

Last Days 441

Chapter 441: Ruby's Research

Ruby was looking at the test result in her hand in satisfaction.

After receiving a large batch of shadow creature's corpses from Riya, she had been busy doing her research and trying to extract the mana. Because she found out that the dark element mana seemed to be easier to 'see' compared to other.

Or it might be because these magic beasts were of higher ranks.

In any case, Ruby managed to do it and extracted the concentrated dark element mana in the test tube. The problem is, the mana would not last long in this state and had to be used by others one way or another.

She could also absorb it if she wanted to as she found out that one of her element is dark element. But Ruby didn't know whether she has other elements or not because she didn't do comprehensive test.

For Ruby, her own strength as a magician or magic warriors were not important.

These research results were more important.

'If the mana can be safely extracted, it might be useful for other things.' Ruby looked at the glass in front of her happily.

The existence of mana has always been a headache for many people. Even if they knew that there was mana around them, it was impossible for them to extract it safely and used it for other things.

The only thing they could do was to make use of the existing magic cores extracted from the magic beasts.

But what if the magic beasts were eliminated?

Where should they go to find more mana?

'But so far, I can only extract the mana from the magic beasts' corpses and it might take a long time to figure out the method to extract it from other sources.'

Ruby looked at the row of plants on the side.

One of the requirement that she thought for herself was to be able to extract mana safely from the plants. Because the plants absorb nutrients from the ground and possibly also the mana into their body.

Slowly but surely, the plants will be filled with mana.

They knew it and they could absorb it into their bodies naturally through consumption and training.

But to separate the mana from the plant, no one could do it yet.

Many research have ben done on this matter and Ruby was also interested. But she felt that she should try it from other aspects.

So she turned her attention towards the dark element magic beasts' corpses that Riya gave to her not long ago. It seemed that these magic beasts' bodies contained much more mana than what she expected, which allowed her to be able to study them in depth.

'And I can even see the dark element characteristic clearly. It's really magical.'

Ruby sighed deeply and really wanted to make more investigation for these magic beasts and mana. She felt that the appearance of magic beasts had gradually lead her research ashtray.

No, not ashtray, she was guided to focus more on mana and the magic beasts.

It seemed as if mana will become a new source of energy in the future.

And this energy seemed to be inexhaustible.

Because mana could not be completely eliminated but simply changed their forms one way or another.

Isn't it a type of energy?

'For now, this is good enough.' Ruby submitted the research report in her hand happily. If the higher ups were willing to invest more resources for her, then she would be able to do more research and didn't have to go to Riya.

Well, it was not like she asked for help but Riya was the one who stepped down and chose to help her without hesitation.

Ruby felt that she was really lucky to be able to meet with good friends.

Because after the world had changed, many people's relationship became even more plastic and it was hard to trust other people sincerely.

sigh

As Ruby happily cleaned up her table, Professor Brown came inside.

"Ruby did you succeed?" Professor Brown was delighted when he saw Ruby's bright smile.

"Yes." Ruby nodded. "I have submitted the report and now waiting for verification. I'm sure that if this method succeed, it might be able to be used for other element."

"Good, good." Professor Brown is happy for his student.

He did help in her research but the one who did it was mostly Ruby and Professor brown almost didn't do anything. But being able to satisfy his curiosity was more than enough for Professor Dit.

The achievement belonged to his student and he would not be greedy to take her glory.

"When the result come out, we could apply to ask for a batch of other element magic beasts," Professor Brown said with pleased look.

If they truly succeed, they might be able to do more experiment. And for Professor Brown, this was the best news ever.

Ruby's eyes also shone when she heard that.

She wanted to do more research!

cough

Let's finish this one first. Otherwise, it would be impossible even if she requested to the higher ups for more materials. They would tell her not to chew more than what she could bite.

Because if she were to divide her focus, it would be impossible for her to fully focus on her current projects.

Professor Brown's research's direction was also different from her.

"Professor Brown, how's your research so far?" Ruby took the initiative to ask.

"I failed again." Professor Brown looked a bit embarrassed. "It seems that for us to cultivate artificial magic beasts, it required more than just normal breeding environment."

Yes, Professor Brown was researching how to breed these magic beasts.

To be honest, when Ruby heard what Professor Brown wanted to do, she thought that her professor was getting too much ahead.

Because the existence of mana had changed the body of these magic beasts.

And it seemed that fragile babies of these magic beasts couldn't survive in normal environment.

So far, none of the magic beasts' babies managed to survive.

Chapter 442: False Claim

Wait, it seemed that the fertility rate was even lower.

Ruby didn't even know how Professor Brown managed to make these magic beasts get pregnant and she didn't want to know either. She was afraid that Professor Brown's method will make her question the world's morality.

"Will there be special environment for their growth?" Ruby murmured in a low voice as she looked at the report in Professor Brown's hand.

"Perhaps but I don't know for sure. Samuel had said that these magic beasts have different living environment but I'm not sure how it affect their children." Professor Brown sighed.

If these magic beasts were similar to ordinary animals, it would have been so much easier. Unfortunately, it was not the case at all.

For some reason, similar species have different living environment.

Was it because of the mana contamination?

There were so many questions but so few answers.

Both Ruby and Professor Brown could guess that it might take decades for them to finish their research. Even if there were many researchers that Continent Z had deployed to study various matters, it was impossible to completely answer all of these questions anytime soon.

They had to be patient and continue their rigorous research.

"I plan to ask some questions to Samuel when he come back about where he found these magic beasts," Professor Brown said. "Perhaps it'll be the key to my successful research."

Ruby chuckled and nodded.

