

Beast T 151

Chapter 151: Resource Production? A New Industry! The Terrifying Cost of Breeding! _2

She was even the acting chairman now.

"Could it be that Tianyun Group's twenty percent shareholding is worth less than one percent of Heart of Woods?"

Still, it had to be said that Su Ping's words indeed made Dong Muyun feel a lot more comfortable.

Dong Muyun hummed lightly, but still said,

"Since that's the case, do you know how to raise this thing? How to bring out its most appropriate effects?"

Su Ping's eyes lit up, and he quickly flattered,

"I don't know, please teach me, sister!"

Su Ping wasn't an all-rounder; he couldn't possibly know everything about business models and the breeding of various Pet Beasts.

Let alone the fact that he had never even heard of the Rainbow Coral Worm before.

"TSK TSK, now you know to call me sister. But it's a pity, I, your sister who only knows money and profits, am afraid I'm not as good as the younger and prettier Miss Qin."

Su Ping touched his nose somewhat awkwardly.

Fortunately, Dong Muyun didn't tease him any further and directly said,

"To raise the Rainbow Coral Worm, you need to prepare Star Algae, which is its favorite food. Secondly, to be able to approach the Rainbow Coral Worm in the water at any time, and simultaneously prevent passing schools of fish from harming it, you need to isolate it."

"Isolate?"

Su Ping frowned slightly.

If it were isolated, how could the schools of fish use the Rainbow Water tainted by the glow of the Rainbow Coral Worm? How could they comprehend the so-called Rainbow Aurora under its light? How could the halo of the Rainbow Coral Worm continue to attract schools of fish?

From Dong Muyun's description, Su Ping had never considered making this precious little creature a Pet Beast.

After all, a Pet Beast that at best lived a few years—you know, when a Pet Beast reached its lifespan, if you tried to artificially prolong its life, that would consume the Beast Tamer's own Origin.

Although the Rainbow Coral Worm was precious, it was purely a Resource Type Pet Beast and not suitable as a battle-type Contracted Beast.

At least in the short term, Su Ping had no such thoughts. Since that was the case, if the Rainbow Coral Worm can't provide resources when isolated, what was the point?

But fortunately, Dong Muyun wasn't the type to play coy and directly explained with a smile,

"That's right. It's just that the materials for isolation are different. You need a special material from the Water Elemental Series: Water Element Barrier!"

Su Ping slapped his forehead.

He had been silly. How could he apply the physical knowledge of his previous world to measure things in this magical world?

The Water Element Barrier, a special Elemental Type material, is a water-based barrier that can block most solids but does not hinder the flow of water.

It is a special material sometimes used in Water Element Pet Beast venues.

However, Su Ping had never encountered it before, so he quickly flashed a flattering smile again and looked towards Dong Muyun.

She also laughed. On those cheeks, as charming and delicate as roses, every smile she wore couldn't help but make one feel a twinge of fear.

And sure enough, as soon as Dong Muyun opened her mouth, Su Ping felt what cataclysm meant.

"Tianyun Group sells it! A square meter is only priced at five hundred thousand! Tianyun Group can customize the desired shape, space, and size for customers. They also assist with installation, regular maintenance, and repairs, including warranty after damage."

Su Ping's vision darkened.

Five hundred thousand didn't sound like much.

But that was the price for just one square meter!

Not to mention, the Rainbow Coral Worm itself, along with the connected coral, was already over ten meters wide. You couldn't really leave it with no space, right?

In that case, how would it continue to secrete Rainbow Coral?

This was a resource and material!

It was the only resource material that Heart of Woods could foreseeably produce on its own!

So, if they went by what Dong Muyun said, disregarding other factors, just in terms of length and width, one side of the enclosure would need to be twenty meters.

The four sides of a square enclosure together would mean eighty square meters of barrier material if it were one meter high.

Therefore, not considering height, surrounding the Rainbow Coral with a one-meter-high Water Element Barrier would require a whopping forty million!

But how could one not consider the height issue?

The secreted coral needed to attach itself to soil or rocks to coexist.

So, stacking this Water Element Barrier from the bottom of the lake upwards—if their artificial lake was ten meters deep, they'd multiply the forty million base amount by ten, which amounted to a whopping four hundred million!

Four hundred million!

And that was just for ten meters of height.

In fact, if they really calculated according to the depth of that artificial lake, with Lingxi River at the center—that is, where the Rainbow Coral Worm was right now—the height of the Water Element Barrier needed from the Lingxi River down to the riverbed would be nearly one hundred meters...

Four billion?

Su Ping only felt darkness before his eyes.

Dong Muyun had clearly foreseen this scenario and was watching Su Ping with a smile.

Su Ping said with a sheepish smile, "That..."

"This is already the discounted price! As you know, there's a reason why Tianyun Group's products are expensive. If you buy this kind of material from somewhere else, they won't take care of it after installation, you know! If an accident happens later on and the Water Element Barrier has a breach, Tianyun Group offers a twenty-year warranty with free replacement!"

Indeed, once Dong Muyun put it that way, it did seem like there was good reason for it to be expensive.

It's just, what's with that damn woman's tone?

Su Ping clenched his fists!

Money is the courage of heroes, gold is the backbone of men! Indeed, a man must not be without money.

Therefore, Su Ping thought for a moment and asked,

"They say beneath a man's knees lies gold. Can I use the gold beneath my knees to offset the cost?"

Dong Muyun smiled and said,

"I have no use for that. And besides, what if Miss Qin tries to fight me to the death over it? However, there is something you could use to offset the price!"

"Oh?"

Su Ping's eyes lit up.

"For instance, further shares of Heart of Woods!"

The smiling Dong Muyun at this moment seemed like a fox incessantly wagging its tail.

Unfortunately, Su Ping didn't take the bait, watching the woman warily.

"No way! Just a symbolic one percent is fine!"

One percent of the shares was what Su Ping used to form a certain alliance with this woman. If it went any further, it would be different, and he naturally refused without hesitation.

Even if he could recover it, Su Ping didn't want to take that risk any further.

Dong Muyun didn't seem disappointed and just shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, then there's nothing we can do!"

Su Ping sighed, somewhat worried.

Money, oh money. Why is it that despite having the skill to slay dragons and earning money at a rate far beyond any other Breeder's imagination, the money was becoming increasingly harder to hold onto, and the damn holes just kept getting bigger?

Dong Muyun was not in a hurry either.

She watched with a smile as Su Ping racked his brains, trying to figure out ways to get money.

However, clearly, while Dong Muyun was not in a hurry, something at that moment was.

「Below Lingxi River.」

Yunning, having transformed into an underwater robot, scratched its smooth, bald head with arms controlled by its awakened mechanical intelligence. Its mechanical eyes, emitting the light of searchlights, showed a hint of bewilderment.

What is Master doing? It's still soaking in the water. At this moment, Yunning, as a mechanical life form, also felt that everything around it was dark and lonely.

Chapter 152: Su Ping's Ten-Day Diary, the Second Wanmu Wolf!

Ten days passed in the blink of an eye.

During this period, almost every day, the entire Heart of Woods was undergoing earth-shattering changes.

On the first day, designers and architects were hired to discuss and mark out the area of the backyard connecting to the Lingxi River.

On the second day, the architect in charge summoned Earth-type Pet Beasts: the Plowing Ox and the Gravel Bee. These two Pet Beasts were tasked with tilling the ground and paving a path.

Behind the Forest Wolf Forest, extensive Wolf Tobacco grasslands bordering the Lingxi River were cleared and converted into arable land. Of course, Su Ping still retained a portion for future research on Wolf Tobacco.

Su Ping designated this area to build his laboratory. Because it was situated behind the Forest Wolf Forest and not far from the Lingxi River, this spot was the most remote, quiet, and safest.

