

BloodLine 371

Chapter 371 Aaron Powell's Decision

While Zack was discussing with his home, a sudden news release from Iron Post City caused turbulent waves among the masses.

[A Trainee Warrior, not an adventurer team, earned the reward of 1 billion credit points]

This time the news was released by the City Lord, Aaron Powell, himself. This news swept the entire city.

From normal residents to powerful warriors, there is only one thing on their mind. which is that their City Lord is alive and well. For the past few months, there has been no word from him, and people have gradually stopped expecting his presence.

Especially when the first migration took place. They didn't care about the City Lord Mansion. It's due to their irresponsibility that the city was reduced to such a state. The city suffers from crippling economic conditions inside and the scourge of banditry from outside.

But now, after hearing the information from City Lord Aaron Powell himself, people don't know how to react. It's not easy to erase the old scares. Especially the victims, for this turned out to be only bitter smiles on their faces.

Many things could have been changed if the city lord chose to show up earlier. A lot of ugly things could have been avoided. But on the other hand, the media houses were again in a frenzy.

Unlike the masses and victims, the media houses now have great content because of City Lord Aaron Powell's public appearance.

Now they have an opportunity to ask many questions, mainly about the scourge of banditry in the insect forest. which even a new wave of warriors finds it difficult to break down.

It's not a secret that Peak Trainee bandits were coming down in numbers from the inner area. Their main motive is to hunt down the warriors who trespass their safe haven.

This news is also known by media houses. So they are wondering about the thoughts of City Lord Aaron Powell this time.

Main Hall-City Lord Mansion,

At this time, City Lord Aaron Powell controlled half of his injuries. With his current condition, he can't be involved in any fight. But it's enough to walk around and talk with people.

After learning from the superior that someone would take care of Soren, he decided to show up before the public. But who would have thought such unexpected new developments would take place?

Even before he made his public appearance, he heard good news from Lawrence.

Right now, he is sitting in the main seat of the hall. In front of him, Manager Lawrence stood quietly. Surprisingly, there were two others standing beside him. The female staff and the accountant, Ms. Melinda,

They just now released the news under the name of City Lord. which is equivalent to making a public appearance. The atmosphere is quite solemn at this moment.

Manager Lawrence was sweating profusely. He didn't dare take a glance at the City Lord.

Seeing his appearance, Ms. Melinda sneered inside, "This guy finally hit an iron plate." She couldn't help but feel joy upon seeing Lawrence's dog-beaten expression.

She expected that manager Lawrence's actions might receive backlash from the young man's family. But surprisingly, it caused dissatisfaction with City Lord Aaron.

She takes a small peek at the City Lord 's expression before turning back to her old self.

The City Lord Aaron was lost in thought. More than a reward, his mind is occupied with bandit boss Soren now. There was no update from the superior. which made him wrinkle his eyebrows in confusion.

After some thought, he decided it was best not to think about it any longer. His superior also advised him to stay away from it and instructed him to take care of the city. Thinking about his city, he couldn't help but feel a tinge of guilt.

His injury and thirst for revenge made him unable to take care of the city. If not for his injury, the city wouldn't have been reduced to such a state. Now, there is no point in overthinking about it. So hereafter, Aaron made up his mind to govern the city properly.

Then, retracting his thoughts, he glanced at the people in front of him. The reason they were here is because he was intrigued by the young man's identity. He actually decided to commission this young man to remove the bandit scourge as soon as possible.

That young man had proved that one strong warrior is better than the average team. But sadly, the young man had already left this city. Otherwise, he would have discussed the deal with him.

Suddenly, he glanced at the accountant and asked, "Melinda, do you have that young man's contact number?"

From their words, Aaron had already learned about the situation. He also knew Melinda had contacted that young man before.

On the other hand, Ms.Melinda stepped forward and answered, "My Lord, I do have his contact number." Her voice was sweet and gentle.

Aaron Powell nodded at her.

As a City Lord, he can track down this person with ease. But the problem is the young man's attitude before leaving. From Melinda's statement, it is clear that the young man didn't want his identity to be known to the public.

That is why he did not name the young man in the press release.

SIGH

He let out a sigh, realising that his current actions would increase the dissatisfaction of the young man. But it can't be helped. Earlier, he made up his mind to make a public appearance. If he makes an appearance, the media houses will be sure to question the reward winner.

So, in order to save his face and avoid an embarrassing situation, he allowed the news to be released. In this way, his public appearance won't be hated by people, because they will be more curious about that young man's identity.

And the media houses will be more focused on him. Meanwhile, he can avoid the direct brunt of harsh criticism. That young man's name is Zack, right? His mouth was raised in a slight arc. His achievements came in a timely manner, which helped him greatly.

But it's a pity that Zack was not in this city.

Seeing that, the City Lord was again lost in his thoughts. Three of them don't know what to do. He is taking his time to ask questions one by one.

Amongst three of them, one person is more uncomfortable. That person is the manager, Lawrence. At that moment, he didn't make any noise. But various thoughts were running through his mind.

"Damn it, I didn't expect the lord to appear abruptly," he thought to himself.

Earlier, he knew that the lord was recovering from his injury. So he assumed that he wouldn't interfere with outside matters as usual. Apart from making some crucial decisions, the lord wasn't involved in city affairs that much.

He also assumed the lord would not make a public appearance until he had recovered from his injury. But unfortunately, everything went against his assumptions.

The Lord decided to show up just after he released the news about the 1 billion reward. The lord didn't say anything, but he knows this is going to be trouble. The Lord is thoroughly dissatisfied with his unverified actions.

His mind is racing to find some solutions. Before the lord questions him, he needs to come up with some answers. Right now, he doesn't know what the lord is up to next.

He can only bite his nails and wait for the lord to question him.

The only person without any worry is the female staff, who inspect Zack's collections on that day.

The City Lord, Aaron Powell, realised that three of them were waiting for his instructions. Next, he told the three of them to leave. Surprisingly, he didn't reprimand Lawrence right now; he allowed him to leave with them as well.

Seeing the disappearing backs of three of them, he decided to go to the study room. He finally gave up the thought of contacting the young man, Zack, right now. He believes that media houses will find out his identity in one way or another.

because some media houses have the support of giants behind them. If this current news gains enough attention from the people, then soon the identity of the young man will come to light.

His lips curved into a gentle arc before he walked back to the study room.

...

Hansen's Campus-Red Stone City,

Meeting hall,

Elder Thornton is having a conversation with Arthur. Currently, they are discussing about Zack. These days, many people are camping outside the gate of Hansen's campus. Many of them were media houses and a few were spies from hostile forces.

Elder Thornton is feeling a headache. Without Zack, he wouldn't be able to make some crucial decisions. The talented young warriors of Iron Post City now want to fight against Zack Lockwood.

In this situation, he is totally perplexed. So he looked at Arthur. He hoped that Arthur would speak with his friend about it.

Elder Thornton knows as long as James helps with their current situation. Their current troubles will be resolved in a matter of time. It's because Zack had never denied his uncle's words.

On the other hand, Mr. Arthur doesn't know whether to laugh or cry. He already spoke with his friend James about their issue. His friend agreed to help them as much as possible.

But he knows James won't go against Zack's wishes. So, their current situation is quite tricky.

Chapter 372 What Will Zack Do?

(From MC's Perspective)

After having a conversation with Uncle, I went back to the backyard to cultivate. It's been a long time since I used the small training room. After arriving at the backyard, I entered the training room.

Seeing the fortified wall, my expression eased a little. I don't want the breath of the lightning essence to be noticed by anyone. The lightning pearl has a pure essence that can be easily noticed by powerhouses.

I don't know whether anyone is staring at our home right now. But I feel there is a possibility of it. So I decided to be more careful in my actions. After locking the door, I walked forward to the centre.

Then I sat cross legged and took the lightning essence pearl out of my storage ring. The glittering purple colour blinds my eye for a moment.

Then slowly I adjusted myself and began to cultivate. I held the lightning pearl between my two palms and began reciting the celestial lightning scripture.

Next, the lightning rune in my mind began to flicker as I recited the words. Slowly I immersed myself in cultivation. After absorption, the pure lightning essence started to circulate in my body according to the scripture, then it finally settled down in my dantian.

The process continues, and I slowly forget what's happening outside, as my goal is to spend a few more hours on cultivation this time.

...

At this time, what Zack wasn't aware of was that news released by City Lord Aaron Powell also detonated Red Stone City. Hearing that, cold shivers went down everyone's spine.

People want to believe it as false news. But no way, who told the City Lord to release it himself? When it comes to Iron Post City, he is the ultimate authority.

Study room,

James Lockwood was completely dumbstruck by the news. He talked about this to Zack a couple of minutes ago. After reading the online news, he couldn't keep his calm.

"Damn, which force is it? It's so fierce," he muttered in shock.

It took a while for him to digest the information. Then a slight glint flashes in her eyes. Apart from Tier-7 cities, nothing comes to his mind right now. Only they are capable of raising such monsters.

"Are those powerful families already letting their descendants walk around?" He said to himself.

James knows that the crimson hall competition is a few months around the corner from happening. So it's quite understandable that talented geniuses were popping up at this time.

What does he fear that this explosive news will have a ripple effect? In the coming days, there is a possibility that more and more geniuses will appear.

