

# Outside of Time

## Chapter 21: Assemble (2)

The thumping sound resounded with every fall of his step, coming closer until he was outside the bamboo gate. When the bamboo gate was pushed aside, the shocking stature of a large man stepped into the courtyard.

With his existence, the courtyard seemed to have shrunk a little, and the imposing aura of his tall silhouette spread even more. Xu Qing felt like he was facing a formidable mutated beast in a ruined city, and his pupils constricted.

“Leader, I’m back.”

The large man grinned at Captain Lei, his voice muffled. When his gaze caught the food on the table, his eyes lit up. As he came closer, he cast his shield aside and threw the mace on the ground. Thereafter, he sat down right away. A hair-raising creaking sound was then emitted from the chair, as though it could hardly support the weight. From the start to the end, he didn’t look at Xu Qing. It was like he didn’t care.

Captain Lei laughed but said nothing. Meanwhile, the large man stared at the food but didn’t lift a finger. He waited quietly.

As for Xu Qing, he looked at the shield and mace on the ground.

From the sounds earlier, he could make an elementary judgment that the weight of these two items probably... far exceeded his weight.

Not long after, amid the silence within the courtyard and the streets outside the bamboo gate, two silhouettes appeared; a man and a woman.

The man was a youth with a longbow on his back. He had a tall and straight figure, but he had a scar in the shape of a cross on his face. It looked as though it was forcefully carved by someone. While it was a ghastly sight, his eyes were particularly sharp.

As for the woman, she looked to be around thirty years old and had an ordinary appearance. However, with the full body of tight leather clothing, her figure was very hot, emitting a type of primeval temptation.

The two of them walked into the courtyard and greeted Captain Lei before sitting on the seats. After that, the youth carrying the bow shot a glance at Xu Qing as though he was examining him.

On the other hand, the woman by his side had a curious look. Her tone was a little coquettish when she smiled and spoke up.

“Leader, we were only out for a trip. How did you gain an extra child? You’re old but strong, huh, leader? Don’t tell the reason you called us here today is to let everyone know that you have an offspring but have kept it a secret from us?”

“The age isn’t right,” the burly man muttered.

Xu Qing didn’t speak. He shifted his left leg slightly away, allowing a smooth retrieval of the dagger tied around his calf. He felt a little uneasy; each of these three people who came gave him a feeling that they were very strong.

They felt even stronger than Fat Mountain from yesterday.

This was especially so for that man with the bow. He gave Xu Qing a faint feeling of needles prickling on his back.

“Barbaric Ghost, the third level of Body Refinement\*, innately born with godly strength.” Captain Lei didn’t bother with her joke. He only looked at Xu Qing and pointed at the burly man.

“Luan Tooth\*, the third level of Qi Condensation, able to communicate with ferocious beasts. The wild dogs you see at the campsite are mostly her spies.”

“Cross, the great circle of the fourth level of Qi Condensation, people within the same realm are hardly his match.” Captain Lei introduced them one after another and then pointed to Xu Qing in front of the three people.

“Kid, the second level of Body Refinement.”

As Captain Lei spoke, the expressions of the three people on the team grew much more solemn. Xu Qing sat at the side and listened attentively.

“Eat first. We’ll talk as we eat.” Captain Lei started flatly as he swept his gaze across the four of them. He then picked up a small piece of meat and ate it.

“I called you all back earlier because this year’s spring harvest has been brought forward. The camp leader has issued a mission, and it is about the seven-leaf grass. Apart from the original purchase value, the party with the most harvest will receive three clear dust pills. Its effect far exceeds that of the white pill.

“We can start harvesting in advance from the piece of land we hid in the forbidden zone. What are your opinions?” The moment Captain Lei made his speech, there was a

glimmer in the eyes of Barbaric Ghost and the other two. They looked at each other and then nodded.

Xu Qing had never heard of clear dust pills, but it was clear from Captain Lei's words that they were better than white pills, with superior effects.

"Since you have all agreed, let us prepare. The kid will follow us on our trip into the forbidden zone this time around," Captain Lei said slowly.

"Him?" The three team members turned toward Xu Qing.

Cross furrowed his brows slightly.

"Leader, the second level of Body Refinement is too weak. It will be a little inappropriate for us to take care of him on top of completing the mission."

"There's a first for everyone." Captain Lei's gaze swept past Cross, and he looked toward Xu Qing.

"Kid, decide for yourself."

"I can do it." Xu Qing nodded.

