

Paradise 641

Chapter 641: Seamless

The Yao family heard about the news as soon as Lin Huang left the Abyss Brink. Instead of informing Yao Huanhuan, her parents contacted their elder daughter, Yao Lan, who was busy working.

“Lan Er, did you meet that Lin Xie kid at the Abyss Brink?” The mother asked during the call in the reading room.

“Yes, I did.”

“What do you think about him?” The father asked directly.

“He’s very powerful. I can’t fight him even if we were on the same level,” Yao Lan commented.

“It can’t be. You’re a supreme genius as well. How could you guys be so different ability wise?” The father frowned.

“It’s not only his battle ability. He’s much more powerful than normal holy fire-levels overall as well as being skilled in a variety of techniques... He’s overall ability would top all supreme geniuses. Perhaps not more than five people of the same level could fight him in Division 3,” Yao Lan gave an honorable comment.

“Did you fight him?” The father was surprised to hear her.

“No, I imitated what Huanhuan would say and do while I spent a day with him.” Yao Lan smirked.

The parents were concerned. They did not expect their elder daughter to be this mischievous.

“His ability is indeed out of my expectations. He’s a crimson flame-level who hunts for immortal-level rank-6 triple mutated Life Fire monsters. He even escaped from an imperial-level triple mutated monster. I think I wouldn’t have been able to do it if I didn’t use my ultimate move with my current abilities,” Yao Lan shared what she observed after spending a day with Lin Huang.

Her parents, who were on imperial-level, were in disbelief about how powerful Lin Huang was after listening to what Yao Lan said.

“But the good news is that he’s really not interested in Huanhuan.” The parents were relieved by Yao Lan’s conclusion.

“But the kid is back in Sweep City now for God-knows-what reason. We haven’t told Huanhuan yet, but she’s been bugging us to get the kid’s whereabouts,” the father said helplessly.

“This Lin Xie isn’t a bad person, but it’s better not to let Huanhuan get close to him. I couldn’t get anything from his identity besides what’s on the surface. Judging from his ability, he could be a Holy Son candidate trained by a top underground organization. We shouldn’t offend the organization behind him.”

“But Huanhuan...” The mother looked troubled.

“You guys have spoiled her. Why don’t I talk to Huanhuan after I’m done with my stuff here a few days later?” Yao Lan told her parents.

“Stop investigating Lin Xie. It’s better than we don’t have anything to do with him. Don’t say anything even if somebody asks us about him.”

After hanging up, from a hotel room in the foothold near the second layer of the Abyss Brink, Yao Lan projected a gold list from her Emperor’s Heart Ring. If somebody else had been there with her, they would have recognized that more than ten names on the list were famous supreme geniuses in Division 3. Yao Lan smirked while she moved her graceful fingers, adding ‘Lin Xie’ at the bottom of the list in gold ink.

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Besides visiting the black market, Lin Huang had been staying in his hotel room ever since he returned to Sweep City. He had been getting used to the telekinesis ability before obtaining the telekinesis weapon. After spending two days practicing the Devil’s Psykid’s telekinesis, he had mastered 80% of it. The inheritance of monster tinder was different from the legacy of the human memory as the former was more than just a memory whereby the human could obtain the skill directly. Take an ordinary person obtaining the ability to make dual-vector foil out of nowhere for instance. He did not have to learn and understand the theory of making it. Gaining such an ability became part of his body; he could create a dual-vector foil by himself as long as he had enough materials. The only thing that he had to go through was to get used to the process of creation.

The inheritance of the human’s memory allowed one to obtain the memory but not the ability. It was like obtaining all of the information on how to make a dual-vector foil, but you would have to learn and understand the information before creating the dual-vector foil itself. If one could not understand the theory of making it, he could not make the dual-vector foil even the information was in his brain and the materials were sufficient.

That was the main reason why Lin Huang had picked the Devil’s Psykid as his Life Fire monster after listening to Bloody’s explanation. Obtaining the Devil’s Psykid’s telekinesis would save him at least two years of training time. It was calculated based on Lin Huang’s supreme genius standard. For others, it would take tens of years – even up to 100 years – to master the ability. Ever since he received the ability, he had mastered it from kindergarten-level to a highschooler’s level within two days. Besides some detailed and complicated techniques that required more training, he had basically mastered it.

With his current mastery of Divine Telekinesis, he could easily kill an immortal-level rank-3 monster without using any telekinesis weapons.

“There are still some difficulties in mastering the details. I’ll need at least a week to practice and familiarize the Devil’s Psykid’s telekinesis.” Lin Huang was aware of his own progress. Although he had mastered 80% of the Devil’s Psykid’s ability, the remaining 20% required more time as it was complicated.

Besides possessing Divine Telekinesis himself, Lin Huang chose the ability to hide his identity as he also inherited memory of the demigod Qi Muxiong. Qi Muxiong was a master in telekinesis, so it was a no-brainer that his telekinesis power was mighty since he was young. Besides discovering many telekinesis

techniques throughout his life, he had also come up with a telekinesis cultivation called Seamless. The cultivation would allow a person to channel telekinetic power into countless threads which could then be controlled from far away.

Qi Muxiong could divide his telekinetic power into 18,000 threads as well as controlling the threads to attack at will within the range of 30,000 kilometers. If he was on Earth, he could stand on his balcony and control the threads to pierce through any creature's head that was located in any corner on Earth. The level-1 of Seamless was to use telekinetic power to divide 300 threads. After two days of training and mastering the basics, Lin Huang finally proceeded to learn Seamless.