Suddenly, he gazed in the direction of the backyard. He is worried about Zack right now. Zack is the current leader/champion of Star Tower. So there is a possibility that these talented warriors will challenge Zack in the coming days.

He also guessed that the winner of 1 billion credit points might be Peak Trainee Warrior. Such cultivation bases under 14 or 16 years old can be called monsters.

When they join the academy, they will step into an elite base in a few days. "Zack, how are you going to handle the coming storm?" James muttered to himself.

At that moment, he forgot about the assassins and bounty hunters. If Zack can emerge as the winner from peer challenges, then there is nothing to worry about outside threats.

He believes that Zack's teacher will take care of the outside problem. But when it comes to the road Zack can only walk himself.

He decided to have a good talk with Zack about it. He knows Zack is a mature child. If he can cross this hurdle, then he won't be afraid of other participants in the Crimson Hall competition.

BUZZ

A notification sound resonated inside the room.

James glanced at the contact number before attending the call. He asked, "What is it now?" He knows the other person is getting impatient. Arthur had requested his help to ease down the relationship between Zack and Elder Thornton.

But seeing Zack's firm attitude, how can he go against his wishes?

On the other hand, hearing James's annoying tone, Arthur doesn't know whether to laugh or cry. In front of him, Elder Thornton is hearing their conversations. Because Arthur put it on speaker.

"Did you talk to Zack?" Arthur inquired.

James sighed and said, "Yes, he decided to take some rest for a few days before going out."

A quick glint flashes in Elder Thornton's eyes.

"What happened to this child?" He thought to himself.

Usually, Zack comes to their Hansen Campus after his monster-zone excursion. Because he needs to travel via Red Stone City to reach his home. So Zack had no other choice but to stop by the Red Stone City.

But this time, Zack didn't even come to their campus. "Strange," he grumbled.

But the next second he realised something. He directly asked, "Is he injured?"

Hearing that Arthur had blacklines in his forehead Earlier, Elder said he wouldn't interfere in his conversation. But right now he is interjecting openly.

James heard a deep voice this time. He had no doubt whose voice belonged to. His expression turned solemn for a moment. "Why this secrecy? He can talk to me directly," James said in his heart.

But the next second, he retracted his thoughts and answered politely, "Elder, Zack is doing alright now and he has a Mid-level Special Trainee cultivation base."

A happy glint flashes in Elder Thornton's eyes. Even Arthur was surprised. Earlier, everyone opposed Zack's trip. He even scolded his friend James, who proposed it. But Zack somehow benefited from the trip in the end.

Which is also good for their campus.

At this time, Elder Thornton and Arthur looked into each other's eyes. They have a tacit understanding of each other. It's not a good idea to push him any further now that he's made a breakthrough.

So Elder Thornton was satisfied with Zack's progression. He decided to let him rest for a few days. Then he signalled to Arthur to end the conversation.

Seeing that, Arthur nodded and replied, "It's good news, which we all needed right now. Tell Zack to take a rest without any worries. We are fine with it. Then I'll call you back later. "

James breathed in relief. It's good that both of them understand the situation. Then suddenly, he decided to ask about the monster genius who won 1 billion credit points.

"Arthur," he said.

On the other hand, Arthur decided to end the call but paused his movements at the last second.

Arthur asked, "Is there anything you want to ask?"

Hearing from James about the news that was released a couple of minutes ago,

Elder Thornton's eyes widened in surprise. He immediately accessed his sci-fi watch to read the news. Both of them were in the meeting hall, so they didn't check the news.

Elder Thornton's eyes quickly scanned the trending articles from the red stone city's media houses. "It's as James spoke, a monster genius popped up all of a sudden," Elder Thornton said.

Arthur's breath quickens faster. If this is true, then what is the exact cultivation basis of such geniuses? Arthur worries that some stupid media houses in Redstone City will take this topic to compare against Zack.

Already, they are debating about a challenge post from the new young warriors of Red Stone City. Now this will gain further attention. Then everyone will further stare at their campus's direction.

Several thoughts were running throughout his mind.

The atmosphere turned solemn for a moment. This situation can't be discussed on the call. In order to make future preparations, they need to formalise some plans. In particular, how to keep the media from exacerbating the situation.

Elder Thornton finally said, "Okay, James. It's a serious topic, we can discuss it in person later."

Then they talked about a few more things before ending the call. After ending the call, Arthur looked at Elder Thornton for some answers.

"This smells like trouble," Elder Thornton said. Their little Hansen Campus got famous because of Zack. Other than Zack, there is no one here to uphold their reputation. That's why they didn't accept the challenge requested by the young warriors without Zack's consent.

Now, he doesn't know? What problems will this minor development cause? He also thinks that Iron Post City's monster genius may come from Tier-7 City.

As this thought arose, his expression condensed greatly. Zack's images flash before his eyes. He was worried about Zack as well. More than the challenges issued by local warriors, he fears the challenges from Tier-7 city warriors will trouble Zack greatly.

Elder Thornton has made some firm decisions right now. He looked at Arthur and said, "Arthur, you go to Zack's house right now."

"What?" Arthur was startled.

He was expecting something else. But he didn't expect Elder to say this. What does he want me to do?

Looking at his expression, Elder Thornton answered, "You go and see, what are his intentions? If he needs something, you can tell me right away. We need his presence here more than now."

Arthur nodded at him in understanding. He sighed inside. If not for the previous misunderstanding, we wouldn't have had to be hesitant now. As per the Elder's order, he can check Zack's attitude in person.

Chapter 373 Change Of Plans

(From MC's Perspective)

Lockwood Residence,

I stopped my cultivation five hours later. Then I checked the amount of lightning essence gathered in my dantian. Seeing that my reserve has increased further, I signed in relief. Next, I have to focus on lightning skills. For that, I have to use campus facilities.

For a moment, I hesitated a bit. I'm avoiding this for a reason. I planned to look for a suitable monster zone next. If I go to Hansen campus now, then I'll have to act according to their schedules.

I have already seen some of the online articles. It's really absurd that they think they can challenge me.

It would have been good. If the media houses analysed the strength of the participants who attempted the star tower trial with me, The statistics clearly would have shown them the difference. But still, the media houses decided to make such a splash.

I shake my head in disapproval of their methods. It will waste my time. So I think it's better for me to go to the monster zone instead of Hansen Campus. Then, dispelling the thoughts, I got up from the ground and walked out of this little training room.

I leisurely walked toward the garden and decided to take some rest. I sat on the small wooden bench and leaned back a little. Then I thought about the news. I decided to see what's trending right now.

I have a gut feeling that something is wrong. As this thought arose, I felt my chest tighten a little. Then I accessed the trending news via Sci-Fi Watch. Seeing the news of Iron Post City, my expression turned solemn.

"What is going on?" I mumbled under my breath.

Then I saw something unbelievable. The news about City Lord Aaron Powell is currently trending online.

Seeing that, I clicked on the headline to read further. The more I read the news, the more my heart boils in anger. I have told them before I'm not okay with my identity being revealed.

But this City Lord used my identity to gain public approval. ", " I muttered.

I will tell Mr. Jonathan about it. I guess the city lord doesn't know about my ties with Mr. Jonathan. If he had known, he wouldn't have dared do this PR stunt. A small smile rose on my face as I thought about it.

After clearing my mind, I walked back to the house. When I walked past the hall, I came across Uncle James. He paused his movements right after seeing me. I saw conflicting emotions in his eyes. I walked up to him in concern and asked, "Uncle, is everything alright?"

I couldn't help but think there was something bothering him.

Mr. James let out a small sigh after hearing that. His conversation with Arthur occupied his thoughts right now. He looked at Zack and asked, "Did you watch the news?"

"News?" I said.

I realised he was talking about me. I raised my eyebrows in confusion. Why is he asking about me?

I asked back, "Uncle, what's wrong?"

Mr. James couldn't hide his worries anymore. He led Zack towards his study room for private conversations. He knows walls have ears.

Especially after Zack's return, he is more concerned about his safety.

Inside the study room, both of them sat in their seats. The next second, Mr. James begins to talk about his concern regarding the Tier-7 cities' geniuses.

At first, my reaction was normal, but as I continued to listen, my expression turned dark. I've heard people make conspiracy theories, but my uncle's theory is too much.

"I also spoke with Elder Thornton and Arthur. We also believe that the Iron Post City record holder may be from a Tier-7 city," he said solemnly.

When I heard that, I almost choked myself. For a moment, I began to regret hiding the information from Uncle James. At least he would have stopped worrying about me.

Should I tell him or not? I fell into contemplation. On one hand, I'm listening to his words. At the same time, I thought it was good this way. What if he worries more after I reveal the news? Whatever is happening right now is best for me.

My complexion turned normal after gaining some clarity. Because the media houses will come up with the same theory. In this way, I can avoid the spotlight while they are debating about Tier-7 cities' geniuses.

Finally, my heart returns to peace. When Uncle James finished his words, I assured him that I would take care of myself. Only after hearing those words did his complexion turn better.

"Good," "Good," he said twice.

Then Mr. James decided to bring up the topic of Hansen Campus. He knows if he doesn't ask right now, then those two will call him back again.