"Now that you have succeeded in extracting the dark magic element, do you want to change your research's direction?" Professor Brown asked nonchalantly.

"No." Ruby shook her head and looked at the corpse of the dark element magic beasts on the table. "I plan to study the specific percentage of the dark magic element contained within the organs and see how it affect the magic beasts. Perhaps I'll be able to understand how the mana is distributed within the magic beasts and how it'll affect their practice."

Professor Brown nodded. "If you need help, you can ask."

"Thank you, Professor."

Drap! Drap!

As the two of them planned to go back, a group of people came.

Menai, Professor Dit's other assistant, saw them and then pointed at Ruby. "It's her. She stole my research!"

Ruby's face turned black instantly. She looked at Menai murderously. This man and his professor had already made a lot of trouble when they were in the crack back then.

But at that time, she tolerated him.

Because Ruby knew very well that it was impossible for them to have conflict with the researchers from Continent Z's Capital City.

Those people who listened to their quarrel would never side with them.

But now...

Screw them!

"I have never even entered your laboratory. How could it be possible for me to steal your result? Don't slander me." Ruby sneered.

"No, you did steal my result. The one about the shadow creature is the research that my teacher and I have been working for a long time. How could it be possible for such a student without any foundation like you be able to succeed?" Menai's stance was really tough.

It seemed as if he would be able to get what he wanted as long as he came forward to Ruby and made her hand over her result.

"No!"

"Professor Dit, is this how you teach your student? To slander other people?" Professor Brown was really angry.

He might not have the highest qualification before the world changed, but he truly loved research. And what he hated the most was people who wanted to use their position to take up the result of other people.

Did they never think that these people had worked so hard to achieve their result?

To take the result that these people had poured out sweat and blood to achieve it, are you even human being?

"I have the report in my hand and..."

"There's no way the report would be the same." Ruby looked at Menai coldly. She felt that these two students from Professor Dits were really bad and neither of them were good.

The main reason why she could achieve result was because Riya handed her a lot of shadow creature's corpses. Without these, how could it be possible for her to do a lot of researches?

There were a lot of materials that she had wasted along the way because it was really difficult to fulfill what she wanted to do.

Now, these two b*stards wanted to take over what she had worked so hard to research?

No way!

"It's the truth!"

"No, you're..."

Bang!

...

When Mr. Jones came, the two sides were still scolding each other, but the place where they quarreled had been changed to the special detention room not far from the research institute.

After all, the work of these people involved a lot of confidentiality.

For safety reason, it would be better for them not to stay far away from the research institute.

The previous journey into the crack was an exception.

An exception that ended up badly.

Many people have been scolded badly because of that incident and no one dared to mention that matter again.

"Tell me what happened clearly." Mr. Jones truly have headache. He also recognized Ruby because she was one of the two girls who came with Amelia to City A Base back then. From this alone, he could guess that Ruby should have good relationship with Amelia and Riya.

Once this matter involved Riya, it might alarm Mr. A and the higher ups.

Headache!

"Sir! They stole my research result!" Menai quickly reported Ruby.

"I did not! Don't speak nonsense." Ruby's eyes were cold when she looked at Menai.

"But the parts that you used for research are all the part that belonged to me. It should have been written in the report!" Menai raised his chin proudly.

When the shadow creature was first killed, the corpse was divided into two and the parts that Ruby wrote were all under him.

How could Ruby do the research if it was not from him?

Chapter 443: Sir?

So Menai is very confident.

Professor Brown also frowned when he heard this. Because it was his mistake that allowed them to record everything clearly.

Should he not do so at the beginning?

But Ruby was not worried.

Ruby sneered. "I have more shadow creature in my hands and I have reported it."

"No way! That's not possible!" Menai almost stood up when he heard Ruby's words.

"No matter whether you believe it or not, it's the truth." Ruby didn't care whether Menai believed it or not and turned to look at Mr. Jones. "I have received more shadow creature from my friend and I have made the report about this. I'm sure that this matter should have been reported."

Ruby didn't report Riya's name.

She only wrote down that she had received a large number of shadow creature from other sources and used them for her research. This was reported not long after she came back because she knew that if she ever found something, she needed a legal source.

For this reason, Ruby also tried to ask Riya about it.

And Riya herself told Ruby that it was fine to report it this way. As long as Ruby didn't mention Riya's name, it was impossible for them to know that it was her so soon.

Though, Riya herself already had her vest fallen in front of some people in the higher ups.

So they definitely knew who Ruby meant.

'To think that this report will come in handy...'

The reason why Ruby made this report in the beginning was because Riya told her that it's impossible to hide the research materials in her hand. The higher ups would not stop them from collecting research materials on their own and instead encourage it.

After all, there was truly a limit to how much they could fund the research of these researchers.

Even if they wanted to support it rigorously, they had to think about the impact that their actions would be for other aspects. They could only try to give support impartially to all researchers who were involved in it.

"But that's..."

"All research materials have to be reported, even if the materials are obtained privately," Ruby said calmly.

She might just be a student before the world changed, but it didn't mean that she didn't know any research's rules or anything like that.

Years of helping her professor in the academy had long taught her many rules that she had to follow when she was in the laboratory.

Ruby has always been meticulous in her work.

She remembered all the rules listed when she first came to the laboratory and knew that some loopholes could be used. But she always tried to follow it so that no one could bite her back.

Now, it came in handy.

"So you have reported everything, Ruby?" Professor Brown asked, his tone was clearly relieved.

He didn't expect that his student have already made the report for this, so it was good. In this way, these people wouldn't have the chance to take advantage of his student.

When Professor Brown thought about this, he felt really happy.