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“But Huanhuan...” The mother looked troubled.

“You guys have spoiled her. I’m suggesting that I’ll talk to Huanhuan after I’m done with my stuff here a few days later.” Yao Lan said and reminded her parents.

“Stop investigating Lin Xie. It’s better than we don’t have anything to do with him, don’t say anything even if somebody asks us about him.”

After hanging up the call, Yao Lan who was in a hotel room in the foothold near the second layer of Abyss Brink projected a gold list from her Emperor’s Heart Ring. If there was somebody else there with her, they would have recognized that more than 10 names on the list were the famous supreme geniuses in Division3. Yao Lan smirked while she moved her graceful fingers adding ‘Lin Xin’ at the bottom of the list with gold ink.

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Chapter 642: A Massive Crisis

The telekinetic division was a difficult task whereby it required detailed control ability in telekinesis. Before obtaining the Devil's Psykid's ability, training Seamless would be as tricky as a kindergarten child being asked to solve a high school academic question. However, it was not difficult for Lin Huang to train that now. Within a single morning, he managed to use his Divine Telekinesis power to divide a strand of thread into two, two into four, and so on... Eventually, he managed to divide the thread into 300 of them, completing level-1 of Seamless. Later on, he started practicing the controlling of the 300 threads.

When it was past 10 p.m., Lin Huang managed to control the 300 threads to dissect and sew monster carcasses. The poor White Night Wolf that he used to practice on was dissected more than 1,000 times. It was so disgusting that even the Eclipse Boa refused to eat it and Lin Huang had to dispose of it. The next morning, he began training level-2 of Seamless and dividing threads using Divine Telekinesis. Since he was now more in control of the mastery of his power, his speed of dividing accelerated. By the time it was past two in the afternoon, he had completed level-2 of Seamless and had managed to split 1,000 threads. He then began practicing the control of those 1,000 threads.

Just after five in the afternoon, Lin Huang's communication device rang. It was a message from Hu Lu with three documents attached.

"Mr. Lin, we've found three supreme telekinetic weapons in different forms for you. One is conical, one is star-shaped while another is in a flying dagger-form. You can take a look at the details of the three weapons. I'll arrange the purchase for you once you've decided."

Lin Huang looked at the three documents as soon as he read Hu Lu's message. The first one was the conical telekinetic weapon. It was made of 180 spikes that looked like beaks. The weapon was the fastest as well as the most penetrable one among all. Therefore, most of the psychics used weapons in such form. It cost 9.8 million Life Crystals.

The second document was of the star-shaped weapon made of 108 meteorites. The attack of this weapon was like the falling of meteorites, which required minimum control of telekinesis. It was easy to be mastered as it was mainly operated by the speed of telekinesis control as well as the weight of the meteorites. It cost 8.5 million Life Crystals. Each of the meteorites cost was higher than the spikes.

Finally, the third document was the telekinetic weapon in flying dagger-form which was made of 360 flying daggers. It required a high control of telekinesis. If one controlled his power well, the speed and penetrability were just as powerful as the conical weapon. Besides, it had more modes compared to the latter. However, if one could not master the power well, the impact would be worse than the star-shaped weapon. This was the most expensive one, costing 21.9 million Life Crystals.

Lin Huang picked the most expensive one without thinking twice as the flying dagger one would match his Sword Dao.

“Too bad it’s too little. It’d be great if there are thousands or even tens of thousands of flying daggers in one of those.” He thought of the time when the Sword Dominator controlled more than 3,000 flying daggers. The scene still impressed him until now.

After picking his weapon, Lin Huang called Hu Lu immediately. Hu Lu picked up his call with a smile in her voice.

“You’ve made your decision?”

“Yes, I would like the flying dagger one.”

Hu Lu was not surprised at all. “Sure, I’ll order it for you.”

“No news on the ancient relic?” Lin Huang asked.

“Ancient relics are rare, let alone telekinetic weapons which hardly appear in a few years.” Hu Lu shook her head.

“I’ll keep an eye on that for you and inform you as soon as there’s any news. The one you’re ordering is a supreme one. You can use that first. Is there anything else that you need?”

“Erm...” Lin Huang hesitated before nodding. “Let me know if you can order more of this supreme flying dagger weapon. I’d like to get more of them.”

“More?” Hu Lu was skeptical. She thought that Lin Huang wanted to resell the item. “If you’re planning to resell them, you’re not going to make much profit as the price is quite transparent. Moreover, such a supreme weapon is expensive. You’d be lucky if you could make 10% from it.”

“That’s none of your business. Just order it for me.” Lin Huang did not bother to explain.

“Alright then, how many do you want?” Hu Lu asked unwillingly.

“Get me nine more to round it up to ten.” Lin Huang smirked.

“10?!” Hu Lu thought Lin Huang had gone crazy.

“Mr. Lin, you can get two of them to test the market if you’re really planning to resell them. If you buy ten of them, you might lose 200 million!”

Hu Lu had never expected that Lin Huang would buy all the weapons for his own use as most of the psychics could only divide 100 threads and even fewer of them could split more than 300 threads. The weapon was amazing enough for most of the psychics out there.

“That’s my problem. I won’t look for you if that happens. Just order them for me.” Lin Huang smiled. “Let me know the price. I’ll pay the deposit.”

