

Last Days 961

Chapter 961: People only see the crown and not the thorn

"While we have no idea why they have to stay in the crack to train for a long period of time, but their return is something that we likes. With them coming out, this meant that the number of magic beasts will continue to decrease and we can live a normal life again."

"That..." Sophia wanted to speak but Stephen pulled her hand from behind.

The vendor didn't seem to realize that Sophia was planning to interrupt his words as he continued, "With most of them staying in Continent Z, we can be reassured that the world will be safe because of them~."

Sophia's face scrunched.

The first part of the vendor's words were nothing much and she had already seen it from the website and all.

After all, the higher ups had no other choice but to reveal many things about the returnees. There were many people who have watched how these returnees performed during the magic beasts' tide in the past.

At that time, many people spread stories about them.

The higher ups couldn't even cover it up even if they wanted to.

So all they could do was to build a good image for them and made sure that the people knew about the returnees' existence. This will also allow them to be able to control the public opinion and lead them to think that these returnees were here to help them and all.

"Well, there are a few more customers over there," Stephen finally interrupted.

"Ah, you're right."

The vendor started to serve the other customers while Stephen pulled Sophia to leave the place.

"Brother, why did you stop me?" Sophia asked after they had come out.

She was still feeling somewhat indignant when she thought about the vendor's latter's words. It seemed as if he was treating Riya and the others as protector of the Green Planet and that whatever they did was taken for granted.

As their friends, Sophia is really angry.

Even if she's not their friends, she knew very well that the real intention of the higher ups to release the news of Riya and the others should be nothing good.

While their real identity was not announced for the sake of their safety...

But many people had long known their identity.

Samuel and Dina were too famous while Peter had long make a move in front of many people because of his position with the Martial Arts Association. Only Riya remained relatively unknown because she rarely went around.

Besides, Riya's favorite clothes was the long mage robe with hood, which could help to cover up her appearance to a certain degree.

In this way, Riya's identity was the one most concealed.

Though, the higher ups and many people in City A Base should have long known about her as it was impossible to hide from them.

What spread out was the fact that there were some returnees who were fighting for them against the magic beasts. These returnees were also very powerful and that the practice they spread out could allow many people to become as strong as them.

In this way, many people practiced hard in order to get stronger.

Of course, it was absolutely impossible for everyone to become so strong like the returnees, but it was a good dream to have.

"What do you want to tell them? That these returnees are actually ordinary people and shouldn't be worshiped so much?" Stephen asked back.

He could see his sister's expression and could guess what she wanted to say.

To be honest, he himself also thought that way because he knew Samuel personally and understood that this man was not someone who was so selfless.

If anything, Samuel is nothing more than a black hearted businessman.

Stephen himself was not much better and the two of them used to cooperate in various business in the past.

It was something that they enjoyed very much.

The joy of having their negotiation and the profit that rolled into the account...

cough

In any case, knowing the real Samuel made Stephen understood very well that it was absolutely impossible for him to treat him as some kind of selfless hero who was willing to dedicate himself for Continent Z or even the Green Planet as a whole.

That's absolutely impossible.

If there was no profit to be made, Samuel might not even want to make any move.

"Otherwise?" Sophia pursed her lips. "Riya is just a slightly smarter child and she might be capable, but she still has a lot of weaknesses."

Having known Riya for a long time, Sophia really couldn't see Riya went on to serve the continent.

While Riya could show kindness for others...

It was not that excessive.

"Moreover, I hate the fact that they're talking as if these people should have been the on protecting them all the time... it's not like they're the one choosing to become a returnee," Sophia murmured.

Neither Riya or Samuel ever said it.

But Sophia had the faint feeling that becoming a returnee shouldn't be something that they actually wanted from the bottom of their heart.

Added with four years of living in a completely different world....

Sophia didn't know how difficult it would be for them to survive in that world and made a name for themselves.

Because they have to start from the very beginning and no one would be there to help them.

Sophia was absolutely sure that if it was her, she wouldn't have been able to survive.

It was also because of this that Sophia disliked it when other people treated their efforts with complacent like that.

They deserved more respect.

For they helped them all even if they might not really want to take upon this path.

Sophia bit her lower lips.

She could still remember how Riya would raise her hood when she started to become famous just to avoid the people from recognizing her back then.

Not all of them really wanted to be famous like this.

"You know..." Stephen sighed. "People only see the crown and not the thorn."

"Huh?" Sophia raised her head.

Chapter 962: Hope

Stephen patted Sophia's head as he continued to walk. "No matter how much they work hard behind the scene... all the people see will be nothing more than the result they have shown. Because this is a world where result is the most important."

No one cared about how much they have worked behind the scene.

Even if this was not the result that they actually wanted, but since they managed to achieve so much in this area... the people will only praise them in this area too.

Stephen knew this feeling very well.

Because he never planned on succeeding when he was young.

He felt that it would be better if he had achieved average result so that he could stay more with his family members without attracting his grandfather's attention.

Unfortunately, his attempt backfire.

Stephen was careless on one occasion and his grandfather's aide who was extremely sharp, noticed that he hid his real capabilities. Because of that, he reported to his grandfather and ever since then, Stephen had to work much harder for the Carson Family.

He didn't want any of that.

What he wanted was to spend more time with his family members and played around with his sister.

That's what he longed for.

But their grandfather didn't allow it.

He wanted to use him to grind his other grandsons and also to create more value for the Carson Family.

Perhaps if he had been more careful in front of other people, their grandfather will never know about his real talent.

But there was nothing that could be done.

Stephen could only walked on the path that his grandfather had laid for him.

So he swore to become strong enough and spend as much time as possible with his sister when it was possible. Because he didn't want to lose his family members.