Ruby smiled confidently. "Yes, professor."

So if this b*stard kept on making trouble, she would just pull out those reports that she had submitted in advance.

Though, she would have to apologize to Riya.

Because in this way, there was a high chance that the fact that she knew Riya and Riya's identity as a rune master would be found out by others.

When thinking about this matter, Ruby felt a faint headache.

She knew that Riya had her own reasons why she didn't want others to find out her identity. But at the same time, Riya was still helping her friends out, including her.

This would definitely make it easier for others to figure out her identity.

Epecially because when Riya made a move, she might not think too much about the consequences afterwards.

Ruby just sighed deeply in her heart.

"No, you're definitely lying!" Menai shook his head rapidly as if doing this could change the established fact. "There's no way you have the ability to collect the materials on your own."

Ruby is weak.

This was something that everyone knew and no one could refute it.

After all, Ruby basically spent her time to do her research, completely neglecting her own training. Even if she did some meditation from time to time, it was not much and only enough to make sure that she would not be at the very bottom of the society.

But she had no experience in fighting.

Ruby herself also didn't want to go out and make trouble with others.

Isn't it better for her to be a researcher honestly?

The matter of gathering materials and so on could only be tossed to other people who had the capability to find it.

"I might not have the ability, but it doesn't mean that I can't ask for help." Ruby rolled her eyes and then looked at Mr. Jones. "I'm not lying, Mr. Jones... And you can check it too."

Mr. Jones is Samuel's father and from what Ruby knew, Samuel is also a returnee who had strong skill.

Perhaps, he knew about Riya?

To be honest, this was basically gambling and Ruby felt that no matter what she did, Riya's identity could not be hidden from Mr. Jones.

"Then check...."

"There's no need." Mr. Jones interrupted Menai before he continued to make trouble. Even if he knew that the person in front of him was someone who was sent from Continent Z's Capital City, Mr. Jones didn't have any good impression of him and didn't want to take care so much.

So arrogant and annoying.

"Why are you..."

"I know." Mr. Jones sighed and then motioned for Ruby to come with me. "Let's talk in other room."

"Sir?" Menai had an unbelievable tone.

But Mr. Jones didn't pay attention to them and only let Ruby followed him to a different room. This was the private room where no conversation could be recorded and no one outside the room could hear their conversation.

Chapter 444: Negotiation

It was simply the perfect place for those who wanted to have a secret conversation.

"Sit down... Are the source of your research materials came from Riya?" Mr. Jones asked slowly.

Ruby didn't answer and instead looked at Mr. Jones quietly.

She didn't want to let Riya be chased by the higher ups and others. After all, Ruby knew the Riya as hiding her identity and it would not be a good thing for her to reveal this matter to others.

"You don't have to hide it. I already know that Riya is the rune master and this room is perfectly sealed." Mr. Jones sighed. "She's going out with Samuel right now to explore the crack."

On one side, Mr. Jones was glad that Ruby knew how to hide this matter. But at the same time, he felt headache when he thought about these brats.

Can't they trust him a bit more?

Even his son was the same...

Sigh

None of these brats were worry free.

Ruby sighed. "Yes, it's her."

Since Mr. Jones had said so much, Ruby also knew that it was useless for her to hide it. She felt that Riya might have allowed her identity to be leaked to some people on purpose.

Anyway, she will apologize to Riya when the latter came back later and explained what happened here. While Ruby didn't want to implicate Riya, she also knew that without any backing whatsoever, it was very difficult for her to stand firm on her own.

Her identity as a researcher and a weak woman was simply too easy to be exploited.

Ruby sighed deeply in her heart but she didn't want to change from this path. She wanted to do more research and possibly uncover more things about magic and mana along the way.

"Alright, I know what to do." Mr. Jones sighed.

As he thought, this matter was really related to Riya. Considering Riya's ability that was deemed to be very important by the higher ups, there was no way that the higher ups wouldn't come to interfere.

The only good thing was that they definitely wouldn't make trouble and choose to side with her without hesitation.

But at the same time, the number of cards they could use to 'control' Riya would increase.

His son was basically restrained because of his and the other's existence. And for Riya, it was Amelia, Ruby, and Sophia's existence that restrained her. When this was known to the higher ups...

Mr. Jones could only sigh deeply in his heart.

He hoped that those people would be reasonable and didn't try to exploit these people. Because the backlash they could possibly receive from these people was not something that they could possibly handle on their own.

"You should not tell others about this matter and they will not trouble you anymore. You just have to focus on your research and if your result is good, I'm sure that you can get more resources allocation on your own," Mr. Jones said.

Ruby was stunned and quickly said, "Yes, I will."

After that, Mr. Jones left.

Ruby understood that what Mr. Jones meant was that she didn't have to worry so much because she had a backing behind her.

The corner of her lips curled up slightly and then she sighed.

It seemed that she will be under the care of Riya in the future.

Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing, Ruby didn't know. She just hoped that she would not cause so much trouble for Riya.

Knock! Knock!

"Miss Ruby? I'm Ruben, Mr. Samuel's assistant. I'm sure that you know me." Ruben grinned after he opened the door and saw Ruby.

Ruby looked at Ruben quietly.

Of course she knew. They have traveled together for quite some time in the crack. At that time, Ruben was making a lot of magic talisman, which clearly showed his status as Riya's student.

Though, it does feel a bit funny to think that Riya's student is older than her.

But it seemed that these two people never thought that there was anything wrong with this matter and they enjoyed such interaction with each other. It was really unique and interesting.

As Ruby thought about this, she looked at Ruben in front of her calmly.

