



## 298 The Expedition [3]

"At a very young age, I need to learn what kind of weapon is used for a situation. To help my father run the weapon shop, I studied different weapons to sell them appropriately with the right knowledge. But, it didn't end there. I continued studying them until I got interested in wielding them at all, and then went on a journey to be a mercenary. Just after that, I realized, that everything is not everything, I still lack. I needed to learn more, to know my limits. That's all." 1

Lucas's squad, inside their tent, started talking about their lives, getting to know each other without judging each other's personalities. Everything had a reason, which they needed to learn before jumping to conclusions. That was why, as David was the last person to share about his life, he couldn't help but cry.

"I have an easy life, yet I acted arrogantly in front of you just because I am good with different weapons. I am sorry for that."

The expedition had pulled them closer, not just emotionally, but also mentally. They started to realize that they needed to mature and that what they knew wasn't enough. And because of that, as Lucas was listening to their words, he couldn't help but sigh inwardly. Their

experiences were insignificant in comparison to his, but what was he feeling? It was as if he felt sympathy for them as if the pity life they suffered from was different from him.

Lucas faced death multiple times, but why did it feel like he didn't face one for him to be a pity on them? Privilege? Opportunity? He didn't have one, and he fought for them to have them, so what was the unnecessary feeling for?

'What a shame... I thought I changed, but why does it feel like I have become weaker than before? What is the reason behind this? I want to forget it.'

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Everyone was unaware that he had left their tent. He cast an illusion that would make it appear that he was still sleeping, when in fact, he was already at the peak of the mountain, dashed through different trees, then flew up here.

The scenery at the peak seemed like a desolate sect. There was only one pavilion, but the area around the peak seemed to have had a sect before. There were walls and even a gate before he could enter. And just as he stood there, with the vines blocking his path, he floated and passed through them. He went straight to the pavilion that gave off the vibes of a haunted place.

The red paint on the pillars was already old. There were cracks on the walls of the pavilion as well as the cemented ground within the premise. The pavilion was tall enough to be a five-story building.

He turned his eyes to his surroundings. He was mesmerized by how he was still feeling fine even after the chaotic Qi touched him.

'It was indeed true. The density of Qi in this area is harmful. There was the presence of monsters inside the pavilion, and some unknown essence in this place. Furthermore, the density doesn't indicate any good quality; it wasn't even a clean one. When they combined them all, the Qi in this place became chaotic, unable to be cultivated by any cultivators, and harmful if they stayed longer. The exposure would harm their bodies as well, so the presence of the pavilion doesn't make sense. How was it created, and why was it created?'

Without even noticing it, Lucas almost used some time to have some thoughts. Realizing it, he immediately entered the pavilion and inspected it.

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As soon as the sun started to peek, Lucas returned to the tent, just right on time when his members were waking up.

They prepared for the day, then eventually left. The result of their journey this time was as usual: there were monsters, but they were able to defeat them easily, and the terrain became less problematic than before. There were fewer huge roots, and the land wasn't slippery, despite the fact that it was near the peak where the altitude was high.

The scout team started talking, with their topics more about studying the things they would notice in the pavilion.

Now, since Lucas knew what the pavilion looked like, he couldn't help but disagree with the expectations the scouts had. It was as if they were fantasizing about the pavilion for something extraordinary, divine, and mystical, when in fact, it was just a usual, unconditioned pavilion that had been left behind by humans. There was nothing special about the appearance of the pavilion, but there was something inside that would surely attract people's interest.

"What do you think the pavilion will look like? I mean, the whole appearance of the pavilion from the outside. What do you think? Would it be beautiful?"

"Rather than talk about the appearance, won't it be better if we talk about what we can discover in the pavilion? The red sky is the priority of this



expedition, so we need to find an answer to this phenomenon."

"Yeah, it does really take the interest of people. What is the reason behind the red sky, and what are its causes and effects? Will it affect us for good or for bad? This expedition will find that answer, so we had better be prepared."

"Alright, then, let us try to answer the biggest question: Why didn't the people who discovered the pavillon study the place? What is the reason behind it?"

"I don't know... Maybe there was some that caused them to stop, or maybe there were some records that have been lost that until now we still can't find, which was the reason why we are confused like this."

"That is reasonable. Then, the next question is, if the peak was the cause of the red sky, do you think there was some kind of treasure above there? Is this an effect of a treasure being born? We all know that concentrated Qi and materials give birth to most treasures. They are naturally built treasures that can be used without using most of the owner's Qi."

"We are getting away from our topic. But, that is possible as well. I cannot say that is impossible since, with every birth of a treasure, something unusual happens. The most common is a huge



fluctuation in the surrounding area, followed by unexplained changes in weather conditions. That is possible, so this red sky could be one of them."

"So, that would put the argument of those protesters about the red sky being harmless."

"What do they know? They were already given the chance to explain it, but they couldn't, since all of their claims were speculation, as if they knew everything that happened. What a pretentious being that doesn't even help the prosperity of our land."

"Don't be that harsh. But, what if they just don't have the evidence? That is why they couldn't explain it further? Well, that is just a headache for us. Let's ignore it. What is important is the expedition."

Lucas stopped listening to them and returned his attention to their path. What he just listened to was a bunch of absurdity. They might have been reasonable at some point, but they were far from reality. Now that Lucas knew more about the pavilion, he couldn't care more.

The next day arrived again, and as they estimated by their speed, they arrived at the peak sooner than the initial plan.

'Silent ghost place, with only the cracks of our footsteps could be heard. The breeze of the wind

seemed suspicious, and the fog that built up here covered our tracks. Furthermore, the pressure of the chaotic state of Qi in this place touched our skins just after we passed that gate.'

"Was this place a sect in the past? Why are there walls and gates?"

"If this was previously a sect, then explain why there was only one building here. How could you explain that?"

"Well, it is difficult to build a building here, and it was a surprise that a pavilion was built. That was why, in the past, they got less interested in it since there would be no notable to get from a harsh place where no one would dare to live."

Lucas almost scoffed. The person who talked sounded so smart, but he was wrong. The more harsh the place was, the more it would be attractive to people who sought power. There was a difference between the normal people and the cultivators. While most of the cultivators tried to train in a place where they could nurture, those who were crazy for development searched for harsher places to grow more and nurture faster than others. That was the difference between them, which the scholar didn't know.

'What a fool. He tried to end the curiosity of people by creating a conclusion that could be



easily accepted by everyone. If I was it, it would be better if I tried to explain more why it wasn't making any sense for others to share their ideas. Those ideas can be helpful in this cause!

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