

Versatile 1221

[Versatile Mage](#)

Chapter 1221: Eliminating Zhang Qihu

Mo Fan immediately suppressed the Shadow Mages that were naively trying to seal his movements, infuriating Zhang Qihu even further.

In the pitch-black darkness, no one had noticed a petite figure moving silently to the members of the Golden Battle Hunters that were kept prisoner. She was able to remove the strong magic binding them with some unknown method.

Xu Pingdong, Yang Bao, Fei Shu, and the others were set free. They immediately cast Advanced Spells at the traitorous soldiers they were holding a huge grudge against!

“What happened!?” Zhang Qihu turned around and saw his men being ambushed.

“Someone has set the Hunters free. Leader, we should ask General Shi for backup!” a soldier exclaimed.

“Useless pricks, how is it that we can’t handle a few Hunters and a few kids!?” Zhang Qihu yelled.

He was staring at Mo Fan. He charged at Mo Fan fiercely, like a rhinoceros wearing thick stone armor, moving at an insane speed. He was somehow able to see where Mo Fan was in the darkness.

“You’re dead for sure!” Zhang Qihu laughed hollowly.

Mo Fan needed some time to use Blink. Zhang Qihu had found Mo Fan hiding in the darkness through the vibrations on the ground. He was quite confident that the young man had no time to use Blink.

The impact when Zhang Qihu rammed into Mo Fan was shocking. It instantly disintegrated Mo Fan as he froze in astonishment.

Zhang Qihu skidded a long distance away from the momentum before finally coming to a stop. He turned around to take a look at Mo Fan’s remains. Even a person wearing magic Armor was unlikely to survive the impact!

“How is that possible?” When Zhang Qihu turned around, he only saw clouds of black smoke scattering in the air.

There was no sign of Mo Fan’s blood or remains. The thing he rammed into was just a shadow clone!

“Scum, die!” Mo Fan had silently come up on Zhang Qihu’s side. Dark lightning was coiling about his arms.

Zhang Qihu was startled, then burst out laughing.

“Do you seriously think you can penetrate my rock armor? You’re the one that’s going to die!” Zhang Qihu stood disdainfully, as if daring Mo Fan to attack him.

Mo Fan did not say a word. The lightning coils on his arms gradually grew stronger, and fired a Silent Deadly Ray at Zhang Qihu's chest!

When the lightning with a twelvefold damage multiplier transformed into a ray of light, even Advanced Spells had no chance of stopping it. The lightning swiftly penetrated the rock armor protecting Zhang Qihu's chest; the unstoppable lightning ray punctured his chest too!

Zhang Qihu spat out a mouthful of blood and fell backward. The Silent Deadly Ray had left a scorched hole the size of a fist in his chest. His eyes were wide open even after he fell to the ground. He could not believe it!

The Earth Element was supposed to have a strong resistance toward the Lightning Element; why did the lightning still manage to penetrate his defense!?

"Not dead yet? You're pretty tough!" Mo Fan looked down at Zhang Qihu lying on the ground.

Zhang Qihu was twitching. The Silent Deadly Bolt had not fully punctured his body, yet it had left him with serious injuries.

Mo Fan had no intention of letting the man live. As he clenched his fist, fire engulfed his hand and rapidly turned into a fiery sword...

"Leader!" Lao Yin recklessly rode a gust of wind and dashed over to Zhang Qihu when he saw the man's life was in danger.

Mo Fan did not even bother looking at Lao Yin. His other hand emitted a silver light as he indifferently swung his arm in Lao Yin's direction, like he was chasing a fly away.

A strong force of the Space Element struck Lao Yin and sent him flying.

Mo Fan raised the fiery sword and stabbed the bloody wound on Zhang Qihu's chest.

The flames dug into Zhang Qihu's hardened body. The flames of Ardent Sunset were strong enough to burn the rocks on the Burning Mountains to ashes; they would soon devour Zhang Qihu's body and reduce him to dust!

Zhang Qihu cried out in agony. The pain of his organs being turned into ashes when his flesh was still intact was unbearable. He could easily tell that Mo Fan was not planning to kill him straightaway. Mo Fan wanted the man to suffer before his death!

"Be a good man in your next life, don't be scum," Mo Fan spat coldly.

Mo Fan inserted more scorching flames into the fiery sword. The flames surged wildly inside Zhang Qihu's body. They eventually exploded, killing the man on the spot!

Zhang Qihu was thinking of avenging his brother, yet he too died a horrible death...

"Leader!" Lao Yin's eyes reddened. He charged forward like a wild beast.

The female lieutenant was making her way over, too. It was obvious that Zhang Qihu's death had infuriated them.

“Aren’t you two loyal? Unfortunately, you weren’t able to distinguish right and wrong. You have taken the side of the evildoer, which makes you guilty too!” Mo Fan glanced at the two lieutenants. Lightning was flickering wildly on his palm.

“Sky Lightning Claw!” Mo Fan targeted Lao Yin. The lightning sprang forward ferociously, and tore the man and his magic Armor to pieces. His blood sprayed and his flesh scattered across the ground.

The female lieutenant was startled. Her heart was filled with terror when she looked at Mo Fan again!

How was it possible for such a young Mage to possess such overwhelming strength? He was an Advanced Mage just like them, yet they could not survive a single attack from him!

Mo Fan looked at the female lieutenant, Huang Yi, and said, “Since you’re a woman, I’ll grant you a gentler death.”

Huang Yi had no intention of sitting and waiting for her death. She clenched her teeth, prepared to have a final showdown with Mo Fan...

Suddenly, a Flying Creek Snow Wolf pounced on Huang Yi from behind. His fangs bit her in two.

Her upper body was inside the Flying Creek Snow Wolf’s mouth, while the other half with blood pouring out fell limply to the ground.

The Flying Creek Snow Wolf did not want to waste its food. He swallowed the lower half of her body after gulping down upper. His mouth covered in blood, the Wolf even gave Mo Fan a smile.

Mo Fan was left utterly speechless.

He bet the female lieutenant was feeling some strong hatred for him prior to her death. He had just promised to grant her a gentle death, but she ended up being bitten in half. It was not Mo Fan’s fault either, as he never knew the Flying Creek Snow Wolf had such a weird fetish of treating bad women like that.

“Go wash your mouth, and don’t ever eat humans without my permission again!” Mo Fan said disgustedly when the Flying Creek Snow Wolf was trying to come closer.

“Awooo~” The Flying Creek Snow Wolf seemed excited, but when he saw Lingling looking at him with disgust too, he immediately realized he had done something wrong. He obediently went to the side to rinse his mouth. He spat out the remains that he had just eaten and buried them somewhere.

The truth was, humans didn’t taste that special at all...

After taking out the stronger Mages among the enemy, the remaining soldiers no longer posed any threat once the members of the Golden Battle Hunters joined the fight. The rest of the soldiers were mostly Intermediate Mages. They could not possibly do anything after they were suppressed. Mo Fan and the Flying Creek Snow Wolf eliminated half of them, Jiang Shaoxu subdued around ten, and a bunch of them were trapped by Mu Nujiao’s plants. The rest were taken out by the angry members of the Golden Battle Hunters.

“You guys are too kind,” Mo Fan looked around the basin and realized the Golden Battle Hunters had left many of the soldiers alive.

“We should let the army decide what to do with them. We just needed to kill those that tried to resist,” Xu Pingdong said.

“Brother Mo Fan, I have not been impressed by many people in my life, but you have definitely impressed me the most, apart from our leader!” Yang Bao blurted out excitedly. His eyes were brimming with admiration.

“I did hear that the strongest participant in the World College Tournament has Double Innate Elements, and every Element he had was incredibly powerful. I didn’t believe it at first, but I do now. I bet only Mages at the Super Level and above can stand a chance against you!” Fei Shu added.

The group had all seen how Mo Fan faced more than a hundred soldiers on his own. Not only did the Advanced Mages not stand a chance against him, even the spells cast by the squads of soldiers failed to do any harm to him. The man had also killed experienced soldiers like Zhang Qihu, Huang Yi, and Lao Yin as if he was slaughtering a few chickens!

“They weren’t that strong. They were trying to abuse their numbers, yet numbers don’t really make any difference to me,” Mo Fan said.

Mo Fan was not afraid of being overwhelmed by numbers. The abilities of his six Elements allowed him to fight against huge groups of Mages with ease!

The greatest threat among the enemy had been Zhang Qihu. The man was a strong Advanced Mage, his strength equivalent to the Ice Mage that attacked him on the street in America since he had a unique Domain. However, Mo Fan had already had the strength to defeat that Ice Mage back then, so now that many of his Elements had improved significantly, he had no problem taking Zhang Qihu out!

“Where are Ge Ming and Zhang Xiaohou?” Mo Fan asked Xu Pingdong.

“They were brought into that passage. They were looking for the Earth Pistil,” Xu Pingdong pointed out.

“They should have some special way to keep in contact. The people inside are most likely aware of what happened here. Zhang Qihu isn’t scary, Shi Qianshou is the real threat to us. That guy is a Super Mage, even Ge Ming struggled to take him on.”

“Leader was set up by Tong Zhuang and Zheng Tong. He is definitely strong enough to face Shi Qianshou. Mo Fan, we know how capable you are, but Shi Qianshou is a lot stronger than these soldiers here. It’s going to be difficult for you to save the others alone. I believe we should save the Leader first, since he’s the only person that could take on Shi Qianshou,” Fei Shu said.

“Yeah, we’ll head inside and act according to the situation,” Mo Fan agreed.

“What should we do to them?” Jiang Shaoxu glanced at the soldiers that were left alive.

“That’s why I said it’s better to just kill them all. Otherwise, someone has to stay to look after them,” Mo Fan said.

The soldiers felt a chill running down their spines after hearing his words. The young man seemed approachable and dignified, yet he had shown them no mercy with his words. He had no intention of sparing their lives. Even they did not kill the members of the Golden Battle Hunters immediately after subduing them!

Chapter 1222: To Eat One's Own Bitter Fruit

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In the pitch-black underground, a few Light Mages were tossing Brilliant Lights into the distance to light the place up.

The jagged rocks were like the fangs of monsters, like they were inside the body of an enormous creature. The path was sometimes narrow, and sometimes wide.

"It's not far from here, you promised me that you would let them go. You better keep your promise, or you will never find the Earth Pistil!" Lin Feili snapped.

"You should know that I'm only interested in the Earth Pistil. Is it just ahead on the pile of rocks that look like fangs?" General Shi Qianshou's eyes flickered. He did not bother concealing his greed and excitement.

"Let them go first," Lin Feili said.

"The Earth Pistil, where is it?"

1 "There."

"Go retrieve it for me. How do I know if you aren't trying to trick me?" Shi Qianshou might be greedy, but he was as cautious as always.

Lin Feili went over to the rocks helplessly. He cautiously deactivated the layers of magic formations on them.

A brown-yellow light rippled as soon as the magic formation was deactivated. A pistil like a piece of rock slowly opened above the jagged rocks. Its fragrance and aura immediately caused countless dark lotuses to blossom in the underground.

"No wonder there's an oasis here! I should have known, I should have known, HAHAAH!" Shi Qianshou was on the verge of pouncing on the Earth Pistil like a beast.

He would soon have his own city with the Earth Pistil. Who would dare to criticize him? Who would dare to threaten to bring him to trial at the military court because of the things he had done? He would be the law in the city!

"General Mu, just wait a little longer, I'll definitely make you pay for forcing me into this!" Shi Qianshou went forward and grabbed the Earth Pistil.