Now that she had exposed the fact that she and Riya might be a bit close, she might be watched over by some people in City A Base. This Ruben should be one of them and since she had some interaction with him before, she wouldn't feel so awkward.

Mr. Jones is really thoughtful.

"I know you." Ruby smiled.

"Alright, I'll take care of your affair for the next few days."

"Thank you. I'll be troubling you."

...

After the meeting with Ruby, Mr. Jones came back to his office while rubbing his temple. He knew very well that he couldn't hide this matter from Mr. A, especially because the researchers were people sent by the people from Continent Z's Capital City.

The reason why they were sent here was to help with the research and to get more samples from the crack.

But that missions went badly.

After that, the researchers stayed in City A Base and didn't seem to have any intention to go back in the slightest bit.

When Mr. Jones thought about this, he felt headache about it.

At the same time, he knew that there was nothing that he could do about it.

The higher ups might give a lot of convenience towards these returnees, but they would not hide the fact that they wanted to control these people.

Control...

Mr. Jones sighed deeply.

Who among these returnees would be willing to be used by others?

Having survived a bloody and cruel world during a period of time that was unknown to others, they should have experienced a lot of things that they didn't want others to know in the slightest bit.

And it was precisely during this period of time that these people learned how to be strong and how to control their own life...

"Contact Mr. A."

Chapter 445: Negotiation (2)

Mr. A seemed to have been waiting for Mr. Jones's phone call.

It could be said that he had heard his own researchers coming to him for complaint and now, he was only waiting for Mr. Jones to call him.

Sitting in his office, Mr. A looked at Mr. Jones in front of him. "It seems that the matter has been resolved on your side?"

"What did they tell you?" Mr. Jones asked back instead of answering.

"That the leader of City A Base is very partial?" Mr. A's tone had a hint of teasing and then he chuckled. "It seems that this should involve the other returnees... since it's not your son, I can only guess that it should be that rune master."

The two of them didn't mention Riya's name, but they knew very well who Mr. A meant with his words.

Riya's identity has been kept a secret but there were still people who knew about it.

Mr. A was among them.

Ever since she exposed her identity in that crack and saved the people who came back, there were more people who paid more attention to her. Moreover, her life experience was also completely dug up.

It was so much that they knew more things than the person herself.

After all, Riya would not remember every details of what she did over the years but these people could do it though the surveillance cameras and so on that was still left from before the earthquake happened.

"Yes. The research materials in Ruby's hand are given by her," Mr. Jones admitted frankly. "I have told her not to tell this matter to anyone else, but I don't know how tight lipped your researchers are."

This is a threat.

Mr. Jones knew that these researchers had found out about Riya's existence, but they didn't know Riya's ability even if she had made a move. Because at that time, everyone was too busy running away.

Aside from some people who were close to Riya realizing that it was her, the others only knew that someone was very powerful and managed to block the magic beasts in the crack.

But these two researchers were present.

They should know that there was someone powerful among the people who came with them and could provide this information to others.

So in order to prevent them from spreading this matter to others...

"I don't know when your style has become more violent." Mr. A arched his eyebrows as if he didn't recognize the person in front of him is Mr. Jones.

The two of them had communicated for a long time and Mr. A felt that Mr. Jones is a very reasonable person. The business cooperation they had in the past was also very pleasant.

It was to the point that Mr. A was relieved to leave City A Base in the hands of Mr. Jones and didn't meddle in his management.

But now, Mr. A felt that Mr. Jones was actually quite similar to his son.

Because Samuel's style...

It was far sharper and would bite the prey in front of him without hesitation. Moreover, Samuel always liked to take advantage of others and try to maximize the profits he could possibly get.

"The world is no longer the same." Mr. Jones leaned back against the chair. "It's more dangerous outside and I don't think that I can possibly protect my son if I didn't do anything for him."

Right now, Samuel is one of the strongest person in the entire world and no one dared to blatantly fight against him.

Peter was an exception.

That man really didn't know the word 'fear' as he kept on challenging Samuel whenever he could.

So Mr. Jones knew that if he wanted to protect his son and not becoming his son's weakness, he had to change his style to be tougher.

Yes, becoming a powerful magic warrior is important.

But it was also important to have other skills that could allow him to sit on this seat without other people coveting his position.

Mr. A chuckled. "I understand. There will be people taking them back to the capital city and after that, you won't hear from them again."

The words were cold and it was not like something that an upright person would say.

But who among them were really upright and kind?

They had seen so much of the darkness in the world and this period of time was indeed very special.

It would be impossible for them to remain the same as before.

"I don't think that you're willing to sacrifice the talent that the nation needed at will." Mr. Jones arched his eyebrows.

"Don't get me wrong, we won't take their lives. We're just making sure that they will not do anything unnecessary before they obtained the permission." Mr. A looked at Mr. Jones and then said, "After all, there will be time when the truth comes to light."

The truth comes to the light?

Mr. Jones blinked his eyes before realizing that Mr. A was talking about the time when Riya finally revealed her identity in public.

It was impossible for Riya to be hiding her identity for the rest of her life.

Well, it was not impossible.... That is if they didn't see her taking action on her own and risking the exposure in front of others.

If Riya truly didn't want others to know her identity in the slightest bit, the best choice for her to make was to hide far away and act as an ordinary person.

Is it possible?

It's possible.

As long as she didn't behave out of the line, it was not impossible for Riya to keep her identity secret for the rest of her life.

But this meant that she would not be able to interact like how she had done so far.

And perhaps, this also meant compromising her own improvement.

But Riya didn't do it.

And these people were smart enough to realize that Riya never planned to hide her identity for the rest of her life.