Hu Lu did not want to say any further since Lin Huang insisted. She did not understand how spoiled brats spent their money. After the call ended, Lin Huang transferred the 21.8 million Life Crystals to Hu Lu for the first weapon that he had ordered.

The next afternoon, Hu Lu dropped by the hotel Lin Huang was staying at just before he was ready to train level-3 of Seamless. She was there to pass the weapon to him.

After confirming that he wanted to order the other nine weapons, Hu Lu left full of doubts while Lin Huang stayed in the hotel to train his Seamless skill. Just as he wrapped up in the evening, he managed to divide more than 1,800 threads. He could clearly feel that he was getting better at controlling the threads as a whole. Three days passed, and Lin Huang had mastered 90% of the Devil’s Psykid’s ability. He figured he would achieve the Devil’s Psykid’s standard when he completed level-3 of Seamless and could control 3,000 threads.

Lin Huang began reading the news after washing up. It was a habit of his before he went to bed. Just when he opened the black market’s page, the top news caught his attention immediately. The headlines were ‘Mysterious Case in the Level-2 Abyss Brink’. Lin Huang frowned as he read the news. The mysterious case was actually the wall with Abyssal Mist in the cave where Devil’s Psykid had entered. After Yao Lan had reported that to the Adventure Paradise a few days ago, besides the imperial-level people that were sent to investigate, even the Union Government and the Hunter Association had assigned more imperial-level people to check the case out.

The report showed that the cracks on the wall was nothing ordinary, but was a gap connecting to an unknown space. The cracks were slowly expanding. The Abyssal Mist that was seeping from the cracks was a level-5 contamination. Two imperial-level people had become fiends in less than ten minutes after accidentally touching the mist. It was irreversible, and what was worse was that the mist seemed to have an instinct whereby it would go for non-fiend creatures.

The incident had caught the attention of a couple of demigods who speculated that there was a perilous world on the other side of the cracks since they learned about the report. As the fissures enlarged, the creatures from the other side might head to the Abyss Brink and even access the humans’ world from there. The humans’ world might encounter a massive crisis that was just as catastrophic as the Virtual Eye opening 800 years ago

Chapter 643: The Genius Organization

What happened in the second layer of the Abyss Brink brought people from the mainland to investigate. The conclusion was that although the cracks were expanding at a slow pace, it would take at least five years for the creatures from the other side to enter the Abyss Brink. The mainland even gathered a group of demigods to seal the space. Tens of techniques were used, but none of them worked.

The news soon spread and many transcendent-levels in the community found out about it. Besides the core zones, even the safe zones heard of the story. Under the Union Government’s strict orders, the news did not spread to people below transcendent-level. Lin Huang could sense that the crisis was

getting more intense. He heard about the catastrophe that had happened 800 years ago from Mr. Fu. If something similar happened, even Virtual Gods might not survive the disaster. He knew very well that the five-year period was not just hearsay.

“Seems like imperial-level isn’t enough anymore. I must get to Virtual God or even True God within five years!” Lin Huang gave himself a new target. He did not have the ambition of saving the world, at least not now. All he hoped for was not to die in the coming war. Throughout the coming days, besides sleeping, Lin Huang spent his time training his telekinesis. His usual three meals a day were consolidated into a single breakfast for him. He even used his telekinesis to order take-out food for himself. If the lack of food did not affect his health, he might have even skipped breakfast. Skipping meals for a week would not affect holy fire-level humans, but it would be detrimental if it exceeded more than a week.

On the second day after the news of the Abyss Brink broke, Lin Huang had broken through level-3 of Seamless and managed to divide 3,000 threads. He had arrived at the Devil’s Psykid’s level. After that, he spent a week achieving the division of 8,000 strands. He could finally slow down at level-4 of Seamless training. Although his Divine Telekinesis was powerful, his spirit was restricted by his low combat level which resulted in greater thread division.

However, after ten days of non-stop training, Lin Huang’s telekinetic power was strong enough to kill the immortal-level rank-6 Devil’s Psykid that he had encountered earlier. Within that week, Hu Lu had ordered two supreme telekinetic weapons made of 360 flying daggers. By then, he had more than 1,000 telekinetic flying daggers with him. With the three weapons, his combat strength in telekinesis was nothing lower than his Sword Dao’s.

After the ten days in Sweep City, Yao Lan finally contacted Lin Huang again. She sent a short message: “8 p.m. tonight, Sweep Gourmet. Room 301. There’s something good for you.”

He was not surprised that Yao Lan knew he was in Sweep City. After all, the city was the Yao family’s territory, and nothing could escape them. Since his training had stagnated these two days, Lin Huang agreed to meet her right away since he was not busy anyway.

At 7.50 p.m., he arrived at the Sweep Gourmet ten minutes before the agreed time. A female staff brought him to Room 301. Just as the staff was serving him tea, Yao Lan walked into the room with a young man who looked like he was in his mid-twenties. The man was a rank higher than Yao Lan on immortal-level rank-4. Lin Huang had his guard up. Just in one glance, Lin Huang could tell that the man was also a supreme genius and his ability might exceed immortal-level rank-9.

“Lin Xie, let me introduce you guys. This is Huangfu Hao from the Huangfu family,” Yao Lan introduced the both of them.

“Hao Zi, this is the Lin Xie that I told you about.”

The Huangfu family was the second most prominent family in Sweep City whereby their overall ability was level with the Yao family, and they were not too far apart. Lin Huang had heard of Huangfu Hao before. He was a supreme genius among the Huangfu family’s younger generation.