"Zack, Are you sure about returning back to Hansen campus a few days later? " Mr. James asked. He is sure that Elder Thornton must have plans regarding Tier-7 cities. But he previously refused to talk about it on call.

So he feels it is better for Zack to meet him sooner and solve the misunderstanding.

Hearing his questions, I don't know what to say. Clearly, I have told him, I'm not going anywhere for now. Soon I realised where this is coming from. Mr. Arthur might have contacted him.

"Uncle, I decided to visit the monster zone next," I replied.

Mr. James was surprised to hear that. He thought that after a month-long trip, Zack was mentally fatigued. But he wants to go to the monster zone. He feels Zack is taking too much on himself. He is sure to be under a lot of pressure to prove himself.

He was literally moved by Zack's words.

SIGH

So he decided to hear it first, "Which monster zones are you planning to visit?" He asked.

Hearing that, my lips swept into an arc before saying, "Black Forest."

"What?" Uncle James was slightly taken by my words. But I know my strength. I can handle those weird monsters dwelling in the back forest.

Mr. James commented, "Your courage is commendable. But black forest is now classified. "

"After that unexplainable mutation, that place is now visited by medical scientists. It's more appropriate to call it a research place than a monster zone," he added further.

Hearing that, I felt disappointment in my heart. I never thought that place would attract so many people. Maybe this explains why there are so many weird monsters out there.

"Sigh, Uncle, do you know any suitable monster zones for me?" I asked. I'm asking him to look for it so that some places that were previously restricted to my uncle can get a free pass for me. In that way, I don't have to spend a lot of credit points.

On the other hand, Mr. James wasn't surprised by Zack's request. He almost guessed when Zack raised the topic of the monster zone. But it's not easy to get access to and visit challenging monster zones. It will take some time.

Considering Zack's strength right now, he can easily clear small monster zones nearby. At least he needs to train in monster zones as difficult as the Black Forest. He hadn't made any decisions right now.

Looking at Zack, he said, "It will take some time, probably a few weeks. I feel you should pay a visit to Hansen campus in the meantime. "

I remained silent for a moment. I knew I couldn't avoid visiting Hansen Campus. From Uncle's words, I guess it must be the result of his conversation with Elder Thornton and Mr. Arthur.

Then, having no other choice, I nodded at him. Then we talked about a few other things before I left the study room.

A few minutes later,

I lay on my sofa, checking incoming messages. It's strange that there has been no news whatsoever from Mr. Jonathan so far.

Why is he taking so much time? Is that hideout really dangerous? What could be more dangerous than carnivore bugs? Numerous questions run through my mind.

Then I checked the news again. I want to see what the impact of the news in Red Stone City is. Soon, through my sci-fi watch, I accessed the local news site.

My eyes gleamed with surprise.

As expected, the news sites were picking this up. Seeing that, a wide smile blossomed on my face. I made the right decision by not telling him. I can't imagine the aftermath if the information leaked out.

This place would have been swarmed by reporters right now. Then I proceeded to check the comments.

"Is this news real or fake?"

"Wow, the city lord is alive."

"Ha...Ha...Ha... I thought he had escaped. "

"The city lord is shameless. Why is he deciding to come out right now?"

"He should be jailed."

"Die*****"

Looking at the mixed responses, I don't know how to take it. Most of the comments are abuse directed at the city lord. I can understand their emotions. I had no sympathy for the city lord myself. I believe most of the comments were from residents of Iron Post City.

I can guess that previously they were waiting for him to show up. Now that he has arrived, people are releasing a barrage of attacks on him.

Chapter 374 Returning Back To Hansen After Long Time

(From MC's Perspective)

Two days later,

I decided to pay a visit to Hansen campus. If I did not leave now, then I believe Uncle wouldn't even proceed to look for monster zones. Before exiting the house, I wore a black hoodie on top to prevent others from noticing me.

Then after bidding goodbye to granny park, I walked out of the house. Thankfully, I found no one suspicious near my house. I then headed straight towards the air car platform.

Walking down the street, I didn't fail to observe the pedestrians. Through perception, I monitor the area around me. I can easily find anyone with suspicious behavior once they entered my perception range.

Fortunately, that's not the case with my house. But I don't think Hansen campus will be peaceful like here. I have watched some videos. In that video some people are camping outside of our campus.

I believe they want to meet authorities. But with Elder Thornton's attitude, I think he didn't give any response so far. Thinking about it gives me a headache right now. Anyway I'm going to lock myself in combat training room. And I won't get out until evening.

A Few minutes later, I reached the air car platform. Then I spotted a familiar cab driver amongst the group of drivers. Everyone is waiting for customers to come in.

I walked up to the driver and greeted him with a smile. The old driver was surprised to see me and this guy knows my identity. So he clearly avoided others and led me towards his cab.

"I heard Red Stone City has become frenzy because of you," the old driver uttered in surprise.

Hearing that I chuckled and replied, "Let's go, we will talk on the way."

The driver nodded at me before he got inside. Seeing that I entered the cab and sat leisurely back in the window seat.

Next, the air car rose from the platform slowly. Then the driver drove the air car towards the destination. The air car flew past at good speed as there is no traffic in this morning time.

While looking at the ground, I asked the driver, " Are there any reporters who came here recently?"

"Reporters?" The driver said.

Then after contemplating for a moment, he answered, "I don't know but there are some new faces around the community recently."

Hearing that I furrowed my eyebrows in doubt. New faces huh? It's worth looking into it. Because this white stone city is small city full of residents and little shops. It's not a tourist destination at all.

Looks like I need to check my neighborhood. It's good to take precautionary measures.

"Zack, what happened? Are you worried that there might be reporters from red stone city? " The old cab driver asked casually.

I sighed and answered, "Probably, yes. These days people don't give damn about your privacy."

After saying that I added further, "Old man, if someone asks my whereabouts. Just act as if you never met me. Because some of them might be bad people."

The old driver pressed a sudden break in midair, the air car stopped abruptly, then the old man asked in worry, "Kid, what are you talking about?"

"He...He....He..."

"Why did you stop the car? I'm just telling it's okay to be careful," I said in a calm tone with a small smile on his face.

Hearing that, old man muttered to himself, "What careful? Young people these days acting like old ones." After saying he started the car and drove fast towards the destination.

Seeing the speed of the air car, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. He obviously wants to drop me down as soon as possible. Then I stopped reminding, I knew the old man is clever enough to understand the seriousness of the issue.

A Couple of minutes later, he dropped me at the station. I already booked a bunch of tickets previously, there is no need to go through the hassle of buying a ticket.

After walking past the crowd of passengers, I reached the familiar platform. I looked at the clock and realized the train to Red stone city would arrive in ten minutes.

I felt bored right now. So I started to observe people through perception. It's my favorite pastime. There are no high class people here like in Red stone city. These people are just normal workers who go to work in nearby cities.

I found a few warriors around me. I presume they are going to Red stone city as well. As time passed, I found nothing interesting. So I stopped looking around and quietly waited for my train.

Then a few minutes later, I heard the sound of train.

Seeing the coming train, I realised the train has been strengthened further. It looks more fortified than before. I don't know how many metals they have spent on it.

When the train came to a complete halt, I proceeded to enter inside. A Couple of minutes later, I was sitting in the window seat. In order to avoid any disturbance, I take out new weapon from my storage ring.

It's the mask to cover up my face. I never thought I would use it again. I remembered, I have used this thing previously at Star tower competition.

Now I'm using it again. Then shaking my head helplessly, I wore the mask. With this hoodie and mask, I doubt anyone would recognize me. When the train began to depart, I decided to take some nap until the train reached Red stone city.

Two hours later,

The announcement woke me up from sleep. From looking at outside, I realised it's red stone city. Then quickly I stepped out of the train and headed to the exit.

After walking out, I found the air cav drive conversing at the platform. Instead of walking up to them, I quietly stood like a statue for a moment. I have this feeling that it's not wise to tell them about my destination.

Who knows these people might have come into contact with media people? If they knew my identity, there is a possibility that they would inform other people.

Then I took a deep breath. I felt I was overthinking the possibilities. So I directly walked up to them without hesitation. Once I walked closer, I overheard some conversation which shook me.

"Hey, did the guy from red bird pay you enough money?"

"ha....ha...ha .. "

"He paid me 500 credit points upfront"

"What? Seriously."

"Damn it, why don't I have such luck?"

"I just need to inform him once I see the kid named Zack."

"Wow, star tower kid."

"Yeah, that boy"

Hearing their conversations my heart skips a beat for a moment. Sure, I'm not being paranoid. These things were actually happening.

"Sir, where do you want to go?" A middle-aged driver walked up to me and inquired.

I replied, "huh, just drop me at red berry restaurant."

The red berry restaurant located right next to Hansen campus. I decided to observe the movements outside before going into campus.

I'm sure I'll find something interesting. If there is involvement of crimson hall again, I'll find some ways to inflict damage to them.

After getting inside, I avoided talking to the driver and sat back quietly.

Several minutes later, the air cab slowly landed in front of the red berry restaurant.

After paying the amount, I stepped outside of the car. Then I walked straight towards the restaurant. I never even looked at the campus direction.

I started to monitor through perception from that moment. After entering inside, I found some corner seat to sit and ordered fresh juice.