Chapter 446: Negotiation (3)

As for when Riya planned to reveal her identity?

They didn't know.

But they could guess that she should be waiting for the right time, the time when she felt that it was appropriate for her to reveal her identity. And that time might be when she felt that she was strong enough to withstand the wind and storm of the outside world.

"Right... And it seems that the other returnees have told you something for you to come into that conclusion, Mr. A."

Mr. A smiled and tapped the armrest.

The higher ups did contact a few returnees and talked with them about a few things. To be honest, he was quite surprised when he heard about a few secrets that they were willing to disclose.

And the reason why they felt that it was fine to disclose was...

"The moment they reach rank 7, not many things can kill them," Mr. A said slowly. "Did Samuel ever told you about this?"

Rank 7.

This was indeed a special rank that Samuel told Mr. Jones in the past. Samuel told him that from the moment he reached rank 7, everything will be different.

Things that used to worry them so much would not be of concern when they reached rank 7. The power they wielded in their hands, even if they have to face a nuclear bomb, they would not be afraid.

At that time, their source of fear would only be themselves and other people of the same ranks.

Otherwise, even they might not be able to kill themselves.

This was their source of confidence.

At the same time, it was clear that all returnees were racing in time in order to reach rank 7. It was to the point that they didn't care that they were exposing their identities to the higher ups and asked for some help that seemed negligible.

From a certain point of view, it was clear that these people were doing things covertly and would not ask too much.

Some of them would not even talk much with them.

They didn't know about their abilities and vice versa.

For this matter, the higher ups were also helpless but they also knew that they have no way to stop these returnees from achieving their goals. These returnees were simply too powerful and if they had a conflict with them, what awaited them would be nothing more than a cruel and miserable battle.

Are they willing to take such a huge sacrifice just to fight against these returnees?

The answer is no.

They didn't dare.

They have already lost so many people because of the earthquake and the magic beasts, now they had to follow up with a battle against each other?

No one would be able to withstand being the enemies of the entire world.

So since these returnees hadn't done anything outrageous, the higher ups were also still very tolerant of them and willing to follow their wishes. They were 'cooperating' on the surface.

"Are you willing to let them reach rank 7?" Mr. Jones asked without answering.

Mr. A chuckled. "Do you really think that there's anyone in this world who can stop them from reaching rank 7?"

He did consider that matter before, but then another person came to him and asked the same question that he asked just now.

Is there anyone capable of stopping them from reaching rank 7?

For these people, reaching rank 7 was not climbing a new rank that was full of difficulties but merely restoring their original ranks. They already have the experience to reach rank 7 and then they only needed to be given enough time and resources to reach it.

But other people were not the same.

Because there were a lot of things that they had to pay attention to reach rank 7, each path has their own exclusive methods.

No matter which path they took, the moment they reached rank 7, everything will be worth it.

It's a rank that completely surpassed any other ranks.

And all returnees have the qualification to reach rank 7.

They can't stop it.

Unless there was a major incident that forced these people from reaching rank 7, then there would not be anyone who could prevent them to achieve that step.

"It seems that there's no one but each other," Mr. Jones said calmly. "But I don't think that they are willing to fight against each other just to stop them from reaching rank 7."

Yes, these returnees were competing.

But it didn't mean that they were stupid.

They knew that the other party had the chance and ability to reach rank 7 one way or another and then they tried to stop it?

Are they stupid?

As much as they wanted to stop the other party, it was more likely that they would only hinder their own progress and then the other returnees would take the chance when the two of them were injured to make progress.

Who would want to do anything worthless like that?

They were simply making wedding dresses for others.

So rather than fighting against other people, it would be better for them to focus on their own progress and slowly but surely making their steps forward to reach rank 7 as soon as possible.

"They won't do it." Mr. A shook his head. "And I think that you should know very well what our methods in dealing with these returnees are."

Control, coaxing, and cooperation.

All three were done subtly so that it would not arouse these people's disgusts.

After all, if they wanted to cooperate for a long time, the carrot and sticks would be the most appropriate method.

And this was their plan in the long way to go.

"Grasping their weaknesses one by one... as long as these people they cared for are still alive, none of them will be willing to be reckless," Mr. A said calmly with a smile on his face as if he was talking about the weather and not something cruel like this.

Chapter 447: It's Here

Mr. Jones was silent.

He would never forget that the person in front of him is a politician, a person who has been standing on the forefront and dealt with many old foxes.

For him to be able to stand on this position, how could he not understand the sophistication that belonged to this world?

He might have talked about a lot of things with Mr. Jones, but in essence, it was nothing more than the fact that the higher ups and the returnees were simply on the situation where they were using each other.

The returnees knew that they have advantage in their field and the fact that they were stronger.

And the higher ups didn't want them to be uncontrollable factor that could threaten the safety of countless people all over the continent.

The first one wanted more resources and the second one wanted their ability.

It's their 'cooperation.'

A fragile cooperation if one should say.

Because once the higher ups touched these people's bottom line, there was no doubt that what awaited them would be a huge backlash because neither of them would be willing to back down and be used by others so easily.

So far, even Samuel was the same.

Even if Samuel knew that the higher ups were allowing his father to become City A Base's head and also gave him considerable freedom, they wanted him to do many things for them.

These things were their 'request' in the 'cooperation' between the two parties.

Samuel listened to some of them but he would not be the sword that the higher ups could move as they wished. If they wanted him to do troublesome things, then he had the right to refuse.

If the higher ups forced him to do it while threatening his family...

It was estimated that their negotiation might turn very bloody.

Who would like to be threatened by others?

