

PROTEGE 136

Chapter 136: MYSTIC MOUNTAIN: CHATTY TALKS TO BEAST

"Go," Four Eyes said again, but the little beast continued to cry instead, its eyes filled with determination.

"The beast said he wants to stay by your side and serve you," Chatty said absent-mindedly, drawing questioning looks from everyone.

Chatty himself was stunned, looking at the little beast suspiciously. The fox jumped and flew happily to Chatty's shoulder, licking his face before starting to bark again.

"Murphy, did you truly understand what the beast said?" Fatty skeptically asked, his brows furrowed.

Chatty was so scared with his newfound talent that he ran towards Four Eyes. "Chu Yan! Chu Yan! What is happening to me? I can talk to the beast!" Chatty cried, his voice trembling with fear and excitement.

Everyone laughed at Chatty's frantic state as he almost climbed onto Four Eyes' body, clutching him tightly.

"Did you truly understand the little fellow?" Four Eyes asked seriously, his eyes narrowing as he observed Chatty.

"Yes, this beast said you are his first friend and have saved his life, so he wants to be by your side all his life," Chatty anxiously declared the fox's words, his eyes wide with wonder.

The fox was once again happy. It leaped onto Chatty's shoulder and licked his face. "Stop! Stop!" Chatty yelled at the little beast, laughing despite himself as it flew towards Four Eyes, landed on his shoulder, and cozily wrapped its tail around Four Eyes' neck.

"This is indeed a well-known trait of Enfields. They are very loyal guardians, and they don't forget the first creature they befriend. They would protect them, even the remains of the person, for the rest of their lives," Shun explained, nodding thoughtfully. I read it in one of the books Ren handed me.

Chu Yan patted its head. 'I'll find a way to let go of him before we leave this place,' Four Eyes thought as he patted the little beast on his shoulder again.

Four Eyes pointed at the lizard since no one seemed to care about it. Jack was too engrossed with the little beast on Four Eyes' shoulder. He even forgot that he was reprimanding him.

"Let's roast this since we are almost out of food," Four Eyes suggested. Everyone moved to do what they were asked, their movements stiff with exhaustion.

When the little fox saw that they were going to roast the lizard, it cried out loud. They all stopped, thinking it was warning them of something, and turned to Chatty for an explanation.

Instead of getting an answer from Chatty, he yelled, "Are you crazy? We are not cannibals!" His face contorted in disgust. "No way!"

The fox cried out again, more insistently. "No! I am not telling them!" Chatty retorted. But the little fox growled, fixing Chatty with a steely gaze that made him jump and run toward Shun and Fatty.

"Tell us what the beast said," Jack demanded, his tone urgent as he peered at the fox, who was eyeing Chatty as if ready to attack. Chatty shivered under its gaze.

"This beast... he... he... said it is best to... to eat the beast's internal organs raw to make us stronger," Chatty stammered, his voice barely above a whisper.

The rest wanted to vomit as they examined the lizard in front of them. Shun turned to Four Eyes, his face pale. "Are we seriously considering this?" he asked, his voice filled with apprehension.

The fox went back to Four Eyes' side. "Is it true?" Four Eyes asked the little beast, his voice tinged with curiosity and skepticism. The fox leaped onto Four Eyes' shoulder and licked his face.

The fox then made another cry, more urgent this time.

"The blood essence is the most important, and the internal organs," Chatty informed them, his voice steadier now. However, he still clutched Fatty's arm for support.

The lizard had been cut open, and its crystal core was taken. Its blood, a grotesque lime green, made it even more disgusting to look at.

The little beast flew off Four Eyes' shoulder, landing on the lizard, and dug through its stomach. It flew back and forth, carrying the lizard's spleen and pancreas, placing them in front of Four Eyes.

Four Eyes narrowed his eyes. "Do you want me to eat this?" he asked, his voice heavy with disbelief.

The little beast yelped in affirmation, its eyes wide and earnest.

Four Eyes and the little beast stared at each other, neither wanting to be the first to give up. The beast cried out loud, turning to look at Chatty.