It was also because of this that their grandfather knew that he only needed to control Sophia to make Stephen willing to listen to his words.

Stephen disliked those days.

But he still followed and performed well, learning everything that was thrown to him while building his own power.

He was planning to ensure that he had enough power on his own so that he could protect the people whom he truly cared for.

If it was not because of the earthquake...

sigh

"No matter whether these returnees want to be famous or not... it's a fact that they have saved most people from the magic beasts' tide last year. And the higher ups are using this chance to shape them into the image that they truly want," Stephen said calmly.

He knew very well that these politicians were only using the returnees because the situation forced them to do this.

If it was possible, Stephen was sure that the higher ups didn't want to.

But they couldn't not to.

Because it was obvious that these people would become famous sooner or later because of their deeds. Since it had been determined that they would become famous, it would be better for the higher ups to control the direction of their fame.

In this way, they could ensure that these people could not threaten their position and so on.

"But..." Sophia frowned.

"It's not their real personality and I know that it's true," Stephen continued and pulled his sister out of City K Base. The rest of the conversation shouldn't be done in a crowded place and he didn't other people to eavesdrop on his words.

"But if they didn't do this and use fame to control them to a certain degree, it's impossible to say what these returnees might do. In Continent Z, the returnees' prestige are really high because they're famous for protecting the people from the magic beasts' tide." Stephen looked at the distance.

'But without the magic beasts... it's unknown how many people will see them as a threat.'

This was actually something that only needed them to worry about after everything had been settled, but Stephen couldn't help but think about it.

He knew very well that the higher ups were shaping these returnees as a 'limited time hero.'

For now, their images will definitely remain good.

"People need hope, Sophia. The magic beasts had flooded many areas and their appearance had long crushed people's hope of living. Without hope, the people would not have any desire to survive," Stephen said slowly.

Sophia opened her mouth and closed it again.

It was true.

The appearance of the magic beasts had long caused many people to struggle. Some people had truly lost hope of living and stopped struggling to live, rather choosing to think about their own ending that would not be too painful.

Because living seemed to be too difficult.

Without any hope, many of them were only living mechanically based on their instinct and the sight was really miserable.

And the second earthquake at that time had already crushed many people's hope.

Perhaps not many people saw it, but Sophia saw that some people were despairing when they saw more magic beasts appearing.

It was as if they were asking the world...

'Why do we have to continue suffering like this, living our lives in fear of death all the time?'

That was when Sophia truly understood the meaning of the 'end of the world.'

It was not only when the Green Planet became harder to live... but it's when most people had long lost their desire to live.

They were living yet not alive at the same time.

It's really cruel.

Sophia bit her lower lips and sighed deeply.

"A hero, huh... I don't like it," Sophia muttered.

Stephen patted Sophia's head. "I don't like it either, but the higher ups want us to believe in the returnees and used them as the symbol to preserve the people's hope. That there are still people who fought for them... and that the world will not truly end."

Sophia nodded and then pursed her lips.

"The Green Planet will not end so easily."

Chapter 963: Worry

Stephen heard his sister's words and didn't respond.

He knew more than Sophia who didn't receive much information from Riya because she didn't plan on dragging her friend into the complicated world of the returnees and the higher ups.

He himself had long been embroiled in various complicated matters, so Samuel still told him some things.

One of them was the prophecy of a never-ending battle that would come soon.

'It would only take a few more weeks at most before the time that Samuel said. Before that, I have to pick a relatively safe place to stay with Sophia.' Stephen looked at his sister and sighed in his heart.

He didn't want to care too much about the movement of the outside world.

Because Stephen felt that it was truly tiring.

But he had to know some things in order to make sure that he could protect his sister well.

Grand magic beasts' tide.

Right now, even the higher ups was hiding this matter and made sure that no one knew about it. All while preparing in secret to welcome the grand magic beasts tide and resisted it to their utmost capability.

Stephen had heard about it from Arnold and Ruben who were still in City A Base.

The two of them were involved in this matter and had to help City A Base to make enough preparation.

But the outside world didn't know.

Considering how many magic beasts have appeared, any large scale military operation no longer shocked the people. Instead, they would only think that the military were quite reliable as they continued to eliminate the magic beasts that were staying outside of the bases.

From these two people, Stephen found out that the higher ups had made thorough preparation for the grand magic beasts' tide.

But the most important thing is still these returnees.

Without the returnees, it would be impossible for them to hold the frontline. Because Samuel had said that rank 7 magic beasts would be numerous during the grand magic beasts' tide to the point that it would be overwhelming.

Without the returnees, could these continents hold on their own?

No one knew.

And Stephen himself didn't know either.

But he hoped that they could still pass by the grand magic beasts' tide safely.

"Brother?" Sophia saw her brother was in trance and tilted her head. "Can we stop for a while?"

"Hmm? Sure, what do you want to do?" Stephen turned to look at Sophia.

"I want to talk with Amelia and the others," Sophia replied with a grin. "If we're too far away from the base, there won't be any signal."

Stephen nodded and stopped not far from the tree nearby.

He also took out his phone to check the news about the returnees.

Speaking of which, which returnee have returned to the Green Planet so far?

[Arnold, has Samuel returned?]

[Huh? Not yet.]

So it's not Samuel.

Stephen put his phone away and then looked at his sister who was busy chatting with her friends with a smile.

He didn't regret going out of City A Base with his sister.

While he did miss his friends, but he didn't want to depend on them for the rest of his life.

Not to mention that Carson Family was also there.

It would be better for him to stay in a completely different place, far away from them.

'I guess it'll take a while.'