On the third and fourth days, the road connecting the Heart of Woods to Yuntian Resort was paved, and the necessary land preparation was completed. Simultaneously, teams of Mountain Mover Apes began the excavation!

The cost for the two construction crews, plus design fees, was approximately fifteen million.

On the fifth day, materials for the thirty-million-cost protective fence were purchased, and installation began. The fence started from the Forest Wolf Forest within the Heart of Woods and extended to encompass the entire area north of the Lingxi River, including the vast expanse Su Ping planned for his artificial lake.

This was a very special material that could not only withstand attacks from powerful Pet Beasts but also emitted a specific scent that discouraged Pet Beasts from voluntarily approaching the fence.

Luckily, the thirty-million cost also included installation fees.

Indeed, these products were from the Tianyun Group.

On the sixth and seventh days, the Mountain Mover Apes continued digging the artificial lake. Underwater, certain seagrass plants were planted, and rocks beneficial to aquatic Pet Beasts were also placed. This part didn't cost much—less than ten million—leaving a significant amount remaining.

On the eighth day, the excavation of the artificial lake on the north bank of the Lingxi River was completed. If desired, it could be connected to the Lingxi River at any time to draw water. Simultaneously, professional landscape artists were again invited to provide some aesthetic landscaping around the artificial lake, which Su Ping had named 'Heart Lake.'

On the tenth day, the fence installation was completed. The Heart of Woods purchased several internal sightseeing cars for one million, and a professional bridge builder was called to the bank of the Lingxi River, beside Heart Lake, to survey for bridge construction.

They spent an entire day on research and discussion.

A construction plan was developed for a bridge spanning the Lingxi River at a point over two hundred meters wide. The total cost for materials and labor was estimated at over twenty million.

In fact, normally, it wouldn't require such an expenditure.

However, Su Ping opted for the most robust materials and special construction techniques, incorporating filters on both sides of the bridge.

Once connected to his artificial lake, these filters would prevent larger aquatic Pet Beasts from entering Heart Lake from the Lingxi River, ensuring maximum safety.

Thus, of the one hundred million Dong Muyun had invested, more than half was spent on the construction of the Heart of Woods in just ten days.

And the spending wasn't over yet.

Once the connection to the Lingxi River was established, the expenses for the wilderness botanical garden on the other side, and for other areas Su Ping had yet to plan, would be enormous.

Paving roads and erecting fences alone, not to mention other things, would incur an exorbitant cost.

During these ten days, Su Ping rarely left his residence, except to occasionally supervise construction. He spent the rest of his time at the Heart of Woods, attending to his own affairs.

In these same ten days, the experiences Su Ping gained and the tasks he undertook were, much like the transformations at the Heart of Woods, immensely significant!

Su Ping recorded these changes in his Breeder's diary almost every day:

The first day:

'October 1st, clear. Continued with the cultivation of the ten Legion Forest Wolves.'

'Went to the Linzhou Center and purchased a large quantity of Soul-Settling Paper, Undead Crystals, and bought another eleven Papermen. Started their rearing and feeding. It cost me over five million.'

'Ah, what a fulfilling day! It's just a pity I've been too busy these past few days and have somewhat neglected meditation; the enhancement of my spiritual power hasn't been very noticeable.'

The second day:

'October 2nd, clear. Among the twenty-two Papermen, one Paperman's Paper Body Folding skill reached the Proficient Level. Its folding speed is faster, and perhaps it can also perform more complex transformations?'

'All ten Forest Wolves of the Beast Tamer Legion completed their Photosynthesis cultivation.'

'And among these ten Forest Wolves, the Wood Heart Skill of four of them reached the Proficient Level! Although the remaining six didn't improve their skill level, one could see a significant leap in their skill proficiency!'

'Indeed, the evolutionary steps of the Wanmu Wolf significantly accelerated the improvement of the Wood Heart Skill.'

'Oops, I forgot about my meditation again. Oh well, I'll deal with it tomorrow.'

The third day:

'October 3rd, clear turning to cloudy with a north wind. I received good news this morning: little Paperman Qian Yi's Paper Body Folding also reached the Proficient Level, and along with it, seven other Papermen did the same.'

Chapter 153: Su Ping's Ten-Day Diary, the Second Wanmu Wolf!_2

At the same time, I flipped through the cultivation methods for the Forest Wolf and the Elf Wolf. Heh, I didn't expect to have an accidental discovery; it's just a pity that it requires (erased) a bit too much. And there's no need for that at the moment.

But the Forest Wolf is one thing; the Elf Wolf is really interesting. It gradually abandons the body of the Forest Wolf, turning towards a semi-elementalized wolf form. It's a shame I don't know if there is a corresponding Evolutionary Body for the Elf Wolf. Has it completed the transition from an animal-type Pet Beast to an Elemental Type?

As expected, no Evolutionary Body is simple; my journey is still long.

Unfortunately, searching for the Evolution of the Elf Wolf wasted too much time, and it seems like I won't have time for meditation today.

Day Four:

October 4th, overcast. Such annoying weather.

So today, after briefly taking care of the Forest Wolf's cultivation, I went to the basement's Paperman area where the sky can't be seen.

To try out how many Paper Swords Qian Yi could control at the same time, I tested it with him for quite a while. I even let Xiao Qing and Qian Yi try sparring against each other for the first time. The result was actually a draw?

Clearly, neither Xiao Qing nor Qian Yi were in good spirits. Xiao Qing, because it's at Elite Level, yet failed to defeat an Ordinary Level Pet Beast.

And Qian Yi was annoyed because, despite having so many Paper Swords and its Jinge Technique having reached Perfection, it still ended up in a tie.

However, what was consistent was that although both little guys were upset, they both became more diligent. Indeed, appropriate internal competition is a good thing.

It's just that I'm out of time for meditation again.

Su Ping, oh Su Ping, you can't neglect your own meditation while cultivating Pet Beasts!

Day Five:

October 5th, cloudy. Is it going to rain?

One of the Papermen's Paper Body Joint Skill reached Proficient Level. However, no obvious changes have been noticed. Obviously, this has not yet satisfied the basic requirements for Evolution, whether it's the Skills or its own Level.

Fortunately, over these past few days, all the Papermen have advanced from First Rank to Second Rank after consuming Soul-Settling Paper and a large number of Undead Crystals.

That woman Dong Muyun came again. Doesn't she have anything better to do?

She insisted on having a couple of drinks with me, drunkenly blabbering about the difficulties of large families, conspiracies, and such. I don't understand. Can it really be harder than for those impoverished families who can't even afford Pet Beasts?

So, after all the nonsense this woman spouted, all I wanted to do was go back and meditate.

Day Six:

October 6th, light rain. I really hope this damn weather will end soon. Praise the Sun!

Today's cultivation endeavor showed breakthrough progress!

Among the ten Legion Evolutionary Body Forest Wolves I'm cultivating, Xiao Qiang—whose Sunlight Absorption Skill was only at Proficient Level—had its Photosynthesis also rise to Proficient Level, nurtured by Smile-Faced Sunflower seeds and sunlight spring water!

Due to this damn weather, this progress is much slower than it was with Old Sha, but thankfully, I have finally completed one.

The Forest Wolf has met the minimum requirements for Evolution into Wanmu Wolf and has entered the third stage of the Wanmu Wolf cultivation process, beginning to store Energy in preparation for Evolution.

I want to see just how much potential difference there is between a Forest Wolf evolved with Proficient Level Sunlight Absorption and one with Perfection Level.

Good timing. I should also apply for some more resources from the Legion!

I wonder if there are materials for a Water Elemental Barrier in the Legion's storages. I really want to get up close with the Rainbow Coral Worm. Because there's a reason I can't write in this diary.

Turns out they really do! After talking to Commander Zhang about the new materials and the cultivation progress, I exchanged some Battle Merit Points for a Water Elemental Barrier. It's just a pity that there's again no time for meditation.

