left the Hunters with no choice but to be extremely cautious once they crossed the boundary line.

As they arrived at the boundary line, the Wind Camels were not as useful. These camels that were no stronger than ordinary poultry were extremely terrified when they captured a slight scent of demon beasts, not daring to cross the boundary line.

The group set the Wind Camels free and climbed down to the descending barren lands. Intimidating cries would occasionally be heard from the desert, like soldiers on patrol signaling their restless comrades that their prey was walking right into the trap!

They proceeded less than five kilometers forward when a powerful roaring gust with sand drifting in it approached the group from between two hills.

The roar was deafening, and the sand hills began to sink rapidly!

"How unlucky, we've stumbled into the ruler species in this region when we've just arrived!" cursed Zhao Manyan, who quickly identified the creature through their roars.

"It's a Sand Howl Tiger, a relatively fierce creature among Warrior-level demon beasts. Be careful," Lingling said to the others.

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Chapter 460: Hunting the Demon Tiger

The Sand Howl Tiger was obviously heading toward their party, after they had just infiltrated the demon beasts' territory. Its large, glistening, green eyes could be seen from a good distance away, and the sand drifting in the wind was unable to conceal its menacing gaze!

At the Dongting Lake area, they had first stumbled into a bunch of idiotic Giant Lizards which were only Servant-class. However, the Dunhuang region was truly intimidating; they had already encountered a Warrior-level creature after just stepping out of the safe zone!

If the density of Warrior-level creatures was so high, wouldn't the Servant-class creatures have trouble surviving here?

"It's hungry, and irascible. It will be difficult to comfort it, but it feels like it's in pain, maybe it's injured somewhere," said Xinxia who was sitting on the Swift Star Wolf and glancing at the Sand Howl Tiger alertly.

Xinxia had not faced a demon beast since the incident at Bo City. Her expression was not as calm as the others, but since her secondary Element was Psychic, she should be able to get used to it fairly quickly compared to others!

"It means we can't skip the battle, draw your swords!" Likewise, Mo Fan was irascible, too.

It was his first time bringing his beloved Xinxia on a tour, so it was time to show her his capabilities, too.

To everyone's surprise, Zhang Xiaohou was more impetuous than Mo Fan, and was already charging forward since both his Elements had movement spells. He could not wait to face a member of the infamous Sand Tiger Horde.

"Damn, where did you find this kid? How ballsy is he?!" cursed Zhao Manyan.

Other Magicians would most likely shit their pants when they saw a Warrior-level creature. He had never seen anyone rushing up like Zhang Xiaohou, or at least he would not dare to do the same himself!

"Fight at will, but keep an eye out for the blood sweat its body will excrete when the situation is grim. It's the sign that the beast is about to go berserk. Don't die to its attempting one last attack!" Lingling reminded them.

Zhang Xiaohou was the perfect example of someone impatient to fight. As a matter of fact, he was somewhat influenced by Mo Fan's personality: completely fearless, and smart with little tricks, yet not so intelligent overall.

He charged at the Sand Howl Tiger with a roar, even though they were only fifty meters apart.

The menacing-looking Sand Howl Tiger was around four meters long and had high shoulders, as if the bones were poking out from its skin.

Its limbs were a lot stronger than the Swift Star Wolf, and its claws were sharp and powerful. A fierce head covered in sand-colored hair leaned forward.

The Sand Howl Tiger glared at Zhang Xiaohou. Its gaze seemed to be flickering with a hint of doubt.

Perhaps the Sand Howl Tiger had been hunting its prey around this area for many years, yet it had never seen a human racing toward it excitedly. Shouldn't he be running for his life instead?

The Sand Howl Tiger did have some intelligence. It finally uttered a furious roar and lunged at the skinny human when it realized that he was not afraid of it, and dared to challenge the dignity of its horde.

The human did not have much flesh, but the tiger would not mind chewing on his bones!

The Sand Howl Tiger's explosiveness was quite shocking. It spread its limbs apart and lunged forward, creating a wake of sand plumes rising behind it. The Sand Howl Tiger arrived in front of Zhang Xiaohou before the sand drifted into the air, turning into a furious red shadow ramming in Zhang Xiaohou's direction.

Zhang Xiaohou's face paled. He had been told that the Sand Howl Tigers were described as relatively savage and fierce demon beasts from the desert, yet he never thought their explosiveness would be this outstanding!

Fifty meters was the minimum safe distance for Zhang Xiaohou when fighting against a Warrior-level creature. It would give him enough time to react and cast his Spells. When training in the army, he had never given any Warrior-level creature the chance to outmaneuver him at such distance!

However, the Sand Howl Tiger was a lot quicker than he had imagined. Luckily, he was a well-trained Battlemage. The countless dangerous missions in the past had equipped him with the ability to remain calm when his life was in danger!

He cast Wind Track and Earth Wave simultaneously. A powerful gust swept forward and left a clear trail behind it. The gust carried Zhang Xiaohou to his left swiftly. Meanwhile, he was controlling the sand under his feet, accelerating his movement and sending him to his destination quickly.

Even though the Sand Howl Tiger was savage, with outstanding explosiveness, it turned out that it was not as nimble and agile as the Swift Star Wolf, which could alter his direction rapidly. After missing the pounce, its body slid a great distance away, and by the time it turned around, it was fifty meters away from Zhang Xiaohou again.

It gathered its strength once again and dashed at Zhang Xiaohou at the same pace. However, it did not notice that the sand under its feet had already changed color.

The sand had turned brown, with a slight stickiness. The sandhill appeared to be sinking down, the sand undulating and being drawn into a deep hole.

The sandhill grew steeper gradually as an obvious quicksand hole was formed between Zhang Xiaohou and the Sand Howl Tiger, rapidly expanding in size!

When the dry sand became thicker, the limbs of the Sand Howl Tiger sank deeper into it, requiring a lot more effort to drag them out. It was running with the same force, yet it took the creature three times the duration to cover the same distance.

The stickiness of the sand obviously slowed down the Sand Howl Tiger. In addition to that, as the sandhill continued to collapse, it was no longer trying to hinder the Sand Howl Tiger's movement, but beginning to draw it into the center of the quicksand.

"I thought the guy was being reckless, but he was actually laying a quicksand trap, and baiting the Sand Howl Tiger to jump into it!" Zhao Manyan smiled.

The scariest part about the Sand Howl Tiger was the explosiveness that could take its foes by surprise, and the violent pounces which one could not dodge even when they were well-prepared.

Zhang Xiaohou had used himself as bait, tricking the Sand Howl Tiger into landing in the quicksand. Even though that alone was not enough to bury the beast under the sand, it had significantly weakened the threat the savage beast posed to the party.

With Zhang Xiaohou initiating the fight, Mo Fan and Chen Yi quickly joined the battle.

On the one hand, Chen Yi, whose primary Element was Earth, smartly cast a Rock Barrier above the quicksand pit the Sand Howl Tiger was trying to jump out from. The Rock Barrier kept the Sand Howl Tiger inside the rapidly flowing sand like a wall.