Sophia always spent a long time to chat with her friends, so Stephen was prepared to wait for a while.

...

One married, two engaged, and two single pretty girls chat group

I'm the prettiest girl (Sophia): Hey, Mel, have your brother returned to City A Base? I kept on hearing about the returnees who have returned during my trip.

Pampered baby (Amelia): Huh? No, the one who come back is not my brother but the other two. My brother and Riya hadn't come back yet.

I want a red packet (Claire): So Riya is still away, huh? <Sigh.jpg>

Pampered baby (Amelia): Claire, you're the one who stayed in Continent X, so you should be the one who know when they come back! How come you sound so surprised?

I want a red packet (Claire): Well, I don't know whether Riya will visit me after her return or not. Besides, do your really think that I have time to pay attention about this matter all the time?

Ruby: She will definitely pay a visit.

Pampered baby (Amelia): Huh? Why are you so certain, Ruby?

I want a red packet (Claire): + 1

Ruby: Because she hadn't seen you for a long time and when she passed by Continent X, she will definitely tell you even if it's just for a short period of time.

I'm the prettiest girl (Sophia): That's right. Riya's temperament will definitely make her visit you for a short period of time. But still, I thought that the one who come back is Riya or at least your brother, Mel.

Pampered baby (Amelia): I do wish for my brother to come back soon because I'm worried for his safety, but I believe that the two of them are doing fine. Besides, they're now so powerful and had a lot of responsibility on their shoulder, so I can't always bother them all the time.

I want a red packet (Claire): <Sigh.jpg> it sounds really troublesome.

I'm the prettiest girl (Sophia): I'm sure that Riya didn't want any of these troublesome matters.

Pampered baby (Amelia): Pfft, you bet that it's true. Unfortunately, she can't escape from these things even though she had been trying to live low key for a long period of time.

Ruby: Let's comfort her when there's a chance in the future.

I'm the prettiest girl (Sophia): Right. I might need to come close to City A Base in the future just for the sake of it.

Pampered baby (Amelia): Ahh, when will you come back here? I have a lot of places that I want you to visit...]

Chapter 964: Return

Sophia and the others chatted happily for a while.

And even though Sophia hoped that she could hear about Riya or Samuel, she knew that they couldn't really contact them temporarily.

She could only pray for them.

"Brother, I'm done chatting... Brother?" Sophia saw that Stephen was looking at his phone with a strange expression.

"It's nothing." Stephen put his phone away and chuckled.

Who would have thought that there could be such a coincidence?

They were just talking about him and he really did come back.

[Samuel had just come back, ah it's time for me to work hard again. I'll chat with you again later. - Ruben]

"Let's go."

"Yes, Brother!"

...

The fourth one to come back was Samuel.

And his return could be said to be something that many people has been waiting for. After all, he was one of the few most reliable ones on Continent Z.

At least, the officials felt that it was good for him to come back.

"It seems that I'm not late." Samuel looked around upon his return. When he went back to that gate, he noticed the sign of rank 8 magic beast that had rotted. Just looking at it, one would know that this magic beast had died a long time ago.

This made Samuel wonder if he calculated the time wrong.

After all, there was no calendar and many people often forgot about time when they were busy training.

Samuel was no exception.

He stayed outside most of the time so that he could see the sun rise and fall.

Otherwise, he felt that he might end up forgetting the time for their return.

At the same time, Samuel also saw the childish marks that the other returnees had created around the gate. But because of the passage of time, these things were no longer that clear.

The arrow stuck on the rotted rank 8 magic beast, the crater created by pure strength, the black land with scattered magic beasts' cores scattered around.

Samuel was sure that some magic beasts did covet those beast cores.

But in the end, they didn't take any of them.

Because the leftover magic fluctuation left by Dina was close to rank 9 and it was obvious that her strength improvement should have been extremely massive.

'It's good that they've grown stronger.'

What worried Samuel the most was that he was late to come back to the Green Planet and would miss the grand magic beasts' tide.

After all, Samuel had calculated the time....

More or less.

He was not quite confident in his ability to calculate the time, but he believed that the time was not up yet.

Because whoever sent them to this destroyed world would not have calculated this matter in advance. It, he, she, or they should have made some precaution to ensure that they would return to the Green Planet before it's too late.

Otherwise, they would be trapped in this world for the rest of their lives.

None of them wanted such a thing to happen.

Uh...

Wait.

A certain person named Murin might have thought about staying in this broken world for the rest of his life.

Considering how much Murin was disliked when he was on the Green Planet and the large amount of troubles he had created, Samuel would not be surprised if Murin decided to stay in this world instead.

'But is such a thing possible?'

For whoever setting up that teleportation formation to this world, they should have used up a large amount of resources to pull off such a thing.

And Samuel didn't believe that they didn't pay a huge price to pull off such a thing.

Would they allow them not to return to the Green Planet and defended the planet from the invasion of the grand magic beasts' tide?

Samuel believed that they wouldn't.

He was not sure whether Murin have thought about this or not, but he himself believed that there should be some kind of backup plans prepared to ensure that the resources spent on them would not be wasted.

At least, as a businessman, Samuel would always prepare such backup plans.

He would not allow the business plan to fail so easily because a lot of people's lives depended on his business projects.

Samuel understood very well the pressure he carried on his shoulder.

His every move would affect the Jones Corporation, so he had to be careful and made sure that he would not make a mistake that could cost them dearly.

Whoever sent them should have sacrificed a lot.

The meticulousness to be able to send them to a completely different world and the planning that spanned for such a long time made Samuel believed that there should be some kind of plans that he couldn't see.

Anyway, Samuel had no plan to stay there for a long time.

He had to go back to the Green Planet.