"Your friend said you are his savior and won't harm you. He desires to gain your trust," Chatty shakily relayed to Four Eyes.

The little beast looked at Four Eyes again and barked, its gaze unwavering.

Everyone waited with bated breath for what Four Eyes would do next.

Shun whispered to Jack, "Do you think he'll do it?" Jack shrugged, his eyes fixed on Four Eyes.

Four Eyes could tell that the little beast meant no harm and wanted to help him, but looking at the raw lizard's spleen and pancreas in front of him was truly a test of courage.

Four Eyes decided to sit in the lotus position and meditated for a while, the tension thick in the air as everyone watched him in anticipation.

Fatty muttered under his breath, "I don't think I could do it."

Finally, Four Eyes opened his eyes, nabbed the spleen, and devoured it without chewing. He then gulped the pancreas, finishing it in less than a minute. Everyone was dumbfounded, their eyes wide with shock.

They were even more stunned when Four Eyes suddenly screamed loudly in pain. Jack jumped to his feet, ready to rush to his side, but the little beast howled, shooing him away.

"He said Chu Yan is having a breakthrough. We cannot disturb him!" Chatty said excitedly, his eyes shining with anticipation.

The little beast guarded Four Eyes during his breakthrough. In contrast, the others struggled to summon the courage to eat the raw lizard themselves, the sight and smell turning their stomachs. Nicu hesitated, "If it makes us stronger, should we try it?"

Four Eyes' scream subsided as he fell into deep meditation, the little beast keeping a vigilant watch over him. The rest of the team exchanged uneasy glances, knowing that their own trials might soon begin.

Pharsa should be so proud of Chatty!

Share your thoughts and comments!

Chapter 137: MYSTIC MOUNTAIN: SOMEONE IS WATCHING

Shun was the first to step out of the group and walk towards the lizard. 'If Uncle did it, I must do it as well,' Shun thought, knowing he had more obligation to fulfill than Four Eyes.

While Shun stood before the lizard, the little beast barked. Shun glanced back at the little beast and then turned to Chatty. "The beast said you should eat the gallbladder and the liver, while the leader should eat both the big and small intestines," Chatty said.

Jack, who followed behind Shun and stood beside the lizard, wanted to vomit blood when he heard what Chatty said. 'Both the big and small intestines?' he thought, 'That's a lot!'

"What about me?" Chatty asked. The little fox barked once.

"You!" Chatty was so mad. But the little fox barked again, more insistently. It told Chatty it was not joking. He should eat the brain, which is also the smallest of all organs, while the rest could eat anything they wanted.

"What did he tell you?" Fatty curiously asked. "He told me to eat the brain!" Chatty exclaimed, his voice tinged with disbelief. Fatty laughed out loud when he heard Chatty.

"It also said everyone can eat the rest," Chatty added as he strode towards the lizard to look for the brain. 'Is it truly the smallest? Maybe I can just swallow it like Chu Yan did?' His mind felt like it was about to burst. Fatty followed Chatty.

After Chatty's first breakthrough, he realized how much his body had changed and the big difference in his fighting capability now compared to before the breakthrough. He finally decided to go all out to make himself stronger since he knew there was no turning back from their current situation.

'Since we are already in this situation, we might as well do it.' This was what both Chatty and Fatty had in mind. Looking at the lifeless beast, Chatty immediately looked for the brain. He found a two-fist palm-sized brain. Staring at it, Chatty already wanted to vomit blood.

"Chatty, what do you think I should get?" Fatty asked, his voice tinged with curiosity.

"Don't talk to me!!! Ah! I already have my own problem! Why don't you have the heart?!" Chatty loudly replied without even looking at Fatty.

"I was thinking the same. Look, it's not that big!" Fatty said, holding onto the lizard's heart. When Chatty looked at what was in Fatty's hand, he was furious. He turned to the fox guarding Four Eyes. "You said the brain was the smallest. Why is the heart smaller? You tricked me, you wicked fox!"