“I heard from Xiao Lan that you have a mind-blowing ability. Attack me with all you have,” Huangfu Hao challenged directly after checking Lin Huang out.

“Hao Zi, let’s eat first...” Yao Lan frowned.

“Xiao Lan, I know you would prefer to take this slow, but you know that I’m impatient. I’m used to finishing business first.” Huangfu Hao raised his hand to stop Yao Lan from talking. Then he looked at Lin Huang.

“If you manage to win my trust, I’ll apologize for my absurd attitude later.”

“So, this is the ‘good’ stuff you told me about?” Lin Huang raised his eyebrow as he looked at Yao Lan.

“This guy has a low EQ. Please don’t take it personally,” Yao Lan explained helplessly.

“Don’t mind him. Let’s eat first. We’ll talk about it later.”

“We don’t have to do that. Let’s get straight to business.” Lin Huang took a sip of his tea and put the teacup down.

“Alright then.” Noticing that the atmosphere was tense and nobody had the appetite to eat, she agreed to what Lin Huang suggested.

“We would like to invite you to join the Sweep Alliance.”

“The Sweep Alliance?” Lin Huang had never heard of such an organization.

“The Sweep Alliance is a special organization that was founded by geniuses more than 300 years ago. All of the members of the organization are geniuses. There are supreme geniuses among them including myself and Huangfu Hao,” Yao Lan explained.

“A genius organization?” Lin Huang had heard from Mr. Fu that it would be best if he could join such an organization when he arrived at the core zone because some of the rare ruins and special mysterious lands were opened only to genius organizations. However, different genius organizations would have different criteria whereby some of them would thoroughly investigate the person before allowing one to join. That was why Lin Huang did not have high hopes of joining any genius organization from the beginning as his identity was fake. It would mean trouble for him if he got investigated.

“Yes, our Sweep Alliance is more flexible. You can join as long as you have at least two members who recommend you. Although more than a third of the members are locals, we don’t have any requirement about the member’s origin, so we won’t dig into your personal details. It’s alright even if you’re coming from an underground organization as long as you have impressive abilities and aren’t involved in any other genius organizations. However, the reason why the terms are flexible is that our organization is less powerful compared to the other genius organizations,” Yao Lan told Lin Huang the reason why she had asked him to join.

“The powerful genius organizations in Division 1 wouldn’t need to recruit members as all the powerful geniuses would go to them on their own.”

“Are there any restrictions after joining the organization?” Lin Huang asked.

“The management is very flexible as it’s not a formal organization, but it still is a beneficial one. Let me send you the offer letter since it’s nothing confidential,” Yao Lan said and sent the offer letter to Lin Huang. He started reading it as soon as he received the document. There was nothing strict on the

member duty list. There were only three requirements. The first one would be to claim the Stairway Tree as often as the member could, while another would be to explore the ruins and mysterious lands while the last one would be to join at least one battle hunt once a year.

“What’s the Stairway Tree?” It was Lin Huang’s first time hearing about that.

“It’s no surprise that you’ve no idea what that is. The Stairway Tree is a tree in the virtual world that only genius organization members are eligible to climb. The higher you climb, the more points you’ll get. Not only will it be added to your total points in the genius organization, but you can also use the points to redeem items. Those who rank on top will enjoy rewards every month. Ancient relics, demigod relics... As long as you have enough points, you can redeem almost everything at the Stairway Mall.”

“I supposed it’s not as simple as climbing a tree.” Lin Huang knew instantly that it would not be that straightforward when he heard Yao Lan’s explanation.

“Of course not. Climbing the tree is just the tip of the iceberg. The difficult part is fighting with the rest. The capacity of the tree is limited at different heights, so competition is inevitable. You’ll know the exact rules when you get there,” Yao Lan explained it vaguely.

“Sounds interesting.” Lin Huang thought everything sounded fine after reading the offer letter that Yao Lan had sent him. He then turned around and looked at Huangfu Hao.

“So, you’re the second referrer?”

“That’s right, but you’ll have to win my trust before I can recommend you,” Huangfu Hao said directly.

“Sure, let’s fight.” It was clear that Lin Huang agreed to Yao Lan’s invitation.

“Can’t you guys fight after dinner? I’m hungry...” Yao Lan whined helplessly.

“No!” Lin Huang and Huangfu Hao exclaimed at the same time.

Chapter 644: Joining the Sweep Alliance

“Don’t hold back. Attack me with all you have. It’d be best if you could show me all of your techniques,” Huangfu Hao said to Lin Huang.

“Should we do this somewhere else?” Lin Huang studied the room in the restaurant and looked at Yao Lan. Although the restaurant was a demigod relic itself, he was not sure if the building structure was stable. After all, the restaurant was the property of the Yao family. With the daughter of the Yao family there, it would be bad to destroy the restaurant in front of her.

“Don’t worry, the restaurant is a demigod relic. There are special defenses in the rooms that make it indestructible to people below imperial-level. There’s nothing valuable in this room anyway, and we can always replace them.”

Yao Lan then mumbled to herself, “Luckily, the dishes have yet to be served...”

After confirming that the battle would not annihilate the restaurant, Lin Huang then stared at Huangfu Hao. A silver glow flashed in the air and appeared in front of Huangfu Hao at an instant.

“That’s fast!” Yao Lan, who was watching, exclaimed.

Huangfu Hao’s pupils shrunk as a gold shield appeared in front of his body when he extended his hand. The silver glow collided with the shield and sliced through the shield at an odd angle.