Day Seven:

October 7th, partly cloudy. The sun has come out. That's nice.

All the Papermen have reached Proficient Level in both Paper Body Folding and Paper Body Joint, but only the little Paperman Qian Yi's Mutation Paper Body Control Skill remains at Entry Level. This is truly frustrating.

At the same time, two of the Legion's Forest Wolves with Sunlight Absorption at Master Level—'Dull Head' and 'Dull Brain'—have reached the required Photosynthesis Level and started to store Energy alongside them.

The Legion is really fast! I made the call yesterday, and they've already delivered today!

The Water Elemental Barrier is fascinating. It can be touched by hand and even picked up as if it's transparent glass. But when you pour water on it, the water goes straight through. What kind of physical Rule is this? What kind of liquids can it actually block?

Can liquid metal, like mercury, pass through it?

I'll get Dong Muyun to take this Water Elemental Barrier back to Tianyun Group for basic processing first!

I have to pay this woman the processing fee again. Really detestable. But at least the processing comes with a warranty.

It's a shame that the meditation time I reserved for today was interrupted by a phone call from Miss Qin.

Day Eight:

October 8th, sunny. Praise the Sun.

An unremarkable day. The only thing worth mentioning is that two more Forest Wolves in my home have broken through to Elite Level! That includes Little Ones! Heart of Woods is truly flourishing more and more!

But Miss Qin called again in the evening.

Sure enough, Su Anyong was right: women only disrupt my progress in meditation.

Day Nine:

October 9th, sunny. Praise the Sun.

Xiao Qing's Level has increased, reaching Second Rank Elite. The little guy is so hardworking; I can feel a significant boost to my spiritual power!

Is it possible that if a Pet Beast keeps breaking through, its master won't need to engage in meditation anymore?

Miss Qin called again.

She wants me to visit Magic Capital Academy in two months, before the end of the year?

Before the year's end... I wonder if it will conflict with the Breeder Competition?

And why do I feel a little nervous about it?

Day Ten:

October 10th, sunny. The Sun loves me so much; I'll sing a song for the Sun.

An exhilarating day!

Indeed, for a Forest Wolf with only Proficient Level Sunlight Absorption to evolve into a Wanmu Wolf, the required Evolution Energy is minimal. In just these few days, using only two Elite Level materials, 'Gyro Pine Nuts' and 'Whitewisker Grass,' and one Low-level Commander resource, 'Green Phosphorus Fruit,' the Evolution was completed!

The Evolution was successful! The second Wanmu Wolf has finally appeared!

Indeed, there's quite a gap in potential compared to Old Sha; it barely reached the Racial Potential of a First Stage Monarch! Also, it didn't comprehend the 'Life Magnetic Field' Skill!

I don't know if it's unable to comprehend it or just hasn't yet, much like Old Sha didn't comprehend the Blinding Technique.

But it's good enough that its Racial Potential can reach First Stage Monarch; that's quite incredible!

Sunlight Absorption being only at Proficient Level means it doesn't need many cultivation resources. It needs neither Lungs of Nature nor Sun Crystals—only a massive amount of Sunlight Springwater, a large quantity of Smile-Faced Sunflower Seeds, and subsequent resources for accumulating Evolution Energy. Adding it all up, the total Evolution cost is roughly between 15,000,000 to 20,000,000!

Such a cost for the Evolution of a Wanmu Wolf that can reach Monarch Level potential—in Old Liu's words, this year's Breeder Competition should be no problem.

Moreover, after completing the Evolution, Xiao Qiang's Level directly broke through from Elite Peak to Third Rank Commander! Not bad at all!

Most importantly! I finally managed to get some meditation in today! Nothing should disturb me now, right?

Su Ping's days passed uneventfully, as succinctly summed up by the few words in his diary.

However, it was obviously quite different for others.

It would be truly strange if the masters, connected by Soul Contracts, couldn't feel the Evolution of their Pet Beasts and such significant breakthroughs.

Over the past month or so, the Legion had maintained absolute trust in Su Ping. Even when delivering resources, they would at most ask a couple of questions.

But today was evidently different. The second Wanmu Wolf had appeared.

「Without a doubt, pandemonium erupted inside the Forest Wolf Troop's base a hundred kilometers away!」

Chapter 154: Is this evolved form so fierce?

The War Wolf C Division Command Center.

In Chief Lin Lei's office.

Chief Lin still sat behind his desk, listening as one of his battalion commanders reported on the progress and achievements of the past month or so.

"Sir, the Evolution of the Desert Wind Wolf has been completed, only..."

"Only what?" Lin Lei gave the man a look.

In a certain sense, a few battalions in War Wolf C Division were always at the bottom. Forest Wolf, Sand Wolf, and Snow Wolf were unquestionably these bottom-ranking battalions.

The man standing before him was Wang Feng, the battalion commander of the Sand Wolf Battalion.

"Sir, there's only a little over half a month left until the martial competition begins! I can't seem to book any joint internal training sessions with our brother battalions. Old Yang's Snow Wolf Group has already started training with the Instructor's Shadow Wolf Group. I had hoped to find Lao Zhang, but he said his Forest Wolf Troop hasn't finished its Cultivation yet..."

Lin Lei glanced at the man. "Indeed, his troop hasn't finished its Cultivation. Why don't you make arrangements with a few other battalions, or perhaps arrange some cross-training? There's still half a month left; what's the rush to train for combat? Let me tell you, if you disgrace me in front of the entire Legion this time, I'll have you learn postnatal care for sows!"

Wang Feng was not the least bit concerned by Lin Lei's threat. Instead, his eyes darted about, and he chuckled. "Sir, I heard that Lao Zhang's Forest Wolf Troop has cultivated something remarkable?"

Lin Lei's expression remained unchanged as he took a sip of water. "Where did you hear that?"

"Is it true?" Wang Feng's eyes widened.

"True or false, what damn business is it of yours? Get back to your training, now!" Lin Lei said impatiently.

Seeing the Chief getting angry, Wang Feng fell silent awkwardly, though he didn't dare retort. Just as he reached the door, Lin Lei's voice came from behind. "I don't care where you heard about this, but let me tell you: watch your mouth! It's one thing to spread rumors within our division. But if word gets out to other divisions, I'll be the first to come looking for you!"

Wang Feng was startled, then his expression turned bitter. Could it be true?! Where did that bastard Zhang Lie find such a Breeder?

For a moment, Wang Feng was truly itching to know more, but he dared not ask further. However, just as he was about to open the door, it was suddenly pushed open from outside.

"Sir! It's done, the Cultivation is complete..." Zhang Lie's voice trailed off.

He saw Wang Feng, whose face was brimming with eager curiosity.

"Commander Zhang, what's completed?" Wang Feng asked, winking.

Wang Feng was startled by Chief Lin's furious voice from inside the office. "Damn it, don't you know to announce yourself before entering? And you, if there's nothing else, get lost!"

Regret welled up inside Wang Feng, but he quickly stood at attention. "Yes, sir."

Finally, with no outsiders left in the office, Lin Lei spoke. "Alright, what's going on? Tell me."

Zhang Lie immediately became excited again. "Sir! Chai Xiaowei's Forest Wolf has successfully evolved! He himself has directly broken through from Commander First Stage to Commander Second Stage!"

Lin Lei was stunned. "That company commander of yours?"

"Yes!"

Seeing Zhang Lie's excited demeanor, Lin Lei suddenly thought of something. "So, you came because..."

Zhang Lie chuckled. "The other brats couldn't wait either. Since the competition starts in just over half a month, we can't get much training done within our troop. I was thinking about taking them over there to see and join in the training. Is that okay?"

Knowing that one's own Pet Beast had completed its Evolution, yet being unable to be by its side, was an undeniable and immense torment! Furthermore, Zhang Lie wanted to see for himself what his ace soldiers' Pet Beasts had become.