The fox curled up in Four Eyes' lap and adjusted its position. "But it is not good for you. Your body won't be able to endure it. You can only choose between the kidney or the brain," the fox lazily replied.

"How could you know what is best for me?" Chatty retorted, frustration evident in his voice.

"We beasts can tell almost everything about humans by looking. With my level of cultivation, I could easily tell you only had a breakthrough on the first level, and you have a weak heart," the fox said, curling himself back into Four Eyes' lap.

Chatty was dumbfounded after listening to the fox's words. Indeed, everything the beast said was true. Everyone seemed to understand that 'Enfield' was helping them.

Each one tried to do the same as Four Eyes: set their mind, meditate, and swallow.

For the next five days, the group fought stronger beasts and ate everything as the fox told them to. Almost everyone in the group had a breakthrough to their next level of cultivation.

The little Enfield stayed with Four Eyes at all times. It helped them defeat the beasts they fought by telling them how to deal with each one, which minimized Four Eyes' need to use his black magic.

While waiting for one member to complete their breakthrough, everyone opted to rest. The fox started to hop around Four Eyes, insinuating for him to follow. Four Eyes stood up and followed him.

After a while, the little beast circled around a bush with scarlet fruits hanging on it and barked while looking at Four Eyes.

"Do you want me to pick the fruits?" Four Eyes asked.

The fox barked again in affirmation. Four Eyes picked each of the fruits and stored them in his ring.

Four Eyes and the Enfield didn't realize someone was watching and following them from afar. Seated on a large tree branch, the masked person silently muttered, "This little beast is looking for trouble."

The masked figure's eyes narrowed as they observed Four Eyes and the Enfield moving through the dense forest. The figure's presence went unnoticed, their form blending seamlessly with the shadows of the foliage. The figure's attention was fixed on the pair, curiosity, and suspicion intertwined in their gaze.

As Four Eyes followed the Enfield to the bush with the scarlet fruits, the masked figure shifted slightly, ensuring they had a clear view.

They watched as Four Eyes carefully picked the fruits and stored them in his ring. 'Interesting,' the masked person thought.

The fox happily leaped and indicated for Four Eyes to follow. Four Eyes patiently followed the little beast. The Enfield then led Four Eyes to the lake.

The masked figure followed silently, their movements precise and calculated. Four Eyes was mesmerized by the scenery in front of him. The fox barked at Four Eyes, leading him to a smaller plant. When Four Eyes looked at it, he recognized it as ginseng, but there seemed to be crystallization on its leaves.

Indeed, it was ginseng, and the crystallization indicated that it was the rare, mystical 'snow ginseng.' Four Eyes knelt beside it and carefully observed.

'It's beautiful. Ling would definitely love this,' Four Eyes thought, still looking at it as if he wanted to memorize how it looked before digging it up to uproot the whole plant without damaging its roots.

Just as Four Eyes was digging the snow ginseng, the masked person narrowed his eyes; sure enough, they heard a very loud roar coming from behind the trees.

Chapter 138: THE MYSTIC MOUNTAIN: UNCLE IS MISSING AGAIN

As the roar echoed through the trees, the masked figure instinctively reached for the hilt of their concealed weapon. They watched as the Enfield flew around Four Eyes, urging him to run.

The masked figure, their presence hidden, their eyes narrowing with intrigue. 'What have we here?' they thought, curiosity piqued.

The roar and cries caught the attention of Four Eyes' comrades. Shun, Jack, and the others sprang into action, their faces set with determination.

"Uncle is missing again!" Shun yelled, his voice filled with urgency.

"Dammit! Let us find the Master! Someone stay here with him!" Jack instructed, pointing to the person who was breaking through. Jack then led the charge, his mind racing with concern for his best friend.

The masked figure continued to observe, hiding their presence from the group. 'Let's see how this plays out,' they thought, a faint smile forming beneath the mask.