'It seems that Riya hadn't left any marks.' Samuel chuckled and then took out his sword. "Lightning sword."

Slash!

A large gash formed on the ground just beside the gate.

Looking at the lively ground there, Samuel chuckled and felt that even though it was a bit childish and all... it's quite fun.

Even if time will erase these marks in the future, at least it served their purpose of leaving their marks before their return. The people who should have seen these were the other returnees who also came to this world with them.

"Time to go back."

Samuel stood in front of the gate and sensed the magic enveloped his body.

Swish!

In an instant, Samuel was transported back to the Green Planet.

Now that he was back, Samuel was relieved that the grand magic beasts' tide hadn't happened yet.

The soldiers quickly greeted him and then escorted him back. Along the way, Samuel found out that only three other returnees had returned aside from him. Murin and Riya were still in Afirer Kingdom and no one knew their current situation.

"I see." Samuel nodded.

Chapter 965: Samuel

Even though he had known about this beforehand, he still thanked the people who came to bring him the information.

He rubbed his sword, that had long fully recovered through various resources that Samuel found in Afirer Kingdom.

But even if he spent his time recovering his sword, he never neglected his practice and still managed to reach rank 9 some time ago.

It was precisely because he had advanced to rank 9 that he chose to return.

Because he knew very well that it would be impossible for him to advance again anytime soon.

The improvement upon reaching rank 9 was too slow.

He might need a decade if he wanted to reach the peak of rank 9 and then attempted to advance to rank 10.

There was not enough time.

Only after the Green Planet was safe would it be possible for him to rest and possibly attempt to reach the peak again.

Since Samuel didn't have much to do in Continent X, he didn't stay there for long and only greeted the people there for a bit before going back to Continent Z. There were already many people who were waiting for him.

Soon, Samuel reached City A Base.

"Father." Samuel nodded when he saw Mr. Jones coming out.

"It's good that you're back." Mr. Jones was smiling when he saw his son. In the past year, it could be said that he has been worrying for his children from time to time. He hoped that they were doing fine, yet at the same time, he didn't know what they have been doing.

Because there was no one who could tell him the truth.

When Peter and Dina came back, they only briefly said that they were separated from the others.

They separated within a few days of their arrival in that world, so it was impossible for Peter and Dina to know where Samuel and Riya were going. Besides, the two of them were preoccupied with the large amount of information they received that they didn't have time to care about it anymore.

In this way, no one knew what the others were doing.

As for the world they were in...

Peter never said the word Afirer for he didn't want to reveal the fact that they came back to the world where they used to be for four years in the past. So they only said briefly that they encountered many powerful magic beasts in that world.

Aside from that, they also brought a lot of information from various techniques that they managed to find through one way or another.

For Peter, he found some scattered notes.

For Dina, she found the records of the demonic magician from that castle and the surrounding areas.

They reported some of them.

"I brought some things for the continent... Did that Peter bring anything back?" Samuel asked.

"Dina brought a lot of forbidden techniques for the demonic magicians while Peter brought a lot of other techniques. As for magic beasts' corpses, he could only give us parts that can't be eaten," Mr. Jones replied with helpless tone.

Samuel: "... " as expected of Peter.

That man should have brought the magic beasts corpses because he wanted to eat them all.

Given by Peter's ability to digest the food as his rank advanced, Samuel guessed that Peter should get stronger again after he had finished eating it all.

The energy from these magic beasts were more than enough for him to advance through ranks.

Heh.

A crude way of advancement.

Not that he didn't use it, though.

But it was definitely not as much as a warrior.

"Where's Riya?" Mr. Jones asked the question that concerned him the most.

"We're not together," Samuel replied helplessly. As much as he would like to stay together with Riya, the moment they knew they it's Afirer Kingdom, they knew it's impossible.

There were things he didn't want to show her and vice versa.

They also have a completely different way of training, so staying together will only hinder the progress of one person.

The two of them didn't exactly talk about this clearly.

Because while they also felt somewhat unwilling, they also knew that they should not hinder each other's magic's path.

Besides, this separation is temporary.

They have spent too much time working together when they were on the Green Planet that it was time for them to go on their own.

"You..." Mr. Jones frowned.

"She's still alive," Samuel replied calmly. "Before leaving, she made the soul stone, a type of stone that can detect whether one's person is alive or not. The soul stone could only last for 10 years, though as the materials is only jade and formation."

Riya handed it over to him before they went their separate ways.

Because it was impossible to communicate in that kingdom after all the communication technology and the likes had been destroyed, this was the only way to easily confirm whether the other party is still alive or not.

Without the soul stone, there was no way Samuel would agree easily to go on their separate ways.

He would rather stay with Riya all the time.

But no, they couldn't do that.

Because the two of them knew very well that they had to reach the highest rank possible within the short period of time before they went back to the Green Planet.

"In that case, you can go back and see your family. Your mother has been thinking of preparing meal for you," Mr. Jones said lightly.

Samuel chuckled and waved his hand.

Seeing his son still acting like that, Mr. Jones shook his head and leaned back.

When he saw his son just now, he had the faint feeling that the time Samuel spent in that world was not one year but more.

Because the difference in his son's temperament was not small.

'But no matter what, I'm glad he's safe and sound.'

Pressing the thoughts in his head, Mr. Jones went back to work. There were still many things he had to handle.

With Samuel's return, those people will definitely come and ask countless questions to him.

Chapter 966: Samuel (2)

Samuel walked along the street and looked at City A Base.

He had to say that his father really have the talent to lead a base. Because this base that used to look rather ordinary had slowly changed.

Lamps powered with mana battery, the security cameras, and so on.