As soon as he touched the Earth Pistil, a part of it wilted instantly. Shi Qianshou quickly withdrew his hand and snapped furiously at Lin Feili, "What just happened?"

"I don't know either. I've already brought you to the Earth Pistil, Let them go," Lin Feili replied.

Shi Qianshou ignored Lin Feili. He began to inspect the Earth Pistil with his will.

He was enraged after some time. He glared at Lin Feili and yelled, "This Earth Pistil is about to wilt soon. It doesn't contain much energy; you tricked me, how dare you trick me!"

Shi Qianshou grabbed Lin Feili's arm. A deadly poison spread rapidly through Lin Feili's body. His hand and arm rotted in an instant from the poison!

"Do you have any idea the price I paid just to get this thing? Both you and the old captain deserve to die, everyone that opposes me deserves to die!" A poisonous aura burst out of Shi Qianshou's body. Even the rocks were corroding because of it.

Lin Feili was unable to resist the poison. Shi Qianshou continued to torture him.

Shi Qianshou knew torturing Lin Feili would not help. The energy in the Earth Pistil was depleting. He had to find a way to replenish it. Otherwise, it was no different than a wilted flower!

"You all are willing to pledge your life to me to build our kingdom, am I right?" Shi Qianshou stood above the rocks and said to his men.

"Yes, sir!"

"To build our own kingdom!"

"All hail General Shi!"

The soldiers responded. They were all in high spirits. It seemed like they were not following Shi Qianshou because of their personal gains. They had been brainwashed by the man to a certain degree!

Zhang Xiaohou felt angry and sorry for the soldiers when he saw how passionate they were in following the greedy General.

Soldiers were obliged to obey the orders of their superior, but if their superior was abusing his power for personal gains and ambitions, he was basically committing treason. This Shi Qianshou had completely lost his mind in his pursuit of power. He was leading the soldiers into a deep abyss of sins!

"Very well, we are only one step away from achieving our goals. Brothers, it is time for you to sacrifice your lives generously. You will replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil with your unyielding spirits! I promise you I will carve your names on the gates of the city that I'm about to build!" Shi Qianshou suddenly switched his tone. He sounded terrifying and evil!

Zheng Tong, Tong Zhuang, and the rest of the soldiers were startled. They did not understand what Shi Qianshou was saying.

They understood only when countless poisonous insects suddenly flew out of Shi Qianshou's body and landed on them!

Shi Qianshou was planning to use their lives to replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil, even though they were his subordinates!

The poisonous insects carried a deadly poison with a strong anesthetic effect. The soldiers standing closest to Shi Qianshou were soon staggering as if they were drunk. The poisonous insects that Shi Qianshou released entered their bodies through their nostrils, ears, and mouths...

The poisonous insects were only the size of a thumb at the start, but when they burst out of the soldiers' stomachs, they were as big as a human fist. The swollen insects flew toward the Earth Pistil under Shi Qianshou's control.

The poisonous insects self-detonated above the Earth Pistil. The energy obtained from the lives of the soldiers sprinkled on the Earth Pistil. The wilted part of it gradually recovered!

"This...this..." Zheng Tong was dumbfounded.

"Those with a higher cultivation will provide the Earth Pistil with more energy! Zheng Tong, I promise you that your name will be carved above everyone else's!" Shi Qianshou stared at Zheng Tong coldly.

"I don't want to die, I don't want to die, General, please, please spare my life... AHHH!"

Cries of agony echoed in the underground passage. Countless poisonous insects flew toward Zheng Tong. The man was trying to hold the insects back with his magic, but the poisonous insects soon infiltrated his body. Huge insects burst out from his stomach and flew toward the Earth Pistil... they were like bees collecting honey, except they were using a much crueler method.

Zheng Tong did not die instantly after the poisonous insects burst out of his stomach. There were insects crawling out from his eye sockets too...

He had actually believed in Shi Qianshou, especially after the man had told him recently that he could enjoy any woman he wished once they were able to construct their own city. He could have fun with a few, or more than ten women every day. He had never thought Shi Qianshou was such a devil. He never wanted to share prosperity with others. His subordinates were actually worthless to him, just like the people that he had killed at the relay station!

"He has completely lost his mind!" Ge Ming swore. Even Ge Ming felt sorry as he watched the soldiers falling to their deaths.

The poisonous insects were prioritizing those with higher cultivation and stronger auras. Since Zhang Xiaohou and Ge Ming's cultivation was sealed away, the poisonous insects did not target them straightaway!

"Quick, run!"

Lin Feili, still covered in poisonous blisters rose to his feet as Ge Ming and Zhang Xiaohou were slowly waiting for their turns to die.

Lin Feili's cultivation was not sealed away, but he was fully subjected to Shi Qianshou's poison. Shi Qianshou had completely lost his interest in Lin Feili. He left him on the side and let the poison consume him. To Shi Qianshou's surprise, Lin Feili was still able to run at an incredible pace prior to his death. He quickly grabbed Ge Ming and Zhang Xiaohou with his almost completely rotted hands and ran toward the other exit!

Shi Qianshou was so busy controlling the poisonous insects that he was not paying much attention to Lin Feili. It gave Lin Feili a chance to bring Ge Ming and Zhang Xiaohou to the narrow exit.

“Just follow the path and you will soon find a way out. You have to stay alive at all costs and let the outside world know what happened here...” Lin Feili brought them to a narrow passage. However, he did not go any further. He straightened up and blocked the path with his body.

“Lin Feili!” Zhang Xiaohou did not have much strength left. He tried to drag the man with him, yet his effort was in vain.

Lin Feili’s body was falling apart from the poison. His arms had fallen off now, as he used too much force. The wounds were full of poisonous blisters. Shi Qianshou’s poison was indeed terrifying...

Poisonous insects were approaching the passage. They wildly dug into Lin Feili’s body and continued their way toward the exit through the gaps. They had no intention of letting Zhang Xiaohou and Ge Ming go.

“Tell the outside world what happened...” Lin Feili set himself on fire. The flames devoured him and blocked the passage, burning the poisonous insects that tried to get past him to death.

Zhang Xiaohou’s eyes reddened after watching how Lin Feili was unwilling to give up until his death!

“Shi Qianshou, I’m going to kill you!” Zhang Xiaohou screamed in a hoarse voice, yet he had no choice but to go flee, using the light emitted by the fire consuming Lin Feili as a light source.

The light gradually faded away. Ge Ming and Zhang Xiaohou were supporting one another as they fled. They did not dare to turn around.

The two of them were trying to control their emotions. They had an urge to turn around and fight Shi Qianshou with all they had, but they knew Lin Feili’s sacrifice would be in vain if they died too!

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The cries of agony never stopped. The soldiers were not as lucky as the two that had escaped into the tunnel. They were killed by the man they trusted the most in the cruelest way. Their dreams of being able to act as they pleased were destroyed; they were covered in the poisonous insects that drained their life away. They were filled with pain, anger, and hatred that they would never be able to vent, even if they turned into vengeful spirits!

However, it was meaningless to learn the truth at the last moment. The man that had given them their dream showed no pity at their deaths, as if the Earth Pistil was the only thing in life. His eyes were brimming with passion and excitement as he watched the energy of the Earth Pistil being replenished!

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Chapter 1223: Adding Hail to Snow

Mo Fan was controlling a sprout of flame ahead of himself, lighting up the tunnel lined with jagged rocks, like fangs on the walls.

He gradually picked up a terrible scent and heard faint and intimidating cries coming from deeper in the tunnel.

“The path diverges here, which way do we go?” Mo Fan looked ahead and asked.

"We don't know." As they were speaking, they heard soft footsteps approaching from one of the paths.

Two familiar figures supporting one another came out.

The light shone on their extremely pale faces.

One of them had bloodshot eyes.

"Houzi!" Mo Fan blurted out in joy when he saw them.

1 "Brother Fan!" Zhang Xiaohou quickly went up and hugged Mo Fan tightly, like an injured younger brother.

Mo Fan could feel Zhang Xiaohou's surge of emotions.

He was not injured, yet the sorrow in his heart was pouring out.

"What's wrong?" Mo Fan comforted.

"That asshole Shi Qianshou, he killed everyone inside!" Ge Ming swore.

Ge Ming told them what happened in the underground space.

Everyone gasped after hearing it.

How vicious was this Shi Qianshou?

He had brought at least two hundred people with him, yet he had killed every single one of his men just to replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil.

How twisted would the man's heart have to be to do such a thing?

Mo Fan did not expect to stumble into such an evil general.

He was relieved that Zhang Xiaohou was fine.

"Help, help, help me!" A man in a military outfit staggered towards the group from the edge of the light.

The man had run all the way to the crossroad.

He felt like he had found his savior when he saw there were others.

"It's Tong Li!" Ge Ming's eyes turned cold as he stared at him.

Zhang Xiaohou was extremely angry with him, too.

He had pretended to come to the desert with the others and abused Lin Feili's kindness leading Shi Qianshou here and forcing Lin Feili to hand over the Earth Pistil.

If he had not pulled those strings, none of this would have happened.

He totally deserved what had happened to him!

Mo Fan knew it was Tong Li that had betrayed them.

His eyes flickered coldly and disdainfully when he saw the man asking for help.

A huge cloud of poisonous insects showed up behind Tong Li, chasing down the man who had escaped.

Tong Li's cultivation was not weak.

He managed to escape and reach the crossroad.

He was around a hundred meters away from Mo Fan and the others.

"Save me, please, I'm willing to tell you everything as long as you help me! I will plead guilty, I'm willing to be put on trial at the military court!..." Tong Li yelled.

Mo Fan glanced at Zhang Xiaohou.

His friend was quiet, a hint of disgust in his eyes.

Mo Fan waved his hand.

A silver light swiftly formed a wall in the tunnel to block the poisonous insects.

However, Mo Fan was not trapping the poisonous insects.

Tong Li slammed into the wall too!

"Don't, don't do this, please!" Tong Li's eyes were wide and filled with terror.

Tong Li could no longer move forward.

The poisonous insects easily caught up to him.

They watched as the tiny insects attached themselves to Tong Li and dug into his body.

Tong Li's face contorted.

He slammed his fists on the wall, trying to break through it, but Mo Fan did not budge.

Tong Li's movements slowed down as he became feeble.

Some bloated poisonous insects had burst out of his stomach and returned into the cave, beating blood-covered wings.

"Let's leave this place. We are all done for if the poisonous insects come out now," Ge Ming said.

Ge Ming needed some time to recover his energy.

He would not be able to face Shi Qianshou for the time being.

They still would have trouble defeating Shi Qianshou even after he replenished his energy.

The man had killed two hundred of his own men with ease!

They could not afford to fight Shi Qianshou now.

It was better for them to leave the desert and tell the army what had happened here.

The army would deal with him.

“Mm, since everyone is alright, we should leave as soon as possible. Otherwise, that madman is going to turn us into sacrifices too,” Jiang Shaoxu said.

The group did not dare stay any further, and immediately headed for the exit.

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They regrouped with the rest of the members of the Golden Battle Hunters at the relay station.

They had left the soldiers at the relay station.

They had nothing to do with the life and death of those soldiers.

They followed the same way back.

The journey was easier compared to when they came in, but everyone had a heavy heart.

Who would have thought they would stumble into a mad general when they were only planning to come for an expedition.

Luckily, most members of the team were still alive.

They did not suffer any great losses!

The team left as quickly as possible.

They did not bother to preserve their energy when traversing the Meandering Sand River.

Not long after they reached the Meandering Sand River, they suddenly heard something like a dull clap of thunder from the desert behind.