Shun was the first to act, and his resolve steeled by the urgency of the situation. He raced through the dense forest, the sound of his comrades' footsteps fading behind him. His thoughts were a whirlwind as he pushed branches aside, eyes scanning for any sign of Four Eyes.

Shun raced through the forest, and his heart pounded in his chest. "Uncle! Where are you?" he yelled, his voice urgent and carried over the rustling leaves. The roars guided him, each echo making him push harder through the underbrush.

While Jack leading the rest of the group, was determined not to let his friend face the danger alone. His heart pounded with anxiety. "We have to find him before it's too late!" he shouted over his shoulder. The forest seemed to close in around them, every shadow a potential threat.

Back at the lake, Four Eyes stood at its edge, his senses heightened by the roaring danger from the forest. The Enfield's agitated movements confirmed that something fearsome was approaching. Clenching his swords, he took a deep breath, steadying himself for the impending battle.

The Masked Figure, watching the scene unfold from a distance, couldn't help but admire Four Eyes' determination. 'He's brave,' they thought, their grip on the hilt of their concealed weapon tightening.

When the soldiers finally found Four Eyes, they all had chills running down their spines and their mouths agape.

Four Eyes was in front of an enormous bear with antlers and a three-headed dragon that emerged from the lake.

"We're in trouble," Four Eyes muttered under his breath, glancing at Enfield, who was still urging him to run.

These two beasts were the guardians of what Four Eyes had collected. Every rare treasure in the mystical mountain has its guardian. The scarlet fruit that Four Eyes picked was actually in a bear's nest, and its guardian is the demonic bear; this bear with antlers not only guards the scarlet fruit but is also the guardian of the beasts in the forest. In contrast, the three-headed dragon guards the snow ginseng.

"Uncle, run!" Shun shouted when he saw the bear about to charge at Four Eyes.

Four Eyes knew it was useless to run and unsheathed his sword instead. "There's no running from this," he said, his voice steady.

At the same time, Shun, for the first time, used his fire ability and threw it towards the bear. The fireball struck the bear, making it angry and roar again, which gave Four Eyes a chance to retreat a few steps.

The next moment, the three-headed dragon shifted its body and all three heads were hovering above them.

"We have no chance against these creatures," Jack murmured, gripping his weapon tighter.

Soon, more demonic guardian beasts emerged one after the other, totally surrounding them.

A Barioth, a quadruple flying wyvern. Its body is covered with plates and spikes along its neck and tails. It has two massive orange tusks; its forelegs have deadly spikes, while its wing has three large claws.

A Displacer Cat, having a black panther's head, six legs, and a pair of tentacles on each shoulder.

The famous mythical beast Chimera has three heads of different animals. Its frontal head is of a lion, protruding from the back of a goat's body is a goat's head, and the head of a dragon is its tail.

Another beast that emerges from the water is the Ushi-Oni, also known as the 'ox demon,' a water-dwelling spider beast with the head of an ox, a spider's body, two sharp horns, a mouth full of fangs, and six legs with long claws.

Finally, a blue Azure Dragon emerges majestically roaring from the sky.

ROAR!!!

The remaining twelve soldiers could only drop their jaws, unable to move from shock.

The three-headed dragon from the lake roared and breathed fire, the intense heat washing over the soldiers. They could only bulge their eyes and wait for them to be roasted.

But a thunderous clap echoed through the sky, blocking the dragon's fire. Seven masked individuals clad in samurai armor flew in from nowhere.

Chu Yan, Shun, Four Eyes, and Fatty recognized the leader of the group. It was Otako, who had been observing them since this morning.

The Azure Dragon flying above once again roared, causing the rest of the beasts to either sit or move aside.

The Azure Dragon hovered from above and flew down, but before it landed on its feet, it transformed into a very handsome man. His handsome features would even make a woman feel inferior.

"Welcome, my good friend. What an honor to have you visit my place. Is there anything I can be of service to you?" The Azure Dragon's voice was deep and reverberating as he respectfully greeted Otako.