Huangfu Hao did not have the time to avoid the attack. All he could do was watch the silver glow glide by his arm, leaving a light trail. Yao Lan was shocked to see that happen. Lin Huang then retrieved his flying dagger and said to Huangfu Hao, “Is that enough?”

“Was that all you’ve got?” Huangfu Hao disabled his shield and fronted Lin Huang.

“Almost there.” Lin Huang nodded. Neither did he release his Life Power nor his Sword Dao in his attack. However, he had given 90% of what he had in terms of speed and strength.

“Your speed is almost at the immortal-level rank-7 standard,” Yao Lan concluded before Huangfu Hao could say anything, “But I can’t determine your attack strength.”

“Your attack strength is on immortal-level rank-7 as well. Most immortal-level psychics wouldn’t be able to switch the attack angle just like you did. If we were on the same combat level, your attack just now could definitely kill me.” Huangfu Hao made a fair comment.

“I would like to apologize for my absurdness earlier. Welcome to the Sweep Alliance,” Huangfu Hao said and extended his hand for a friendly handshake. Lin Huang shook his hand.

“Your defense is terrifying. My flying dagger couldn’t break through it,” Lin Huang smiled when he said.

“My inherited ability is special. Although I’m only an immortal-level rank-4, nobody below imperial-level can break my defense.” Huangfu Hao’s poker face was long gone.

“Xiao Lan, why didn’t you tell me that Lin Xie is a psychic? You only told me that he’s a powerful Imperial Censor,” Huangfu Hao turned around and asked Yao Lan.

“How would I know that he’s a psychic? He never used any telekinetic power in front of me.” Yao Lan glared at Lin Huang as his biodata did not state that he was a psychic; not even his Imperial Censor identity was revealed.

“Didn’t you know that?” Huangfu Hao realized that it was a surprise to Yao Lan that Lin Huang was a psychic.

“How many flying daggers can you control?” Yao Lan questioned Lin Huang, perking Huangfu Hao’s interest as well.

“More than 300.” Lin Huang did not tell the truth since controlling 300 flying daggers were terrifying enough.

“You’re crazily talented as a psychic! I’ve met a couple of immortal-level psychic geniuses. The most they could control were 280 psychic weapons. Most of them could only control within 180 to 240 weapons.” Huangfu Hao could not be any happier that Lin Huang was joining the alliance.

“Let’s scan your identity.” Yao Lan was worried that Lin Huang might take his words back, so she protected the scan page immediately.

“Don’t you want to eat first? I thought you’re hungry!” Lin Huang teased.

“I’m not hungry anymore. Hurry!” Yao Lan urged.

Lin Huang projected his ID while Yao Lan and Huangfu Hao scanned theirs to apply for Lin Huang’s membership together. In less than ten seconds, his application had been approved. An offer letter was sent to Lin Huang’s Emperor’s Heart Ring.

“Have a look now. Sign your name if everything is fine and you’ll be one of us.” Yao Lan was impatient.

“Take a look first. Let us know if there’s anything that you find unreasonable and we can get it amended,” Huangfu Hao added.

Lin Huang nodded and started reading the offer letter. The terms of the offer letter were clear. It was basically the same as what Yao Lan had sent earlier.

After confirming that everything was fine, Lin Huang signed his name ‘Lin Xie’ on the offer letter and sent it back. Soon, an identity token was sent. There was a huge ‘Sweep’ engraved on the golden token. From the projection, the token was breathtaking. It was obvious that it was the work of a master.

“Here you go.” Yao Lan flicked her finger and a golden ball fell into his hand. He opened his hand and saw that it was the physical version of the token that was half the size of a palm. It was almost exactly the same as the one that had been projected.

“It’s just a collectible. Most of our activities are carried out on the Heart Network. Since the design of the token is pretty, many members wanted the physical one, so it was made later on,” Yao Lan smiled as she explained.

The token was really beautifully designed with good material, Lin Huang observed for a while before keeping it into his Emperor’s Heart Ring.

“Let’s eat. We’ll talk about the Sweep Alliance later while we eat.” Yao Lan started ordering as she browsed the food menu.

After ordering food, Yao Lan spoke again, “Lin Xie, about the Abyss Brink, the Union Government will send the rewards within these two days. I’ll bring them to you. As promised, you’ll get the rewards and I’ll get the points.”

“What happened at the Abyss Brink?” Huangfu Hao asked.

“It was Lin Xie who found out about the cracks on the second layer of Abyss Brink and I reported it,” Yao Lan explained.

Of course, Huangfu Hao knew about the cracks as every transcendent-level person knew about it since a few days ago. He did not expect that it was Lin Huang who had discovered it.

“You found out about the cracks?”

“It was just a coincidence. I was hunting a Life Fire monster and found out about the Abyssal Mist that was coming out of the cracks on the wall. However, I thought it was just a normal wall crack which might

be connected to the ground, and that was how the Abyssal Mist came about.” Lin Huang nodded as he explained.

“There will be a catastrophe coming in five years. All of the transcendent-levels are worried about their own lives. Many organizations are recruiting members to train more people to prepare for the war. The same goes for genius organizations. We need more resources to level up our abilities. This is the reason why the Sweep Alliance started the recruitment early this time.”

“Nevertheless, we usually make an exception to recruit supreme geniuses even if the war isn’t happening,” Yao Lan smiled as she said.

“We don’t have many members. Including you, there’re only 36 of us and there’re only four supreme geniuses. Besides the three of us, the other supreme genius would be Hao Zi’s sister, Huangfu Lin. You’re the second member that I managed to recruit.”