Everything seemed to change and made City A Base so advanced.

Samuel even had the feeling that if he left his father be for a few more years, he would turn City A Base into the most advanced base in the entire world.

'But that Leon really has so much free time...'

The only person who could possibly made these magic tools could only be Leon and the people he taught. Various delicate machinery that was suitable to be used with mana had appeared and without exception, Samuel was sure that it was because he was planning on using these things to increase his livelihood.

As for why not making weapons....

Samuel had the feeling that Leon had already made them, but he also designed various other things in his spare time.

After all, magic is not only used for war and battles.

First and foremost, the existence of magic was used to improve their own lives.

Samuel lips curled up slightly.

But this is good.

This meant that the Green Planet was still operating normally while preparing for the grand magic beasts' tide.

"...You've been staring at the buildings for a while. It couldn't be that my design is off now, right?" Ruben came out leisurely and looked at Samuel with suspicion.

He was the architect who designed many things in this base, including the buildings.

"I didn't expect you still have time to do this." Samuel arched his eyebrows.

"My previous work is an architect and I like drawing the building sketch," Ruben replied with a shrug. "Even if I no longer work full time, when I have ideas, I'll note it down and then designed it when I have free time."

But the free time was extremely rare.

The only good thing is that Ruben didn't have to work as Mr. Jones' assistant full time. For paperwork, he had already hired other people whom he could trust and depended to help him.

In this way, Ruben has more free time to learn runes, training, and then drawing some things in his free time.

Once he had finished his drawing, he would submit it.

If City A Base was willing to use his design, then he would be happy, but he would not force it.

After all, Ruben knew very well that there were many other talented people out there. He was just one of the many people.

"I see." Samuel nodded.

Ruben looked at Samuel and narrowed his eyes. "You look much older than us now, Sam."

They were of the same age and when Samuel returned from the four years in Afirer Kingdom, his temperament had changed slightly. Ruben, Arnold, and Stephen all noticed that something was off from him.

But since Samuel didn't say anything, they also didn't ask it and instead pay more attention to him.

Later on, he came clean about the fact that he had spent more time in a completely different world. But since his body was still in this world, it was only his soul that was four years older.

They had joked that Samuel is now the oldest of them all.

Now that Samuel came back from that world... Ruben had the faint feeling that their gap was getting bigger once again.

Samuel smiled faintly. "What did you notice?"

"The aura is different," Ruben replied without hesitation. "And my teacher taught me some identification runes. I engraved it on a contact lenses and wore it so that I won't be tricked by some people."

Engraving things on the contact lenses were not easy and Ruben failed several times. But in the end, he succeeded and had been using it for a long time. As long as he inputted enough mana, information will appear in his eyes, allowing him to see more things.

As for why he was not like Riya who only draw it when necessary...

It's because he couldn't draw runes as fast as Riya.

Only when he tried it out did Ruben realize how terrifying Riya's runes drawing speed is. It could even match the instant magic spells that many magicians have been using so far.

"...It seems that you have been working hard." Samuel was speechless.

"Drawing runes are becoming more and more fun," Ruben replied honestly. "And it seems that I do have some talent in this area."

Thinking about the fact that Ruben has been working as an architect for a long time and liked drawing, Samuel nodded.

Perhaps people who were leaning towards the artistic type were more suitable for this kind of path.

But this is good.

At least, this meant that Ruben is walking on the path that suited him better.

"Well... it's almost new year again. Do you think they will appear soon?" Ruben changed the conversation.

"There's n one who could tell for sure what date the passage will be opened," Samuel said seriously.

Because that message only said the year.

It didn't specify when exactly the passage will be opened.

"I see."

"You've reached rank 6... are there anyone who advanced to rank 7 who are not the returnees?" Samuel suddenly asked.

"Can you sense it?" Ruben was stunned.

"More or less... but I don't know who and only the general direction. There are at least 3 more returnees," Samuel replied.

"The Magic Association and Martial Arts Association each had someone who advanced to rank 7 a few weeks ago. It's said that the process is quite thrilling, but I don't know the details. As for the other one, it's someone from Continent W who's being helped by Jonas Nolan to advance to rank 7," Ruben replied.

Samuel arched his eyebrows. "They didn't go on a war?"

"The returnees are much higher in ranks than them... they speculated that these returnees have advanced to rank 8 but there's no concrete evidence," Ruben explained.

Chapter 967: Preparation

For this matter, Ruben was rather helpless.

It was impossible for him to check the other continent so blatantly and he only knew these because he has been helping Mr. Jones in his work from time to time.

While it was tiring, but he had to pass the realest situation of the world to Samuel when he had the chance.

So he kept on working.

Samuel nodded and then sighed. "You have worked hard, Ruben."

"It's nothing much. I'm only doing my duty." Ruben shrugged.

From the moment he agreed to be Samuel's assistant, he had to do his best to support Samuel. Besides, Ruben never thought that his rank could be so high when his talent was not in this area.

He will train, of course.

But he would not completely focus on training but also do other things that suited him. Being an architect was his dream ever since he was young and Ruben will continue to do so until the rest of his life.

Now, learning runes and become a rune master should also be added to the list.

"Good work." Samuel said solemnly.

No matter what, he knew that Ruben has been working hard to help him all these years. Having a subordinate like Ruben really puts him at ease.

Ruben chuckled and then said, "If you really want to thank me, how about if you help me to deal with your brother?"

"...What did he do?"

"He's being lazy again and always escape from training."

Samuel: "... " Sean!

Seeing Samuel ready to come back to the Jones Family Residence, Ruben silently sneak away. Mr. Jones asked him to send Sean to the training grounds a few times and that brat always made trouble for him.