The blue sky was suddenly covered by a brown, blood-red cloud of dust.

They could no longer see the sand dunes and the rocks.

The thick cloud of dust was like the storm of an apocalypse sweeping at the horizon.

“Is he able to control the Sandstorm Demon Locusts?” Mo Fan blurted out in surprise.

“I believe he’s only able to lure the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. He did mark the two girls with poisonous seals so the Sandstorm Demon Locusts would attack them. The relay station was wiped out because he purposely lured the Sandstorm Demon Locusts over. He doesn’t have full control over the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. No one does,” Lingling said.

“Did we just make a huge mistake?” Jiang Shaoxu glanced at the sky behind her uneasily.

Shi Qianshou was a strong Super Poison Mage.

If they allowed him to hold onto the Earth Pistil, wouldn’t it simply turn him into a devil in the desert that killed people like scything wheat, considering how he was trying to control the Sandstorm Demon Locusts?

“It’s not our fault. Even if we didn’t go to the desert, do you think Shi Qianshou was going to give up on finding the Earth Pistil? If we allow Shi Qianshou to have access to the energy of the Earth Pistil,

together with his private army, who knows what sinful things they might do. At least we know the guy has lost his mind. We just need to notify the army to avoid further casualties,” Ge Ming said.

“Yeah, Shi Qianshou is most likely going to become stronger. If we stayed behind and tried fighting him, no one would ever find out the truth!” The group did not act on impulse.

After all, Shi Qianshou was a general. Anyone that was promoted to a general would surely possess remarkable strength.

It was a relief that they were able to escape from the desert. They had to notify the Tarim Basin Fortress.

If they did not deal with Shi Qianshou as soon as possible, it was going to be a disaster!

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The group finally made it out of the desert after a few days. The terrifying cloud of dust behind them was no longer visible. However, the group was not relieved yet. Shi Qianshou would not let them go so easily.

He now had the Earth Pistil. He would surely try everything he could to replenish its energy, including a crazy massacre. The Tarim Basin Fortress was built with gray-white rocks. It was the scale of a city, with a population of around a few hundred thousand people.

There were lots of ore veins, factories, and towns that focused on generating energy with wind and light within a hundred kilometers of the fortress.

The towns were located in the safe zone. The Tarim Basin Fortress would appoint squadrons of soldiers to guard the towns every week, preventing the demon creatures in the desert, mountains, and caves from invading them.

The area was not peaceful. There were usually two or three ambushes every month. Every town was protected by a barrier similar to the Tarim Basin Fortress. The workers and Mages were safe from the demon creatures as long as they stayed within the barrier.

The group went straight to the Tarim Basin Fortress. Zhang Xiaohou was a soldier, so he easily made his way into the fortress. The others were worn out, but they all waited at the entrance, hoping the army would immediately send out a wanted order to arrest Shi Qianshou!

Zhang Xiaohou made his way straight to the Commanding General. Every town nearby was guarded by a General. After all, lots of resources were needed to maintain a city. Each of the towns that the Tarim Basin Fortress was protecting was able to provide the energy needed for around six second-tier cities, including the barrier protecting them!

“General, Commander Zhang Xiaohou from the Qinling Mountains is asking to meet you in person. He says he has something urgent to tell you,” a Communications Officer said.

Currently, there was another General seated at the table, and the rest were Commanders. However, most of them were responsible for commanding and communications in the army. They were not Battle Commanders. Two advisors were seated beside General Mu Da, their faces stern.

"We have yet to learn the reason behind it. Our first priority is to evacuate the workers, townsfolk, soldiers, and the Mages trapped in the emergency bunkers. They have been trapped for three days. They will soon run out of food and water. Many were injured too. They are going to die without medical attention," a female advisor said.

General Mu Da harrumphed coldly,

"Do you think I'm not trying to save them? However, if we don't find out the reason and drive the Sandstorm Demon Locusts away, every man that we send to Anjiao Town is just going to die. It has been three days, yet we still have no clue about what happened. We can't even communicate with the people in the town. You are all good-for-nothing!"

"General, Commander Zhang Xiaohou of the Qinling Mountains is asking to see you," the officer repeated.

"What the hell is the Commander of the Qinling Mountains here for? I'm busy!" General Mu Da snapped.

"But he said it's something urgent..."

"How urgent could it be? Is it more important than saving the lives of ten thousand people that are trapped in Anjiao Town!?"

"Err... sure, I'll ask him to wait."

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Chapter 1224: The Fallen Town

Mo Fan was waiting for Zhang Xiaohou at the entrance. He soon saw Zhang Xiaohou coming out with a grim face.

"What happened? They didn't believe you?" Mo Fan asked.

Zhang Xiaohou's words had a certain weight, since he was a Commander. Normally, a military court would attend to the matter right away. Even if they were unsure if Shi Qianshou was guilty, they would still dispense some men to investigate.

"It's not they don't believe what I say, but I didn't even have a chance to say it. The Tarim Basin Fortress is facing something worse," Zhang Xiaohou said.

"Something worse? Is there anything worse than that devil getting his hands on the Earth Pistil? Shi Qianshou is completely out of his mind. He even killed all his men without any mercy. If he leaves the desert, many innocent people are going to die!" Ge Ming exclaimed in agitation.

"We can't really blame the army. I've already asked around. It turns out that Anjiao Town was invaded by the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. The Sandstorm Demon Locusts are circling the sky above the town and the lands nearby. Luckily, a patrolling squad saw what happened in time and asked the people in the

town and the ore veins to evacuate to the underground bunkers. They managed to avoid a huge number of casualties, but right now over ten thousand people are trapped underground, and are running short on food, water, and medicine. They didn't have time to transport the supplies into the bunkers. The food and supplies are gone because of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts!" Zhang Xiaohou said.

"Seriously? Aren't the towns protected by a barrier? Why would the towns be invaded so easily... did it have anything to do with Shi Qianshou?" Xu Pingdong asked.

Zhang Xiaohou shook his head, "It happened three days ago. We were still in the desert, and Shi Qianshou still hadn't got his hands on the Earth Pistil."

"It's seriously adding hail to snow. Shi Qianshou is still on the loose, and now the Sandstorm Demon Locusts are stirring up chaos. It's impossible to kill all the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. If the army sends soldiers to attack the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, they will most likely be wiped out, even if they managed to save the people," Ge Ming said.

The Sandstorm Demon Locusts had always been a huge threat in the west. The barriers had significantly lowered their threat. They initially thought the towns could develop in peace, but something so terrifying had still happened so suddenly!

As long as the Sandstorm Demon Locusts were still around, there was no way they could build a city nearby. The lands would be left barren, and the Sandstorm Demon Locusts would eventually spread across the entire Tarim Basin and the places nearby. More places would become barren since fewer people were willing to stay around. It was an endless cycle.

The army at the Tarim Basin was trying to use the fortress as a foundation to develop the nearby towns with the resources that were available. The army was aiming to build a modern magic industrial city. However, the Sandstorm Demon Locusts had easily overwhelmed the barrier that they thought was secure. All their efforts over so many years were in vain!

"The only relief was, there aren't many casualties yet. However, if the people in the town die, most people are going to move away from the Tarim Basin Fortress. This resource-rich land will be listed as a dangerous zone not suitable for humans to live on. The military of the west has invested lots of manpower and funds to develop this area. Many soldiers have sacrificed their lives, but the Sandstorm Demon Locusts are about to ruin it all!" Zhang Xiaohou let out a sigh.

The Tarim Basin Fortress had always been a huge focus of the army in the west. The demon creatures were overpopulating and the number of Mages was limited. Humans had been giving up their territories over the years. The human territories had been shrinking slowly, especially in the west. They had no choice but to compromise when facing the unstoppable demon hordes.

The Tarim Basin Fortress was like a war that the humans had declared against the demon creatures, trying to take back their land. The attempt to build a safe zone and construct a city in the west was a huge breakthrough. It would be extremely meaningful if they succeeded!

However, the Sandstorm Demon Locusts had ruined it just as everything was on the right track!

A town had more than ten thousand people. If all the towns were invaded, the Council would immediately call off the plan, as they would not risk the lives of tens of thousands of people just to construct a city. It was too dangerous, and no longer worth it to put in extra funds and manpower...

"That's very serious... but Shi Qianshou is a huge threat too... I'm just worried that he's going to run away..." Jiang Shaoxu said.

The others fell silent.

Zhang Xiaohou had the urge to tear Shi Qianshou into pieces when he was leaving the desert, but his rational side was telling him that the safety of Anjiao Town was more important than Shi Qianshou now. If the Tarim Basin Fortress did not find a way to resolve the danger, they would not have the time to deal with Shi Qianshou!

The group heard some footsteps coming from the entrance. A female soldier with a huge bust was coming out with a woman in the uniform of an advisor, followed by a few high-ranked Commanders.

The two women were discussing something. The one with a huge bust glanced at the entrance and caught a glimpse of Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou, who felt extremely familiar. She quickly took a closer look.

"Sister, give me a second," the female soldier with a huge bust said to the advisor, and she walked toward Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou.

Zhang Xiaohou and Mo Fan lifted their gazes when they saw someone approaching...

For some reason, Mo Fan thought the woman's bust looked somewhat familiar. When they saw the handsome yet feminine face of the woman, they were both astounded.

"It's you!" Mo Fan was the first to speak.

"The two brothers in hardship, it's been a while," the female Commander with an alluring figure said smilingly.

"Li Man, aren't you in charge of the Dongting Lake? Why are you here in the west now?" Zhang Xiaohou said.

"Dongting Lake is well taken care of. The army is only doing daily routines there. There are more opportunities here in the west, so I requested to be transferred here. I have been here for a year and a half. I didn't think I would bump into you both here..." Commander Li Man glanced at Zhang Xiaohou before looking at Mo Fan. She smiled, "You're a famous person now, little caveman."

Mo Fan could only look awkward.

He was living like a caveman back when he was called the Deathbringer of Dongting Lake while getting rid of the aftereffects of using the Demon Element. He stumbled into Commander Li Man, who had gone to the Dongting Lake to investigate the place. They even worked together to kill some ferocious demon creatures.

Li Man had a deep impression of Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou. They were only Intermediate Mages back then, yet they were daring enough to provoke a Commander-level creature. They were utterly reckless.

Li Man had been following the news about them since then. She knew Zhang Xiaohou had joined the army in the Qinling Mountains and Mo Fan was representing their country in the World College Tournament. Without any surprise, both of them had earned a great reputation despite their young ages...

“Li Man, we are running short on time. You shouldn’t be wasting more time on catching up with your friends,” the middle-aged female advisor said calmly.

“Sis...oh, Advisor Shao, I’m running short on men. I was hoping these two could lend a hand. They are both reliable,” Li Man said to the strict-looking female advisor.

An advisor was on par with a General in terms of military rank, thus she might have a say in the matter regarding Shi Qianshou, too. Zhang Xiaohou never thought he would stumble into Advisor Shao of the fortress here, and it turned out that she was Li Man’s elder sister!

“Were you the one that reported Shi Qianshou’s betrayal?” Advisor Shao came over and asked.

“Yeah, he has turned against the army, and he now has the Earth Pistil. He is using innocent lives to replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil. He has killed around four hundred people by now...” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“I know how urgent it is, but we have to save Anjiao Town now. Don’t worry, we have zero tolerance for betrayers,” Advisor Shao said.

“Li Man, how could you rely on two outsiders to help us? Feel free to waste your time here. We’ll be going first. Advisor Shao, we should make our way to the camp as soon as possible!” a Commander behind Advisor Shao said.