“Aren’t you shameless? The ridiculous list that you have are all supreme geniuses. It’s your luck that you managed to get two,” Huangfu Hao teased Yao Lan.

“Why would I want to waste my time if it’s not for supreme geniuses?!” Yao Lan rolled her eyes.

“So, the first one that you recruited would be...” Lin Huang interrupted.

“Him.” Yao Lan pointed at Huangfu Hao.

“Well, this girl insisted that I must join for the honor of Sweep City. After I rejected her, she followed me everywhere we went, even to the toilet. She even told me that the way I pee is wrong...” Huangfu Hao was pissed as he talked about it.

“I thought your sister got you to join.” Lin Huang did not expect Huangfu Hao had such a terrible experience.

“This girl got me to bring my sister in as well. There was nothing that I could do, so I begged my sister. If I had known her well, I wouldn’t have slapped this b*tch since the beginning.”

Lin Huang was glad that he agreed to join, or else similar consequences would happen to him.

“Oh, right, you said there are only 36 members at the moment. Did they quit? We’re there many of them?” Lin Huang asked.

“They didn’t quit. They retired,” Yao Lan shook her head and explained.

“All of the members of genius organizations will have to retire when you’re above 40 or arrive on imperial-level. This rule came about as most of the members would be at immortal-level rank-9 when they’re 40. Those who can’t level up to imperial-level would waste the organization’s resources if they stay while imperial-level people would need resources to sustain themselves. Since they have the ability as well as enough resources on their own, it would affect the resources for the new members if they continue to stay in the organization...”

The conversation with Huangfu Hao and Yao Lan went on until past 11 p.m. The dishes were amazing. There was even a soup made of an immortal-level rank-9 monster. However, Lin Huang focused more on the information that was provided by the both of them. The conversation had given him a better

understanding of the genius organization and the Sweep Alliance. He had officially stepped into a brand new community.

Chapter 645: I Think I've Been Tricked

On the second day of joining the Sweep Alliance, Lin Huang logged into the Genius Union's website through a unique site on the Heart Network after his breakfast. The website scanned the identity of the user automatically. Without registering via the genius organization, the page would not be found. Two options popped up on the main page once Lin Huang logged in: "Browsing Mode" and "Conscious Mode".

Lin Huang heard Yao Lan mentioned this yesterday. The browsing mode was available for people to browse pages, news, videos, and search for information without joining any activities while the conscious mode allowed the person to enter the Genius Union's virtual world with one's consciousness. The latter was the only way to participate in the Stairway Tree climb.

After summoning Bloody and Bai to protect himself, Lin Huang pressed the conscious mode button. In the next second, he appeared in a white space.

"We've detected that this is the first time you're logging in. You're given one complimentary opportunity to adjust your own height and appearance. Would you like to proceed with the adjustment?" A gentle female voice echoed.

"Yes." Lin Huang nodded immediately.

The wall transformed into a full-length mirror, reflecting Lin Huang's original appearance. As he was thinking how he would like to look like, the voice came again.

"You'll only have to think of the appearance and height that you desire, and we'll make the adjustments accordingly."

He then thought of Lin Xie's appearance that he had disguised as immediately. His appearance soon changed to how Lin Xie exactly looked like in the full-length mirror.

"Are you sure you want to make these changes? Please take note that once the change is confirmed, your appearance and height in Genius Union will be fixed. In the eyes of all Genius Union members, this is how your appearance will be unless you want to change it again using your Stairway points."

"Yes!" Lin Huang decided without any hesitation.

"Appearance settings completed. Please complete personal information privacy settings."

"Privacy settings available:

"Visible to everyone.

"Visible to friends.

"Only specific information are visible (to be selected manually).

“Confidential (Any information other than name and organization is not open to anyone else.)”

“I choose No.4. Confidential!” Lin Huang did not want his age to be revealed to anyone.

“Basic settings are complete. Please fill in your details below...”

After spending more than ten minutes completing all the settings, Lin Huang was finally sent into the virtual world of the Genius Union officially.

As he stepped out of the dimensional portal, it was as if Lin Huang had arrived in a bustling city which was as well-developed as Sweep City. Looking at the skyscrapers around and the people strolling on the streets as well as the breeze on his skin, it did not feel like a virtual world at all.

Ding! “You have a voice message. Would you like to play it?”

Lin Huang’s attention was brought back by the prompt tone of the Emperor’s Heart Ring. After playing it, Yao Lan’s voice ordered, “Come to the Stairway Tree as soon as possible since you’re here. Open the map on the Emperor’s Heart Ring directly.”

After listening to the voice message, Lin Huang opened the map of the Emperor’s Heart Ring, finding the location of the Stairway Tree at the center of the map quickly. An option popped out after he clicked the Stairway Tree.

“Are you sure you want to be sent to the Stairway Tree?”

“Yes!” After Lin Huang clicked on the option, he was sent to the bottom of the Stairway Tree immediately.

“This transfer function is so useful!” After turning off the map, Lin Huang looked up at the moat-like Stairway Tree not far away from him.

The size of the tree was beyond his understanding. Besides not being able to see the top of the tree, he could not see the end of the ‘wall’ as he looked to the left and the right. He looked at the details of the giant tree and realized that the diameter of the trunk alone was more than 300 kilometers. The longest branch extended up to tens of millions of square kilometers, occupying the entire sky of the virtual city.