Watching Zhang Lie's excitement, Lin Lei opened his mouth. He almost wanted to report to General Zhao and ask if he too could go see it. Would that be alright? Of course! A brand new, never-before-seen Evolutionary Body! And one with Monarch-level species' Racial Potential! Who wouldn't want to see that?

Unfortunately, given his status and position, he couldn't simply leave the Legion base.

However, what Zhang Lie said did make some sense. Cultivation was one aspect. During the martial competition, it wouldn't just be the Pet Beasts entering the field, but also their Beast Tamers. The Pet Beasts and Beast Tamers needed to synergize to achieve even greater effects.

Thinking of this, Lin Lei didn't mince words and said directly, "Fine. However, they can stay there. As for you, return to me immediately after you've delivered them! And don't forget to write me a 10,000-word self-criticism!"

"Yes, sir!"

「Soon, under the bright midday sun, a military vehicle swiftly departed the Legion base.」

No one in the vehicle spoke. The ten soldiers whose Pet Beasts were being cultivated were filled with a mix of excitement and nervousness. They all pursed their lips, their tanned faces unable to conceal their irrepressible joy and anticipation.

Seeing them made Zhang Lie grit his teeth. "Damn it! Once we get there, all of you better keep your composure! I'm telling you, you are elite soldiers of the Forest Wolf Troop! Don't act like unsophisticated mutts who've never seen anything! Understood?"

"Yes, sir!"

「Time passed slowly.」

Su Ping, having finished lunch and burped contentedly, didn't rest. He brought Xiao Qiang and Old Sha, along with over ten elite Forest Wolves, to the combat arena.

After merging with Yun Tian, Su Ping could finally conduct Pet Beast battles without any reservations. With a dedicated combat arena, they could safely use their Skills and unleash their full power, no longer needing to worry about damaging the ecological environment of their Forest Wolf woods.

In the open-air venue, basking in the sunlight, Old Sha and Xiao Qiang both squinted their eyes in sheer enjoyment.

But Su Ping spoke up. "Alright, Xiao Qiang!"

"AWOO! (Here!)"

The Forest Wolves from the Legion reacted swiftly to the roll call, which greatly satisfied Su Ping.

"Next, I'm going to test your combat capabilities!"

"AWOO! (Yes!)"

At this moment, Xiao Qiang had already assumed the form of the Wanmu Wolf. The green, horn-like antlers on its head swayed slightly as it awaited Su Ping's further instructions.

"First, you'll face these dozen or so Elite Forest Wolves. However, your goal isn't to defeat them. If you can't overpower them quickly, then my Cultivation of your Evolution would be a failure. So, your task is to control them for ten seconds, then release them. Wait for them to attack you again, and then see if you can wear them down until they completely lose all combat power!"

This was a rather unique battle method. However, it was a very useful combat training method. It allowed for the maximum observation of Xiao Qiang's sustained combat power and trained an even more important aspect: mental fortitude.

Su Ping then looked at the summoned Wolf Pack. "And you all, your job is to attack it relentlessly. Understood?"

"AWOO!"

"Good, go ahead!"

Both sides stepped onto the training field together.

「Meanwhile, a military vehicle had stopped at the entrance of the Heart of Woods.」

Lao Guan, seeing Zhang Lie arrive, smiled and said, "Xiao Ping is in the combat arena over there, training the evolved Forest Wolf. Commander Zhang, you and your men, please follow me."

Zhang Lie nodded. The ten Legion Soldiers behind him were all keenly focused. One of them was so excited he involuntarily held his breath after boarding the sightseeing vehicle with Lao Guan.

He was Chai Xiaowei, Xiao Qiang's current Beast Tamer. It was he who had sensed the changes in Xiao Qiang through their Soul Contract, even experiencing a direct boost of a minor Level himself!

Zhang Lie, seeing this soldier's dazed expression, smiled and said, "Alright, I've seen the Wanmu Wolf before, so I have some understanding of it. The Wanmu Wolf's Abilities lean more towards battlefield control and creating forest terrain, which Forest Wolves excel in. Its individual combat prowess might not be that strong. It's primarily more formidable when fighting in coordination with others."

He had indeed seen it; after all, he was the first witness to Old Sha's Evolution.

Saying this, they all disembarked from the vehicle and followed Lao Guan into the combat arena Su Ping had reserved.

The venue was extremely deserted. Although open-air, it was only open from above; a circular wall enclosed its perimeter. However, just as they stepped inside, a series of whistling sounds reached their ears.

Zhang Lie immediately spotted Su Ping standing by the fence. But at that moment, his gaze slowly shifted towards the training field.

The vast arena, normally a relatively open training field, was now densely packed. Trees! It was entirely filled with trees, roots, branches, and leaves!

If not for the walls and fences around the combat arena, Zhang Lie would have thought it was a small forest. But clearly, this wasn't a normal forest. A natural forest wouldn't be this abnormally dense. These trees were packed and squeezed together, looking less like a potted plant arrangement and more like a patch of weeds magnified a thousandfold.

Then, in the next moment, he saw a figure strolling leisurely outside this 'forest' on the training field. It was draped in branches that seemed to flow down from its body, resembling a peculiar Old Wolf wearing a straw rain cape. However, the emerald-green, Y-shaped antlers on its head were reminiscent of the legendary auspicious Divine Beast: the Kylin.

At that moment, everyone knew that the peculiar Forest Wolf on the field, resembling a Kylin, was indeed the Wanmu Wolf! It was the very Contracted Beast they had sensed through their soul connection.

Beside them, Chai Xiaowei's eyes widened, and he clenched his fists in excitement. However, mindful of his commander's earlier warning, he dared not make any overly conspicuous movements, merely staring at the scene on the field with thrilled eyes.

However, soon, none of them could remain calm!

They then noticed that within the dense thicket of entwined branches and leaves—branches stretching out like dark green pythons—figures were darting up and down. They were all too familiar with these figures. They were ordinary Forest Wolves. There were over a dozen of them! All at the Elite Level.

Yet, these Forest Wolves were scrambling to attack Xiao Qiang on the field. However, the small 'forest' before them seemed like an insurmountable natural barrier. The branches, moving faster than the wolves, would swiftly bind any wolf that made a move, immobilizing it for about ten seconds before releasing it again.

It was like a cat toying with mice, tirelessly watching these struggling little creatures attempt to challenge this Wolf King of the trees in its jungle!

Even considering the difference between Commander Level and Elite Level, wasn't this gap a bit too large?

At that moment, they finally grasped the true charm and combat power of this Forest Wolf Evolutionary Body.

Instantly, several soldiers looked at their commander with admiration. No wonder! No wonder our commander was so confident this time and paid such a heavy price for us to undergo this Evolution! Such a powerful Evolutionary Body is truly worthy of the commander's high regard. And yet, an Evolutionary Body this powerful isn't considered strong in single combat? Then what kind of creature *would* be considered strong?

It was then that Zhang Lie, who had been quiet all this time, watching the leisurely Wanmu Wolf and the dozen-plus Elite Forest Wolves being effortlessly captured, finally couldn't hold back.

"Damn... is this Evolutionary Body really that fierce?!"

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Zhang Lie ignored the strange looks from his teammates.

At this moment, he had only one thought:

Outrageous! This is utterly outrageous!

Generally speaking, a Commander Level Pet Beast naturally held an absolute advantage over Elite Level ones.

But could the advantage truly be this significant?

He just watched. For a full ten minutes since they had entered, those Forest Wolves hadn't even touched Xiao Qiang once. The forests that kept springing up seemed to appear at their feet at any moment. Most importantly, the control and growth rate of these forests were just too fast!

Logically, the energy consumed in this process should be substantial, right?

But!

So much time had passed! They had already been inside for ten minutes, and who knew how long Xiao Qiang had been fighting before they even arrived!?