Advisor Shao nodded, and did not talk any further. She led the Commanders and left the entrance. She must have been appointed to command the army on the front line.

Li Man hesitated for a moment. She looked at Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou and asked, “It’s pretty urgent, I was given the mission suddenly too. If you two are willing to help...”

Zhang Xiaohou looked at Mo Fan. He was obviously letting Mo Fan decide.

Mo Fan said helplessly, “If we don’t resolve the danger that Anjiao Town is in, the army wouldn’t have enough men to deal with Shi Qianshou. The longer it takes, the trickier it will be to track him down. We can help you, but we hope you can let the advisors and the Generals know how urgent it is. That Shi Qianshou is a huge threat; we have to take him down!”

“Mmm, come with me then,” Li Man smiled.

“They are coming with us. They are pretty strong too,” Mo Fan pointed at Mu Nujiao, Jiang Shaoxu, and Lingling.

“I recognize them. These two must be representatives of the national team too!” Li Man said.

The people of the Golden Battle Hunters did not join them. They were overwhelmed by fatigue after everything they had gone through.

Ge Ming was not in good condition, either. He was the strongest in the group, thus Shi Qianshou had made sure he was well taken care of. He would have to rest for a few days to regain his strength. However, Ge Ming also promised that he would lend them a hand as soon as he recovered.

“Li Man, shouldn’t you tell us what’s going on first? I thought every town was supposed to be protected by the barriers. It’s unlikely that the Sandstorm Demon Locusts could break it down so easily!” Zhang Xiaohou asked on the way.

“That’s what bothered us the most. There’s no way the Sandstorm Demon Locusts could just bypass the barrier,” Li Man said helplessly.

“We’ll have to go to the town to learn the truth,” Mo Fan said.

“Mm, the only problem is, the Sandstorm Demon Locusts have fully occupied the area. It’s extremely difficult for us to enter their territory. We’ve lost contact with the people in the town too!” Li Man sighed. “My sister has been here for more than ten years! She is determined to turn this place into a safe zone, a city in the Tarim Basin. Who knew things would all go south within a night... if anything happens to the people in the town, everyone’s efforts will be in vain!”

[Versatile Mage](#)

Chapter 1225: The Army that Faced Destruction

A dark brown cloud filled the sky. The ground was trembling from the sound it made. Countless Sandstorm Demon Locusts loomed over the place, like a storm hanging low in the sky, only a thousand times scarier!

The town was not very big. It had a few main streets with houses, factories, and buildings densely packed together. They were built with the sturdy stone found in the west. They had yet to end up as the Sandstorm Demon Locusts’ food.

However, the windows of these houses were gone. The strong vibrations had shattered every French window and the glass of the windows, mirrors, and cabinets to pieces. The streets were in a total mess...

The underground bunkers were located under the buildings on every street. The buildings were currently filled with the Sandstorm Demon Locusts without even the slightest gap between them. The Sandstorm Demon Locusts seemed to have picked up the scent of humans hiding underground. They were trying to break through the entrances of the emergency bunkers.

“Why aren’t they leaving yet? Are they seriously not giving up until they reduce us all to bones?” a tired middle-aged man behind the entrance said.

Battlemages were on standby close to the entrance. They took turns guarding while the others slept on the ground, preserving as much strength as possible. However, there were only slightly more than a hundred Battlemages behind the door. How would they stand a chance against thousands, or even tens of thousands of demon locusts?

The dim hall behind the Battlemages was crowded with trembling workers and residents. Their eyes had lost all their light after being constantly tortured by fatigue and fear!

"Can we make it out?"

"I don't know," the Battlemage replied.

Some burst into tears upon hearing the response. There were cries of kids, women, and even men.

"Li Qing, can't you say something nice? What the hell is 'I don't know'?" a soldier beside him snapped furiously.

"I don't feel like lying to them. It's extremely difficult for the army to fight the Sandstorm Demon Locusts that are going to just keep coming. It has been three days, they couldn't even get in contact with us. We all know how terrifying the Sandstorm Demon Locusts are. The army won't give up on us, but I don't believe they can save us, either. As long as the Sandstorm Demon Locusts are still around, we are all going to die," Li Qing tried to sound as calm as he could, even though he was panicking.

"Is he being serious?" an old man asked.

The rest of the soldiers fell silent.

"I'm an old man, so it doesn't matter if I die, but my granddaughter is only eight. You must make sure that she lives, I'm begging you!" the old man pleaded.

"Old man, we can't even protect ourselves."

"The food and water will only last for two days. Let's just pray that the Sandstorm Demon Locusts will leave on their own."

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Fifteen kilometers away from Anjiao Town, soldiers were swiftly building a temporary camp behind a natural wall of rocks.

The camp was nothing fancy. It was just to prevent the Sandstorm Demon Locusts nearby from finding them.

Four troops of soldiers were dispatched here, each troop consisting a thousand soldiers and led by a Commander. Advisor Shao was in command of them.

Li Man was assigned to a special force established not long ago. She had less than fifty people under her lead. It mainly consisted of Intermediate Mages and above. Li Man was put in charge of the squad.

Mo Fan and his crew followed Li Man to the camp on the front line. Mo Fan saw an army in dark red uniforms heading toward Anjiao Town.

The terrain they were at was slightly higher. They could clearly see Anjiao Town located down in the basin. However, the black Sandstorm Demon Locusts were like a dark tornado that had originated from a different world. It was looming over Anjiao Town and the whole area within ten kilometers. The town

was as tiny as a lonely island on a pitch-black ocean. It would be devoured by the huge waves at any second!

"It's...it's bigger than the Sandstorm Demon Locusts we encountered in the desert!" Mu Nujiao blurted out in astonishment.

"A troop of a thousand Mages is only like a little raft in the black ocean. Are they going to be fine entering the territories of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts so recklessly?" Zhang Xiaohou said.

"There's no other choice. The food and water in the bunkers in Anjiao Town are only going to last for another two or three days. Advisor Shao has to do something. However, the situation isn't as grim. The troop only consists of Fire Mages. The armor they are wearing has nodes for Star Orbits. If they cast their spells together, they can form a fiery barrier similar to the barrier of a town. The barrier will burn any Sandstorm Demon Locusts that come close into ashes. It's the only reliable method we have come up with. They will bring food and water into the town and find out why the barrier has failed to protect the town," Li Man said.

"They will soon reach the Sandstorm Demon Locusts."

"Mm, is that barrier really going to work?" Mo Fan's heart sank when he saw the troop of soldiers stepping into the devil's nest.

He looked at Li Man and asked, "What's with the barrier of the towns? Tell me the details."

"A barrier is essential for the construction of a city. Without it, there's no way a city could survive in a land crawling with demon creatures. This basin had a red danger level as soon as the Sandstorm Demon Locusts first showed up. The Council asked every person, city, and soldier to evacuate, but General Mu Da invented a fire barrier that could block the Sandstorm Demon Locusts from the fortress. With it, the Tarim Basin Fortress was able to expand further and build a few towns around it to extract the resources that are available..." Li Man explained.

"These Sandstorm Demon Locusts are afraid of fire, right?" Mu Nujiao asked.

Li Man nodded and said, "Fire is what they are scared of the most, so the fire barrier has guaranteed the safety of the towns for people to reside in, even though they were once listed as dangerous, but..."

Li Man glanced at Anjiao Town, surrounded by the Sandstorm Demon Locusts.

"Are there Sandstorm Demon Locusts that aren't afraid of fire?" Lingling suddenly asked.

"That's impossible; all Sandstorm Demon Locusts are afraid of fire!" Li Man said confidently.

Mo Fan shuddered as soon as he heard Lingling's question. He immediately took out the Rock Crystal from the storage of his Space Element.

He had received the Rock Crystal from the mutated Sandstorm Demon Locust before he left the Burning Mountains. He had a feeling that something was not right, but when he realized something, a chill instantly ran down his spine!

"Huh, Mo Fan, that's a crystal you got there; why is there something inside it?" Jiang Shaoxu said.

Mo Fan did not respond. He pinched the crystal into pieces.

The crystal cracked open, exposing the thing that Jiang Shaoxu had noticed inside it. It was an insect with an odd shape. The insect had been dead for quite some time, but they could still tell that it had died while it was still in the egg!

“Why...why would the crystal have an insect that hasn’t been born yet!?”

“Is that a Sandstorm Demon Locust? A Sandstorm Demon Locust that hasn’t been born. It’s already dead...” Li Man exclaimed in surprise.

“Brother Fan, why do you have the Sandstorm Demon Locusts’ egg?” Zhang Xiaohou asked.

Mo Fan did not answer the question. He dragged Li Man toward the main camp.

Li Man was utterly confused, but she could tell that it was something bad just by looking at Mo Fan’s expression.

The others knew Mo Fan rarely showed such fear, and quickly caught up to him.

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Ten kilometers away from Anjiao Town, the deafening sound was messing up with the soldiers’ minds.

Luckily, they were using the nodes on their armor to maintain the fire barrier protecting them. Otherwise, they would not have had any chance to cast a single spell while being constantly harassed by the sonic wave.

Commander Fan Liang was leading the team. He seemed a little irascible, yet he had motivated countless soldiers to fearlessly charge into the front line with the same face. He had made worthy contributions repeatedly over his career.

“Don’t be scared, I have fought against these bugs for almost ten years. As long as we have the barrier, they are just going to wet their pants and run away. Charge, the people of the town are waiting for us. Our troop is going to be praised by every person in the west!” Fan Liang yelled at his men.

They were currently approaching the edge of the tornado of Sandstorm Demon Locusts. As soon as they set their foot in, thousands of Sandstorm Demon Locusts would be lunging at them.

“Repeat after me, We are fearless!”

“We are fearless!”

“We are unstoppable!”

“We are unstoppable!”

The troop of a thousand soldiers continued to move forward. They were carrying life-saving food and water as they approached the devil’s den.

The retreating path was no longer visible. Their vision was fully covered in darkness. The lonely town was swaying in the 'tornado' of the demon locusts.

"Fan Liang, Fan Liang, please respond. Retreat at once, retreat at once!" A soft distorted voice came from Commander Fan Liang's communication device.

Fan Liang was struggling to hear it clearly. The noise produced by the wings of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts was just too deafening.

"What did you say? I can't hear you. Don't worry, we are going to accomplish our mission. My troop never fails our mission!"

"I say retreat! Retreat!" the seriously distorted voice was screaming.

"We will not fail, we will not hand over our Tarim Basin Fortress that we've put so much effort in to these filthy, greedy, disgusting bugs!" Fan Liang declared seriously.

"Re...retreat!"

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The signal was cut off. All they heard were piercing screeches.

Up on the observation tower fifteen kilometers away, Mo Fan, Li Man, Advisor Shao, Zhang Xiaohou, and the other three Commanders were staring at the troop with wide eyes. They were watching the Sandstorm Demon Locusts slowly devouring the soldiers...

"Where...where is the fire?" a Commander sobbed.

Advisor Shao stood there, her face extremely pale. Her eyes were bloodshot.

"Why didn't the fire barrier work? Why!? Why!?" a devastating cry echoed in the camp.

Mo Fan looked into the distance. He saw the Sandstorm Demon Locusts diving at the soldiers of the vanguard troop, he watched the insects turning the soldiers into piles of white bones.

Perhaps he could have prevented the tragedy from happening if he had realized the rocks on the Burning Mountains were actually the eggs of the mutated Sandstorm Demon Locusts!

[Versatile Mage](#)

Chapter 1226: Food Preferences

"It's the mutated Sandstorm Demon Locusts... we saw how the Sandstorm Demon Locusts were diving at the Burning Mountains every night. They were doing it to select the mutated ones, so they could mass reproduce..." Mo Fan said numbly.