He still had five white pills in his pocket. Xu Qing didn't have a great need for the pills, but he understood that to live within the scavenger campsite, he would have to enter the forbidden zone sooner or later. If that was the case... then he could learn more by going with a team with abundant experiences.

Cross fell silent, not speaking anymore.

"Let's disperse after you are done eating. We will gather here tomorrow morning and set off!" Once Captain Lei was done, he got up and returned to the house.

Xu Qing's fork stabbed into a large piece of meat. After consuming it, he took a look at the three people and then returned to his room quickly, not wanting to stay there. Xu Qing had always stayed vigilant toward strangers from the start.

It was a night of silence as the preparatory work wasn't much for Xu Qing. Because of his habit, he was at the level where he could undertake a task at lightning speed, anytime and anywhere.

As such, the next morning, the group of five walked around the campsite under Captain Lei's lead.

Today, the sky was azure blue and the sun shined brightly.

In the air, a single eagle circled the campsite as if it was staring, and their figures attracted the attention of scavengers all around.

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This was seemingly because of Barbaric Ghost's abnormally large stature coupled with Luan Tooth's graceful figure. Some people from the group of carriages, which had arrived a few days ago, looked toward them as well.

Today, there were even more scavengers around the carriages, and it was a rare occasion for them to stand in a queue. It looked as though they were waiting.

As Xu Qing didn't head out at all yesterday, he had no idea what happened. As his gaze swept across, Luan Tooth smiled and spoke up from the side.

"I heard someone talking last night that these carriages were from Purple Earth. There seems to be a doctor with superior medical expertise there. Yesterday, he healed the leg injury of that old pervert, Lame Jackal. So, many people queued up to have their injuries checked."

"That doctor must be earning quite a bit," Barbaric Ghost muttered in envy as he heard this.

Xu Qing was envious too as he glanced from afar. The moment he retracted his attention, his gaze hardened slightly.

Not only him, but even Barbaric Ghost and Luan Tooth's eyes sharpened in that instant. Only Cross and Captain Lei maintained their usual expression. However, upon closer look, one would be able to see the coldness in their eyes.

That was because of another team gathering members ahead.

There were seven or eight of them in that team, men and women included. Every one of them emitted a savage aura.

This was especially so for one member who was an old man like Captain Lei. People were clustering around him.

His hair was disheveled, and he had a bloodthirsty look in his eyes. At this moment, he was sitting atop a stray dog's corpse and eating a raw dog leg. He then said some chilling words.

“Go find those two b\*stards, Horse-Four and Fat Mountain! How dare they be late for set off. They must be sick of living.”

It was none other than the Bloodshadow Team!

That old man eating the raw meat appeared to be the captain of the Bloodshadow Team.

His body released fluctuations of unrestrained spirit energy that caused Xu Qing, who heard these words, to squint slightly and cover the glint in his eyes.

After Luan Tooth saw the meat in the Bloodshadow Team Captain's hand and the dog's corpse under his body, intense rage and murderous intent filled her eyes in an instant. That was her dog.

At the same time, the Bloodshadow Team spotted the Thunder Team too. The old man sitting on top of the dog's corpse grinned and licked his lips, looking at Luan Tooth.

“Little coquettish hussy, the quality of your dog's flesh is not bad. I wonder what the flesh of your body will taste like.”

[1] Body Refinement seemed to correspond with Qi Condensation, but it might be referring to the type of cultivation art they practiced. The raws the author used was '14' for Body Refinement, even when he introduced the MC's cultivation level. For example, the Mountains and Seas Art that MC is practicing is one that tempers and refines his body.

[2] Luan (2) is a mythical bird related to the Chinese phoenix.

## Chapter 22: Forbidden Zone's Taboo (1)

Faced with the Bloodshadow's challenge, the killing intent in Luan Tooth's gaze grew even more intense. She then looked at Captain Lei.

Captain Lei's expression was just like usual, and he spoke up calmly.

“Cross.”

Hearing that, Cross picked up his bow without saying a word, instantly drawing it and shooting an arrow toward the air.

He was so fast that a sharp sound was created, and the arrow instantly pierced through the eagle circling in the air like a bolt of lightning. As a result, blood burst out and the eagle let out an agonizing cry, falling. With a bang, it landed on the ground between the two groups.

At the same time, the body of someone in the Bloodshadow Team shook tremendously, and he spurted out a mouthful of blood. His countenance instantly turned extremely pale.

That was his eagle. Unlike the dogs that Luan Tooth kept, he had integrated his spirit energy into this eagle to control it. Hence, because of the backlash effect, he received a severe injury. The other people in the Bloodshadow Team instantly sent out strong killing intent, but they were stopped by the Bloodshadow Team Captain. The latter slowly stood up from the dog's corpse and stared at Captain Lei instead of looking at Luan Tooth.