"I am honored to see you as well. I never thought we would meet today, but let me apologize for the disturbance my team and I caused. I sent these young gentlemen to your mountain to cultivate. However, I didn't expect them to disturb the guardians," Otako politely explained.

The Azure Dragon cast a steely, measured glance at the twelve men assembled before him, their anxious whispers barely audible over the rustle of leaves in the breeze. With an air of regal authority, he began to approach them, each step deliberate and poised. His long, azure robe shimmered in the fading light, adding an ethereal quality to his movements. In his hand, he held an exquisitely crafted folding fan adorned with intricate patterns of dragons and clouds, which he gently waved, sending a cool, refreshing breeze through the stifling atmosphere.

Chapter 139: THE MYSTIC MOUNTAIN: OTAKO IS IMMORTAL

As the Azure Dragon neared the group, the men straightened, their eyes fixated on the fan, mesmerized by its beauty and the subtle power it seemed to wield. The Dragon's gaze, calm yet piercing, swept over them, taking in each face with a quiet intensity that left them feeling exposed as if he could see straight into their hearts.

The Azure Dragon, the King of Mystic Mountain, smiled as he approached the group. His curiosity piqued, and he stopped and circled around Shun. "Fire skill, not bad," he remarked, his voice laced with a hint of amusement. Shun straightened, a mixture of pride and nerves evident on his face.

The Azure Dragon then approached Chatty, who shrunk his neck in nervousness. "Hmm, animal telepathy. Nice," the Dragon noted with a nod of approval. Chatty's eyes widened, relief washing over him.

Faced with Four Eyes, the Azure Dragon encircled him five times, nearly making Four Eyes dizzy. "Very strong black magic. Your power can be your greatest strength or could be your demise. I see you were able to make friends with Enfield. This means you have a pure heart," he observed. Four Eyes blinked but remained poker face as he always did.

The Azure Dragon approached Jack, Nicu, and Ailun and said, "No special powers, but strong bone refiners. Good." The trio exchanged glances, their faces a blend of determination and respect.

Next, the Azure Dragon encircled Fatty. "Transmission magic, but you still have a long way to go," he commented.

Fatty "????"

Fatty's eyes widened in confusion. 'What transmission magic?' he silently wondered, scratching his head.

"The rest of you need to work harder. Two months on my mountain, and yet only achieving the second level is the worst. It is an insult to my place," the Azure Dragon exclaimed, his tone sharp as he walked back to Otako's side.

Otako, amused by the Azure Dragon's revelations among the soldiers, chuckled softly. "My friend, you have been reborn and are now immortal," the Azure Dragon remarked, his voice softer. "Come and visit us often."

"Thank you, Lord Majesty," Otako replied formally, addressing him as the overall protector and crown of the Mystic Mountain.

"From an immortal like you, I don't deserve such formality," the Azure Dragon responded, his gaze warm.

Hearing their conversation, the twelve gentlemen were dumbfounded and trembled with fear, realizing Otako was immortal. They glanced at each other, their expressions a mixture of shock and awe. Some murmured among themselves, disbelief mingling with respect.

Once a martial artist achieves the highest cultivation beyond their exaltation, becoming immortal is actually a new beginning to a never-ending life, so they say the person has been reborn. Otako had cultivated both the Inner and Outer Universe to their peak and was now considered a celestial being. His cultivation was no longer limited to using True Essence but also encompassed Astral Essence and Spirit Essence.

This is why the Azure Dragon, despite his immense power, could only rely on his high cultivation and beastly strength, which was inferior to Otako's. This made him very respectful toward Otako, even in his own territory. With Otako's immense power, he could destroy the eons of space and time, asunder the heavens, and completely eradicate an entire realm. Offending Otako was the last thing anyone wished to do.

"Are they going back with you?" the Azure Dragon asked, breaking the tension.

"They will head back today on their own," Otako replied politely.

"I understand. Let the Enfield guide them back to the entrance," the Azure Dragon instructed.