The place fell silent, yet everyone felt like there was some sound echoing in their ears. It was the cries of the soldiers five kilometers away dying in a horrible way.

A thousand soldiers had turned into bones in just a few minutes. The whole camp was having difficulty breathing under the immense pressure.

Some time later, Advisor Shao took a deep breath and straightened herself. She saluted in the direction of the troop that was wiped out. She did not allow the tears that were rolling in her eyes to run down her cheeks.

As the advisor, she had no right to cry. She had to organize her thoughts and remain calm at all times. The soldiers had sacrificed their lives in exchange for important information. She could not afford to put their sacrifices in vain.

"Tell the General to evacuate all the other towns right now. The Sandstorm Demon Locusts are no longer afraid of fire. Once Anjiao Town has fallen, the other towns will be in danger too!" Advisor Shao said to her subordinates.

"Affirmative!"

Advisor Shao glanced at Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou and said coldly, "Thank you for providing us with such an important piece of information. You all should evacuate with the rest of the army. We'll take care of things here."

Both Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou shook their heads. They could not just leave after witnessing what happened. There were still so many innocent lives in Anjiao Town.

"My fire is very effective against the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, including those that have mutated. If you are trying to deliver supplies into the town still, leave it to me," Mo Fan stated seriously.

The Sandstorm Demon Locusts had mutated, meaning that the Tarim Basin Fortress was going to fall eventually. They had to evacuate right away.

However, Advisor Shao was clearly not willing to abandon the people in the Anjiao Town. They would fight until the very last second. It was their obligations as soldiers.

Mo Fan could tell that Advisor Shao was willing to die with the people of the Anjiao Town. However, Advisor Shao was struggling to come up with a better plan. The only possible outcome was that the people of this camp would all die too!

Mo Fan was not a busybody, yet they were times he felt like he had to step forward bravely. Besides, the Ardent Sunset that could suppress the Sandstorm Demon Locusts was the only chance to save these people!

"Mo Fan, they had just wiped out an entire troop, if you go..." Mu Nujiao said softly.

"Did you forget? I used my fire to burn the Sandstorm Demon Locusts that were chasing after you. I believe they were mutated Sandstorm Demon Locusts, too," Mo Fan assured her. He knew the girl was worried about his safety.

"He's right!"

"I'm not the Sandstorm Demon Locusts' nemesis, but Little Flame Belle is," Mo Fan declared.

"Little Flame Belle? Really!?"

"But you won't be able to bring much supplies in on your own. There are more than ten thousand people in the town that need to eat and drink!" Advisor Shao said.

"I have the Space Element; I can bring a whole truckload of supplies with me. It's only going to take a few runs," Mo Fan said.

Advisor Shao and the other Commanders found some hope again!

They were now relieved that Li Man had brought these people along. Otherwise, they would be left clueless about what to do after losing a thousand soldiers. Their gaze toward Mo Fan, Zhang Xiaohou, and the others had changed too.

It was rare to see young Mages willing to step forward and risk their lives. Most talented Mages preferred to stay in the cities and enjoy their prestige and power. Their talents were usually wasted as they aged and achieved higher status.

"Brother Fan, I'll go with you," Zhang Xiaohou said.

Zhang Xiaohou was extremely worried about letting Mo Fan go into the town alone. Mo Fan was his brother, he would rather go together with him. They were bold enough to jump into the Dark Abyss together. The Sandstorm Demon Locusts were nothing for them!

"Alright, but you have to stay within ten meters of me at all times," Mo Fan nodded.

"How about us..."

"I can only bring one person with me at most. You girls should be on standby here. You can join us once we find the way to drive the Sandstorm Demon Locusts away," Mo Fan said.

Mu Nujiao and Jiang Shaoxu nodded. They knew now was not the time to act on impulse. They should obey Advisor Shao's arrangements instead.

"Withdraw at once if something goes wrong. The west army will still be grateful toward you all," Advisor Shao said.

"We won't force it, either!" Mo Fan treated his life more preciously than anyone else!

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It was the same path, but this time, it was only Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou walking it. However, the people at the camp were feeling several times the pressure than what they were before. They were scared that the two would turn into bones within seconds, just like the others. Both of them had the option to leave. The death of the people and the disaster taking place had nothing to do with them.

"Brother Fan, are you scared?" Zhang Xiaohou could not help but ask as he walked alongside Mo Fan.

"I'm fine, perhaps I'm slowly getting used to it," Mo Fan answered. He still remembered how a bunch of high school students were assigned to be the vanguard during the Calamity of Bo City, clearing the path for the entire school. Even though the danger they were facing back then was nowhere close to the current danger, they were extremely weak back then. It had been his first time putting his life at risk. His whole body had been trembling in fear.

However, they still had to move forward, even if they were scared. It was the same most of the time.

"I think I would be quite scared if I was alone, but I realize we can always overcome the situation whenever I'm with Brother Fan," Zhang Xiaohou said optimistically.

Mo Fan knew Zhang Xiaohou trusted him.

Everyone had someone they could trust completely in their hearts. They would feel calm and collected even if they were heading toward the unknown or death as long as they were with the person they trusted. It seemed like he was the person that Zhang Xiaohou trusted in his heart.

Unfortunately, Mo Fan did not have one. It was the reason he kept trying so hard to become stronger!

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Mo Fan felt like his brain was about to explode from the noise in his ears. He could barely cast a few Basic Spells and Intermediate Spells under the circumstances. There was no chance he could cast an Advanced Spell.

Luckily, Little Flame Belle had a ring of fire around her. She was escorting Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou after Mo Fan Summoned her.

The Sandstorm Demon Locusts were afraid of the fire of the Ardent Sunset. After all, they had mutated from the flames surrounding the Ardent Sunset, which were inferior to the flames of the Ardent Sunset. They did not dare challenge the much stronger Ardent Sunset. As a matter of fact, the Ardent Sunset was deadlier to them than any other kind of fire. Even the slightest touch would set the Fire Seed in their bodies aflame.

Little Flame Belle stood on Mo Fan's shoulder. She did not need to release any energy. Her Domain alone was enough to keep the Sandstorm Demon Locusts ten meters away from them.

Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou eventually reached the territory of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. The soldiers at the camp were utterly relieved when they saw Zhang Xiaohou and Mo Fan were fine in the 'tornado' of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts!

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"Well done!"

"Where there's a will, there's a way."

The faint ring of fire in the cloud of Sandstorm Demon Locusts was the last wisp of hope among the soldiers. They were utterly impressed by the two figures that were gradually moving into the distance!

—

The light was fully blocked off. It felt like they had entered a nest of demon creatures when so many Sandstorm Demon Locusts were circling and flying in the sky around them. Even an entire army would be devoured by the Sandstorm Demon Locusts once they came in here.

Humans were still too weak compared to demon creatures!

Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou slowly entered Anjiao Town. Even the ground was covered in a layer of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. Their secretions were like a layer of wax above the ground in the town. It stank.

As the ring of the Ardent Sunset passed by, the Sandstorm Demon Locusts nearby quickly fled into the sky in a panic.

Mo Fan looked around and saw the remains of a Summoned Beast. It was likely that a Battlemage had sent their Summoned Beast out to investigate the situation outside, but it ended up as food that the Sandstorm Demon Locusts competed over.

The Sandstorm Demon Locusts were unwilling to give up. They could smell the living humans under the ground. They would not leave until they had eaten them all.

"It must be somewhere here, the building...holy crap, where did the building go?" Zhang Xiaohou was initially looking at the map, but he realized the place ahead was completely empty when he lifted his gaze.

There were supposed to be four buildings here, according to the map!

"What are these demon locusts up to? Why didn't they eat the buildings in the first place? I remember seeing these buildings back at the camp..." Mo Fan said.

"Yeah, maybe it's because they need time to digest their food?" Zhang Xiaohou said.

"Digest... right!" Mo Fan realized something.

Mo Fan had stayed with the mutated Sandstorm Demon Locust on the Burning Mountains for some days. He gave the creature jerky at first, and the creature gladly ate the jerky. However, after it finished eating the jerky, it began to eat other things. It started with the burned weeds between the gaps of the rocks, the sand, and eventually the rocks. However, when Mo Fan gave the remaining jerky to the creature, it still ate it gladly...

It implied that the Sandstorm Demon Locusts had preferences for their food!

"These Sandstorm Demon Locusts will eat living things first. They will then eat fresh plants before eating metal, rocks, and finally..." Mo Fan glanced ahead as he was speaking.

Some Sandstorm Demon Locusts that were unable to find food were sniffing the soil on the surface, before they started chewing away at it.

"Crap, they are starting to eat the ground!" Zhang Xiaohou yelled.

“The soil and sand must be the most difficult thing for them to digest, so they won’t eat it unless they have no other choice. However, there’s nothing else to eat here, but there are living things under the ground!” Mo Fan shivered in fear as soon as he said the words.

If the Sandstorm Demon Locusts ate the ground, the people underground would have no way to escape!

“Why is there such a terrifying species in the world!?” Zhang Xiaohou swore.

Versatile Mage

Chapter 1227: Barrier Core

Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou finally found the entrance to the underground bunker. They knocked on the entrance.

Zhang Xiaohou was a soldier. He only needed to use the secret knocking pattern of the army to notify the people inside that help had arrived.

The thick stone door was the last line of defense for the people inside the bunker. Their hearts were filled with hope when they heard something different from the endless buzzing of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts!

“They are here, help has arrived!” the soldiers guarding the entrance yelled out in excitement.

“But there are still so many Sandstorm Demon Locusts out there, my Summoned Beast just went out to investigate...”

“It’s the right password, open the door now!”

The people were relieved when they heard that help had arrived.

However, they only saw two young Mages standing outside the door. There was no army, no food and water, and no medicine. Their joy instantly dissipated like a puff of smoke.

“Just the two of you? Did they really give up on us?” the soldier that was depressed right from the start blurted out.

“A company of soldiers already died. Us two are the only people that can pass through the Sandstorm Demon Locusts,” Zhang Xiaohou answered.

Mo Fan opened the storage of his Space Element and distributed the supplies. They were not much, but they were still a glimpse of hope for the starving people.

“We’ll make a few more trips. Please wait patiently until we find a way to drive the Sandstorm Demon Locusts away,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“It has been so long. Hasn’t the army come up with any plan, or have they decided to abandon us? Did they send you two here just to deliver us our last meal!?” the soldier snapped furiously.

“Chen Yi, can you please calm down! The Sandstorm Demon Locusts are everywhere outside! Even the whole army won’t be able to kill them all. The army is obviously trying to come up with a plan to save us. They have risked their lives to transport food and medicine to us. How can you blame them instead!?” Captain Liu Zhuo exclaimed.

Chen Yi harrumphed coldly. He turned around and sat in the corner with a strong grudge.

“Keep the situation under control, make sure the people aren’t panicking,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

Mo Fan pulled Zhang Xiaohou to the side and whispered, “By the time we come back with more supplies, the Sandstorm Demon Locusts would most likely finish eating the layer of dirt above the bunker.”

“What should we do then?” Zhang Xiaohou was uneasy. He glanced at the people in the bunker and saw them sitting closely together helplessly. He did not feel great.

“Not everyone here is trustworthy. It’s better not to tell them about the Sandstorm Demon Locusts eating the dirt. Call Captain Liu Zhuo over, let’s listen to what he has to say,” Mo Fan said.