Captain Lei also looked at him coldly.

The two of them stared at each other for a very long time before both let out cold snorts.

"Let's go." Captain Lei said calmly and continued walking forward. Luan Tooth and the others followed behind him. Xu Qing was amongst them too.

He felt the great hostility between the two teams and thus turned back to take a look at those people from the Bloodshadow Team. He could tell that they were waiting for Horse-Four and Fat Mountain, but it was a pity that the two of them would never appear again.

Xu Qing withdrew his gaze silently and followed Captain Lei and the others, gradually leaving the campsite.

The forbidden zone didn't seem far from the campsite, but it was still a bit of a distance to go there on foot.

The group then walked for over an hour before they saw the pitch-black jungle from afar.

From the outside, this stretch of forbidden zone jungle seemed to stretch on endlessly, and it was unknown how wide an area it covered.

It was now late in the morning, and the sun was very strong. However, the jungle in the forbidden zone seemed to be a different world compared to the outside world.

They could see a tempest gathering in the sky above the end of the jungle. The many bolts of lightning that could be seen by the naked eye were especially dazzling, giving the entire forbidden zone a mysterious and dangerous

feeling

Xu Qing observed everything and quietly followed the group. On the way, no one in the Thunder Team said a word. However, as they got closer and closer to the forbidden zone, Xu Qing sharply noticed that everyone's muscles were gradually tensed up. It was the same for him.

This continued until the feeling of having stepped into a cold world appeared on Xu Qing's body, and all the warmth on his body was instantly removed. He had entered the forbidden zone.

It felt as if all the scenes he saw in the normal world had been wiped out as well.

The familiar bone-piercing chill awoke his memories of being in the abandoned city ruins and under the blood rain.

Therefore, he took a deep breath and became extremely vigilant. He instinctively grabbed onto his iron stick tightly, just like he had done back in the ruins.

What was different was that there were a lot of crumbling walls and ruined curbs in the city but here...

The trees were warped so badly that they looked like vicious ghosts, and the muddy ground was so loose that they seemed to be from hell. Also, the branches and leaves of the trees permeated out like claws and teeth covering up the sky.

However, the Thunder Team's members seemed to be very familiar with this place.

They carried their weapons on their back, and the path they took was clearly one they had often taken, with each step taken very meticulously. Some places seemed normal, but they would jump past them, and there were places that seemed dangerous, but they just walked through them.

There were also areas from which they made a detour for no reason. This continued on and they avoided all the dangers on the way.

Xu Qing followed behind them and paid attention to remember all the details.

However, he also noticed some strange things. Captain Lei didn't take the lead for the entire journey. Sometimes, it'd be Barbaric Ghost and sometimes it'd be Luan Tooth. They went in rotations.

Although they didn't progress at a very fast pace, other than them hearing some ferocious beasts' roars in the far distance, it had been quite safe.

There were some venomous bugs, but they didn't get close after Luan Tooth had lit an incense.

After they walked for about two hours without saying a word, they finally stopped beside a muddy place with silt and let out a sigh of relief.

Xu Qing noticed that Luan Tooth had taken out some medicinal powder and scattered it into the mud. Very soon, a bunch of hostile venomous bugs came out. However, Luan Tooth kept a normal expression as she swung her hand, scattering out another type of powder. After that, the venomous bugs quickly scattered off restlessly, and the muddy spot calmed down.

After completing all these, everyone squatted down and scooped up the silt with great familiarity, covering it all over their bodies.

"Did you remember the details on the way here?" Captain Lei gestured for Xu Qing to do the same while he was spreading the silt onto his body.

Xu Qing nodded and started doing the same without any hesitation. At the same time, his gaze swept past Luan Tooth. He felt that she seemed to know a little about poison techniques.

"The reason we jumped across certain places was because the leaves looked seriously decomposed yet were intact. This means that no ferocious beasts passed by them, and there are unknown factors that exist.

"The areas we crossed through were because there were ferocious beasts' feces on the ground. Living creatures instinctively choose safe areas for excretion. Therefore, it means that there aren't any excessive dangers or mud swamps that devour humans.

"As for the areas we made a detour from, it's because of Barbaric Ghost's nose. His nose is sharp and can smell the scent of some dangerous mutated beasts. You'll learn many things on this journey, so just try to remember whatever you can."