Not only could he not see the treetop by gazing up, but he also could not even see the end of this wall as he looked around horizontally.

“The area of the treetop is even larger than the continent of China on Earth...” Lin Huang thought it was incredible.

“I had the same reaction as yours the first time I saw this tree.” A female voice came from behind.

Lin Huang turned around immediately and saw Yao Lan who he was expecting.

“You’re 5 minutes and 18 seconds late,” Yao Lan glanced at the time and said to him in all seriousness.

“I’m sorry. There was some delay with the settings when I came in.” Lin Huang forced a smile, knowing that he was late without having to look at the time. He initially thought he could make it on time since he had entered ten minutes ahead, but he did not expect that the settings would have delayed him by 15 minutes

“Don’t worry about it. I forgot to tell you about the information settings yesterday.” Yao Lan waved her hand. “Let’s get a drink and then I’ll show you around.”

Yao Lan brought Lin Huang to an open-air bar and sat down. She ordered a glass of mixed fruit juice while Lin Huang ordered a glass of green juice.

“Since you were late, the drinks are on you,” Yao Lan said as a matter of fact.

“Sure,” Lin Huang replied.

He was curious as the seats were almost fully occupied in the bar as well as in the stores around. The streets were crowded too.

“Didn’t you say that all people are geniuses in this virtual world? Why are there so many people everywhere?”

“The people that you see aren’t human but are virtual humans. Some of them are service staff providing various services to us. For instance, the bar owner and waiters as well as the staff in the stores over there. Besides them, the rest are virtual residents who don’t do anything. After all, there are limited geniuses in this world. It’d be pretty empty if we place limited geniuses in this city that’s the size of an A-grade foothold. I think that’s the reason why they came up with virtual residents.

“Also, there’s a rule in this virtual world. We’re not allowed to fight the virtual humans, or else, we’ll be banned from entering,” Yao Lan reminded Lin Huang while they were on the topic of virtual residents. He was not interested in the virtual humans at all as he looked at the Stairway Tree nearby. People were climbing the tree.

“I supposed we’re not allowed to fly up the tree?”

“Yes, anything that flies is prohibited on the tree. Not only that, teleportation is prohibited too. All you can do is climb.” Yao Lan nodded.

“Can I ride my summoning monster then?” Lin Huang asked.

“Yes, you can, but your flying summoning monster won’t be able to fly near the tree. Besides, there’s nothing that we can do about the gravity over here. Apart from summoning monsters that can climb, the rest won’t apply to the tree,” Yao Lan explained.

“But even if you have a summoning monster that can climb, you’ll be attacked by the other climbers much more easily.”

“They can attack as they wish?”

“Of course, competition on the tree is intense. As long as you have sufficient abilities, besides attacking, you can kill as you wish. You’ll gain half of the points of the other person if you kill him. As soon as the person dies, not only will his accumulated points in the year be cut by half, he’ll have to climb from the very bottom again. Although the points can be used to redeem items, the monthly rewards are based on the height climbed. That’s the reason why many people would prefer to be robbed by half of their points instead of getting killed and starting from the bottom.”

“Why are you at the bottom of the tree?” Lin Huang was curious.

"I used my points to redeem a virtual clone. My real body is on the tree. Do you really think I'd come all the way to the bottom to welcome you? There are different difficulties at different heights where we'll have to try a couple of times before succeeding. It's difficult to go back to how far you've climbed when you're starting all over again."

"A virtual clone?" Lin Huang could not tell that she was just a clone.

"I used my points to redeem it. The clone is just an empty shell with my aura without any combat ability," Yao Lan confirmed.

"How do we get points?" Lin Huang asked.

"You'll obtain basic points from climbing different heights. Killing the monsters on the tree will earn you points. You can kill or rob the others to get points too. You can also use items to redeem points on the system or trade with others. Those are the four ways of getting points," Yao Lan explained in detail.

"Climbing the Stairway Tree basically depends on yourself. The most we can provide you with are some strategies. Unless we're climbing on the same height, there's nothing that we can do to help you. We don't have many members in the Sweep Alliance. Unlike those powerful genius organizations in Division 1 and Division 2, they have 18 supreme geniuses with 15 immortal-level rank-9s among them. Each of them can kill imperial-level humans."

"Seven of the top 10 genius organizations come from Division 1 while three are from Division 2. The No. 1 in our Division 3 is only ranked No. 12 on the leaderboard."

"Where does the Sweep Alliance sit?" Lin Huang asked.

"Erm... No. 180..." Yao Lan scratched her nose out of embarrassment.

Lin Huang felt that he had been tricked into this organization after hearing the ranking.

"No wonder the Huangfu siblings were unwilling to join..."

Chapter 646: Climbing the Stairway

There were more than 120 genius organizations in Division 1 alone and more than 80 in Division 2. Although there were lesser in Division 3, there were still more than 40 of them. Meanwhile, the remaining nine divisions outside the core zones had a total of 12 genius organizations. There were a total of 268 genius organizations in the Genius Union.

The Sweep Alliance ranked No. 183 due to two main reasons. One was their low number of members. Half of the 268 genius organizations had more than 100 members while the Sweep Alliance only had 36 members. They ranked No. 240 based on their number of members, coming in at almost the last 20. Another reason was that they did not have a really powerful member. Huangfu Lin was the only one in the Sweep Alliance that could kill imperial-levels. Her combat level was only on immortal-level rank-7. Immortal-level rank-9 supreme geniuses led the top-ranking organizations, and they even had more than one immortal-level rank-9 supreme geniuses.