Yet, despite such wide-range and frequent manipulation of the forest, Xiao Qiang showed no signs of energy depletion at all.

On the contrary, those Forest Wolves were clearly starting to run out of steam.

Trapped by the Wanmu Wolf's Tree Prison and then forced to relentlessly attack once released, they were still running a deficit, even in broad daylight with Sunlight Absorption for replenishment.

Incomprehensible!

Zhang Lie truly couldn't understand.

He didn't get how such large-scale terrain-modifying Abilities could consume so little Energy! All he knew was that he hadn't misjudged the Wanmu Wolf bounding above; it was like a Kylin, a truly magnificent sight! This was the best Forest Wolf Evolutionary Body.

Su Ping paid no attention to the crowd that had entered; his gaze was firmly fixed on Xiao Qiang above.

He understood what was happening even better than Xiao Qiang's owner did.

The reason he had so ostentatiously tested Xiao Qiang's strength was precisely because of this understanding.

Xiao Qiang's Sunlight Absorption was only at the Proficient Level.

Thus, the evolved Photosynthesis was also only at the Proficient Level.

And most importantly, after completing the Evolution, Xiao Qiang's Heart of Woods had also risen to the Proficient Level!

These three Skills formed a formulaic iron triangle, creating a continuous synergy within Xiao Qiang.

It was simply too difficult to advance to Perfection Level! For Old Sha's Heart of Woods to reach Perfection Level was not something achievable in a day or two. Thus, this first experimental Evolutionary Body, where the Heart of Woods Level matched the other two Skills, held great research significance.

Indeed, that was the case.

At this very moment, Xiao Qiang's Energy cycling within its body was much smoother and more natural.

The physical strain from extensively using these three linked Skills—similar to how Old Sha had in the Secret Realm—would be minimized.

However, the mental fatigue from rapid Skill usage was still inevitable.

But, this was already quite impressive.

It also highlighted the power of this Skill formula.

It's a pity that Sunlight Absorption, the source, being only at the Proficient Level, was indeed too low. It couldn't achieve a qualitative change, making it impossible to further observe the upper limits of this Skill combination.

「Half an hour later」

Xiao Qiang was still in the arena. Its movements showed hardly any signs of disorder, yet in front of it lay numerous Forest Wolves.

Some of the Forest Wolves with lower Elite Levels had already fainted.

Even those at higher Elite Levels, including two at the peak Elite Level, were barely hanging on in this battle.

It was almost impossible for them to resist again.

This outcome wasn't entirely unexpected, but the process was certainly awe-inspiring!

One against sixteen!

Wanmu Wolf, a complete victory!

「Two hours later」

Zhang Lie stood at the entrance of the Heart of Woods, a look of reluctance on his face, but he still remarked to Su Ping as he was leaving, "I was a bit worried before, but now I'm not afraid at all! Breeder Su, these ten rascals will stay with you for now. Don't hesitate to order them around as you see fit! If any of them dare to act up, call me, and I'll skin 'em when I get back!"

Zhang Lie glared fiercely at the ten people behind Su Ping.

Not a single one of the Beast Tamer soldiers denied it. In fact, one who had a good relationship with Zhang Lie even spoke up directly, "Commander, you don't even have to say it. If anyone dares to disrespect Breeder Su, we brothers will beat the living crap out of him!"

To be honest, Zhang Lie absolutely believed him.

In this whole world, who else could cultivate a Pet Beast like the Wanmu Wolf? Was this Su Ping before him just some young kid? No, he was the guide to their bright future!

Zhang Lie shot them a look. "You rascals got lucky this time! So, in the Legion competition half a month from now, if anyone dares to mess up, you'll all suffer five times the punishment I get from the Division Commander!"

"Yes! Guaranteed to complete the mission!"

After receiving a satisfactory response, Zhang Lie finally turned to Su Ping and said with heartfelt sincerity, "Breeder Su, sorry to trouble you. Any expenses these rascals incur here will be fully reimbursed by the Forest Wolf Troop! We absolutely won't let you waste a single cent of your money."

Su Ping smiled and shook his head, "Commander Zhang, you're being too distant."

Let alone the Forest Wolf Troop offering reimbursement, Su Ping himself was eagerly awaiting the arrival of these ten Legion Beast Tamers!

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The reason was simple: among these ten individuals, the one with the lowest military rank was already a company commander, in charge of around two hundred people and Pet Beasts. The rest were either battalion commanders or elite non-commissioned officers, all of whom had extensive experience in group combat.

If Su Ping wanted to command a horde of beasts in battle in the future, he was more than eager to discuss this with the Beast Tamers within the Legion! That's what he thought, and that's what he did.

At first, these ten Beast Tamer soldiers were indeed very cautious. The reason was simple: Su Ping didn't make the best first impression on them. The first time he came to summon Pet Beasts, he was anything but polite. After summoning them, he simply told them to beat it.

However, after this interaction, they found that Su Ping, despite his exceptional talent, wasn't as odd-tempered as they had thought.

"A horde? A Legion? Breeder Su's ideas are quite bold!"

That evening, sitting on the grass in the Forest Wolf woodland, one of the soldiers, the oldest and a thirty-year-old Beast Tamer named Li Da, spoke up in surprise.

"That is the idea," Su Ping said. "I am sentimental about Pet Beasts I have raised from youth, so I'm reluctant to sell them. I figured, though arena combat might be out, for exploring Secret Realms and defending against Ferocious Beasts, I could still employ some."

The others were also surprised. They knew that in the Beast Tamer Legion, Pet Beasts collaborated in combat under the command of Beast Tamers, who themselves followed orders from superior officers.

But if one person were to command a Legion's worth of Pet Beasts? Not to mention two hundred Pet Beasts from a company, even managing thirty to fifty Pet Beasts from a platoon would be difficult, wouldn't it?

They were surprised but didn't discuss this further. Li Da nodded and said, "I believe Breeder Su can do the impossible."

After a little flattery, he made his suggestion, "If that's the case, then I suggest, Breeder Su, you shouldn't command them all at once in battle. That would surely lead to mistakes. You should primarily engage with a few highly-talented Forest Wolves, get them used to your commands, and make them understand your commands.

"Then, use these Forest Wolves as the core to build combat squads! Let these core Forest Wolves command the others. This will be more efficient, and it's best to conduct tactical-focused training so they get used to their roles!"

Upon hearing this, Sun Xiao, a soldier standing next to him, laughed, "Isn't this just like the training methods of our Legion's companies and platoons? Breeder Su, you don't need to ask Commander Li. He's all talk, but I'm the one with the real combat experience!"

"If you trust me, leave it to me. I can't promise miracles, but I can develop a set of guidelines for you during this time. You just train them according to these methods, as long as you can command each 'Forest Wolf squad leader'!"

"And me! Breeder Su, I'm the instructor of the assault company, responsible for the company's Pet Beast assault training..."

"I can help as well..."

Watching hands rise one after the other, Su Ping smiled.

Who in this world understood Legion combat better than the members of the Beast Tamer Legion? Who knew better how to ensure that a group of Pet Beasts performed effectively in large-scale warfare? Clearly, no one! So, I really only need to train according to the methods of these most endearing individuals.

As for their concerns about whether uncontracted Forest Wolves would understand my commands? Clearly, there was no need for concern. The soul sight ability bestowed by the Myriad Spirit Beast Atlas was my most reliable skill. It seemed that after completing this Cultivation task, in the future, I could continue my collaboration with the Beast Tamer Legion. Besides, just having these Beast Tamers from the Legion help oversee the Forest Wolves' combat training was already a huge help to me.

This also allowed Su Ping to devote more energy to the further Cultivation of Forest Wolves and Papermen.