Hearing this, Xu Qing looked at Barbaric Ghost. Barbaric Ghost also turned his head at this moment and bared his teeth to smile at Xu Qing.

“As for this silt, it’s a place that our team found many years ago. It contains the shedded skin of night lizards. Not only will we be able to cover our scents after wiping them all over our bodies, but it’ll also instill fear in other creatures to a certain degree.

“The place we’re headed to is further forward. To the north is the Venomous Dragon Swamp. The different terrains in the forbidden zone jungle have been segregated into multiple areas by the scavengers. “The Venomous Dragon Swamp is one of them, but this time around, we aren’t going there.” As Captain Lei said all these, he had covered his entire body with the silt.

## **Chapter 23: Forbidden Zone’s Taboo (2)**

Xu Qing was also done. When he got up, Cross, who walked past him, despite doubting whether it was a good decision for Xu Qing to tag along with them earlier, still chose to speak out albeit with an indifferent expression.

“Pay more attention to your mutation points. The density of anomalous substances in the forbidden zone is very dense, so you must pay constant attention to it. Once the mutation goes over the limit, no one can save you.”

Xu Qing nodded. He had noticed this point long ago.

He could sense that the density of anomalous substances in this forbidden zone was extremely high, but it was a lot weaker when compared to the peak in the city ruins.

However, he had now accumulated quite a lot of anomalous substances in his body, so even though he wasn’t cultivating now, the mutation point on his arm was starting to give him a faint piercing pain just from him breathing

Therefore, he took out a white pill and put it in his mouth. He didn’t swallow it but kept it in his mouth to let it slowly melt.

Very soon, everyone was done covering themselves with the silt. They checked out each other and then continued on their way.

However, things were a little different from before. Their travel speed became even slower, and everyone had their weapons drawn.

Xu Qing glanced at their weapons.

Barbaric Ghost's weapons were a finesteel shield and a mace, Captain Lei's weapons were a pair of boxing gloves, Cross's was a longbow, and Luan Tooth took out a serrated dagger that shone with a cold gleam.

When Xu Qing had gone out a few days ago to tail Fat Mountain, he had other gains too.

Due to his sharp hearing, he had heard a lot of conversations between scavengers and learned a lot of information he didn't know of in the past.

For example, he already knew that weapons were classified into magic treasures, runic treasures, and ordinary treasures.

Amongst them, magic treasures were considered legendary and extremely rare.

Rumor had it that each magic treasure had a different degree of anomalous substances within, and the amount of anomalous substances would increase with usage, being extremely hard to eliminate. Therefore, they were practically non-renewable resources. In addition, their might was exceptional, and thus they were considered extraordinarily precious.

This led to the birth of unique existences like treasure-nurturers. They tended to be kept from a young age, using their bodies to dilute the magic treasures' anomalous substances.

Captain Lei had mentioned this in the past.

Apart from magic treasures, there were also runic treasures and ordinary treasures.

Although runic treasures were also rare, they were more attainable compared to magic treasures. Last but not least, ordinary treasures were commonly seen.

They tended to be weapons that were forged from unique materials and could be used by ordinary people as well.

Xu Qing felt that his iron stick might be an ordinary treasure, and what these people were using was clearly of the same category.

Time passed by slowly and Xu Qing followed the Thunder Team, entering deeper and deeper into the forbidden zone.

They did encounter some troubles on their way, but the troubles were nothing major. Barbaric Ghost was enough to deal with them by himself.

When they occasionally encountered some stronger ferocious beasts, Cross's bow would fire intensely.

As for Luan Tooth, her attacks were mainly spells. She seemed to be able to perform some intimidating skills that caused the ferocious beasts to pause in their movements and become less agile.

There was also once when Xu Qing attacked. He grabbed a venomous snake that shot out from behind them and crushed it.

After Xu Qing had done this, Cross also noticed during their journey that Xu Qing was able to keep up with them without making any newbie mistakes. Hence, there was less judgment in his gaze when looking at Xu Qing. He also imparted to him some of his experience.

"Kid, this forbidden zone might seem dangerous, but to us people who are veterans here, as long as we don't encounter three types of situations, we're basically safe.

"You must remember these three situations.

"The first one is the encounter of unfamiliar mutated beasts from the depths of the forbidden zone heading to the outer area. Such situations aren't common and our activity areas are basically on the outer edges.

"However, the moment we encounter one, it'll be extremely dangerous. It's because we only understand the habits and abilities of the mutated beasts on the outer edges. Moreover, the forbidden zone is too big and there are various mutated beasts in it with different abilities. If we aren't careful, we'll die.

