



278 Shadow Monsters

"Prepare the left-wing. We will attack as soon as it lands on the ground. Clear all the tracks and hide in the branches!" Alfred shouted his order to his men, who were now preparing for an incoming shadow monster. **1**

Above them, a huge black monster was flying. It resembled a lizard in appearance but was enormous. It had two wings on its back with featured bones on them, flapping. However, this monster wasn't alone. Behind it were another three shadow monsters with the same appearance but smaller sizes.

All of a sudden, these monsters appeared earlier. Just when they were investigating, these monsters caused havoc and fear to the people below, who were members of the expedition team. But as Alfred, an experienced leader of this one, was able to bring their morale back, he stood before them and ordered what they needed to do.

Even though they were still ignorant of what these monsters could do, they were still preparing their defenses to not let them easily get them.

"So far, they are still not landing. They were just flying above us as if they were observing us."



Alfred mumbled with Brian beside him, thoroughly observing the creatures above.

"I can't sense any cultivation base from them."

"Me too," Alfred responded. "I think they are at least stronger than us. We must prepare."

"That's what we are doing." Brian sarcastically answered, then went back to his squad. The Maliban squad had already prepared, with a formation they commonly do in their training. Brian smiled, seeing how snappy they were.

The surrounding pressure was getting heavy as well. The people, waiting for the shadow monster to attack them, were too tense. For them, fighting an unknown monster like them could be hard since they were not the best team in White Lead. There was a reason why they were sent here, but this wasn't what they were expecting.

In the records, this area just had Master Spirit Realm cultivation base, but it was wrong as those shadow monsters were higher than they were expecting since they couldn't assess their real cultivation.

However, despite the pressure, they were still confident since the number they had was above 50. With that number alone, composed of cultivators from Warrior Stage cultivators to

Master Stage, they thought they could defeat such monsters.

"Now, we just don't know what their goal was..."

"Monsters don't have intelligent minds."

"You underestimate them too much."

Grah!

It was a deafening sound. Just when they were casually talking, the shadow monsters started moving in their direction.

"Divide their attention," Alfred ordered.

Everyone knew the drill. They separated their attention with ranged weapons, and as they successfully did it, Alfred's group had the strongest.

Meanwhile, Brian's squad got the second-biggest monster.

The shadow monster started flying down straight towards them with wind gathered from its speed. And as they had gathered as a target, they had enough confidence in their formation. Once the shadow monster almost had them, they all moved sideways for it to miss. Then, they gathered their Qi into their weapons and launched an attack on it.

There were smiles on their faces as they thought



that it was a success. However, they were bewildered to see that physical attacks had no affliction. They became silent for a moment, and as the shadow monster's mouth hit the ground and returned immediately to its senses, they were nervous for a second.

"Don't be fret! That is just a monster. Fill your bodies with Qi and perform a technique that has some imagery. In that manner, we might have a chance!"

Everyone nodded. They did what Brian ordered them to do. They gathered their Qi and then directed their techniques at the shadow monster that was trying to look for them. They attacked synchronously. It was a splendid one, and it was amusing to see how they looked so coordinated.

But... they still failed.

"What?" Brian asked himself, seeing that no one was able to injure the monster. "Is this really an embodiment of shadow? How will we be able to injure this monster?"

Grah!

They were startled by that screech, and as the monster counterattacked, they had no way to defend themselves.

Boosh!

"Wahh!"



Clouds of dust were created as the monster pounced at each of them, hitting them physically but not able to harm them back by any means of physical attack.

Screams from each direction reverberated through the whole forest. Such an event could be normal in an expedition, but not all the groups in the expedition team. Everyone was frightened, fighting for their lives as they had no way of hurting the monster. They had no other ideas for defeating such monsters.

"W-What kind of monsters are these? Physical attacks don't work on them, so maybe light affinity attacks might work!" Brian shouted, but, Alfred had already thought of it. Thus, he had his subordinate with a light affinity attack target the monster.

"Hey, you know anything about defeating darkness affinity, right? Try hitting that screeching monster. Maybe we've got a chance."

"Understood."

[Spirit Light Sword]

Slash!

The man dashed to the monster while everyone was distracting it. He was able to slip through and slash the legs, and a white line was created on the legs. Alfred, seeing it was delighted, and



gained an idea of what to do with the monster. However, his face started to become sour when he saw the white line slowly disappear, and at the same time, the monster stopped.

The monster then slowly turned its head and faced the man. The man froze in his position. Fear had already taken over him. And as the other tactics of taking the monster's attention worked, he was fated to die.

"NO!"

He closed his eyes, and just after a second, his head flew. The monster swung its tail at him, killing him in an instant.

Alfred and others witnessed it. They couldn't make any words out of it, as what just happened was fast, and he didn't expect that it would just take him like that to die. It was his idea, and also the only way to inflict damage, but it seemed that the monster was smart enough to see his weaknesses.

'Shit. We can't be worried about just one death. We need to survive.'

While his body was visibly alarmed, Alfred's mind was making some critical thinking about making decisions that would benefit the team. Since they already knew that physical attacks didn't work on these monsters, as if they were



just shadows, what they needed to do was to at least enhance their defense since the attacks of these monsters were just physical attributes.

"Everyone, gather. We will protect each other until I finish this call."

"This is the only way I could think of. Dig a way out, or try to resist their attacks until reinforcement arrives."

And thus, everyone moved according to his words. He also took out his jade slips and also a warning talisman that could contact the capital directly.

"These monsters' attacks were just basic physical attacks. I can't see anything that uses Qi, so we should be okay for a few hours."

Using array formations written on talismans, once they finally gathered, they tore their talismans to activate the array formation. For a second, they got to breathe. However, one person wasn't calm, and it was Brian.

"Brother, Brother Alfred is missing."

And just as he heard it, Alfred paused and looked around.

'Don't tell me he died from that clash? What a pity. I was really interested in making him White Lead's asset, but this is just his potential... But,



how did he die?'

"He is still not dead." Brian blurted out, surprising Alfred as if he had read his mind. But Brian just knew that Alfred was thinking that way as his face started to be gloomy.

"He has disappeared since earlier before the shadow monsters arrived," Seva remarked while helping the average members of the team who were injured.

Alfred took note of it and his eyebrows furrowed.

"Why?"

"That is the question. We can't find him, so why did he disappear?"

"Maybe he got lost or he didn't follow us when we heard the explosion. Don't think of it negatively. These monsters gathered and distracted on us. They won't go to the settlements and cause destruction. For now, let us wait for the reinforcements. I have already contacted the capital."

Everyone nodded and followed what Alfred said. They used their time to calm down and waited for the reinforcements. But an hour had already passed, and the talisman they got was decreasing. It might not be enough to protect them until the reinforcements arrive.

"Why are they late?" Alfred gritted his teeth as he took out the jade slip once more and tried to send a direct sound message to the capital. But, he was cut off, making his eyebrows furrow again.

"What is wrong, Brother?"

Alfred tilted his head in frustration. "The capital is not responding to my calls. Just earlier, they were able to receive my calls, but now, they couldn't get anything from me."

"Well, that is because no one will ever come here to help you." Just as a voice resounded, everyone's attention was dragged to one person who was floating above them.