Indeed, that's what happened. This peaceful lifestyle continued for two more days. During that time, including the previously advanced 'Dumb' and 'Dazed', a total of eight Forest Wolves that had reached Master Level in Sunlight Absorption also finally upgraded their Photosynthesis skill to Mastery Level. This marked the beginning of the third phase in the Cultivation of Forest Wolves.

Accumulating power, preparing to evolve!

At this stage, Su Ping didn't have to worry too much. By now, of the ten Forest Wolves, only Li Da's had yet to complete this skill level Cultivation. It couldn't be helped. That Forest Wolf, like Old Sha's, had reached Perfection Level in Sunlight Absorption. To upgrade its Photosynthesis, it needed to stabilize first before consuming another Sun Crystal.

Although I now have several Sun Crystals that can be reused, I can't waste them, can I? After all, my own Forest Wolves might need them in the future. Saving one means earning tens of millions. Where else could I find such a deal normally?

However, Su Ping and Li Da didn't have to wait too long. After two more days, once it had consumed a Sun Crystal, Li Da's Forest Wolf, 'Da Zhuang'—which had already achieved Perfection in Sunlight Absorption—also reached Perfection in Photosynthesis. It then began accumulating power in preparation for Evolution.

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Apart from these Forest Wolves being bred, what caught Su Ping's attention the most was undoubtedly the Paperman.

The progress of the Paperman also brought joy to Su Ping.

Qian Yi had to be evolved as soon as possible.

Therefore, the twenty-two Papermen, seven Paper Sword Forms, and the small Paperman Qian Yi were training themselves day and night without rest.

The results were extraordinary!

Six Papermen, with unlimited supplies of resources like Soul-Settling Paper and Undead Crystals in this period, soared from the common Third Rank they were at when first purchased, much like rockets, all the way up to the common Seventh Rank.

The upgrading of their skill levels was the same.

The Paperman's Racial Potential was low, their Skills were few, and even their self-awareness wasn't high.

But there was also a benefit to this.

That is, they could focus more.

They were more single-minded.

As Su Ping had the small Paperman Qian Yi practice swordsmanship while supervising the other Papermen in performing 'joint' and 'disjoint' exercises, several Papermen advanced their 'Paper Body Joint' skill from just learning it to the Mastery Level in less than a month.

Su Ping figured that the shared learning effect was certainly one aspect, but it also indicated that the difficulty of upgrading the Paperman's 'Paper Body Joint' skill really wasn't high! In a way, it was even effortless. Such Skills were indeed easier to improve.

However, what truly excited Su Ping was that three days later, the small Paperman Qian Yi's mutated 'Paper Body Control' skill, after a great deal of effort, had finally advanced from the Beginner to the Proficient Level!

Unlike the Paper Body Joint skill of the ordinary Paperman, which showed no noticeable change in appearance, the improvement in Qian Yi's Paper Body Control was extremely evident.

This fact became clear when it could even remotely control Paper Swords around thirty centimeters from its body, showing how significant this skill level upgrade was for the small Paperman.

Unfortunately, while the breeding of the Pet Beasts was going strong, the construction of the Heart of Woods hadn't made much progress over these days.

The reason was nothing else but the familiar problem of being out of money again.

Some construction team expenses could be put on credit.

But the special materials required for building bridges could not be deferred, resulting in a temporary halt to the work.

If Su Ping didn't have some expectations for evolving the Crown Wolf Emperor, he would have even considered selling the natural essence in his hands.

The resources from the Legion had a special marking, making them difficult to sell, but the origin of the natural essence was clean.

It's a pity. How could Su Ping not have expectations when Miss Qin was evolving the Crown Wolf Emperor? Money could be earned, but resources like these were really hard to come by.

However, Su Ping was determined to put the development of new industries around the Heart of Woods and the training of new Breeders on his agenda when he had the time.

Besides, after the Beast Tamer warriors led by Li Da arrived, Su Ping finally had time to properly meditate and solidify his skills. In the days that followed, he successfully broke through to become an Elite Third Rank Beast Tamer.

Of course, there was an even more important matter at hand.

The Forest Wolves bred by the Legion were nearly finishing their Evolution one by one.

Over these few days, the eight wolves who had reached the Master Level of drawing from the sunlight had also finally completed their Evolution.

They became the third to the tenth Wanmu Wolves in the world!

This provided Su Ping with over 500 experience points. However, putting that aside, the most important development concerned the Forest Wolf 'Er Zhuang,' who was already at the Commander Level.

After evolving, a dazzling sunlight brilliance burst from its body.

Its fur color was a bit more golden than the other Wanmu Wolves.

The reason was that Su Ping, using his Eye of Truth, clearly saw an Ability in Er Zhuang's evolved skill list that no other Wanmu Wolf possessed: 'Blinding Technique!'

「At the same time, there were less than ten days left until the Legion's big competition.」

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[Blinding Technique (Beginner): Channels the light of the sun; the intense brightness greatly affects the enemy's vision! This is a Skill representing a preliminary application of the Power of the Sun.]

This was the Skill description for Blinding Technique.

Actually, it looked quite simple, and its effect was even rather ordinary.

Through Su Ping's tests, this Blinding Technique would cause the Wanmu Wolf's body to burst forth with a brilliance even more dazzling than staring directly at the sun, temporarily blinding an opponent if they were looking directly at it.

However, such Skills had severe limitations and constraints.

First, it was useless against Plant Type creatures. They might even be delighted by it, attacking with even greater vigor.

Secondly, Su Ping didn't know its effect on Elemental Types or Undead Types, but it also didn't have much impact on Papermen. At most, due to Attribute resistance, the Papermen might feel some aversion, but it wouldn't cause any substantial harm.

Finally, if an enemy took precautions by simply closing their eyes or turning away, the effect would still be greatly diminished.

Of course, if the enemy closed their eyes or turned away, perhaps the Blinding Technique would have achieved its effect and purpose after all?

But Su Ping didn't overlook the Skill in the slightest. A Breeder's intuition told him that this difficult-to-awaken Wanmu Wolf Racial Skill could have numerous connections and be of immense significance.

Because Su Ping glanced again at the Illustrated Handbook entry for the Wanmu Wolf that he had looked at countless times:

[Wanmu Wolf Evolutionary Form: Forest Wolf, an advancement based on the Wood Element Attribute and a preliminary control over the Power of the Sun and further natural plant powers. Possessing great potential for growth and future development, it is one of the top Evolution choices for a Forest Wolf.]

In the Myriad Spirit Beast Atlas, it was even specifically highlighted: "preliminary control over the Power of the Sun!"

Su Ping's intuition told him that compared to previous Skills like Tree Prison or Life Magnetic Field, or even the mutated Wood Body, perhaps none was as significant as the Blinding Technique. The other Skills increased the Wanmu Wolf's combat capabilities. But the significance of the Blinding Technique itself was very likely related to the Wanmu Wolf's further Evolution!

Is the path of further Evolution also related to sunlight?

Su Ping suppressed this question in his heart; now was not the time to research and consider these things. Time was incredibly tight! Less than ten days remained before the Legion tournament would begin.

And Da Zhuang was still accumulating Energy. It wasn't that Su Ping's time calculation was off; it was just that the heavens hadn't been very cooperative these past two months. Even though it was autumn, the sunlight had been less abundant than before, causing the accumulated Power of the Sun to be too scarce and slowing down the Forest Wolf's Evolution.

This also served as a lesson, making Su Ping realize even more clearly how immense the Wanmu Wolf's demand for sunlight was for its Evolution.

Luckily, it was a close call but without any real danger!

「Two days later,」

After Su Ping also fed the prepared Elf Leaves and a Golden Oak Fruit to 'Da Zhuang,' Da Zhuang's Evolution finally began in an orderly manner.

「Thus, within fifty days.」

All ten of the Legion's Forest Wolves completed their Evolution from Forest Wolf to Wanmu Wolf! Not a single one failed; at most, their potential varied.