Zhang Xiaohou called Liu Zhuo over and told him about the Sandstorm Demon Locusts that was eating the earth above them.

Liu Zhuo was startled. His eyes were filled with despair.

“We are only telling you because we are afraid people like Chen Yi would cause more panic among the people,” Mo Fan said.

“I understand. Forget it, just go. If you can come in here, you should be able to get out too. There’s no need for you to die with us. Either way, we are grateful for your help,” Liu Zhuo said.

“We aren’t leaving you all here. We want to hear your advice, maybe you have some idea how we can save these people. Time is running out!” Zhang Xiaohou said seriously.

“The barrier is the only protection the town has. We don’t stand a chance without it,” Liu Zhuo said.

“Can we reactivate the barrier?” Zhang Xiaohou asked.

Liu Zhuo shook his head, “It won’t make any difference. These Sandstorm Demon Locusts are no longer afraid of the fire of the barrier.”

“What fire does the barrier have? Can we use a different fire?” Mo Fan asked.

“I’m not sure what it is exactly, but I believe you can change the fire. You just need to insert another flame into the Barrier Core. I saw the mayor doing it before,” Liu Zhuo said.

“Great, my fire is effective against the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. If we can reactivate the barrier with the fire of my Ardent Sunset, we might be able to get rid of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts,” Mo Fan said.

“Is your fire really that powerful?” Liu Zhuo was a little disbelieving.

“How do you think we managed to come here? Captain, we shouldn’t waste any more time. Even if the chance is slim, anything is better than waiting to die here!” Mo Fan said.

Liu Zhuo nodded in agreement.

The man was right, he could not afford to just wait here. Doing something that had the slightest chance of working was better than doing nothing.

“Alright, I’ll bring you to the Barrier Core!” Liu Zhong said.

—

They did not bring anyone else. It was only Zhang Xiaohou, Liu Zhuo, and Mo Fan. The three left the underground bunker.

The Barrier Core was located at the town hall, even though all that was left of it was debris.

The Barrier Core was underground, but it was not connected to the underground bunker. They had to walk quite a distance to the center of Anjiao Town.

Liu Zhuo was still a little worried. He was not sure how capable the two young men were until he saw the Sandstorm Demon Locusts backing away as soon as Mo Fan unleashed the flames of his Ardent Sunset. His eyes glimmered!

They had tried driving the Sandstorm Demon Locusts away with the Fire Element, but no matter how strong their spells were, the Sandstorm Demon Locusts were not afraid at all. They had no choice but to give up, but to Liu Zhuo’s surprise, the young Mage actually possessed a fire that was the Sandstorm Demon Locusts’s nemesis. If he could insert the flames into the Barrier Core, Anjiao Town would be saved!

The noise kept buzzing in their ears and messing with their minds.

Liu Zhuo was drenched with cold sweat, despite the heat from Mo Fan’s Fire Domain.

“We’re close; the room is made of natural burning rocks. The Sandstorm Demon Locusts shouldn’t be able to enter it,” Liu Zhuo said.

Liu Zhuo went to the underground and moved the thick layer of debris aside, revealing an entrance to the underground.

The entrance was tightly sealed. It was protected by a magic aura, too. Liu Zhuo knew how to deactivate it. He crouched down and was about to get rid of the magic aura when he suddenly froze.

“What is it?” asked Mo Fan with a confused look.

“Someone deactivated the magic aura,” Liu Zhuo said. He grabbed the handle and pulled.

The door rose with ease after the pull, revealing some stairs leading down to the underground.

“Someone might be hiding down there because they weren’t able to make it to the emergency bunker in time,” Zhang Xiaohou said.

“Mm, that’s what I’m guessing, too. Let’s head down. If we let the Sandstorm Demon Locusts in, they are going to absorb the energy of the Barrier Core,” Liu Zhuo said.

The three immediately went down the stairs. The lights were still on, leading them toward the magic formation that was protecting the town.

It was Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou’s first time seeing a magic formation protecting a town. The magic formation of the barrier protecting a city would normally be hidden in the most secretive place, protected by the government. Its location was highly confidential, since if a city lost its barrier, it would soon be overrun by demon creatures. The people would be killed quickly!

The barrier of the town was not particularly huge. There was only a hall containing the magic formation in the underground.

The hall was built with fire crystals that could conduct magic. When energy was flowing in the Orbits, Patterns, or Constellations along the fire crystals, it was the same as Casting a spell. The Barrier Core would provide the energy needed to keep the magic formation going.

“The thing in the middle should be the Barrier Core. It’s the source of energy for the barrier. You just need to insert your fire into it, and the fire of the barrier should change too,” Liu Zhuo said.

“Alright, I’ll try,” Mo Fan said.

Mo Fan placed his hand on the Barrier Core and directed the fire of his Ardent Sunset into it. Mo Fan was soon surrounded by an ardent-red fire. The color of the fire of the Barrier Core gradually synchronized with Mo Fan’s fire.

Liu Zhuo and Zhang Xiaohou stood on the side. They were feeling a little nervous. Whether it was going to work or not would decide the fate of the people in the town. They were overjoyed when they saw the color of the Barrier Core changing under Mo Fan’s influence.

“I...I think it’s done,” Mo Fan opened his eyes and looked at the Core Barrier.

“The Barrier Core has absorbed the aura of your flames. Hopefully, it is enough to drive the Sandstorm Demon Locusts away when we activate the barrier,” Liu Zhuo said.

“So should we activate the barrier now?” Mo Fan asked.

Liu Zhuo nodded. He went to every corner of the hall to light up the magic nodes.

Every node was soon lighted up. Brilliant Star Orbits were gathering toward the Barrier Core from all directions. A brilliant, ardent-red flower was burning above the Barrier Core...

The light of the fire was not strong. Zhang Xiaohou and Mo Fan thought it would be a lot brighter, but the hall soon dimmed; the fire did not last for more than ten seconds!

“What’s going on? Did it not work?” Mo Fan asked quickly.

Liu Zhuo was frozen in surprise. He shook his head and said after some time, “Your fire works, and I believe the barrier will have the effects of your Ardent Sunset when it’s activated... but the Barrier Core... it doesn’t have any energy!”

"It's empty?"

"Someone stole the Barrier Core's energy!" Liu Zhuo said in despair.

Versatile Mage

Chapter 1228: Wild Disaster, Shi Qianshou

"Maybe you guys forgot to turn it off, so its energy has been depleted?" Zhang Xiaohou asked.

"Impossible! I'm certain that I checked the Barrier Core recently. Its energy should last for more than half a month. The barrier was even shut off after it didn't work against the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. How corrupted would a person have to be to steal the energy of the Barrier Core!?" Liu Zhuo was infuriated. He slammed his fist on the crystal wall nearby.

The Barrier Core was the town's hope. Liu Zhuo finally found a glimpse of hope for Anjiao Town to survive, but he did not expect such an outrageous thing to happen.

"No wonder the magic aura was deactivated. The question is, who else knows about the Barrier Core apart from you?" Zhang Xiaohou asked.

Mo Fan pulled Zhang Xiaohou's arm and pointed at a crack. A black insect with broken wings was stuck inside.

"Don't you feel like this insect is familiar?" Mo Fan asked.

Zhang Xiaohou took a closer look and shuddered. How could he not recognize the insect? It was the poisonous insects that had killed everyone in the cave where the Earth Pistil was, the same poisonous insects that Shi Qianshou was controlling!

"Could it be Shi Qianshou?" Zhang Xiaohou blurted out in shock.

"I bet it's him. He just got his hands on the Earth Pistil, but its energy had been depleted, so he took the opportunity when Anjiao Town was attacked by the Sandstorm Demon Locusts to steal the energy of the Barrier Core so he could replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil!" Mo Fan said.

"I thought he ran away. I didn't think he would be so bold as to show up again," Zhang Xiaohou said through clenched teeth.

Zhang Xiaohou detested Shi Qianshou. He could not wait to kill the man with his bare hands, but to his surprise, Shi Qianshou was mad enough to sneak into the town to steal the Barrier Core's energy!

If they left Shi Qianshou alone, who knew what kind of terrifying things he would do with the Earth Pistil?

"Wasn't he able to control the Sandstorm Demon Locusts? I think he's the only person that can enter Anjiao Town freely," Mo Fan said.

"But he already left; how are we going to find him?" Zhang Xiaohou said.

“He shouldn’t be too far away. This kind of poisonous insect will die after it is separated from the host for too long. We can let this insect go, and it will lead us to Shi Qianshou,” Mo Fan said.

“Shi Qianshou, General Shi?” Liu Zhuo asked in surprise.

“Yes, it’s him, but he already turned into a devil.”

“If it’s him, he would know about the Barrier Core and the magic aura on the entrance too! However, there’s nothing you can do even if you found him. There’s no chance you can take him on,” Liu Zhuo said.

“It’s true that we don’t stand a chance against him at other places, but that might not apply here in Anjiao Town!” Mo Fan smiled.

—

Zhang Xiaohou followed Mo Fan’s instructions and released the poisonous insect with broken wings. It immediately headed in a certain direction. It was moving at a fast pace even without its wings.

The poisonous insect led the three to the west of Anjiao Town. The area mainly consisted of factories and accommodation for the miners. These houses clearly did not suit the Sandstorm Demon Locusts’ appetite. They were the only buildings left in Anjiao Town.

The factories were huge. The Sandstorm Demon Locusts were still flying in the sky outside. They would rest on the roofs of the factories when they were tired. The roof was covered in dark layers of insects. It was ghastly to see...

The little insect jumped to the roof of the factories. Mo Fan and Zhang Xiaohou finally saw a man in a military jacket covered in blood among the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. He was sitting right in the middle of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, but the demon locusts did not attack him. They were circling him as if they were interested in something in his hand.

“Piss off, you lowly beings have no right to covet my treasure!” Shi Qianshou’s eyes were bloodshot. He had gone mad from the overwhelming greed driving him.

The Sandstorm Demon Locusts scattered after the man roared out. They were clearly afraid of the poisonous insects around him. They did not dare to harm him as long as the poisonous insects were around.

“Eat, eat as much as you want. Once you’re done, this land will be mine!” Shi Qianshou fondled the Earth Pistil in his hand, as if it was his child.

“Oh, I almost forgot, there should be people in the bunker still. Since they are going to die either way, they should make some meaningful contributions to me instead!” Shi Qianshou grinned when he suddenly remembered something.

His men and the energy of the Barrier Core he had recently obtained were nowhere enough to replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil.

The Barrier Core of a small town was like an insignificant piece to the Earth Pistil. The energy that he needed to replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil was equivalent to the energy needed to support the

barrier of a city with around a million people. The Earth Pistil was even stronger than the Core of the Tarim Basin Fortress!

It would be perfect if the Core of the Tarim Basin Fortress was still intact!

Shi Qianshou jumped down from the factory. He was having a hard time remembering where the underground bunker was. Most of the buildings had been destroyed, and the Sandstorm Demon Locusts were everywhere. It was quite tricky to find the entrance to the underground bunker.

As soon as Shi Qianshou took a few steps, he discovered a ring of fire amid the dark Sandstorm Demon Locusts that were circling the area like a black tornado.

The Ardent Sunset was a special kind of fire. Its color hinted that it was no ordinary fire. Shi Qianshou was quite curious about who the Fire Mage was; the man was able to move freely among the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, just like him!

“Shi Qianshou!” Zhang Xiaohou yelled furiously. He had the urge to turn into a monster and tear the maniac into pieces.

Shi Qianshou waved his hand to drive the Sandstorm Demon Locusts that were blocking his vision away. He burst out laughing when he saw Zhang Xiaohou inside the ring of fire.