"This Enfield is very mischievous, dragging one of my soldiers to take the guarded treasures of the mountain. If I were not around in time to visit them, my whole team would have offended all the guardians of your mountain and been wiped out without anyone knowing how they died," Otako solemnly expressed.

The Enfield on Four Eyes' shoulder shivered upon hearing Otako's words and shrunk itself around Four Eyes' neck.

"Indeed, he is. I apologize on his behalf. May I offer you something as my apology that you may require from the mountain?" the Azure Dragon acknowledged the Enfield's mistake and made amends by offering compensation and bowing to Otako.

"Then I shall not be polite. I am indeed in need of Azure bone, ruby coral, and ice lotus," Otako declared.

"Another from your side seems to be crossing the heavenly realm and someone soon to be reborn," the Azure Dragon said as he signaled to the three-headed Dragon. The Dragon immediately dove into the water and re-emerged with all the items Otako had asked for.

"I hope to meet another immortal with you soon," the Azure Dragon remarked, handing the items to Otako.

"Certainly. Thank you, Lord Majesty. I will take the group away and come to visit you again," Otako said gratefully.

"Then I shall look forward to your next visit. And you," the Azure Dragon said, addressing the Enfield, "bring them back to the entrance and find me to receive your punishment."

The Enfield on Four Eyes' shoulder shivered once more. The Azure Dragon instantly transformed back into its original form and flew into the air, leaving with a thunderous roar. His majestic wings caused a whirlwind that rustled the trees and sent waves rippling through the water.

As the rest of the guardian beasts departed one after the other, Four Eyes and his comrades felt a strange mix of relief and awe. They looked at Otako, their faces reflecting a myriad of emotions—admiration, fear, and respect. The journey ahead seemed daunting, but with Otako's guidance, they felt a renewed sense of purpose and determination to achieve greatness.

Otako turned to the group, his expression serious. "You all have witnessed the power of the Mystic Mountain and its guardians. Remember this experience. It will serve as a valuable lesson in your cultivation journey," he said, his voice resonating with authority and wisdom. The gravity of his words hung in the air, echoing in the minds of the twelve men.

The twelve men, on the other hand, felt their knees turn to jelly. Fear and awe mixed in their eyes as they processed the enormity of what had just transpired. Each man exchanged nervous glances, the reality of their situation sinking in. The memory of the Azure Dragon's presence and the sheer power of the guardians they had encountered left a lasting impression on their hearts and minds.

Chapter 140: THE MYSTIC MOUNTAIN: LET'S HEAD HOME

Shun, gathering his courage, stepped forward. "Thank you, Grand Commander," he said, bowing deeply, his voice filled with reverence. The others quickly followed suit, showing their respect and gratitude. The synchronized bowing of the men was a powerful display of unity and respect, and their heads lowered in deference to Otako's wisdom and leadership.

Otako's gaze remained earnest as he looked at the group. "Remember, strength is not just about physical prowess. It is also about wisdom, discipline, and the purity of your intentions. Continue to cultivate these qualities, and you will find true power."

As Otako's words sank in, the group felt a renewed sense of purpose. They straightened their backs, their expressions shifting from fear to determination. With Otako's guidance, the weight of their journey and the challenges ahead felt a little lighter.

"Grand Commander," Fatty said, his voice trembling slightly, "we will work harder and strive to meet your expectations. We won't let you down." Though shaky, his words conveyed a genuine resolve that sparked a similar sentiment in his comrades.

Otako nodded approvingly. "I believe in your potential. The path of cultivation is long and arduous, but with perseverance and a steadfast heart, you will achieve greatness."

The men felt a surge of inspiration, their spirits bolstered by Otako's faith in them. They exchanged determined glances, silently vowing to rise to the challenge and honor their Grand Commander's teachings.

"Chu Yan, come forward," Otako called.

Four Eyes obediently walked forward to Otako's side. However, the Enfield, sensing the gravity of the moment, fled with fear and perched on Jack's shoulder. Four Eyes' mind was racing. 'Why does this touch feel so familiar?' he wondered.