Furthermore, besides completing their Evolution, all the Forest Wolves were equipped with the Wood Heart Skill.

Even Er Zhuang's Heart of Woods Level, just like Old Sha's, became the only one among the ten Wanmu Wolves to reach the Master Level for an Evolutionary Body. Er Zhuang's Heart of Woods, along with its Sunlight Absorption and Photosynthesis, all reached the same Skill Level.

And Su Ping's prediction was indeed correct! Uniformity in the three Skill Levels proved more effective. This was even more so than in cases like Da Zhuang's, where Sunlight Absorption and Photosynthesis reached Perfection, but Heart of Woods was only at the Proficient Level, making combat handling smoother.

Da Zhuang's Level was one rank higher than Old Sha's, directly reaching Commandant Ninth Rank after completing Evolution. Er Zhuang, on the other hand, was only at Commander Seventh Rank. However, in sustained, arduous battles, Er Zhuang could even gain the upper hand.

This once again proved that as long as the difference in Level wasn't too great, improvements in Skill Level had a greater impact on combat power.

Er Zhuang's three Skills formed a perfect chain, like a fully cleared pipeline, continuously converting sunlight into power, making Er Zhuang's strength seem almost inexhaustible.

However, to Su Ping's slight disappointment, even though the trio of Skills at the Master Level were indeed somewhat better than before, the further qualitative change he had hoped to see still hadn't occurred. This made Su Ping begin to doubt whether his formulas and conjectures were correct.

But clearly, this was still not something to dwell on at the moment.

Su Ping didn't become idle just because the Wanmu Wolves had completed their Evolution. His following days became even busier.

He was so busy, in fact, that he had to apologize to some clients for whom he had scheduled or tentatively booked Heart of Woods Cultivation sessions, telling them he would get back to them in a few days.

The Wanmu Wolves had one final step: ensuring seven days of activity. He had to guarantee that this last critical phase was absolutely foolproof. Undoubtedly, the Beast Tamer Legion's tournament was far more important right now than earning this bit of money.

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The closer the day approached, the more Su Ping's attention centered on the upcoming event, a focus particularly emphasized by Zhang Lie's constant calls over the past two days.

Finally, only two days remained of the two-month timeline.

"Mission accomplished!"

Su Ping smiled wearily at the arriving Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie's eyes narrowed slightly as he observed the ten figures in the woods.

Commandant Ninth Rank, Commander Seventh Rank, three Commander Sixth Orders, one Commander Fifth Stage, three Commander Fourth Orders, and one Commander Third Rank!

These were the ten figures arrayed before him. Merely standing behind the young man, they seemed like an impenetrable bulwark before an endless, wild forest, its verdant foliage concealing untold dangers.

Were these the same ten Forest Wolves he knew?

No!

These were the Wanmu Wolves!

Because next to these ten Wanmu Wolves stood their respective Beast Tamers.

Su Ping hadn't been idle during this time, and neither had they. But it had all been worth it!

Zhang Lie said nothing, not voicing a single doubt. He simply saluted the young man before him, who was about the same age as his own son.

"Breeder Su, we set off tomorrow. Commander Zhao and Chief Lin have invited you to attend and observe the upcoming military competition. Do you accept?"

As Zhang Lie had anticipated, Su Ping nodded. "How many days will the competition last?" he asked.

"It officially starts the day after tomorrow, but we need to return to the Corps base tomorrow to prepare. The competition itself will last about two days!"

"Good! I'll get ready tonight and leave with you all tomorrow."

He was finally going to the Corps base!

A faint thrill of excitement stirred in Su Ping's heart.

That wasn't a place just anyone could visit!

Influenced by his father, Su Ping harbored both a longing for and curiosity about the Beast Tamer Corps. And with their departure set for tomorrow, how could Su Ping not be excited?

During dinner, he mentioned his plans to Lao Guan. Lao Guan nodded, telling Su Ping to be careful while he was away and that he would handle everything at home.

Since the drowning incident, Lao Guan hadn't brought up the matter of cultivating a Heart of Woods for Guan Lili again. Lao Guan hadn't even pursued the compensation from the family involved in the drowning.

Su Ping knew Lao Guan didn't want to cause him any trouble. That couple's humility was due to Dong Muyun. However, Su Ping didn't know much about the precise nature of the relationship between Dong Muyun, the former chairman, and himself. If he accepted a favor from them, some things might become complicated later on.

Lao Guan had been diligent for many years and was naturally unwilling to let greed create potential problems or hidden dangers for Su Ping and the Heart of Woods.

Su Ping saw all of this clearly and understood Uncle Guan's intentions. However, Su Ping didn't say anything more about it.

He could discuss it after the military competition was over and he returned.

By then, he could offer both reassurance and a generous gift to this diligent Manager Guan.

「 」

When night fell, Su Ping returned to his room and lay on his bed. Before he could enter a state of meditation, his phone rang again.

Su Ping initially thought it was Qin Xiaoxue, as Miss Qin had indeed been calling quite frequently these past few days. However, the caller ID took him by surprise.

It was his father, who hadn't contacted him since they last parted ways.

"Hello?"

"Son, have you missed me?"

"If you have something to say, just get to the point."

"Tsk, I was just thinking about the upcoming military competition in Jianghai Province. Have your preparations been completed? Your old man here has been bragging about you. Are you confident?"

As Su Ping had figured, his father, having discussed it with Zhang Lie previously, naturally remembered the event.

Su Ping replied with a slight snort, "It's in the bag!"

Facing Su Anyong, Su Ping's confidence was palpable.

"I've witnessed Old Sha's capabilities myself," Su Anyong said. "Unless your luck is terrible, or the competition rules or terrain are completely ridiculous, breaking into the top five shouldn't be an issue!"

This time, Su Anyong wasn't being stubborn.

Yet, Su Ping snorted coldly again. "Top five? Who are you looking down on? First place! It has to be first place!" he declared.

"You kid, don't be too arrogant. The networks within the Beast Tamer Corps aren't as simple as you imagine. You've only focused on cultivating one type. I reckon some elite battle groups will feature diverse cultivation strategies! Five-person combat teams can form complementary squads with the same species but different Evolutionary Bodies. Although Wanmu Wolves are versatile, they also have distinct weaknesses!"

Su Anyong was indeed right. Putting other attributes aside, the greatest weakness of the Wanmu Wolves, similar to other Wood Element Pet Beasts, was their vulnerability to fire. They were inherently countered by Fire Element Pet Beasts.

Su Ping, however, didn't seem concerned. His eyes darted around for a moment before he abruptly asked, "Dad, you mentioned competition rules. What are they usually like in these Corps competitions? Tell me in detail."

Su Anyong smacked his lips. "There are many," he said. "The most traditional and widely applied is the one-on-one elimination match, a knockout tournament system decided by drawing lots. However, this format was slightly improved many years ago. It was updated to include terrain selection, and instead of random draws, a challenge-point system was implemented. However, this too was later criticized for lacking practical battlefield applicability. It was seen as too performance-oriented, failing to showcase the full combat capabilities of Beast Tamers and their Pet Beasts in unpredictable wilderness scenarios, as it focused too much on arena-style duels."

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"So, the Legion competitions in recent years have mostly been battle royale style, based on large maps. It's like throwing competitors into a designated area to 'raise gu'; whoever comes out on top is the badass."

"Still, this format focuses too much on luck and randomness. All in all, that's just how it is. I guess the upcoming Legion competition will probably be another battle royale."

"In situations like that, it's closest to a real engagement in the wild..." Su Anyong suddenly stopped mid-sentence, as if a hen had just clutched his throat, and he seemed to realize something.

As he seemed to expect, Su Ping's quiet voice finally came through. "Su Anyong, you sure know your stuff."

Su Anyong let out an awkward chuckle. "Hey, didn't I tell you? I enlisted back in the day and hung around in the Beast Tamer Legion for a few years."