“So it’s you, the poor wretch that escaped! I believe the man beside you is the lucky kid that was away when we showed up. Both Zheng Tong and Tong Zhuang warned me about you. Mm, you’re quite impressive indeed, since you are able to move freely among the Sandstorm Demon Locusts,” Shi Qianshou said disdainfully when he saw it was them.

“The army knows what you did, you’re going to die!” Zhang Xiaohou snapped.

“HAHAHA, the army? What difference does it make? The army is struggling to look after themselves. What can the army do to me as long as I’m with the Sandstorm Demon Locusts? Once I replenish the energy of the Earth Pistil, the army is going to submit to me!” Shi Qianshou laughed wildly.

Shi Qianshou had noticed that the Sandstorm Demon Locusts had mutated and were invading human territories after he came out from the desert. He was overjoyed, since no one could possibly harm him as long as he stayed with the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. He could even abuse the Sandstorm Demon Locusts against his enemy.

He had used the Sandstorm Demon Locusts to kill everyone at the relay station that no one cared about, yet did anyone know that he was behind it?

Even now, as long as he was walking among the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, the Sandstorm Demon Locusts would take responsibility for every death he caused. As for what Zhang Xiaohou had told the army, Shi Qianshou was not afraid of the consequences. A little Commander without any evidence had no chance of taking him down, not to mention that he now had the Earth Pistil. The whole Tarim Basin Fortress would have to listen to him!

If he could maintain a barrier strong enough to protect a city with a million people, the people in the west would be treating him like a god. An accusation without evidence and a barrier that had come just in time to save the people; it was obvious that the army knew which was more important to them!

As for his mischief? Shi Qianshou was actually amused by how naive they were!

Was there any authority in a high position that had not done something that they did not want others to know about?

Compared to a city that could protect the lives of a million people he was trying to build and the achievements that would make him go down in history, the little mischief he had done was not even worth mentioning!

“To be honest, I’m really not that interested in taking your lives now. Tell me where the underground bunker is, and I might consider giving you a high position in my city. You know, I might have the Earth Pistil now, but I do lack some reliable subordinates. That being said, if you aren’t used to my methods of taking innocent lives, I can promise you that I’ll do a lot more good deeds after I become the mayor. I know better than you what a city needs, and what a mayor should do!” Shi Qianshou said indifferently.

Zhang Xiaohou felt like he was about to explode after hearing the words.

*-Is this assh**e seriously asking me to bring him to the bunker so thousands of people will be made sacrifices to his insane ambition?-*

“They are going to die either way. Isn’t it better if they die for a greater cause?” Shi Qianshou smiled.

“I think it’s better if you die, everything is going to be a lot simpler!” Mo Fan stepped forward. The fire of the Ardent Sunset grew stronger, driving the Sandstorm Demon Locusts further away.

“You want to kill me? Leaving aside the fact that your Intermediate and Advanced Spells aren’t strong enough to harm me, you won’t be able to cast a single spell because of the noise that the Sandstorm Demon Locusts are making. Just forget it, I’m like a god here. No one can oppose me!” Shi Qianshou smilingly said.

“Don’t you have trouble using your magic, too?” Mo Fan said.

The sound that the Sandstorm Demon Locusts was producing was like a huge magic-forbidding aura. Only those whose mental strength had reached the Advanced Stage could use their magic inside the strong interference!

Mo Fan did not believe Shi Qianshou’s mental strength had reached the Advanced Stage. Shi Qianshou was using the disastrous invasion of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts as his umbrella, but Mo Fan was also using it as his shroud. Mo Fan was able to take Shi Qianshou on, since he was unable to use his Advanced and Super Spells too!

“My Poison Element isn’t affected. My poisonous insects can deal with you easily!” Shi Qianshou sneered.

“Same as my fire, it’s unaffected, too!”

Mo Fan clenched his fist. The flames of the Ardent Sunset swam along Mo Fan’s arm like a dragon, gathering at his wrist and fist!

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Chapter 1229: The Wings of Two Fires

The aura of the Ardent Sunset fiery dragons had significantly surpassed the scale of the Intermediate Spell Fiery Fist. Shi Qianshou was forced to back away from the scorching heat when the flames lunged at him wildly.

The flames burned Shi Qianshou's arm. He covered his eyes from the blinding light. The fiery dragons circled him and formed a ring of fire around him. The scorching heat of the flames continued to bake him.

Shi Qianshou's face contorted in rage. He bent forward and spread his arms out.

A black gust of wind lifted his bloody military jacket. It flapped wildly as a thick poisonous gas spread into the surroundings and collided with Mo Fan's flames.

The poison was so strong that it could even corrode the flames. Shi Qianshou let out a hollow laugh. As he opened his palms, poisonous insects beat their wings and sprang forward like a poisonous, black mist. It was difficult to tell if they had come out from Shi Qianshou's body or if they were born in the poisonous, black mist. The poisonous insects had eyes poking out from their sockets and wings like scissors. Their legs were thin and long, like mosquitoes, while their mouths were sharp and pointy. They could pierce the skin of a human like a needle!

"Brother Fan, watch out for those poisonous insects!" Zhang Xiaohou reminded him.

"You and Liu Zhuo should head inside the factory and find somewhere safe," Mo Fan told Zhang Xiaohou.

"Got it!" Zhang Xiaohou knew he and Liu Zhuo were unable to provide Mo Fan with any help since they could not cast a single spell due to the noise around them.

"Find some way to notify the army that Shi Qianshou is here!" Mo Fan said.

"Mmm, Brother Fan, don't worry. I'll leave Shi Qianshou to you!" Zhang Xiaohou nodded.

Even though he did not have the chance to kill Shi Qianshou himself, he was satisfied as long as Mo Fan was able to avenge Lin Feili on his behalf.

Zhang Xiaohou and Liu Zhuo ran for the factory when the two strong magicks collided once again. Liu Zhuo told Zhang Xiaohou there was an underground passage in the factories.

—

"We'll die without the protection of the fire," Liu Zhuo said uneasily.

"We will be fine as long as we don't attract a whole bunch of Sandstorm Demon Locusts to us. Didn't you say this factory has an underground passage to the mine? I remember the mine is in the north, it's very close to where the camp is!" Zhang Xiaohou said.

"It's very close, but there are Sandstorm Demon Locusts along the way," Liu Zhuo said.

“Then we’ll force our way out, we have to do something!” Zhang Xiaohou said.

—

Mo Fan’s ears were picking up another noise. The sound that the poisonous insects were making did not have the same scale as the noise of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, but they were also extremely annoying, especially how their poison could spread rapidly from the tiniest cut on their target’s body.

“So you like to act like a hero, I’ll let you know how insignificant your attempt is!” Shi Qianshou yelled at him.

The poisonous insects rapidly coiled into an enormous spinning top and surrounded Mo Fan. They unleashed their poison while diving at Mo Fan like a bunch of greedy demons!

Mo Fan was shrouded by the poisonous mist. He summoned the Black Snake Armor without any hesitation.

The Black Snake Armor covered his body. The snake scales quickly absorbed the poison, clearing the cloudy mist around him.

Shi Qianshou was stunned. His Poison Element was at the Super Level, deadly enough to defeat a strong Commander-level creature with ease, yet the young man had something that could ignore his poison!

The Black Snake Armor was even more lustrous after absorbing the poison. It meant that the duration of the Armor had increased!

“Little Flame Belle, time to let this scum have a piece of our new fire!” Mo Fan said with an icy expression, his eyes burning like flames!

Little Flame Belle was shrouded by two different fires: the purest fire, the Calamity Fire, and the flames that even the Sandstorm Demon Locusts had to back away from, the Ardent Sunset. The two Soul-grade Fires merged into a stronger flame surrounding Mo Fan like a Domain!

Mo Fan’s body was set on fire as soon as Little Flame Belle’s soul merged with him. The Calamity Fire attached to the Black Snake Armor as an extra layer of protection, while the Ardent Sunset circled restlessly as his weapon!

It was Mo Fan’s first time merging with Little Flame Belle after she came back to life. Not only was Mo Fan feeling the destructive flames filling up his body, he could also sense the faint pulse of a pounding heart. It was surprisingly calming, like a clear spring amid the raging flames that were motivating him!

Mo Fan was lost in his thoughts for a second. He finally realized why it felt so familiar. It was as if he was hugging someone tightly in his arms, like she was currently fighting alongside him, since Little Flame Belle’s heart was also Xinxia’s heart.

The woman who was far away by the Mediterranean Sea knew he was currently in an intense fight!

“Little Flame Belle, we can’t let Mummy Xinxia worry about us. Let’s make it a quick one!” Mo Fan was engulfed in two Soul-grade Fires. He was utterly fearless, even if he was facing Shi Qianshou whose Poison Element was at the Super Level.

Little Flame Belle's soul responded to Mo Fan's words. Mo Fan could feel the excitement from her, the excitement that she could fight alongside him again. It was her greatest wish!

"Humph, it's nothing but a show!" Shi Qianshou scoffed when he saw Mo Fan engulfing himself in fire.

So what if the young man had two Soul-grade Fires? He was a Super Poison Mage, his poisonous insects could destroy everything!

"Devouring Wind!" Shi Qianshou waved his hand, sending poisonous insects forward. They combined into a black gust surging ahead.

The Devouring Wind was formed by the poisonous insects. Similar to the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, the places that it swept past would be left barren. It was a vicious Poison Spell. Shi Qianshou was clearly planning to use the Devouring Wind to destroy Mo Fan and not leave a single piece of his bones behind.

The black tornado of millions of poisonous insects swept forward. Mo Fan thrust his right hand at it. The flames of the Ardent Sunset circling him spread rapidly. A huge arc-shaped barrier with dense fiery runes appeared before him. It completely blocked the Devouring Wind. The Poisonous Devouring Insects were turned into piles of black ashes when they collided with the burning shield.

The insects failed to get any closer. The flames of the Ardent Sunset were not only the Sandstorm Demon Locusts's nemesis, they were basically every insect's nemesis, as it could easily burn them all into ashes.

"Rise!" Shi Qianshou lifted his hands. The poisonous insects in the surroundings coiled about his legs and spiraled up, lifting him into the air.

The poisonous insects rose into the air and gradually covered Shi Qianshou's body. They continued to stack on top of him, turning into a poisonous black giant!

BANG!

The poisonous giant that Shi Qianshou had turned into stomped in the air, sending a huge bunch of poisonous insects to the ground. His strength was on par with a muscular demon creature. The impact knocked the buildings nearby to the ground while the wave of insects went after Mo Fan a few hundred meters away!

"Die!" Shi Qianshou raised his hands. Countless poisonous insects appeared from his palms and combined into an Insect Bomb made of thousands of poisonous insects above him!

The Insect Bomb grew bigger and bigger, reaching the size of a two-story building. Shi Qianshou tossed the Insect Bomb at Mo Fan a few hundred meters away.

The wings of the poisonous insects snapped like scissors. Their strength alone could shred a Commander-level creature to minced meat.

Mo Fan rode a wave of flame and dodged the Insect Bomb. As the Insect Bomb landed on the ground and left a huge pit behind, the poisonous insects scattered and chased after Mo Fan. It felt like they were trying to surround Mo Fan in a disgusting ball of insects!

“Fire Burst Feathers!” Mo Fan spread out the Calamity Fire that was covering him like armor. The fire turned into thousands of fiery feathers firing at the poisonous insects rapidly gathering toward him.