"The second type is singing voice." At the mention of this, Cross revealed a wary expression.

"There's a saying that a singing voice appears in this place, and not a single person out of a hundred who heard the voice can survive. However, I have never heard it before. Among us, the only one in our team who has heard it is Captain Lei."

Xu Qing looked toward Captain Lei.

Captain Lei didn't say anything but looked into the depths of the forbidden zone with a hint of complication in his eyes.

"Let me talk about the third one." Luan Tooth, who was at the side, smiled and said. She took a look at Xu Qing.

“Kid, the third type of danger here is very commonly seen. It’s labyrinth fog.”

“When labyrinth fog appears, it’s like one is blinded and loses their way. Moreover, the labyrinth fog usually exists for a very long time. Once a person loses their way in here and can’t find their way out, the anomalous substances in the fog will corrode them, causing the anomalous substances in their body to gradually rise. This also tends to represent that death is coming.

“However, there are two ways to deal with this. One is fire, while the other is coming from people who were either born with or cultivated to gain strong mental energy.

“The former doesn’t tackle the problem from the roots. Although fire can drive the labyrinth fog away within a small range, allowing one to regain vision, the labyrinth fog is mysterious and it’s hard for fire to sustain for long. As for the latter, they are very rare and there might only be one in the campsite in a few decades. People like these tend to leave very quickly as they have better room for growth elsewhere.”

“There’s a fourth type of danger, and that is encountering malicious sneak attacks from hostile enemies.” Barbaric Ghost, who was leading the group, said gloomily.

Luan Tooth was about to say something. However, Captain Lei, who was looking far away, suddenly changed his expression and let out a low bellow.

“Quiet!”

At the next instant, Cross drew his bow, Luan Tooth’s eyes revealed a cold gleam, and Barbaric Ghost’s muscles tensed up. Xu Qing’s hair instantly stood up. A strong sense of danger suddenly emitted out from the pitch-black jungle in the far distance.

Very soon, streams of cold light appeared in the darkness. They were many pairs of eyes, which looked at them with indifference and coldness.

There were exceptionally a lot of eyes.

With the appearance of these eyes, many huge wolves with the size of water buffalos and black scales growing all over their bodies walked out slowly.

There were at least several dozen of them. Moreover, there seemed to be even more of them in the far distance, and the numbers might be in the hundreds.

Upon sensing that each wolf emitted the energy around the second level, Barbaric Ghost and the others’ countenances changed.

“Black-scaled wolf pack!”

"They usually only live near the boundaries between the depths and the outer edges of the forbidden zone. Why did they come here?!"

Cross's pupils contracted and Luan Tooth's face also turned a little pale.

They were very clear that although one black-scaled wolf might not be much, wolves in such large numbers would be a harsh trial for them.

Most importantly, the density of anomalous substances in the forbidden zone was very strong. If one were to deplete too much spirit energy in their bodies, they could only absorb spirit energy from the surroundings for replenishment. During the battle, they wouldn't be able to separate the anomalous substances. If that was the case, the anomalous substances in their bodies would accumulate extremely quickly and the risk of mutation would be magnified.

Xu Qing's breathing also hastened slightly. The pressure coming from the wolf pack was tremendous.

"You guys, retreat first. I'll stay here and obstruct them."

Amidst everyone's shaken state, Captain Lei spoke up in a deep voice and walked out slowly.

At this moment, a spirit energy wave that surpassed Cross's by at least a fold erupted as Captain Lei stepped forward.

The wolf pack also paused in their footsteps, all of them staring at Captain Lei.

## Chapter 24: Evil Shadow (1)

"Let's go!" Cross's gaze swept across the Thunder Team and backed off decisively. Luan Tooth and Barbaric Ghost, who were next to him, also retreated rapidly.

Xu Qing narrowed his eyes and watched as Captain Lei walked toward the wolf pack. Spirit energy burst out from all over his body and created a sense of intimidation for the wolf pack.

Xu Qing didn't move his feet but raised his iron stick slightly as a cold glimmer flickered at the iron stick's tip.

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"Kid, do you know why Captain Lei is the captain?" Cross's voice rang out from a distance after he had leaped away.

"It's not just because Captain Lei's sixth level of Qi condensation cultivation realm far surpasses ours, but even more so because of his ability to assume responsibilities and his decisive judgment in the face of danger."

The moment Cross's voice rang out, a loud boom echoed out as well.

It was a big tree that was 200 zhangs away that was broken by Cross's bow and fell to the ground.