I casually looked around and there were not many people here. Some were starting to come in right now. Through perception, I began to observe a few people eating in the restaurant.

I started to look for signs like company badges or logos. It's impossible to look for gadgets as they usually store them in their storage ring. So from badges I can identify which organization they belong to.

Time passes,

The waiter brought the fresh juice in time. Unfortunately, I didn't find anything concrete so far. Unless, I ask people's background openly. It's difficult to find if they are media people or not. Then shaking my head in helplessness, I started to drink.

A few minutes later, I walked out of the restaurant slowly. Then I headed towards the campus building. When I raised my head to see the group of people, I paused my movements for a moment.

"Damn, people were blocking the gate," I grumbled.

I saw five of them arguing with security for some reason. And few of them had gadgets in their hands, taking photographs boldly. "What is Elder doing right now?"

Clearly he can tell these people to walk away. Then why is he being silent? Numerous questions come to mind. Suddenly, I saw one of them staring at my direction.

In order not to cause suspicion, I started to walk. Due to my dressing, they couldn't identify me. So I easily walked past them and then I found opportunity to get inside while they were arguing.

"Phew," I took a deep breath after getting inside the campus.

Chapter 375 Testing Against Puppets

Hansen Campus,

Seeing someone slipped inside, the people who were arguing with security were stunned.

"Did you find out who that is?" The lean middle-aged man inquired of his colleague. They have been pressured by their superiors to collect some news. In particular, the news related Hansen campus.

They were pissed off, witnessing someone went inside under their nose.

"No, I couldn't see his face." His colleague replied. Hearing that they didn't argue anymore. Everyone saw that person wore a mask to cover his face. He also used hoodie to cover his head.

Who is this strange fella? Everyone puzzled. Next they decided to stay vigilant to not let anyone before they learn about that person's identity.

...

(From MC's Perspective)

I entered inside the building. For a moment, I looked at my left and right side. I saw more number of students compared to last time. There is still some time left for staff to arrive. So it's not even total strength of the students.

"What's going on?" I mumbled under my breath. It's quite intriguing, earlier deserted places were occupied by students.

Then I stroll towards the practice room after clearing my mind. On the way, some students looked at me with strange gaze because of my mask and hoodie. Seeing that I removed the hoodie and continued to walk forward.

I arrived at the training room few minutes later. Next, I take out my ID to scan. After scanning my ID, the metallic door immediately opened.

"Creak"

Seeing that, I stepped inside and the door behind me shut automatically.

Next, smile blossomed on my face after seeing that training room was same as usual. Apart from me, there is no one present inside at this time.

Then I walked towards the puppet training room. I hope they it's also same as usual. I walked past the speed testing room and arrived in front of puppet training room.

"Creak"

I stepped inside after scanning my ID, the door then closed automatically and no will disturb me until I come out.

Seeing that I proceed to select the type of puppets. I started from selecting normal wooden puppets.

BUZZ

When I made the selection, a wooden puppet appeared above from the ground. The fight mode was turned on by me. In few seconds, the wooden puppet will start attack me

Realizing that, I take out the black sword from storage ring.

When the timer was on, the wooden puppet moved. The wooden puppets movements were limited to the stage. This function can be turned on and turned off.

I just didn't bother to turn it off. The wooden puppet current strength was at Initial level- Trainee Apprentice Warrior.

I want to see the power level difference between. I aimed the sword at the wooden puppet's head.

I charged the sword with small amount of lightning essence.

"SWORD DIVIDE," I said.

A burst of purple light released at the wooden puppet. Next second, the wooden puppet was blast into pieces.

The Special Trainee level lightning energy was unbearable for the Trainee level puppets. It was totally shredded into pieces.

Next, I decided to test the lightning power by rising the power level of the puppets from Initial to mid level then Peak level Trainee Apprentice Strength.

Time passed,

From every test, I have noticed. I only need to charge the black sword with little more lightning essence. And everytime it was the same result.

The wooden puppet was shredded into smaller pieces.

Next, I decided to select special trainee level wooden puppet. Obviously this time the consumption will be large, but I would like to try it. My lightning reserve is enough to carry out my little experiment.

When the initial level- special trainee puppet appeared. I charged the black sword with full lightning energy. I didn't leave any space to left out. When the sword was brimming with purple color energy.

"SWORD DIVIDE," I muttered.

This time the clapping sound of purple lightning was loud enough. It reverberated inside the room. Fortunately, this metallic room was completely fortified otherwise the sound would have been noticed by others.

When the purple lightning beam blasted the wooden puppet, I saw the top of the humanoid puppet completely disappeared.

My eyes gleamed with interest. It's a wooden puppet that's why its top was completely disappeared. If it is replaced by living warrior without protective gear. I believe this energy is alone to cause fatal wounds.

Wooden puppet is not enough for my test. So U decided to change the puppet. Then I selected the metallic puppet with Initial- Special Trainee level from the monitoring system. This metallic puppet is harder than human flesh.

I wonder, how many attacks will it take to damage the metallic puppet.

BUZZ

The previous wooden puppet had completely disappeared. Now a brand new metallic puppet appeared above the platform. The moves made by puppets were recorded one.

As long as you are familiar with puppet movements, then it's easy to stay away from the puppet and shift your attention on being offensive.

This time after charging the sword with lightning energy, I blasted the metallic puppet with sword divide move.

"BOOM" a deafening sound resonates inside the room.

Without minding it, then I saw the aftermath.

A three and half inch dent can be seen on the puppet's chest region. I spotted small purple arcs lingering over the metallic puppet. When it comes to Warrior, this attack would have left them with broken chest bones.

No wonder, I easily dealt with those Special Trainee bandits back at Insect forest. My only trouble was those seasoned bandits. They gave me quite a headache.

Then I observed my lightning reserve in my dantian. Seeing that it was enough to release a few more attacks, I selected metallic puppet with next level, Mid-level Special Trainee. The result was a 3 inch dent.

Time passed, I repeated the same process with Peak level- Special Trainee puppet. This time it was resulted with 2 and half inch dent on metallic puppet. The dent size was again reduced by half.

This will be the case when there is no inner armor. Based on the grade of the artifact, I believe the impact will be greatly reduced.

My curiosity for Trainee Warrior level puppet was further increased. This is the level of teachers and elders here. I assume that only Elder Thornton has taken half step in Elite level.

And the rest of the elders and teachers's cultivation base was at Trainee Warrior level. I walked up to the monitoring system and selected the Trainee Warrior level puppet.

BUZZ

A small smile blossomed on my face hearing that sound. This time I saw the metallic puppet was different from previous one. Obviously, the puppet was further strengthened with metal elements.

It can be seen from, how dense was the metallic puppet's hand was?

Next, I repeated the previous attack after charging the sword.

"BOOM" the loud sound resonated inside the room.

This time I saw the metallic puppet didn't even vibrated. But I spotted one inch dent mark on it's head. The dent size was decreased by 1 and half. It was huge difference.

But I intrigued about the designer of this metallic puppet. How did the designer make this calculation?

Is it the Trainee Warrior puppet was randomly strengthened or is there any calculation behind it? A hint of curiosity rose in my heart.

Considering Elder Thornton's background, I feel it's reliable. If this is the case, then Mid level- Peak Trainee puppet will have a half inch dent. This is just my assumption but in-order to verify.

Again, I selected the next level puppet and proceeded to repeat the process.

"Boom"

After the aftermath, I spotted a half inch dent. I smiled, "The result was same."

Then the next level was the last one. There is no more elite level puppet in this institute. Then I continued the same process with Peak Trainee puppet.

Seeing that, there is no dent on it, I let out a small sigh. Then I didn't continue with sparring, I just turned it off. I found the lightning reserve in dantian reduced to quarter.

Then I sat cross legged on the ground. I didn't take out lightning essence pearl to cultivate. Rather I fell into contemplation.

There is no problem with lightning power. It's destruction power will increase whenever there is a cultivation breakthrough.

The problem lies in skills. I took a few more seconds in charging the sword. There was slight improvement compared to a month ago.

Currently, I have intermediate level proficiency both in sword divide and Lightning wheel techniques. But this is not enough. If I met opponent with better skills, then it will expose my flaw right away.

Considering the crimson hall competition few months away. I need to increase my skill level further. At least I need to reach proficient level.

These are modern day level method. Considering ancient skill division, my skill comes under a small wheel. In that proficient level is just sub level of small wheel.

I can't imagine the effect of further levels. I can operate the lightning techniques in the blink of an eye. That would be deadly.

For current me, I should reach proficient level before the competition. After gaining some clarity, I decided to go with speed test.

Chapter 376 Elder Thornton's New Surprise For Zack

Hansen Campus,

Beep!

Elder Thornton squinted eyes as he saw the new notification popped- up in the projection screen. He was looking at his mail as part of his daily routine. But, all of a sudden this new notification came up, he clicked the notification to read further.

Next second, he got up from the seat in surprise. Because he saw the name of Zack in notification. Earlier, he changed the settings to remind him whenever a person with Zack's ID, scans the monitor system.

Now, from the monitor system he received notification that someone with Zack's ID had entered the combat training room. Elder Thornton guessed, that person most presumably Zack.