When Four Eyes stood next to Otako, Otako held his hand, opened his space ring, and took out the scarlet fruit. He divided it into two, handing most of the fruit to Four Eyes and keeping the rest for himself.

"Shun," Otako called.

Shun's scalp tingled when he heard his name. Eventually, he strode forward and stood beside Otako, his heart pounding.

Otako then handed Shun the rest of the scarlet fruit. Four Eyes, on the other hand, was still deep in thought. When Otako held his hand, the touch was so familiar. He couldn't shake the feeling of familiarity, which made him think of a person: His wife, Ling Li.

But Four Eyes' thoughts were disrupted when Otako called his attention, "Chu Yan, finish the fruit with Shun immediately." He ordered.

Four Eyes and Shun obeyed and started to eat the fruit. The moment they swallowed, an intense, searing pain surged through their bodies. Four Eyes dropped to his knees, followed by Shun. Their bodies hurt so bad that it felt like they were going to explode. That is because each and every muscle, tendon, and bone is being totally destroyed and crushed by the scarlet fruit before it will reconstruct them to a new and much stronger level and enhance their overall blood and vitality.

"Stay strong," Otako's voice boomed. "This pain is the key to unlocking your potential."

"You," Otako pointed at Jack, "assist him and never leave his side until he finishes his breakthrough."

"Yes, Sir!" Jack immediately went to Four Eyes' side and helped him sit in a meditative posture. "Hang in there, buddy," Jack whispered, his voice full of concern.

"You, and you," Otako called Nicu and Ailu, "do the same with him," referring to Shun. The two instantly went to Shun's side, too scared to even say a word to Otako.

"The rest of you, wait for them. Then you may go back to the entrance. You have all shown courage and determination today. But remember, true power comes not just from strength but from wisdom and humility. Continue your training with these lessons in mind," Otako stated.

The group nodded, their resolve renewed. They bowed once more before Otako, who gave a final nod before disappearing into the forest, his figure merging with the shadows.

Everyone felt their hearts stop beating in front of Otako and was relieved that he was gone.

"Otako is too scary!" one of them whispered.

"Otako is immortal! Damned!" another added, shaking his head in disbelief.

"Did you see that Azure Dragon turn himself into a human?" one of the soldiers marveled.

"Can you turn yourself into a human?" Chatty asked the Enfield.

"Not yet; only level five and above beasts can," the Enfield replied.

Everyone waited for Chatty to interpret what the Enfield said.

"He said only level five and above can transform into a human. What about you? What level are you?" Chatty said and asked the Enfield again.

"I'm only level three; leveling up from level three to four takes so much time and effort," the Enfield said. "The two masters would have waited several more years to break through to level four if they were not given the scarlet fruit," the Enfield explained.

"Why? What does the scarlet fruit do?" Fatty asked, curiosity evident in his voice.

"Did you see how much they were in pain after consuming the scarlet fruit? It improves the whole body by increasing the vitality of your blood; it also strengthens the muscles and bones by destroying and crushing every single one of them and reconstructing it to a new level," the Enfield explained.

Chatty was so impressed by what the scarlet fruit could do. "Oh! Wow, it is that powerful."

"Now, you know why it is guarded," the Enfield nonchalantly said, then went to Four Eyes' lap and curled himself.

"Tell us what he said!" Fatty urged Chatty.

"Oh, " Chatty forgot that his companions needed him to translate for them. He relayed everything Enfield said.

"Wow, it is that powerful. That is why Master Chu Yan was facing the guardians," one of them commented, his voice filled with awe.

"We are truly lucky to have survived this ordeal. If Otako hadn't arrived, how could we have a chance against those guardians?" another added, shaking his head.

Shun woke up from his meditation after three days, while Four Eyes took five days. Their auras had changed a lot from before. They felt stronger, more resilient, and ready to take on any challenge.

Jack was truly happy for his best friend, tapping Four Eyes' shoulder. "Welcome back, Buddy, and congratulations on your breakthrough. Now, let's head home, everyone!" Jack happily announced, and everyone cheered.