Barbaric Ghost and Luan Tooth did the same thing as well. Many big trees now toppled over, forming a barrier. After leaving a space like an entryway, Cross and Luan Tooth didn't stop and started running once again.

Only Barbaric Ghost, who held a shield and mace, stayed behind, leaning against a big tree. He resembled a small mountain as he guarded the small path.

At the same time, Captain Lei abruptly erupted forth with strength, his hands releasing a piercing dazzle as he charged into the wolf pack.

Every time he passed through and had contact with the wolf pack, there'd definitely be flesh and blood breaking down and horrible deaths.

However, the wolf pack was too large, and Captain Lei's figure was quickly engulfed. There were only sounds of explosions and wolf howls that kept ringing out. Cross, who was in the distance, also appeared at this moment as he let out a low bellow.

"Kid, come over and meet up with us! There'll be a time for you to fight!"

Xu Qing made a call that this was the Thunder Team's battle plan and thus stopped hesitating and ran straight to where the Barbaric Ghost was at.

Barbaric Ghost grinned and pointed to the entryway behind him. Xu Qing then took a look at him and darted through the gap, chasing after Cross and Luan Tooth who were far away.

Very soon, he saw Luan Tooth, who was busy clearing up an area and using trees to put up blockage around it.

She then took out a lot of powder and scattered them on the sides. After that, she even bit through her finger and drew a diagram that no outsiders would understand on the ground with her blood.

After noticing Xu Qing, she didn't have the time to say anything and only used her gaze to gesture for him to hurry up and move.

Xu Qing glanced over and passed by her quickly without any hesitation. He continued on until he was 200 zhangs away behind Luan Tooth, and he finally saw Cross who was crouching on top of a large tree.

This tree was extremely large, as though it was a vantage point that could allow one to have complete vision over the entire battlefield. Cross, who was squatting there, watched as Xu Qing quickly got close before he spoke in a low and deep voice.

"You'll take charge of the area that is beyond 200 zhangs behind me!"

Xu Qing nodded heavily, understanding the Thunder Team's battle plan.

He swiftly moved over and when he reached the 200 zhangs range, he immediately scanned the surroundings. He didn't make any changes to the environment but hid in the slit beneath a shrub.

This was like how he had been hunting in the city ruins back then, remaining completely immobile.

At the instant he hid, an even more intense explosion rang out.

With the trees covering his vision, Xu Qing couldn't see the scene beyond 800 zhangs away. However, he could sense that the battle was very intense.

In fact, this was how it was. At this moment, Captain Lei's figure charged out from the wolf pack 800 zhangs away from Xu Qing. Even though he was at the sixth level of Qi condensation, it was hard for him not to be in a bit of a battered state when he couldn't over-deplete himself.

Thankfully, he had great control of his spirit energy. He saved half of his spirit energy and retreated toward where Barbaric Ghost was while being chased by the black-scaled wolves.

Barbaric Ghost smiled sinisterly and raised the mace in his hand. The moment Captain Lei jumped past him, he smashed the mace fiercely toward the pursuing black-scaled wolves.

Cross, who was at the highest spot, also focused his vision at this instant, suddenly drawing his strong bow.

Many arrows formed from spirit energy whistled sharply, leaving wind marks as they landed on the wolf pack to support Barbaric Ghost.

When the cries rang out once again, Captain Lei had left the place where Barbaric Ghost was and moved close to Luan Tooth. Behind him, Barbaric Ghost was alone, blocking everything like a mountain.

Just like that, Xu Qing, who had hidden himself in the slit, saw that the first to return was Captain Lei, who had dashed past Luan Tooth and Cross.

Captain Lei sped past Xu Qing and threw a glance at Xu Qing's hiding spot from the corner of his eyes. He didn't have any time to speak, so he just nodded. He then headed 200 zhangs away and sat down cross-legged as he swallowed a white pill to meditate. While reconditioning himself, he also made preparations for the next round of fighting.

This was the Thunder Team's retreat plan.

As the strongest one amongst them, Captain Lei was the first to stop the wolves while Barbaric Ghost was the second line of defense. When Barbaric Ghost was almost out of energy, he would retreat and the mission to stop the wolf pack would be left for Luan Tooth to continue, followed by Cross.

The cycle would repeat like this. This would allow them each to have their own rest time.

This was the most suitable cooperative battle method for teams in forbidden zones where the density of anomalous substances was very high.

Out of which, the ones who felt the most fatigued were Captain Lei and Cross.

The former had to spend the most time holding back the wolves and killing most of them, fighting for more time for his teammates at the back.