Then without thinking further, he contacted Arthur. He instructed him to come to his cabin as soon as possible. Since, Zack is here. He needs to think about the next course of plan.

He knew reporters waiting outside of the building. He wondered, how did Zack bypass them to enter the building? His eyes gleamed with surprise.

Then he muttered, "How to clear the misunderstanding between us?" Last time, he accused Zack of hoarding their resources. But from that kid's point of view, he had demanded the rare resources which he was in need of.

He glanced at the projection screen. The name of Zack is blinking in green color. Which shows Zack began to practise using one of the facilities inside the combat training room.

So it will take some time for him to leave. Which gives plenty of time to Elder Thornton to think of a viable plan.

A few minutes later, his cabin door was opened by Arthur. He walked inside with a worrisome expression on his face. Taking a glance at him, Elder Thornton understands his mood.

"Cough" "Cough"

He coughed twice to clear the awkward atmosphere. Earlier, he was the one who pressured Arthur to visit Zack's house. But unexpectedly the trip was canceled due to some other issue.

Arthur sat opposite to him and asked, "Elder, what happened?" After saying that he waited for Elder to explain, he has been pressured by Elder lately.

Ever since Zack left for the insect forest. Elder Thornton wanted him to learn about his every move. So having no other choice, he asked his good friend James about Zack.

So with his help he was able to withstand the pressure so far. But now he heard Zack has returned. He doesn't have to continue it anymore.

Looking at Arthur, Elder Thornton said, "That kid Zack is now training inside the combat chamber." He said it in a calm tone.

But for Arthur it took some seconds to realize. "What?" He exclaimed in surprise. He had expected they needed to come up with something to convince Zack. But it looks like they were overthinking so far.

SIGH

Elder Thornton let out a deep sigh. Casting a glance at the screen again, he commented, "Looks like the kid has been practicing hard."

A quick glint flashes in Arthur's eyes.

If it was earlier, he would have celebrated Zack's success. But now with geniuses from Tier-7 city popping up, he worries that Zack's current strength is not enough to handle them.

Getting no response from Arthur, Elder Thornton raised his eyebrows and asked, "What? Are you not happy?"

Arthur was stunned. He immediately refuted by saying, "Elder, I'm happy with his progression. But looking at Tier-7 Cities' warriors. I don't know how to react."

Elder Thornton didn't doubt his words. Even he has some concerns about it. But it can't be helped. From the very beginning, Tier-7 cities have maintained their dominance over Tier-8. In recent decades, he hardly saw any Tier-8 City getting promoted to Tier-7.

"If Zack was born in Tier-7 City, he would have reached Peak Trainee level by now," Elder Thornton said in a solemn tone.

Arthur nodded hearing his words. Even if they don't know about Zack's element, at least they can see Zack's cultivation talent. Zack's talent is no worse than the geniuses of Tier-7 City.

Suddenly, a doubt rose in his heart.

Arthur asked, "Elder, What are you expecting from Zack?" He was obviously talking about the crimson hall's competition. He can't recall how many times they have discussed it.

But seeing there is no leak of information from crimson hall, he couldn't help but worry. If Zack can pass this hurdle successfully, then he will be recruited by those giant academies. And then his future will be limitless.

For this, Elder Thornton has a mirthless grin on his face. He commented, "Arthur, you are forgetting something. Zack had 'D' rank quota."

He further added, "Despite his future performance, it was clear that he will join a certain academy."

Hearing that a look of understanding appeared on Arthur's face. Zack doesn't have to bet his life on the line. As long as he plays safe and remains undefeated for several rounds, then his name will be known by everyone.

In that way, their hansen institute will gain further reputation. Then the sponsors, resources and new wave students were just around the corner. These are all good things.

Then why is he not happy about it?

Arthur looked at Elder Thornton with a puzzling gaze.

Elder Thornton saw through his thoughts. He replied, "I'm worried because Crimson hall had already forged enmity with Zack. Obviously they will act against him if there is a chance."

Then he continued to say, "We still don't know about the competition. But knowing how cunning they are? I feel the crimson hall will do something to benefit themselves. Which also gives them an opportunity to target their enemies."

Elder Thornton also wanted to say, if something happens to Zack then his teacher will make the hansen institute disappear along with him.

Realizing that he gulped his saliva. He is most terrified about Zack's teacher not crimson hall. But there is also some hope in his heart that Zack's teacher won't let anything dangerous befall on Zack.

So, in short, the current Hansen Institute is riding on a tiger. Anything can happen to it in the future.

Arthur sighed inside. He understands that they won't be able to help if Zack gets targeted at the competition.

The atmosphere turned quiet for a moment.

Elder Thornton decided to drop this matter and want to discuss the current things.

"So, what do you think? This kid won't be pleased unless we give something that benefits him," Elder Thornton said.

"Breakthrough Pills," Arthur replied.

Elder Thornton shakes his head in disapproval. "I guess, he got a breakthrough recently, the pills won't help be helpful for now," he said.

Arthur nodded in understanding. It might take a few months for Zack to get next breakthrough.

Then suddenly a good idea comes to his mind. This idea is viable for the current situation and it will help Zack to improve his strength further.

"Elder, what about getting a monster zone pass for him?" Arthur asked.

Hearing that Elder Thornton fell into contemplation. This idea seems not bad at all. But considering Zack's strength right now. The nearby monster zones won't be challenging that much.

If Zack can survive insect forest successfully, which shows he can escape from peak trainee warriors.

But there is a huge problem. If Zack's whereabouts were known by hostile forces. In particular, Crimson hall. He doubts they will pass the chance to kill Zack.

He can imagine the scenario where the monster zone is filled by bounty hunters in search of Zack.

So he canceled the monster zone idea right now. Last time, he was lucky to save Zack from assassination. But he can't be sure about the future.

Before the start of the competition. It would be best if no one knows about his whereabouts. Suddenly, an idea came to his mind about sending Zack to an unexpected place.

A place which can't be predicted by the other forces including the crimson hall.

Then a quick glint flashes in his eyes.

Recently his old friend requested some help from him. It's about exploring an abandoned site. He remembered his old friend mumbling about that place. That site belongs to a very old era.

More than the site he was interested in that actual location. The site was located in the middle of the forest. And that forest was creepy, almost similar to the insect forests.

That place is also plagued by deadly monsters. Along with improving his strength, Zack can also widen his horizon.

If not for Zack's successful survival from insect forest, he wouldn't have thought about this plan.

After weighing the pros and cons, he decided that the place would be suitable for Zack's next training. When it comes to exploration sites, he can help his friend whenever he has time.

He is sure that crimson hall won't be able to find anything.

Finally, a wide smile blossomed on his face as he thought of this good plan.

Arthur was startled, he knew the Elder had thought of a good plan and he couldn't wait to listen.

"Elder?" Arthur said.

Elder Thornton almost forgot about Arthur's existence. He said, "I thought of something good. You can leave now and bring me Zack later. I know he will come to you after the practice."

Hearing that Arthur nodded at him before he left his cabin.

Chapter 377 Part 1: Trunulesia Forest?

(From MC's perspective)

"Creak" the door opens

I walked out of the combat training room. Then I looked at the sci-fi watch and realised. In fact, I have spent four hours in training. So far, the training has been very successful. Next, I want to try the gravity training chamber after lunch.

Then I will go home later without any worries.

After gaining some clarity, I decide to freshen up. Then I make my way to the school's restrooms.

A few minutes later,

I put on new clothes and put the dirty clothes back in the storage ring. As I decided to move, a Beep! Sound rang in my ears.

I saw that Mr. Arthur was calling me. Then I answered the call. "Hello...", I said.

"Zack, are you done with your training?" inquired Arthur.

Hearing this, I replied, "Yes, I am coming to your cabin now."

Arthur was happy to hear that and cheerfully replied, "Okay, I'll wait for you here."

After saying that, I ended the call because I already felt bad for not calling him back last time. Most of all, I neglected his call after I came back home.

Shaking my head, I increased my pace.

A few minutes later,

"creak" the door opens.

I went into Arthur's cubicle and sat down in the chair opposite him.

The atmosphere was dull for a moment. Mr. Arthur was working on the projection screen. I did not disturb him and decided to wait until he finished.

On the other side, Arthur glanced briefly at Zack before turning back to the projection screen.

Arthur does not make it hard for Zack on purpose. He suddenly received an important email. He takes his time to answer it.

A few minutes later,

Arthur finally finished his work. He heaved a deep sigh before turning to Zack.

"Zack, how are you?" asked Arthur with a smile on his face.

Hearing this, I replied with a smile, "I am fine, Mr. Arthur, and you?"

"I am fine," he said before his expression tightened.

His serious look startled me and I asked, "What happened?"

"Zack, I hope you can clear up the misunderstanding with Elder Thornton," Arthur said in a solemn tone.

I was silent for a moment. I remembered my last encounter with Elder Thornton. I felt that there was actually no serious misunderstanding between us.

I was just annoyed by his constant bickering. So I decided to stay away from him for a while. I sighed inwardly. Uncle James also wished for the same thing.

Finally, I decided to let it go and move on. I looked at Mr. Arthur and replied, "All right, I will forget the old things."

Arthur sighed with relief. Earlier, he had really thought it would take some time to convince Zack. But now things were going smoothly. He could not help but relax a little.