Samuel didn't like it and Mr. Jones also knew that. But the higher ups would definitely pay more attention to Samuel's family and when it was truly necessary, it was not impossible for them to threaten Samuel with him.

So Mr. Jones has always been trying to get stronger and made himself has more importance.

Because only in this way would it be possible for him to protect his family better.

And now...

There was another chip that the higher ups could use when facing Riya.

It would not be a pleasant thing for her.

"As expected of you, Mr. A." Mr. Jones chuckled and crossed his arms. "But I guess you should also give some sweetness for them to be willing to work for you?"

"That girl is not much better than your son when talking about trade." Mr. A shook his head. "I think that he's influencing her badly."

With how black bellied Samuel is, Mr. A felt that Riya who was getting close to Samuel would be infected by that man. Because the request she made was getting more and more greedy...

Just like a certain black hearted businessman.

"We're a businessman and a businessman will not do business without any profit," Mr. Jones said calmly.

Mr. A: "...."

Well, like father, like son.

The two of them were indeed very similar to each other and for this matter, Mr. Jones was really speechless.

"In any case, that girl's research result is quite surprising even for us. We'll not be stingy to support people who truly have talent and ability," Mr. A said calmly.

Even without Riya's existence, they would not be willing to let someone with talent to be buried.

"You will still give more preferences just because of her existence," Mr. Jones said calmly.

Mr. A smiled. "Naturally."

The two men stopped talking after this. They understood very well that they were just cooperating with each other and this was good enough.

...

Meanwhile, Ruby didn't know anything about the conversation between these two people about her.

She was now protected as there were bodyguards around her and Ruby felt helpless.

But it was not bad.

At least, these people would not disturb her when she was busy with her own research.

In the next few days, Ruby fully understood what Mr. Jones meant. Menai and Professor Dit were reported to the higher ups and the two of them were suspended from work.

This made the two of them angry and annoyed, but there was nothing that they could do.

On the other hand, Ruby was able to get the recognition and her research request was also approved easily. The resources were given to her and with this, Ruby could do a lot more research in the future.

This made Ruby very happy.

So she spent the next few days fully absorbed in her research.

...

Riya and Samuel didn't know about the commotion that happened outside. The two of them were still exploring the crack and went deeper and deeper.

There were many magic beasts that attacked them, which slowed down their progress significantly.

Because they had to rest to recover their mana before continuing their exploration.

Otherwise, it would be impossible for the two of them to go deeper into the crack and fulfill their intention in coming here.

Thanks to these magic beasts' corpse, Samuel was advancing very quickly.

And Riya herself also got a lot of resources. She could make dozens of rank 5 formation with these and didn't have to trouble herself to make the mana essence from the rank 4 magic beasts' blood anymore.

"How long are we going to go?" Samuel asked when he saw that the terrain had changed once again.

They have experienced the ordinary area, followed by the frozen land.

The temperature kept on dropping and if it was not because of their strength, they would never be able to make it this far.

"It's not far." Riya looked at the front and then smiled faintly. "It's here."

Here?

Samuel raised his head to look in the direction Riya was looking at and then his expression froze.

What is that?

Chapter 448: Formation

The terrain in this area was really cold and the ground had started to be slippery since two days ago.

The fact that they have been staying in the crack for days was something that both of them knew. After all, they still keep track of time more or less through the clock and their own phone.

As for how the phone still operate, they charged it themselves.

With their control over their lightning element, it was nothing much to charge a phone and all.

Even if there was no internet, they could still see the time. The time might not be accurate because it was not synched for a long time, but it was good enough to gauge how long they have been here.

At the very least, they have been here for half a month.

And the world within the crack had long made the two of them wary. Just from the change of the temperature to the large increase of strength from these magic beasts, it was more than enough to tell them the danger in this crack.

Now...

"Is this a crystal world?" Samuel asked.

A few steps away from them, the grounds were all crystal clear as if it was made of ice and crystal. It looked very beautiful yet also seemed out of place.

"It's not cold." Riya touched the surface on the ground and then walked forward.

"Wait, are you not worried that there will be some traps?"

"The jade dolls have already come here before."

In other words, she had already scouted ahead.

Samuel: "... " sorry, I seem to forget about it.

The two of them walked into the crystal areas and then saw a few magic beasts roaming around. These magic beasts didn't seem to notice the two of them and instead looking to the front.

"That's... a cave?"

"There's another pillar inside and I want to study the formation first," Riya replied. She had already seen part of the formation from the jade doll and knew that there wouldn't be any danger even if she went inside.

However, she didn't know how long it would take, so she would like to trouble Samuel to clean up the magic beasts around.

After all, if they were to disturb her when she was inside, it would be very troublesome.

"Alright, I'll clean up the nearby magic beasts." Samuel nodded when he heard Riya's words.

Isn't it just cleaning up some magic beasts?

He's good at it.

Swish! Slash!

roar!

The magic beasts were instantly attracted by Samuel and at this moment, Riya sneaked in. This cave was somewhat similar to the previous two caves but also different at the same time. The size was larger and there were a few more runes carved on the wall.

Riya had noticed the difference, which was why she was wary and didn't make a move first.

The magic beasts who lingered outside should also sensed the danger, which was why they didn't dare to come inside.

'But this formation didn't seem to trigger when I enter it.'

Riya looked around and started studying the formation.

The special magic core in the pillar was indeed very attractive and Riya could sense that it was a rank 6 special magic core. Just taking one of it might allow her to reach the late stage of rank 5.

But Riya had to focus on the matter on hand first.

If the formation triggered instantly after the special magic core was taken away, then she would have nowhere to cry to.

'Hmm~.'