As for the latter, other than having to do his part in the cycle, he also had to be the safety assurance from the highest point when his teammates were retreating.

It could be said that everyone's position was very important, and the most important thing was their cooperation and trust!

"Is this what a scavengers' team is like..."

Xu Qing's gaze was firm and he continued to hide without moving. As time passed, he soon saw Barbaric Ghost panting and moving nearer.



A short moment later, he then saw Luan Tooth clutching her chest while having a pale countenance.

The last one to pass by him was Cross.

His countenance was cold and appeared normal, but Xu Qing still sensed that Cross's spirit energy had almost depleted. The densely-packed wolf pack howled and was giving chase behind him.

When Cross passed Xu Qing by, he seemed a little hesitant.

## **Chapter 25: Evil Shadow (2)**

"I can do it." Xu Qing saw the other party's unspoken meaning and said in a deep voice.

Cross didn't say anything and left. An instant later, the wolf pack came surging over.

The wind that kicked up blew past Xu Qing's face, bringing along a stench. The ten or so wolves who were at the very front had pitch-black bodies and crimson eyes that emitted viciousness and craziness.

Clearly, the first cycle of Thunder Team's battle arrangement had caused these wolves to suffer quite a bit of casualties. Stimulated by the blood, these black-scaled wolves became incomparably berserk.

At this moment, they seemed to not have noticed the hidden Xu Qing and wanted to chase after Cross.

However, the instant they got near, a dagger suddenly flew out. With a whooshing sound, the dagger pierced into the forehead of the black-scaled wolf at the very front.

It was with such great strength that the dagger instantly pierced through the wolf's head.

This black-scaled wolf let out an agonizing cry and died instantly. As his corpse landed due to inertia, Xu Qing's figure shot out like a bolt of lightning

The raven-black iron stick flashed with a cold gleam, fiercely piercing into the eyes of another black-scaled wolf, penetrating the head. After that, Xu Qing's body swung and he clenched his left hand into a fist, smashing it toward the third wolf at the back who was pouncing on him for a sneak attack.

The wolf head was instantly smashed and blood splattered all over Xu Qing.

After killing the third wolf, Xu Qing's figure moved once again.

His speed was perfectly displayed at this moment.

He was extremely agile, like a massacring rakshasa\*. He was moving through the wolf pack with an icy gaze, attacking decisively.

As the black iron stick gleamed, many black-scaled wolves' agonizing howls rang out and spread to the surroundings.

Blood from more and more wolves got onto him and his hands were also dyed red. Although it felt sticky, his grip on the iron stick was still firm. At this moment, even the color of the iron stick had turned crimson.

However, because the wolf pack was scattered, some still managed to pass by him.

Some of their claws and fangs also left marks on his body.

However, with Xu Qing's speed, he managed to charge out and somehow stopped the wolf pack. As for his injuries... his purple crystal's terrifying recovery abilities displayed amazing effects during this battle.

All of his external injuries quickly healed in a few breaths' worth of time. Even the wounds that were more serious stopped bleeding.

Because his entire body was covered by wolves' blood, other people wouldn't be able to see this clearly.

Compared to his wounds' recovery, his stamina recovery was even more terrifying. Hence, his battle prowess was sustained to a shocking extent.

Gradually, his surroundings were covered by wolf corpses. At this moment, the coldness in his eyes deepened, and his battle duration exceeded everyone else's, causing the wolf pack to show a hint of being somewhat intimidated.

When seen from afar, when the sunlight streamed through the densely-packed tree leaves and landed on his body that was covered in blood, the refracted light seemed to turn him into a blood glow.

This scene was also seen by Captain Lei who was 200 zhangs away, as well as Cross who was at a vantage point.

The two of them were shocked by Xu Qing's ruthlessness and tenacity.

“Kid, retreat!” Captain Lei suddenly said.

Xu Qing still had some strength left, but he could also feel the serious depletion of his spiritual energy.

Although the purple crystal could recover his stamina and heal his injuries, the consumption of spirit energy couldn't be compensated.

Fortunately, he was a body refiner, unlike Luan Tooth who wouldn't be able to act the moment she exhausted her spirit energy.

However, he was still affected somewhat, and this caused him to have no choice but to absorb the spirit energy from the surroundings that had dense anomalous substances in them. At this moment, the piercing pain in his arm's mutation points became increasingly intense.

Therefore, after hearing Captain Lei's words, Xu Qing didn't hesitate and immediately backed off.

The instant he did so, a black-scaled wolf with eyes that weren't completely red but had one black eye instead, leaped up and pounced toward Xu Qing.