Now he did not have to listen to Elder Thornton's whining. Then he asked Zack to come back after lunch. He specifically mentioned that Elder Thornton had something to tell him.

When Zack left the room, Arthur called Elder Thornton to inform him of Zack's change of heart. Arthur knows that he had some doubts, but he himself does not know what Elder Thornton has in mind.

At the same time, after leaving Arthur's cabin. I stroll to the school cafeteria. As usual, I wore a mask to hide my face.

Time passed,

This time I ate much more food. My strange behaviour attracted everyone's attention. But they could not recognise my face because of the mask.

Without caring about their stares, I continued to complete the food on my plate. A few minutes later, I left the cafeteria and went back to Mr. Arthur's cabin.

Images of Elder Thornton flashed before my eyes. I wonder what he is up to now? To be honest, I want to know if Elder Thornton had any information about Crimson Hall. That would help me immensely.

Soon I reached Mr. Arthur's cabin again. As I approached to open the door. A silhouette came from the cabin.

I saw Mr. Arthur come out just in time. When he saw me, he was startled and asked, "Zack, can we go now?"

Hearing this, I nodded. Then Mr. Arthur led me to Elder Thornton's cabin. On the way there, we encountered some students who bowed to Mr. Arthur before looking at me with strange looks.

I grinned inwardly because some of these fellows were older students of mine. I wonder what they would think if they saw my face.

Then we walked past them.

On the other side, Arthur showed a little smile. He too noticed this little episode. Except for Zack, he does not usually spend time with other students.

Therefore, some of the students were suspicious after watching the two of them. He cast an appreciative glance at Zack. "He was clearly wearing a mask to hide his face. It's difficult for people to know his true identity."

A few minutes later, they both arrived in front of Elder Thornton's cabin.

"Creak!" the door opened.

We entered the cabin. When Elder Thornton saw us coming, he tuned in to us with a bright smile on his face.

I had the feeling that he was mainly verifying my cultivation base. But my pendent will thwart his attempt.

"Zack, come here and sit down. It's been months since I have seen you," Elder Thornton said enthusiastically. He had even forgotten Arthur's existence.

Arthur, on the other hand, did not know whether to laugh or cry. He had not expected Elder Thornton to change so drastically. Arthur saw that there was no trace of dissatisfaction in Elder's face.

Then he stepped forward and took a seat next to Zack.

Hearing Elder's words, I was taken aback. I thought he was acting arrogantly. Why this sudden change of heart? A hint of doubt rose in my heart.

After taking my seat, I made myself comfortable. Then something suddenly occurred to me. Maybe the elder is showing his face to me because of my teacher. There is no doubt about that. The doubts in my heart were swept away when I realised this.

"Elder, I heard you have something to talk about?" I asked. No way, I do not like this awkwardness. It's better to jump into the discussion.

Hearing this, the elder Thornton smiled. Actually, he was a bit exuberant because of his earlier phone call with his old friend. The two had had a fruitful conversation. His old friend also agreed to have Zack work at their reconnaissance site.

Elder Thornton leaned back comfortably in his seat before starting the conversation. He glanced at Zack before saying, "Zack, your performance in the Insect Forest exceeded our expectations. Not only did you survive the deadly insects, but you broke through in the end."

A brief glint flashes in my eyes as I hear his appreciation. Where is this going? Did Uncle James tell him something? Especially about my request to train in monster zones?

Noticing the look on Elder Thornton's face, I thought it was not wise to remain silent. So I answered, "Well, I was lucky to have survived. And I also left the place before it fell into chaos.

At that moment Arthur spoke up, "Is this about those Peak Trainee Warriors?"

I turned to him and replied, "Yes, apart from deadly insects colonies, I have never seen so many trainee warriors in one place."

The elder Thornton nodded at this point. He too sensed that Zack was moving on. So there is no need to think about old things.

Finally, he decided to announce the news. He said, "Zack, I have chosen a suitable place for the next training."

When I heard that, my eyes lit up with surprise.

Moreover, Arthur was the first to ask, "Elder, which monster zone did you choose?"

Earlier, the elder had said to him that he did not agree with monster zones. So what happened now?

Hearing Arthur-san's question, I was also waiting for Elder to answer.

"Ha...Ha...Ha..."

Elder Thornton let out a small laugh before saying, "It's not a monster zone. But a dangerous place like the insect forest."

"What?" This time I was taken seriously again by his words.

He had actually found another place that resembled the Insect Forest. Damn!

Unlike me, Mr. Arthur beside me panicked. "Elder, are you sure?" He asked.

"You know he was lucky enough to escape from this insect forest. Why did you choose such a place?" added Arthur further.

When I heard his words, I wanted to disagree. Because actually I was excited to hear this similar place.

But before I could say anything, Elder Thornton said, "Trunulesia."

"Trunulesia," I said.

That word did not ring a bell with me. Then I saw Mr. Arthur; he seemed to know something.

"Is this where the mutant class monsters live?" asked Arthur.

Hearing this, I turned to Elder Thornton.

Elder Thornton looked at both of them and answered in a calm tone, "Yes, the Trunulesia Forest. It is a little different from the Insect Forest. There you had to deal with deadly insects. But here you will encounter mutated monsters."

I swallowed my saliva as I heard this. When it comes to mutant class monsters, the only one that comes to mind is the tree monster kind. I remember how difficult it was to escape from its roar.

The atmosphere calmed down for a moment. I felt their gazes on me. But various doubts rose in my heart. I have only heard of class monsters being locked up in monster zones. So what is it about the Trunulesia Forest?

Chapter 378 Rumors?

(From MC's perspective)

Hansen Campus,

Elder Thornton saw Zack's confusion. He said, "These mutant monsters are very different from those confined in monster zones."

Hearing that my eyes gleamed with surprise. I looked at him for further explanation. I have a vague feeling in my heart that trunulesia forest might be more dangerous than insect forest.

Beside me, Mr. Arthur also patiently listened to Elder's words.

Seeing that two of them were interested to hear further, Thornton decided to disclose the news fully.

"The trunulesia forest underwent mutation a long time ago because changes happened at a nearby old ruin site."

"The unknown change not only caused the mutation to forest, it also caused the mutation to monsters dwelling in it" After saying that he observed the reaction of Arthur and Zack.

He gave them some time to digest the news.

Hearing this piece of information blows away my mind. How come an old ruin site has powers to do that? For a long time, I thought the ruins were nothing but abandoned buildings sites from bygone eras.

But it looks like things were not just simple.

I asked, "Elder, what exactly is the old ruin site?"

Why do I feel? The ruin site is more important than the forest. To think it caused mutation, obviously the site itself is a most dangerous place.

A quick glint flashes in Elder Thornton's eyes.

He predicted the information would intrigue Zack. So he answered with a smile, "I don't know?"

"What?" I was startled a little bit.

As expected this Trunulesia forest seems to be nothing like an insect forest. How come I am going to face this? A hint of apprehension appeared in my eyes.

It's hard to survive with lack of information. Atleast at insect forest, the place was divided into outer area and inner area. What about the trunulesia forest?

I saw Elder Thornton is taking too much time in explaining things. I wrinkled my eyebrows in tension.

Elder Thornton smiled bitterly after seeing the reaction of both. Then he said, "Actually, nobody is able to find the reason. Because the mutation was happened long time ago."

"Probably, several hundred years," he added.

"So far we came to know that mutant monsters are dwelling in it, afraid of going outside. In the morning, there is no monster activity. But at night the entire forest was found to be alive. "

"Some Elite warriors in history tried to capture some monsters but after getting contact with them they were soon found to be infected by the mutant monsters, resulting in death," Elder Thornton answered in solemn tone.

I sucked cold breath. How to defeat such a thing?

Elder Thornton continued to say, "Imagine that place like a special zone. The Trunulesia forest has its own special environment due to mutation. It also became a safe haven for mutant monsters."

"If the mutant monsters walk out of the forest, they will die. Only the special environment makes them survive. So it's typically naturally formed monster zones."

"This place is indeed more dangerous than an insect forest," I replied.

I asked, "Elder, then how will you survive in that forest?" This is the doubt which bugs me greatly. If I can't get close to the monster, then how am I going to defeat it?

How did predecessors die? Are mutant monsters causing any infection? Or they died because of the special environment of the forest.

At this time, I heard Elder Thornton's words. Which solved my doubts.

"In order to protect yourself, you need to wear full body safety gear specifically designed for Trunulesia forest explorers," Elder Thornton said with a smile.

I sighed in relief. At least, there is something which can protect me from that special environment. I don't know whether I'm able to improve my strength in that forest.

But at least I can have some protection from the outside world. After the Trunulesia mission, I will participate in Crimson Hall's competition directly.

A quick glint flashes in my eyes.

I have to say, Elder Thornton had really found a strange place for me. I guess, no one will be able to find my whereabouts before Crimson Hall's competition.

I asked, "Elder, when should I leave?"

Elder Thornton remained silent for a moment. He didn't reply immediately but he watched Arthur's expression. He can obviously see traces of worry from his eyes.

Elder Thornton knew how dangerous that place was. That's why he is letting Zack join his friend's team. In that way, he can escape from any trouble with the help of the team.