Bang! Slash!

Amidst the chaos outside, Riya studied the formation quickly and thoroughly. It was only after she understood everything that she stopped and walked out.

At this moment, the battle was over and Samuel was standing while leaning against the wall. There was a large roasted meat on his hand and he was busy munching on it. It seemed that this was indeed the fastest way for him to replenish his energy.

"Your body is getting bulkier," Riya commented.

"It couldn't be helped, I'm rank 5," Samuel replied. "When I reach rank 7, I'll go back to my previous appearance."

To be honest, Samuel liked his previous appearance better. Because he didn't look like a warrior in the slightest bit, which would not make him stand out.

Riya chuckled and nodded.

When magic warrior reached rank 7, their appearance would change back and looked like when they were young. It was also similar to magicians because their appearance would look younger.

Of course, they could offset this by using their mana.

But why not?

Isn't it interesting to look harmless while in truth they were not that harmless?

"Come inside, I'll explain the formation."

Samuel arched his eyebrows. "Are you sure that you want to explain it to me and not to the higher ups?"

He didn't have thorough understanding about formation. Even if Riya were to tell him many things, Samuel doubted that he would be able to understand.

Riya passed a look at Samuel and said, "Don't worry, I won't tell you the name of the formation and their specific terms. I'm only telling you the brief explanation about the formation."

Samuel nodded when he heard that.

This was better.

At least, he could still understand one or two things.

As for others...

Sorry, he was not capable enough.

"There are a total of 12 pillars," Riya said as she walked towards the pillar in the middle, "And I suspect that the one who made these pillars are not human being because some of the strokes were impossible to be made by humans."

Samuel was stunned.

Did it mean that there were other intelligent creature in the crack?

"I have seen the formation in the first two pillars and they were very similar. After seeing this pillar, I noticed a few other formation and realized what kind of formation it is." Riya looked at the pillars and pursed her lips. "It's the 12 pillars from the World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation."

Samuel: "... " sorry, can you explain more about it to me?

Chapter 449: The World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation

Riya knew that Samuel didn't understand, so she simply continued, "The World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation is a special formation. It's a formation that could either be used to fuse two completely different world or to 'awaken' the mana within a planet to accelerate their process."

Hearing this, Samuel understood what Riya meant.

The main reason why the Green Planet had sudden surge of mana should be attributed by this formation.

"...Wait, this crack is within the Green Planet?"

"Yes and no." Riya pursed her lips. "It could be said that the two worlds are overlapping right now because of this formation. If the formation is destroyed, then the crack theoretically will disappear."

"Theoretically?"

"Yes theoretically. Because once a world fusion happens, it's almost impossible to separate them again. Just destroying the formation alone is not enough... besides, do you really think that a mere rank 9 can destroy such a large formation?" Riya shook her head.

"The defense of this formation is higher than rank 9."

Samuel's eyes narrowed when he heard that.

But if they wanted to advance above rank 9....

Forget it, he had never even reached rank 8 because he fell when he was at rank 7. Advancing to rank 8 and then rank 9 alone was already going to be very difficult.

Even if they have some ideas about what they needed to advance through the rest of the ranks, it would have to wait until they truly reached that point to test it out. Exploring the path ahead and researching many things... it could be said that their future path would be filled with many trial and errors.

It would be impossible to reach such height in such a short period of time.

"Is it not possible to destroy it when one reach rank 9?" Samuel asked. "You know that some people's attack power at the same rank can be different, right?"

He was referring to himself.

As a magic warrior who was famous for his offense power, Samuel felt that if it was necessary, it was not impossible for him to defeat those of the same ranks through pure attack power.

Riya glanced at Samuel and shook her head. "I only said that the defense power is higher than rank 9. When you're rank 3, can you defeat someone at rank 4?"

When he was rank 3, can he defeat someone who was at rank 4?

Samuel opened his mouth and then closed it again, frowning to think about it. Because Samuel knew very well that every three ranks represented a completely different realm and the improvement one had when they advanced to rank 4 from rank 3 was huge.

So the gap between rank 9 to rank 10...

"You're saying that the gap is so big that it's impossible for people below the rank to destroy it?" Samuel asked back.

"Yes." Riya nodded as she looked at the runes and formation in front of her. There was a trace of fascination yet helplessness within her eyes alongside longing.

For a rune master, being able to study runes and learned many of them has become her long cherished dream.

She wanted to learn more runes and possibly create the greatest runes and formation in the entire world.

It is her dream.

Samuel saw the look in Riya's eyes and smiled helplessly, somewhat dotingly. "You can study the formation here if you want to. I just need to make sure that the magic beasts wouldn't get close."

"Nah." Riya shook her head. "The formation in this place is nothing more than a small branch of the entire big formation. Even if I want to study it, I can't do it right now."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"I'll explain to you later," Riya replied and her finger tapped on the air as mana surged and runes started to form around Riya.

Samuel frowned but didn't make a move as he watched Riya made formation out of nowhere. He looked at the runes around him and saw that they didn't seem to have any reaction.

One second, two seconds, and so on.

Time passed quietly and after 10 seconds, Riya stopped with a sphere in her hand, a sphere consisting of countless runes.

At this moment, the runes around them seemed to shine slightly as if responding to Riya.

"This is..."

"This is the prototype of the runes and formation in this room. To be exact, this is the miniature version," Riya replied with a smile as she played with the formation in her hand. "Of course, the power is far from comparable and I only show this to demonstrate."

Samuel looked at Riya curiously.

"Try to use a rank 3 power to destroy it." Riya raised her hand and beckoned for Samuel to attack.