Upon seeing this, a cold glint flashed in Xu Qing's eyes, and his iron stick transformed into a bloody arc that suddenly pierced through the wolf's head. He then wanted to continue retreating, but at this moment...

Under the spotted sunlight, he had no idea if what he saw was an illusion, but the shadow of this fallen black-scaled wolf seemed to have become distorted.

It then rapidly extended out of the ground toward where Xu Qing was at.

Right now, the sunlight on the ground was mottled and not strong, so he was unable to ascertain what he was seeing at the first instant. At the next moment, that shadow came into contact with his body.

After that, Xu Qing's body violently trembled.

An evil intent that was hard to describe wanted to invade his entire body.

However, at this moment, something happened to the purple crystal, which hadn't done anything thus far other than providing recovery abilities.

At this moment, it suddenly vibrated and a cold stream erupted from it.

With the eruption, the feeling of being invaded by evil intent instantly disappeared.

This cold stream came quickly but also vanished equally quickly, disappearing without a trace in the blink of an eye. The purple crystal then returned to how it normally was, remaining completely motionless.

Xu Qing was stunned, but he didn't have time to overthink it for now. After his body recovered, he quickly backed off. The scene earlier had happened in an instant, so neither Captain Lei nor Cross, who was far away, noticed anything amiss.

Right now, as Xu Qing retreated, Captain Lei came over. His gaze still had hints of astonishment in them.

"You've done a good job. Hurry up and go to the back to get some rest."

"The black-scaled wolves prowl the depths of the forbidden zone. They like places with a high density of anomalous substances, and the outer areas have lower anomalous substance density in comparison. Therefore, no matter why they came here, they don't like this place. As long as they aren't able to win after a prolonged fight, they'll definitely leave."

After saying that, Captain Lei erupted forth with all of his spirit energy and charged out toward the black-scaled wolves that were chasing Xu Qing.

Barbaric Ghost's figure also arrived rapidly. He had clearly been waiting at the back for a very long time, so he grew anxious. When he saw Xu Qing covered in blood as well as the countless wolf corpses not far away, he inhaled and went forward, wanting to help Xu Qing.

"I'm fine." Xu Qing didn't let Barbaric Ghost help him but turned to take a look at Captain Lei instead. He then quickly left under Barbaric Ghost's respectful gaze.

When he passed by Luan Tooth, she seemed to have received the news as well, and her gaze had a hint of shock in them when looking at Xu Qing. After giving it some thought, she took out a leather pouch and tossed it to him.

Xu Qing took it and felt the shape of alchemy pills inside. He understood what they were and thus thanked Luan Tooth. He then quickly left under Luan Tooth's gaze until he saw Cross.

Cross was on a tree and didn't make a sound. He nodded at Xu Qing with apparent recognition in his eyes.

Xu Qing didn't say anything either and gently nodded as a gesture. After he went to the very back, he found a place to sit down. He then exhaled a breath of turbid air and took out three white pills to swallow.

As the alchemy pills melted, he started to absorb spirit energy from the surroundings for replenishment.

Time flowed by, and Xu Qing opened his eyes an hour later. His mental fatigue seemed to have eased a little, but he still had a hint of perplexity in his gaze. He noticed that the anomalous substances in his body... didn't seem to be much.

Therefore, he rolled up the sleeve of his left arm. Now, the perplexity in his eyes instantly turned into shock.

To think that... he had one fewer mutation point on his arm!

However, his cultivation realm was clearly at the second level of Body Refinement. Moreover, after having experienced the killings earlier, not only was he not weakened, but he seemed to have become stronger after his recovery.

He remembered very clearly that he had passively absorbed spirit energy during the slaughter, and he had felt piercing pain from the two mutation points on his arm.

As for the white pills, it wasn't as if Xu Qing hadn't eaten them before. Their effects shouldn't be this amazing. However, there didn't seem to be any other explanations for his situation.

Other than... what had taken place in the instant the purple crystal released a cold stream.

"Shadow, evil intent, crystal erupting cold stream..."

Xu Qing narrowed his eyes and recalled the strange scene from earlier.

He was certain that it wasn't his eyes playing tricks on him when he saw a shadow coming into contact with him. It wasn't an illusion from the scattered sunlight either.

Therefore, he carefully thought back on the scene of the crystal erupting with a cold stream. It was as if at that instant, the evil intent that attacked him was washed off and absorbed into the crystal.

"Was it eaten up?" Xu Qing guessed, feeling a little surprised.

Footnote:

[1] Rakshasa is a type of demon or goblin in Hindu mythology.