"Oh, so hanging around for those few years clued you in on the current Legion competition rules?" Su Ping didn't believe him.

Su Anyong continued, "Can't I have comrades? What does a little squirt like you know about deep camaraderie?"

"Such deep camaraderie, yet in all these years, I haven't seen anyone come looking for an old comrade like you for a reunion?"

Su Anyong promptly changed the subject. "Alright, your stepmother's awake. We'll talk later. Also, if you really manage to get the Wanmu Wolf to place first in the Legion competition, I'll bring your stepmother along to deliver a present!"

"Hey, what kind of present—"

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

Su Ping curled his lip as he listened to the dial tone. This old geezer is definitely someone special. And there's a very good chance he is either directly from the Beast Tamer Legion or some kind of official. Of course, maybe he used to be, but Su Ping didn't know what his situation was now. He couldn't be bothered to ponder it further; the old man would tell him eventually.

Tossing his phone aside, he started his meditation.

Now that the cultivation of the Pet Beast was complete, he also needed to earnestly practice meditation to catch up on the Realm he'd fallen behind in.

After all, the professional Beast Tamer assessment Qin Xiaoxue had told him about for next year still weighed on his mind.

「The night slowly passed.」

「Come morning, over a hundred kilometers away at the Beast Tamer Legion base.」

The most central courtyard of the Forest Wild Army Command Center.

A special aircraft arrived, and two figures descended from the sky.

Standing there in military uniform with a beaming smile was Commander Zhao, flanked by a few other commanders who were also grinning at the newcomers. "President Qin, President Liu," Commander Zhao said, his face wreathed in smiles as he saw them arrive, "you honor our Legion with your guidance. We've hardly given you the welcome you deserve, forgive our lapse, forgive our lapse."

The two arriving figures were none other than Qin Erlong and Liu Fuhai.

Although local and Legion jurisdictions didn't overlap, for significant events like this competition, it was common to communicate. This competition certainly qualified.

Moreover, and most importantly, one was the spouse of a key figure from Magic Capital Academy, while the other was a steadfast reformist in the Breeder Association. Both were undoubtedly comrades in the same camp as Old Zhao.

This time, the Legion was initiating preliminary reforms, especially concerning elite Pet Beast cultivation, so naturally, these two had been invited to observe.

"Hahaha, we're just here to join the excitement. But you, Old Zhao, you're making a significant move this time. It looks like *that person* is finally ready to free up their hands and start cleaning house, eh?" Qin Erlong said this quite openly, not bothering to lower his voice at all. In fact, he even raised it slightly, glancing with a smile at the few other figures who had arrived.

Commander Zhao naturally understood his meaning. Damn, having a powerful wife really means you can say whatever you want, huh? He's speaking so recklessly!

Liu Fuhai chimed in, "Heh, after the reforms of the Breeder Association and the Beast Master Association are complete, the next targets will be the Legion and the education system. Old Zhao, you're firing the first shot here!"

Commander Zhao said, "Alright, let's not stand out here in the wind. Let's go inside."

Qin Erlong could speak without reservation, and Liu Fuhai wasn't afraid either. However, at this major Legion base, the most important military installation in the east, there were some things Commander Zhao definitely couldn't say publicly.

The other commanders, those who were in the same faction and on good terms, came to greet Qin Erlong and Liu Fuhai. The rest departed promptly. Neither Qin Erlong nor Liu Fuhai paid them any mind.

Among these people, some were individuals backed by certain prominent Families, while others were those who had lost out due to the recent internal reforms. But in the end, they were all just like a mantis trying to stop a chariot—their efforts were futile.

The smooth progression of this outsourced elite cultivation competition was proof of that!

Back in the command headquarters office, Commander Zhao poured tea for his two guests before saying with a smile, "The competition officially starts tomorrow. I'm afraid I'll have to trouble you both to spend the night here."

Qin Erlong laughed. "Cut the crap. You just want Old Liu and me to intimidate those restless elements within the Legion, don't you?"

Vice President Liu waved his hand. "Don't drag me into this. I'm just here to watch the show. If there's any fighting to be done, you guys can handle it."

After saying this, Vice President Liu quickly asked, "Old Zhao, let me ask you something."

Commander Zhao nodded. Although Vice President Liu was only at Monarch Peak, and his actual combat prowess as a Beast Tamer was indeed inferior, his status as a Breeder was not to be underestimated. Old Liu was at Monarch Peak, true, but his network of connections was second to none!

Forest Wolves were one of the most common types of Pet Beasts. As one of Dragon Nation's renowned Forest Wolf Breeders, Old Liu had encountered countless powerful individuals who favored them. Breeders, especially high-level, renowned ones, were formidable for this very reason. Therefore, Commander Zhao didn't dare to treat Old Liu with anything less than utmost respect.

"Ask away!" Commander Zhao prompted.

"This time, will the external Breeders responsible for the outsourced cultivation also be coming to observe the competition?" Liu Fuhai asked, blinking.

Commander Zhao nodded. "Naturally. These are the masterpieces of various Breeders, after all. Our Legion has allocated considerable resources, so we certainly want them to see our sincerity and the results of their own expertise!"

Liu Fuhai wasn't concerned about sincerity. He quickly asked, "I've heard about the Breeders for the Snow Wolf, Sand Wolf, Hunting Wolf, and Shadow Wolf. For the Sand Wolf, Young Yang from our Jianghai Province Breeders Association and I personally supervised part of it. The Snow Wolf is supposedly handled by a Senior Breeder from Beiyuan Province. I've also heard bits and pieces about the Hunting Wolf and Shadow Wolf. But what's the situation with this Forest Wolf?"

Although Liu Fuhai hadn't specifically inquired during this period, with such a major event happening in the Legion, Breeders in several neighboring provinces and cities in the eastern region had caught wind of it. Yet, concerning the Forest Wolf Breeder, not a single piece of information had leaked out, from top to bottom.

Liu Fuhai was puzzled. Normally, such a Breeder should be at least Intermediate Level, if not Advanced Level. Across the entire Dragon Nation, weren't the most skilled Forest Wolf Breeders located in Jianghai Province and its surrounding areas? Yet, he hadn't heard a thing.

Commander Zhao also paused for a moment. Looking at Old Liu, he finally realized something and asked, "You don't know?"

"Know what?" Liu Fuhai looked genuinely clueless.

He had indeed been extremely busy lately. He was assisting Yang He with the cultivation of the Desert Wind Wolf (from the Sand Wolf project), accompanying the exchange Breeders from Huaiyang Province, and organizing materials for the Breeder competition scheduled for the end of the year. With the official President of the Breeder Association away, all these responsibilities had fallen onto his shoulders, keeping him incredibly busy.

Scratching his head, Commander Zhao finally understood why the old fellow had spoken as he did earlier. "The Breeder for this Forest Wolf Troop is from your Jianghai Province. And it seems they're from Linzhou City, too."

"Ah?" Liu Fuhai raised an eyebrow.

Meanwhile, Qin Erlong, who was standing to the side, seemed to have thought of something, a flicker of understanding in his eyes.

Old Zhao didn't want to elaborate further with Old Liu. After all, he had only glanced at the document himself, and it would be difficult for him to recall one specific name from the dozens listed. So, he said directly, "How about this: in a little while, later this morning, the Breeders from various locations will be returning to the Legion base with the Pet Beasts whose cultivation is complete. Why don't you go and see for yourself then? Wouldn't that solve it?"

Liu Fuhai frowned but didn't object, simply nodding in agreement.

However, Old Liu clearly didn't notice the teasing glint in Qin Erlong's eyes, which suggested he had already figured something out.

「Meanwhile, on the outskirts of Linzhou City, Su Ping had already boarded a vehicle with Zhang Lie and the others, excitedly heading towards the Legion base.」