Samuel arched his eyebrows and then his mana surged before he slashed forward with his sword.

Clang!

Something seemed to stop him and Samuel's hands trembled.

He looked at the formation with suspicion and then asked, "Is this a rank 3 formation?"

"No, this is rank 4," Riya replied. "I don't need such a long time to make a rank 3 formation."

Samuel: "..."

He was sure that if Ruben were to hear Riya's words, he would feel despair once more. His teacher was too outstanding and as student, the pressure was really great.

What Riya could do within moments were something that Ruben might not be able to do in his entire life.

It was truly...

Samuel sighed and then said, "Can I try once more with the limit of rank 3 power I can muster?"

Riya smiled and raised her hand. "Sure."

Taking a deep breath, Samuel urged his mana to his sword and only after the entire sword was covered in lightning did he move.

Slash! Clang!

The small formation sphere trembled for a moment but the attack was completely deflected, with nothing remain in place.

Samuel looked at the sphere in silence and then turned to look at Riya. "It seems that if you were to make this, I'll never be able to defeat you."

Chapter 450: The World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation (2)

Riya: "... is that the point?"

She looked at Samuel speechlessly and then shook her head. "It's impossible for me to use this in combat."

"Reason."

"One, it took too long to form even one. Second, this damn thing consumed a lot of mana to maintain and I don't want to waste my mana," Riya replied and with a wave of her hand, the small formation sphere disappeared.

"Besides, this kind of formation is not suitable for combat because the range depends on how much mana you're willing to invest. Even for magicians, the large amount of mana will be too much for them. Unless you're willing to use a lot of magic cores or mana stones to make it."

Samuel nodded in understanding.

A good combat ability didn't only require sufficient power but also the resources to support it. If they were to force themselves to use such a move that was clearly self defeating... then they would be stupid.

"Anyway, this formation is backed by a lot of mana and there's no problem to run for years," Riya said.

"In other words, it's impossible to destroy." Samuel sighed.

"By the time someone reached rank 9, it'll be too late to stop the world's fusion." Riya patted the pillar and sighed. "Also, there are 8 outer pillars and 4 inner pillars. The previous two pillars that we found on the outer edge were the outer pillars and this is one of the inner pillar."

"The inner pillar required more mana to operate and also located deeper in the crack. Unless they have reached rank 5 and had prepared a lot of things, no one would be able to reach it in a short term."

Samuel nodded.

After Riya knew that this was the World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation, she definitely knew the structure of the formation well.

"Is this a rank 10 formation?"

"Yes, you can say that."

"Can you make it?"

Riya: "..."

She looked at Samuel blankly as if asking, 'Are you seriously asking that question to me?'

"I have never reached rank 10 so I'm not even qualified to try making it. I only know the theories and this formation had more than 100,000 branches. How many years do you think I'll need to make this formation?" Riya retorted.

Samuel shut up wisely.

He knew that if he were to mention about this matter again, Riya might snap up at him.

But years to make this formation...

Who would do it and why?

"Also, in order for the World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation, the twelve pillars have to be connected to a medium."

"Medium?"

"Yes, the World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation basically will allow the world to fuse, so you need something that can bridge the two worlds." Riya thought for a moment and felt that her thoughts before was truly connected at this moment and then said, "In short, there are 12 returnees in total as each of you represent the pillars."

Samuel looked at Riya solemnly. "Does it mean that if we're not in the Green Planet, the fusion will stop?"

"Unfortunately no." Riya could guess what Samuel was thinking and said, "The medium is only needed to activate the formation. So the moment the formation is activated, the medium is no longer necessary."

Their usefulness had ended from the moment they returned to the Green Planet.

Hearing this, Samuel sighed.

When they were sent to that world, they were only ordinary humans. What could ordinary humans do to prevent themselves to be sent to that world?

Nothing.

They could only wait and pray silently.

"Is there anything special about the returnees?" Samuel asked.

"Well, all the pillars had to represent different path, so the main reason why each of us are chosen should be related to the profession we are most talented in," Riya replied. "Or to be exact, the extreme advancement of a certain profession."

Because all of them basically went to the extreme on one path.

Physical path, magic path, and even the side profession could be dug to the point that it became the main profession instead.

Samuel nodded, though not quite understanding.

Riya also didn't explain further to Samuel and she looked at the pillar in front of her. "This is my pillar... it represent the magic and the runes."

"Do you want to destroy it?"

"I can't."

"Oh."

Seeing Samuel's look, Riya chuckled in amusement. "The formation is simply too strong, so it's impossible for me to destroy it. But I know that I can take this special magic core and the time limit for the formation to activate is too long."

"...Are you not afraid that you'll attract the person who made the formation?"

If Samuel counted right, Riya should have taken the special magic core more than once and probably did it several times.

"No." Riya shook her head. "Whoever made the World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation had to stay in the very middle once it was activated. It had to be done until the two worlds are completely integrated which will take a few years but even if we come to him or her, the world fusion couldn't be stopped. And if my guess is right, the shape of this World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation is that of a spear. In that case, I can guess the location of other formations and pillars."

Samuel nodded.

"Even if we kill that person who made it, this World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation can't be stopped?"

"No." Riya knew what Samuel was thinking. "At the center of the World Fusion and Mana Integration Formation, there will be a barrier, a protective barrier. The person who made this formation had to stay there for years or possibly even decades until the two worlds completely fuse and the barrier will disappear."

"Barrier...." Samuel frowned.

Riya glanced at Samuel and added, "The strength of the barrier is the same as the strength of the entire formation. So unless you have the power to destroy the entire formation, you can't destroy the barrier."