Now that he had the chance to make trouble for the brat, he will do it.

Of course, before Sean realized that he was the one who made the report to Samuel, Ruben will run away first.

Reporting about Sean being lazy was definitely fun, but Ruben didn't want Sean to come looking for him and made trouble. After all, Sean was just like Samuel in terms of keeping grudges.

That brat will definitely try to get it back from Ruben.

Sean didn't know what was waiting for him.

But when he went back home and saw his brother back... he will realize that it was definitely the start of a long hell week of training for him.

"Brother! You're back!" Amelia was the happiest when she saw Samuel coming back.

Seeing that Amelia had already reached rank 6, Samuel smiled and patted his sister's head. "You're doing well, Mel."

He nodded at Arnold, who followed them back home.

"You missed a lot of thing, you know." Amelia snorted as she pushed her brother's hand away and sat down. "There are a lot of things that happened in the past year and do you see that City A Base has changed..."

Amelia chattered a lot, telling Samuel about what had happened in the past year.

He listened patiently.

Even though the important thing was only one or two points, but Samuel still listened carefully. It has been a while since he stayed together with his family and he missed this feeling.

Through Amelia and also Arnold saying a few more things, Samuel knew that there were many things that had been prepared.

Including the fact that they have prepared a lot of bunkers all over the world.

"If the passage is opened in the middle of a city base... the people will have to evacuate at the fastest speed possible, so there are a lot of training to ensure their safety," Arnold said after Amelia had gone back to rest.

He was more involved in this matter than Amelia, so he definitely knew more. But since Amelia missed her brother, then Arnold didn't bother her and instead waited until she was done before he reported everything to Samuel.

To be honest, Arnold is not exactly Samuel's subordinate, but he had been living as a mercenary for a long time that he didn't mind too much being used like this.

Besides... Arnold felt that it's better for Samuel to know more about the situation.

Even though Samuel is a returnee, he's also one of the few people who also knew how to lead the people.

Samuel nodded. "I hope it wouldn't happen that way."

The human's population on the Green Planet had decreased significantly because of the earthquake and the magic beasts' appearance back then.

If these passages also opened in the middle of a city base...

It was hard to imagine what would happen to them.

Arnold nodded and looked at the starry sky outside. "No matter what... we'll be prepared for the battle that was about to come."

Samuel nodded.

...

Later on, Sean came back and what greeted him was a kind teaching from Samuel.

Seeing that Sean's ranks was only in the early stage of rank 5, he really understood that Ruben was not lying.

Sean was really lazy.

Even though his talent was indeed not high, the resources from the Jones Family should have allowed him to advance through ranks much higher.

So Sean was granted special training.

"Ahhh, help me!! I'm going to die!"

Listening to Sean screaming on the training ground, Amelia only laughed and cheered. "You can do it, Brother~."

Arnold: "... what a 'loving' brother and sister.

In the end, he also laughed as he watched Sean's miserable performance on the training ground.

"You're all a devil!" Sean was really annoyed.

"If you don't train, are you going to let yourself be the first to sacrifice during the grand magic beast's tide?" Samuel sneered when he saw Sean's appearance. "Get back here!"

"Ugh..."

Under Samuel's strict training, Sean was forced to train several times harder than before, making him want to vomit.

As they were training, Samuel suddenly raised his head.

He sensed the mana fluctuation and the familiar mana signature made him curl his lips.

She's back.

Chapter 968: World Destruction

Long distance away in Afirer Kingdom, Riya looked at the mess around the gate and rubbed her cheek.

To be honest, she had no plan to go back so soon, but when she was training, she was interrupted by the violent mana's movement.

That was when she realized the truth.

The truth of the so called world's destruction.

The land disappearing, the air turned cold, and the space became turbulent.

What she saw was no less of the word destruction.

It's a complete end of the world.

"I see... sacrificing a world that's about to end to open up a new passage meant literally," Riya muttered as she looked at the destruction in the distance.

During her practice, Riya went to various places.

To be honest, her teacher's note had allowed her to find many places that were suitable for practice. Even if Afirer Kingdom had changed greatly because of the grand magic beast's tide, some places remained quite similar and Riya chose to follow her teacher's suggestion.

After reaching rank 7, Riya knew very well that her progress would slow down.

It was only thanks to her teacher's guidance that she managed to grow up quickly and all.

During her practice, she also created a lot of teleportation formation plates. Because Riya knew that as rune masters, her greatest advantage lies in the large amount of resources that she could make.

This would allow her to fight for days or even weeks without stopping.

The mana stone could help her recover her mana and the formation plates could be activated easily as long as she infused her mana.

With correct arrangement, these things could potentially help her to stop the grand magic beasts' tide.

Perhaps...

Riya had never seen the grand magic beasts' tide and she honestly didn't know whether her meagre preparation would be enough. Because Riya knew very well that compared to the other returnees who have seen the destruction with their own eyes, someone like her who had never seen it definitely couldn't understand the horror of the grand magic beasts' tide as well as them.

She could only do her best.

During her training, Riya also headed further away from the cities.

To be exact, she was heading further to the north where the border was located and that was when she sensed the change in her surroundings.

She was busy meditating and training, but something interrupted.

And this interruption was also extremely harsh.

Just imagine someone who was listening to music suddenly heard ear piercing cry 10 times louder than the music they were listening to.

It would be a miracle if they were not disturbed.

"...A complete world destruction."

The moment Riya opened her eyes, she saw the world destruction extremely clearly that made her heart constrict.

This is the result of the forceful opening of the passage.

The number of magic beasts on Afirer Kingdom might be large, but Riya knew very well that it's impossible for grand magic beasts' tide to have such a small number of magic beasts.