He sighed and said, "Zack, I'm not sending you alone."

Hearing that, a quick glint flashes in Arthur's eyes. "Sure, there is a catch here," Arthur thought to himself. Elder Thornton and Arthur looked into each other's eyes.

I'm not going alone. What does he mean by that? I saw Elder Thornton look at Arthur before turning towards me.

"At this time, you must have realised how dangerous that place is?"

"Actually, an old friend of mine is going to that old ruin site for exploration. He had asked me to arrange for a helper. So, I'm recommending you," Elder Thornton answered with a smile.

Finally, a realization struck my mind. That's how it is? I actually thought Elder Thornton voluntarily selected that place for me.

But it looks like I'm going to be just a helper. I feel my action will be hindered in this way. Will his friend allow me to venture inside the forest?

A lot of doubts appeared in my heart.

"Elder, If I stick around your old friend, then how am I going to train separately?" I asked in a dejected tone.

"Don't worry about it. I briefed everything to him. You just have to assist him with his work and in free time you can train inside the forest," Elder Thornton replied.

Hearing that I nodded and finally my tensed expression eases down a little.

SIGH

Elder Thornton let out a sigh before saying, "My friend didn't reveal the exact date. But I believe by this week he will tell me about it. So In meantime you can practise here as usual."

Then he looked at Arthur and asked, "Arthur, what about you? Are you okay with the arrangements?"

Mr. Arthur doesn't know what to say. But he can see what Elder Thornton's thought behind this. He let out a small laugh and said, "Elder, I'm happy as long as the environment is safe for Zack."

Elder Thornton nodded and replied, "what we need to do now? is to block the prying eyes of crimson hall."

"Crimson Hall," I muttered. I almost forgot to ask about the crucial question.

"Crimson hall, what are they upto these days?"

Mr. Arthur looked at Elder Thornton. Seeing that Elder Thornton signalled him to answer this time, he replied, "It was the same as before. Not a single piece of information is getting outside of the crimson hall."

Hearing that I wrinkled my eyebrows, "How could it be?"

Mr. Arthur could see the same doubt in Zack's eyes, which plagued everyone's mind.

"We also don't know, How did they do it? Even their Ally organization was helpless in this situation," Arthur answered in a solemn tone.

At this time, Elder Thornton said, "Zack, don't think about them now. Just focus on your training. I want to see how long they can conceal the information?"

Obviously, Crimson Hall's discussion made everyone's mood dull. We talked about iron posts before bringing the discussion to an end.

After leaving the cabin, I separated from Mr. Arthur and walked towards the gravity room. I wore the mask to hide my face again.

On the way, I encountered a few students but they didn't mind my presence. A few minutes later, I reached the gravity training room.

After stepping inside, I found the place was crowded as usual. Students were conversing with each other. Some were waiting for other students to finish their training in the gravity chamber.

Suddenly, I overheard a conversation.

"Have you heard the rumors?"

"Our chairman has sent Zack to train in Tier-7 City."

"What? This is unfair"

"We should strongly protest against this"

Hearing the conversation, I almost choked.

What is going on here? I looked at the group of people who were seriously discussing me.

Who is spreading lies about me?

I walked up to the group of five. Seeing me coming, five of them stopped their conversation and turned towards me.

"Who are you?" A skinny looking student inquired about me.

Five of them also looked at me suspiciously. Fortunately, I wore a mask. Otherwise, It will be difficult to inquire about news from them.

"Cough"

"I'm one of the passed out students from this institute. I just overheard your conversation which piqued my curiosity?" I said with a smile.

Hearing that five of them looked at each other before turning towards me.

"What do you want?" Another student inquired.

Hearing that I chuckled and asked, "Tell me about the rumour? Is this true?"

The atmosphere was silent for a moment.

Seeing their hesitation, I added further, "Don't worry, I'm just asking casually."

Hearing my words, all of them calmed down.

Chapter 379 Soren's Condition

(From MC's perspective)

"Senior, we don't know the exact details. But we heard it from other students. " The skinny student said.

Hearing that, I wrinkled my eyebrows. Obviously, I won't believe the rumour started to spread out of nowhere. Who's behind it? I pondered for a moment.

Then I decided to let it go. Right now, my training is more important. I take a glance at five of them before turning towards the gravity chamber.

...

The Iron Post City,

City Lord Aaron Powell is currently looking at the reports. There were a lot of casualties reported in the last two days. He doesn't know whether the trend will continue in the coming weeks.

SIGH

He let out a deep sigh before muttering, "What is happening out there?"

"Why is Soren not dead yet?"

A couple of days ago, his superior assured him that the bandit boss would be no more in the future. After saying that, he didn't even reveal any further details.

Having no choice, he blindly trusted his superior words. But as the days go by, he is getting more impatient.

He already made an announcement that he would be taking care of the office. If things go south now, it will further plummet his reputation.

"Should I make some backup plans?" He muttered to himself. But his superior had already warned him to stay away from this matter.

Gritting his teeth, he finally decided to wait for a few days. Who knows, he might hear some good news? After gaining some clarity, he picked up another report to read.

It's about the reward. 150,000 credit points were given in the last two days. A foreign adventurers' team received the reward.

A slight glint flashed in his eyes as he looked at the report, because he remembered Zack Lockwood at this time.

"That kid? Why is there no news so far?" Aaron Powell's eyes gleamed with surprise.

He is also keeping an eye on various news sites. Every media house debated the 1 billion credit point winner. But none of them were able to find his actual identity.

Aaron feels things are not as simple as they seem. Maybe that young man had some background, because otherwise he wouldn't have told us not to reveal his name.

His expression hardened further. He is actually hoping for good relations with Zack. He believes that Zack's presence will instill fear among the bandits.

In that way, the banditry will be reduced gradually. And the economic loss of the city can be controlled. But all of his plans were based upon successful cooperation from Zack.

Now they don't even know the other party's background. How come he is going to contact him? His mind was a little bit sullen after hearing bad news one after another.

He can't let the city worsen further. "I will wait a few days. If Soren was not dead by then, I should contact my superior, "Aaron Powell mumbled under his breath.

When the city lord was lost in his thoughts, a silhouette entered the city without informing him. He is none other than Elder Brody Roth from the Roth family.

He was supposed to come here a few days ago. But his plan was delayed by May Ford Academy's affairs. When he walked out of the train station, he immediately called Mateo Roth.

A few minutes later, a luxurious air car landed in front of him slowly.

Elder Brody jumped into the air car as soon as it touched down. Mateo was sitting in the seat next to him.

"Hey kid, you still don't want to show your face?" Elder Brody asked in an amusing tone. He was not offended by Mateo's attitude.

Before coming here, Mateo had already informed him that he didn't want to appear in front of the public.

Because, in recent days, the performance of foreign adventurer teams from various cities has amazed everyone.

which in turn made everyone take a look at their own team. Some time ago, Mateo's Fire Sword Team was the strongest team.

Because of the family's order, Mateo had stayed away from the affairs of the iron post city. His team's absence raised some eyebrows because of it.

Seeing the absence of his team, people started to criticise him deeply.

He noticed Mateo's mood was sullen because of it. Shaking his head in disapproval, Elder Brody commented, "Why are you still thinking about the bandit hunting mission?"

A bright glint flashes in Mateo's dull eyes.

Hearing the elder Roth's question, he answered, "It's because a single person's achievement made me look back at my own progress."

"It will be even harder for me to kill that many warriors at Insect Forest."

Elder Brody's eyes flashed with a cold glint.

Obviously, he too heard about the news. He even watched some debate shows about it. It's hard to believe such a monster genius has visited this city.

SIGH

After sighing, he looked at Mateo and comforted, "It must be a talented genius secretly trained by some family. So don't compare yourself with him and start to focus on your progression. "

Mateo nodded helplessly. But he was not convinced in his heart. He is a skilled warrior from a Tier-7 city. But his performance was not worth mentioning in front of that person.

Which family is he from? Mateo started to ponder. When the news first came out, he didn't mind that much. But he was shocked when the second notice was issued by the City Lord himself.

City Lord Aaron Powell decided to show himself at this point of time. He even suspected that the unnamed warrior was planted by the city lord himself to divert people's attention.

This is what he believed at first. But after two days, he learned that the information was true. Some of the spies at the city lord mansion even verified the information.

His heart was boiling with anger. Most of his anger was directed towards his own family. because they made him spend too much time on this useless mission.

If not for this mission, he would have reached peak trainee warrior right now.

By this time, the luxurious air car had already reached the destination. It slowly lands in front of the hotel.

Everyone from the Fire Sword team was staying in this hotel. After stepping out, two of them walked into the hotel and headed towards their room.

On the way, Elder Brody casually asked, "Are there any recent changes in insect forest?"

Hearing that, Mateo answered, "Apart from the usual killing and looting, I didn't notice any major changes."

Mateo was astute enough to realise Elder was referring to Bandit boss Soren. Since the city lord has made an appearance, then it's time for the bandit boss too.

Mateo thinks that the Elder doesn't want to come across the City Lord during his stay in this city.

Soon they reached their respective rooms. Elder Brody didn't have any further talks with Mateo. Before leaving the city with Mateo, he needs to complete his own mission.