“Explode!” Mo Fan clenched his fist, detonating the fiery feathers in different locations. The flames caused by the explosions gradually formed a ball of fire with Mo Fan at the center. The spectacular flames immediately burned the poisonous insects aiming to surround him into ashes!

“Rocket Wings!”

Mo Fan took a step back. The Calamity Fire reappeared and engulfed him. This time, it did not just cover his body, but it also formed a pair of wings on his back. The wide wings were completely made of fire, giving him an imperious appearance.

However, that was not the end of it. A brighter and ardent-red fire rose from the base of the wings and spread rapidly, forming another pair of wings slightly above the wings of the Calamity Fire!

The wings of the Ardent Sunset were like burning clouds. The light it was emitting was even a little brighter than the Calamity Fire. The two fires set off Mo Fan’s appearance, making him look like an emperor just been born from the flames!

“I have a strong dislike of insects recently!” Mo Fan raised his head and looked at Shi Qianshou, now completely covered in insects.

Shi Qianshou sensed the overwhelming power of the flames, but the proud man showed no intention of backing away. He continued to Summon his insects, facing Mo Fan’s flames directly with his poisonous insects!

The giant made of Shi Qianshou’s insects shifted again. This time, they took the form of a giant centipede floating in the air instead. The giant centipede opened its mouth wide, revealing fangs made of the sharp wings of the poisonous insects.

The giant centipede dove forward. Its mouth was big enough to swallow an entire factory. Mo Fan was staring right into its dark, disgusting mouth!

Mo Fan did not back away from the ghastly bite. He stomped the ground, unleashing a shocking power from the wings of the Ardent Sunset and the Calamity Fire. It crazily boosted his speed, firing him into the air while a blazing red aftertrail and a strong wind followed behind. The force turned Mo Fan into a raging inferno bursting into the sky. The stunning ardent-red flames were trying to get rid of the cloudiness in the sky...

[Versatile Mage](#)

Chapter 1230: Deserted by All

The flames filled the sky and shattered the giant mouth of the centipede made of poisonous insects. The flames even devoured the Sandstorm Demon Locusts in the distance. Countless poisonous insects and demon locusts were burned into ashes by the wild flames spreading kilometers away!

The streets and the roofs were covered in soot. Mo Fan soared into the cloudy sky like an eagle declaring its territory the moment it spread its wings!

Shi Qianshou hid among the insects. They were his weapon and his armor, but half of them had already been killed by Mo Fan's raging flames. He needed a significant time to Summon them back, and most importantly, he would need to expend a significant amount of energy!

Shi Qianshou's body was a little scorched from the heat. He landed on the street that was covered in debris, nervous now. The remaining poisonous insects flew around him uneasily while buzzing annoyingly.

Mo Fan descended from the sky and landed on the street too.

Mo Fan laughed when he saw Shi Qianshou was injured. "Take a look at yourself, you are like a pile of manure circled by flies. Mmm, a disgusting pile of manure! You should just build a latrine pit and trap yourself inside it, so you can enjoy the rotten smell coming out of your bones and soul together with your insects!"

Shi Qianshou's face twisted. He was a General, the future mayor of a city. Everyone was going to circle him, just like his insects. His power, his authority, his influence were nothing close to what Mo Fan had described!

"An imbecile like you will never understand. You will never match the contributions I've made in the west, even in a few lifetimes. The higher-ups are riding roughshod over us while we expand their territories. However, they didn't bother leaving our names on the booming lands!" Shi Qianshou said with a twisted look.

"Do you really think the people are going to live peacefully in a city built on top of countless corpses?" Mo Fan said disdainfully.

"Isn't every city the same?"

"Forget it, I'm more used to beating the crap out of a maniac than trying to talk some sense into them!"

"Says an Advanced Mage like you?"

"I've defeated those that were ten thousand times stronger than you! And besides, I really hate bugs!" Mo Fan did not waste any more of his time with Shi Qianshou. The two flames intertwined on his right hand, and gradually formed a sword of the Fire Calamity and Ardent Sunset!

The sword was engulfed in the two different flames. A ring of flame was circling around the enormous sword. Mo Fan could feel that the fiery sword was more than twice as heavy as it used to be. Most importantly, the sword felt very solid. It was no longer just a body of energy, but a real sword of fire!

Little Flame Belle was getting stronger. Even the sword she Summoned felt similar to a real magic Weapon. It was definitely perfect for Mo Fan, who was a fan of violence!

1He lifted his gaze to the ten-plus meter long fiery sword. Mo Fan believed it was necessary to change his habits. He should not keep throwing punches at someone's face. He should act more gentlemanly, like a high-spirited swordsman that sliced things in half decisively and beheaded a jerk among scum like Shi Qianshou!

The Double-Flaming Fiery Sword slashed forward with a huge explosion. The entire street was filled with the destructive flames. The sword went right after Shi Qianshou, who was trying his best to back away. The buildings on both sides of the street collapsed to the ground. The street had survived the invasion of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts, yet it was razed to the ground by Mo Fan!

The sword was still intact, but it was too heavy for a single hand. Mo Fan held it with both hands and chased after Shi Qianshou. When he saw the man hiding behind a building, he brought the sword down heavily, despite the building that was in the way!

The flames spread rapidly from the sword. Shi Qianshou initially thought Mo Fan was going to stab, pierce, and slash with the sword, but the man had no clue how to use a sword at all. He was slamming it down like a hammer!

Shi Qianshou could easily dodge slashes of the fiery sword, since he could fly around with the help of the poisonous insects, but the heavy slams with a huge area of effect were giving him a huge headache. The rolling flames from each impact would burn some of his insects to death. Without the insects, his strength was going to decline significantly!

He could not help but admit that the Advanced Mage was a lot stronger than he had thought with the two Soul-grade Fires and the Fire Spirit Possessing him. Even his poisonous insects were greatly suppressed by the fires!

There were different ways of using the Poison Element. Breeding a huge number of poisonous insects was only one of them. It had abandoned the traditional way of casting Poison Spells, since the poisonous insects could be used both defensively and offensively. He could also transform the poisonous insects into creatures of different forms, similar to a Summoner. Usually, a Poison Mage using this method would be a lot stronger than a normal Poison Mage since they could do a lot more things in a fight. The only downside was that if they relied too much on the poisonous insects, they would find themselves at a huge disadvantage when facing someone like Mo Fan, whose fire was the poisonous insects' nemesis!

Another kind of Poison Mages purely used the Poison Element to attack, harass, and torture their opponents. Shi Qianshou now wished that he was that kind, since he could easily corrode Mo Fan's body away with a single Super Poison Spell!

However, the magic Armor that Mo Fan was wearing was a nuisance to deal with, too! It had absorbed all the poison that Shi Qianshou had unleashed. He could not help but wonder where the young man had gotten such a remarkable treasure from!

"Die!" Mo Fan detested the insects!

He slashed out, sending waves of flames surging at Shi Qianshou.

Shi Qianshou quickly backed away, controlling the poisonous insects to form a wall to stop the flames from hurting him.

The wasps were dying at an incredible pace. The flames were like starving wolves pouncing at the insects. They stood no chance against the flames of the Ardent Sunset!

The poisonous insects began to flee. They were overwhelmed by fear after witnessing the horrible deaths of their brothers and sisters. Shi Qianshou was hoping that the insects could buy him some time, but to his surprise, he saw the flames lunging at him as soon as the insects flew away.

Shi Qianshou had no choice but to Summon his magic Armor. It was obvious that Shi Qianshou was not a rich General, since his Armor was not high-quality.

Mo Fan was once on the national team. Every member of it was supported by factions or financial groups, so their equipment was among the best. Some even had luxurious equipment that was better than what a Super Mage owned. Shi Qianshou had most likely spent most of his savings on breeding his poisonous insects, so his gear was a little unpresentable.

His magic Armor managed to endure the flames, but Mo Fan believed it could not take any more hits. Shi Qianshou was done for once his poisonous insects were unwilling to obey his orders after they were overwhelmed by fear!

“Son of a b**ch, come back, come back here!” Shi Qianshou snapped furiously when he saw his poisonous insects fleeing.

The poisonous insects had to obey the orders of their master, but even the lowliest creatures would follow their instincts in front of death.

“You were inhumane toward your men, and now, even the insects most loyal to you have decided to betray you.” Mo Fan moved forward, glaring at Shi Qianshou whose poisonous insects were leaving him.

“I don’t need you to tell me how to use my magic!” Shi Qianshou’s eyes reddened like a devil’s.

The escape of the poisonous insects was a deadly blow to Shi Qianshou. Without them, it was extremely difficult for him to use his magic!

“If you didn’t treat them like that, these poisonous insects were more than willing to wrap around you to protect you by sacrificing their lives until the very last moment. I have seen many that tried to protect their master recklessly. You should reflect on how much of a scumbag you are. No one is willing to follow you anymore, not even the insects that you bred!” Mo Fan swung the fiery sword at the man without mercy.

The hit sent Shi Qianshou flying. His Armor had saved his life, but it began to crack apart too. It could endure a few more hits at most!

“Damn it!” Shi Qianshou rose to his feet. Not a single poisonous insect was left. The aura of his Poison Element was preventing the Sandstorm Demon Locusts from attacking him, but the Sandstorm Demon Locusts were the least of his concerns at the moment. His biggest threat was Mo Fan, who possessed two Soul-grade Fires!

The reincarnated Little Flame Belle had provided Mo Fan with some extremely powerful flames!

“Even if you’re stronger than me in here, I can still pinch you to death with a single hand out there!” Shi Qianshou rose to his feet.

He did not continue the fight with Mo Fan among the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. He covered himself in a poisonous mist.

He used the poisonous mist to force the poisonous insects to return to him. The poisonous insects soon gathered around him, back under his control. They lifted Shi Qianshou into the air and dragged him away from the Sandstorm Demon Locusts.

Mo Fan knew the man was planning to run away, but there was nothing much he could do if the Super Mage was serious about running away.

“Little Flame Belle, we can’t let him leave!” Mo Fan said.

Little Flame Belle summoned the burning feathers again to propel Mo Fan forward.

However, even though Mo Fan was incredibly strong in his current form and his temporary speed burst was impressive, he was clearly lacking in speed when traveling across a long distance. If he was still able to use the Shadow Element and the Space Element, he could easily catch up to Shi Qianshou in seconds!

Mo Fan chased after Shi Qianshou with all he had, yet the man was slowly getting away. He soon reached the outer ring of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts.

The effects of the noise grew weaker the further he was from the Sandstorm Demon Locusts.

“HAHAHA, I dare you to keep chasing. I will destroy you as soon as you set your foot out here!”

Shi Qianshou had left the tornado of the Sandstorm Demon Locusts. There were only a bunch of Sandstorm Demon Locusts patrolling the area. The noise they were making was nowhere enough to disrupt Shi Qianshou’s magic.

As a matter of fact, Mo Fan’s mind was no longer affected by the noise either, meaning that he could now use his other Elements!

The problem was, Shi Qianshou’s other Elements were most likely at the Super Level too! No matter how strong he was with Little Flame Belle’s double Soul-grade Fires, he still could not take on a Super Mage!

“Useless pricks, you will all die for disobeying my order!” Shi Qianshou stood on a sand dune. A strong wind suddenly blew and swept the sand around him into the air. The sand was spinning at an incredible speed!

The sand punctured the poisonous insects around Shi Qianshou. Their blood sprayed in the air like a mist. The sand had cruelly massacred the remaining poisonous insects in an instant!

Mo Fan’s heart was filled with rage when he saw Shi Qianshou killing his own poisonous insects that way!

This Shi Qianshou had so lost his mind; he was beyond redemption!