That's when she guessed that this is the world after the so called destruction.

But is the destruction was simply as destroying the facilities, city, and so on?

Riya had a lot of doubts in the past.

And now...

rumble

The sky was crying, the earth was shattering, and the air stagnated.

It seemed as if the entire world was crumbling away, slowly but surely. Everything was disappearing at speed visible to the naked eyes and if she didn't do anything, Riya knew very well that she herself would also be killed.

But she couldn't help but pause briefly.

Taking everything into her eyes, Riya felt her heart was grief stricken.

Because she understood very well that after this, nothing would remain from Afirer Kingdom.

The world where they used to live, even if it was only for a short period of time, nothing would remain in the end.

It was destroyed.

'Was it black hole?'

Riya didn't know.

She lacked sufficient knowledge and her senses were only telling her that it's dangerous.

Her rank was far from enough to fully understand the cause of such unimaginable destruction.

The only thing she knew is that it had to be the consequences of opening up the passage to another world forcefully.

"Will the Green Planet..."

Thinking about how the Green Planet, along with everyone who lived on the surface, will experience the same thing, Riya bit her lower lips.

No...

She couldn't let such a thing happen.

Even if she didn't actually care about everyone on the Green Planet, there were many people whom she didn't want to lose.

Her friends, her boyfriend, and her newfound family members.

Even if it was only for them...

Riya had to fight.

"It's really not fair for you to show such a thing to me..." Riya muttered to herself as she pushed all thoughts away and focused her attention on her own magic.

Afterwards, she activated her teleportation formation to get away from it as far away as possible.

She knew that if she was late even by a second, she might be caught in the space turbulence. Inside that space turbulence, even her teleportation formation might not be able to work so well.

Because the law of the space hindered it.

Unless she countered it with her own magic, she might even get lost in the space.

Swish!

Within a few minutes, she had returned to the areas not far from the gate.

This was when she and the others escaped at that time.

When fighting that rank 8 magic beast, Riya didn't have time to set up the teleportation formation.

The gap between rank 7 and rank 8 was too big.

She couldn't do anything and had to escape.

Because of that, she set up her teleportation formation in this cave not far from where she and the others landed during their escape using the random teleportation formation.

This might not be the best, but it was pretty good.

"The others have already gone back?" Riya muttered to herself.

Chapter 969: Back

Seeing the destruction and the space turbulence at the border, Riya knew very well that sooner or later, the entire world will be destroyed.

She didn't know the exact cause.

But she could guess that someone was using the entire planet to open up a new channel to other worlds.

All the people, magic beasts, and even the resources on this planet could be said to be the chips on the table, all used for the sake of opening up a new stable passage to other world.

And Riya knew that the one who used it was not here.

To be able to use this ability from such a faraway place....

'Only rank 10 and above could possibly do this.'

Thinking about this, Riya felt that their future challenges would not be limited to the Green Planet.

Presumably, they might even need to face off stronger opponents.

But she's not afraid.

For the Green Planet, she had people whom she had to protect.

And not only for them but also herself.

No matter what, she would not give up on her dream of reaching the peak of her practice even if it meant that she had to work hard.

"I should go back too..." Riya sighed and then went to the familiar gate. There were also other magic beasts around the areas that were running away from the destroyed place.

She knew that the entire world will be turned into dust.

With the strong power of that space turbulence, the destruction of this planet did take a few years to complete, but this was already the final stage.

Only a few more months or perhaps just weeks were left before it could reach this place.

The others who had gone back might not even know that the planet they were staying on would be completely destroyed. Because unless they were proficient in speed or space techniques, they might not be able to come back alive after staying on the edge of that destruction.

Riya had been staying at the north, far away from this gate.

So she had to expend a lot of mana to teleport here.

She didn't know where the others were located, but she guessed that they shouldn't stay too far away from the gate.

Unlike her who had placed several teleportation formation along the way to help her get back quickly, other people didn't have such capability.

They had to stay close to the gate in case they ended up unable to go back.

They came to this world just for training and not to stay here for a long time. So most of them were rational enough to stay behind and try their best not to stray too far away from the gate.

Even if they did travel far away, that would be on the first year and on the second and third year, they were getting closer to the gate again.

If they were late, who knew whether they would be trapped in this world for a long time.

'But it's not impossible for Murin to stay far away...'

Thinking about Murin who might not want to go back, Riya's lips twitched slightly. He had been thinking about creating a world where humans and magic beasts could coexist together.

Isn't the environment in Afirer Kingdom truly fulfill his dream?

So if he decided to stay behind, Riya would not think that it was strange.

Instead... she would think that it was normal and natural.

Because Murin never liked the Green Planet.

"Forget it."

No matter what Murin decided, Riya couldn't interfere.

But she knew one thing.

If he decided to stay in this world, he would not be able to go back to the Green Planet again in his entire life.

He might end up dying because of the world's destruction that couldn't be stopped.

But it was not her business.

Riya would not care too much about Murin's life and death.

If he's dead, then he's dead.

If he's still alive and go back to the Green Planet, then she will throw him to the passage and let him fought with the magic beasts.

Such a strong labor force, how could it be possible to let him be?

It's better to let him work for them.

If Murin were to know, it was estimated that he would roar in anger because of Riya's thoughts and behavior of wanting him to work for them for free.

He would never accept such an arrangement!

Hmph!

Tep.

Landing in front of the gate, Riya cleaned up the few magic beasts and then tossed their corpses into her world casually.

In the past year, she had expanded her world through using various magic beasts as foundation. The world's consciousness also started to be more conscious, but it was still following Riya's order strictly.