Time passed,

After disguising himself as an old veteran warrior, Elder Brody exited the building. In order to visit, insect forest, he even forged a fake ID for himself.

Soon, he reached the city wall. After showing the fake ID, he smoothly walked

Seeing the borderless in front of him, Elder Brody couldn't help but think of his first visit. At that time, he went to meet bandit boss Soren.

Even this time, he made a visit here to meet him. He didn't know whether Soren had recovered from his injuries. If he is recovered, then it's great news, he won't need the Roth family's help anymore.

But if it's the other case, then they have to conjure another plan. Elder Brody has a vague feeling that this trip is extremely important to the Roth family.

Shaking his head, he walked towards the destination. After getting near the narrowed path, he didn't wait anymore. He rushed forward.

Last time, bandit boss Soren gave him an exclusive map of this forest. Following that map, he can bypass various obstacles on the way.

But he also knows, he has to be careful in the inner areas. After gaining some clarity, he directly followed the route according to his memory.

At this time,

Deep inside the inner area,

There is a medium-sized wooden house. It was built under the naturally formed cave's space.

Outside of the wooden house, several peak trainee warriors can be seen taking rounds to monitor the area.

In one of the rooms of this wooden house,

"Who are you?" A haggard figure roared back in anger.

But unfortunately, his painful screaming was blocked by the invisible barrier. Nobody knows that the dignified bandit boss has been undergoing extremely severe torture.

"He...He...He..."

"Does it matter? I had already planned to skin you alive, "Mr. Jonathan said with a laugh.

Hearing that, bandit boss Soren's expression tightened. He immediately refuted it by saying, "No, you are that ghost sent by Aaron Powell. since he can't take revenge himself. He must have approached you."

"Tell me, what did he offer? I can give you ten fold of that. "

Mr. Jonathan sneered, "Stop daydreaming."

"It was already decided that you would lose your life here."

After saying that, Mr. Jonathan took out some liquid from his storage ring. In that liquid bottle, a black substance can be seen squirming.

Seeing that, Mr. Jonathan smiled sweetly. Under the horrified gaze of Soren, he poured the entire black liquid on his body.

Chapter 380 Soren's Sad Ending

The iron post city,

Wooden house - insect forest,

Seeing that bandit boss Soren's health condition deteriorating, Mr. Jonathan decided to end this quickly. He had tortured him enough these days.

He wondered, how did Soren find this isolated place?

Because Mr. Jonathan didn't come across the swarm of insect bugs in this place. If it's one day then it's fine, but he has spent more than one day here yet there is no sign of bugs.

Which made him more confused. Finally, Mr. Jonathan strongly feels that something is wrong with this place. He decided to search this entire place before leaving.

The next second, he walked up to bandit boss Soren. Feeling his presence, Soren raised his head and asked, "What are you doing?"

Mr. Jonathan replied with a smile, "Well, your suffering ends here." After saying that he arrived in front of Soren and stomped at his chest.

PFFF

Soren spilled a large amount of blood from his mouth. His eyes were wide open, he lowered his head to look at his chest.

Looking at the wide hole in his chest, Soren spurted blood again. His vitality drops to the bottom and breathes his last breath a few seconds later.

Then Mr. Jonathan proceeded to dispose of the corpse. He decided to erase the corpse. So that no one can know, Soren had died here.

1 hour later,

Mr. Jonathan is standing in front of a strange tree. He has searched the nook and corner of Soren's safe haven. So far he didn't find any suspicious things except this tree.

Because in front of him there is a purple shade tree. Seeing the purple color at first, he thought this tree might be a mutant class monster.

But after careful checking, he learned that this tree is ordinary but its color is different. He has a vague feeling that this purple tree provides string deterrence to insect bugs and other nearby monsters.

This was his assumption but to confirm it. He decided to collect some samples. Starting from soil samples, root samples, and even some leaves.

Then he left several minutes later.

Now, his work is done. He decided to meet Zack next. Before doing that he decided to make a phone call to his master after getting out of this place.

His master had a desire to come to this small outer post to watch Zack's competition. Mr. Jonathan doesn't know whether his master's decision has changed or not. So he didn't want to waste any more time here. He increased his speed the next second.

At this same time, there is also one silhouette rushing towards the inner through a secret route. He is none other than Brody Roth. He has no idea that the person he wants to meet has already disappeared from this world.

In order not to raise any eyebrows. Mr. Jonathan didn't touch Soren's men. He left them alive purposely. They were still guarding Soren's room 24/7.

Several hours later,

When Mr. Jonathan exited the insect forest, it was already nighttime. He followed his way back to the iron post city along with others. He found the activities of warriors hadn't reduced at all.

Clashes were still going on between warriors and bandits. But he knows that at one point, those bandits will realize that their boss is no more.

By that time, the scourge of banditry will disappear automatically. Then he successfully entered the city a few minutes later. The first thing he did was book a hotel room.

He didn't leave right away to meet Zack. There are still a lot of things he has to do here. Then after getting inside the hotel room, he reported everything to his master via phone call.

But what made him speechless was, that he learned that his master was already in this small outer post. He had black lines on his forehead after hearing that. He knows, that if the master's traces were leaked, then it will lead to a huge disaster.

After meeting with Zack, he decided to join his master. His master had already sent his address. Mr. Jonathan gave a lightning essence pearl to Zack. But he has one more thing in his hands.

His master reminded him again to hand over the thing to Zack without fail.

The following day,

After checking out the hotel, Mr. Jonathan hid from others and decided to see the city lord.

When he saw Aaron Powell last time he was recovering from injury. Mr. Jonathan wanted to see what he was doing right now. And also he wants to see whether he has any motive to hurt Zack.

Because last night he learned some great news. The city lord published Zack's achievement without mentioning his name. But he knows that some forces will show some interest to know about Zack.

If the City Lord leaked Zack's name to others, then it will be easier for others to narrow down the search. Then it will matter for time before they learn Zack is the same person who ranked No.1 in the star tower rankings.

A cold glint flashes into Mr. Jonathan's eyes.

He spoke with the City Lord's superior. But his superior doesn't know about the connection between him and Zack. So Mr. Jonathan decided to remind Aaron Powell before leaving this city.

City Lord Mansion,

At the meeting hall, the city lord is conversing with his manager Lawrence.

"Lord, the reporters were asking about that kid again." Manager Lawrence said in a solemn tone.

At first, Lawrence released the information because he believed that media houses will find Zack's identity. But so far none of them can find him.

And now in return, they expect the city lord mansion to reveal the information. He raised his eyebrows in frustration.

He is the second most answerable person after the city lord. So the reporters won't leave him for a second If he didn't answer their questions.

The atmosphere was silent for a moment.

Aaron Powell listened to Lawrence's words without many expressions on his face. His mind was occupied with some other matter. The death toll of warriors on their side increased quite drastically.

In one day more than 100 warriors died. This number is quite astounding. Fearing public criticism, Aaron Powell was quite hesitant about revealing the news.

He is pondering whether to ask superiors about it.

Seeing the city lord spacing out, manager Lawrence called out, "Lord?"

Hearing that Aaron Powell retracted his thoughts and looked at the manager.

At this time both of them weren't aware that another person came into the hall without alerting them.

Mr. Jonathan raised his eyebrows in surprise after looking at the healthy city lord. Then he chooses to overhear their conversations silently.

Aaron Powell asked, "What is it? Lawrence"

Feeling the cold gaze, manager Lawrence's heart skips a beat. He realized that the city lord is brooding about some other thing. Manager Lawrence swallowed his saliva in fear.

Then he replied, "Lord, what to do with those reporters?"

"Should I reveal that Kid's name to them?"

When finished saying those words, he crept out all of sudden. For a second, he felt death was near him.

He raised his head to meet the city lord's eyes. "Is it lord?" His heart was set on storms. Other than the city lord there is no one here. And their city lord is the strongest presence in this city.

So he did not doubt that the city lord was dissatisfied with his words.

On the other hand, Aaron Powell pondered.

When it comes to a young man named Zack. He doesn't know how to decide. The young man strongly requested them to not reveal his identity.

But if his superior requests the information, Aaron Powell doesn't know what to do then.

SIGH

After letting out a deep sigh, he answered, "Just tell them considering the safety of the young man in mind. The city lord mansion is not going to reveal his identity." His answer was simple and plain.

The city lord doesn't know that his answer just saved him from a lot of beatings.

Manager Lawrence was not surprised by the answer. He knows about City Lord with his caring personality, he won't offend the young man without knowing his background.

Knowing that lord was not in a good mood. Manager Lawrence decided to leave this place.

After seeing his disappearing back, Aaron Powell decided to leave the hall.

But before he could do that he felt tremendous pressure. The next second, he completely bent down.

Mr. Jonathan showed some restraint, otherwise, Aaron would have crashed to the ground.

A sudden change in situation caught him off guard. Aaron Powell's mind went blank for a moment. Before Aaron could open his mouth, he heard a voice from behind.

"You did the right thing by not revealing Zack's identity. I hope you will do the same in the future," after saying that Mr. Jonathan disappeared from the place.

The next second, Aaron Powell broke out in cold sweat. He immediately turned around to look for the person. But unfortunately, he didn't feel any presence. Then a horrible realization struck his mind all of a sudden.