It was obvious that as the master of the world, Riya's order is absolute.

The world will also follow her without hesitation.

She was once worried that the world will be out of her control if it had gained consciousness, but it seemed that she was thinking too much.

Riya was puzzled how did she hear the story of the world rebelling in the past, then?

She didn't understand.

And in the end, she didn't bother trying to figure it out and simply focused her attention to the gate in front of her.

"Before that, though..." Riya looked at the childish markings that other people had left and she smiled as she waved her hand and formed a teleportation formation right in front of the gate.

With her current rank, creating a teleportation formation had become extremely easy.

This way, there were five distinct markings in front of the gate.

Even though everything will disappear once the destruction reached this area, Riya felt that it's fine.

Riya pressed her hand on the gate and opened it slightly.

Seeing the familiar place on the other side of the gate, Riya smiled faintly.

'I'm back.'

Swish!

Her figure disappeared from Afirer Kingdom and reappeared on the Green Planet.

Chapter 970: Riya

Riya opened her eyes and scanned her surroundings.

It has been a while since she came to the Green Planet.

She really wanted to stay in that world for a while longer, though.

At this moment, she was still rank 8 peak and failed to advance to rank 9, which puzzled her. Riya tried a few times to advance to rank 9, but it seemed something was preventing her from advancing.

When she advanced from rank 7 to rank 8, it was very smooth.

There was basically no blockade at all.

Everything was as natural as drinking water and Riya didn't have much worry.

But when she wanted to advance to rank 9, Riya felt that something was wrong and she couldn't grasp it. There was no complicated ceremony or anything like that to advance to rank 9, yet she failed to advance.

Riya didn't understand.

She tried to look at her master's record, but he's not an extreme rune master and naturally didn't have much record about this.

For this matter, Riya could only sigh.

Well, forget it.

It was indeed impossible for her to figure out everything without a proper connection or something like that.

She had to search bit by bit, trying to figure out what was wrong.

But before she could find it, the destruction had arrived, forcing her to leave the world in advance and returned to the Green Planet.

"Miss Riya." The soldiers who were waiting were relieved when they saw Riya coming out. There were only 6 returnees who were going to the different world, but the soldiers were here to watch over them.

Or rather, they were ordered to keep watch and helped to escort them back.

Even though these returnees were quite powerful, but just in case someone wanted to trick them, it would be better to be cautious.

"Thank you for your hard work." Riya gave a polite smile to the soldiers, feeling that Continent Z really put them in high position.

She felt somewhat uncomfortable for a moment before pushing the thoughts away. After all, Riya knew very well that it would be impossible for her not to be treated carefully by Continent Z after she showed her abilities.

Even though she didn't particularly like it or anything like that, Riya knew that she had to accept it.

Because her status had changed.

'Now they even sent soldiers to wait for me...'

Riya looked around, sensing the presence of other powerful magicians. After reaching rank 8, especially because her main study was in the law of space, Riya was exceptionally sensitive to other people's mana fluctuation.

Not only that, she should have long advanced to rank 9 but since she failed to advance and remained at rank 8, her strength was far above ordinary peak rank 8 rune masters. This also pushed her sensitivity and capabilities far higher than most people.

So when Riya wanted to use her senses, other people might not be able to sense her in the slightest bit.

She targeted those who were exceptionally powerful.

Because they were either rank 8 or rank 7 magician, magic warriors, or even warriors.

The warriors would leak out unique aura that looked different in her eyes. Even though they looked normal on the surface, but Riya could sense their differences well.

Sensing that there were more people at rank 7, Riya blinked her eyes.

It seemed that the continent were pouring out a large amount of resources in order to allow some people to advance to rank 7 within three years.

Otherwise, it would have been impossible for these people to advance so quickly in such a short period of time.

Even the returnees spent 4 years...

Then again, they were not in a hurry to advance and focused more on their foundation.

The mana fluctuation of these rank 7 were not as strong as the returnees, proving that their foundation was not as stable as them.

Aside from them, Riya found out that the number of magicians, warriors, and magic warriors had increased considerably all over the Green Planet. Almost whenever she looked there would be a large number of people with mana fluctuation.

'I see, to use number in order to match up against those magic beasts.'

Even though this might not be that effective, but in order to increase their survival capabilities, the continents could only increase the number of the lower ranked magicians, magic warriors, and warriors.

This would increase the survival capabilities of ordinary people.

Even if this increase might not be much, but they also understood that as long as these people were able to cooperate together with each other, it would not be impossible for them to survive.

What awaited them would be a battle ridden world.

But this is also their world.

Everyone wanted to live.

So they were willing to work hard and listened to the continent's instruction in order to increase their strength little by little.

As for how it would be when the grand magic beasts' tide finally arrived...

Riya had no idea.

But she believed that other returnees who have experienced the grand magic beasts tide would be able to offer valuable advices for this.

Their preparation...

She hoped that it would be enough.

Riya's eyes flickered slightly.

"Have everyone else returned?" Riya asked.

The death of that rank 8 magic beast could only prove that at least one of the other returnees should have returned.

And the markings from around the gate...

Even though Riya believed that when they left such markings it meant they have left Afirer Kingdom and returned to the Green Planet, she wanted to ask for confirmation.

"Yes, everyone but Murin has returned, Miss Riya," the captain replied loudly.

"How long has it been since their return?" Riya asked carefully. She could guess that some time has passed because the rank 8 magic beast had rotted considerably. Moreover, the magic cores that was left behind on that dark land has been half buried.

This meant that these two people should have returned for quite a long time.

The markings that Samuel and Peter left behind was harder to calculate.

"Yes, Ms. Ruth have returned three months ago, Ms. Dina returned..."