Lin Huang understood where the Sweep Alliance stood after hearing Yao Lan's explanation. She was picky when it came to picking members while Huangfu Lin did not bother about that at all. Among the 36 members, besides some of them that had been recruited by Huangfu Hao, most of them joined on their own. Some of them joined before Yao Lan did and they had yet to retire.

However, due to the war that was coming within five years, the Genius Union would need more resources. She had lowered her criteria in recruiting to get more members for the Sweep Alliance. Besides personal rewards for higher positions, there were also rewards for team ranking. The benefits were definitely attractive. After completing the basic explanation, Yao Lan brought Lin Huang to the Stairway Tree.

"You can start climbing today if you're not too busy. Rewards will be given 20 days later, and your result will be added to the points for the month." Yao Lan sounded impatient.

"Alright, I shall warm up today." Lin Huang nodded and summoned a golden-haired ape.

It was one of the Monster Cards that he had obtained after killing the Triheaded Ape earlier. After Xiao Hei's amendment, the apes' genetic issues had been solved. Besides that, one of them obtained an ancient Mighty Ape's bloodline during its triple mutation while another obtained the bloodline of an ancient Frost Flame Ape.

The golden-haired ape was the one that had obtained the Mighty Ape's bloodline. It was more than 200 meters tall like a little mountain. Many people exclaimed when they saw it.

"That's a triple mutated ancient monster's bloodline!" Yao Lan was stunned when she saw the golden-haired ape. Some of the people who were climbing mid-way and those ready to climb looked enviously at the ape. None of them planned to capture it as the Mighty Ape's aura was an immortal-level. Besides, from its size alone, it seemed like a bad idea to offend it.

"Let's go!" Lin Huang waved at Yao Lan and hopped onto the Mighty Ape's shoulder.

"Herculean King, let's climb trees today!" The Mighty Ape (the ape only had the bloodline of the Mighty Ape, but not a genuine one as it was just a temporary name) that was summoned by Lin Huang was excited as it was its first time being summoned. It pounded its chest after hearing his instruction and roared into the sky before climbing.

Although the branches of the Stairway Tree were as thick as a wall, the barks were not as smooth as the surface of a wall. The cracks in the barks were the best climbing points of the tree. Although the Mighty Ape was huge, its ape instinct still made it much agiler than the people who were having a hard time climbing. Because of its massive size, in less than one minute, it had climbed thousands of meters high and disappeared into the clouds.

The people below were envious as they watched the ape disappear. Yao Lan, who was watching at the bottom of the tree, smiled and she shook her head.

"At this speed, he should face his first challenge soon."

There would be checkpoints every 10,000 meters on the Stairway Tree. The higher it was, the more difficult it was to go through the checkpoint. Besides abilities, most of the checkpoints would require specific skills or strategies to be exact. The lower checkpoints were public whereby everybody knew the

usual modus operandi, but up to a certain level, the strategies were kept private by the organizations and would not be leaked to other organizations. Some of the organizations would sell the strategies at a high price, but only some of the top organizations had the strategies to the more difficult checkpoints. They were not lacking points and did not wish to be on par with other organizations.

The first checkpoint that was 10,000 meters above ground was the Fog Cloud level. It was the layer of white clouds that Lin Huang had seen when he was at the bottom of the tree. The cloud was thousands of meters thick. Entering the cloud was like entering fog that made everything poorly visible. Most importantly, the fog had an intense hallucinogenic effect that penetrated directly into human bodies and could not be avoided.

Those who were not aware and breathed normally would accelerate the hallucinogenic effect once the fog was in the lungs. In the fog, let alone holy fire-level human, an immortal-level person would be affected if they stayed. It was easy to get lost in the thick fog, and with the hallucinogenic effect, many holy fire-level humans would be stuck on this level.

Yao Lan had planned to give the strategy to Lin Huang, but he did not ask for it. He even refused to hear anything about the checkpoint. He thought it would be more exciting and new that way. He wanted to know how far he could go with his own ability and without any strategies that were told by someone else.

As soon as he entered the clouds, Lin Huang sensed something odd in the fog. As a psychic, his sense was much more powerful than the average person. He could sense clearly that there was an odd energy in the fog that was trying to penetrate his body.

“This hallucinogenic cloud should be the first checkpoint. It will definitely affect those who have weak spirits. Normal people should be slower than me if they’re not riding a summoning monster as I do. The longer one stays in this cloud, the more one will be lost,” Lin Huang analyzed the complication of the checkpoint.

Before he could analyze further, the Mighty Ape had gotten out of the clouds and climbed further up. Clearly, the hallucinogenic effect could do little to no harm to immortal-level humans in such a short period of time.

“I wonder what the second checkpoint is going to be...” Lin Huang stopped looking at the clouds beneath and looked up into the sky. There was a layer of dark clouds on top of his head. Suddenly, it was snowing...

Chapter 647: God Relic — Emperor’s Heart

“It’s snowing?” Lin Huang frowned as he looked at the nebulous cloud that was getting thicker on top of him. As the Mighty Ape was climbing higher, the cloud got darker. In less than a minute, the sky was so dark that it looked like it was dyed in black ink. The day became night in an instant. Lin Huang realized that the absurd change of weather was not natural at all.

“This should be the second checkpoint.”

The higher they went, the lower the temperature became. There was a layer of white frost on the tree bark.

“It’s a little cold up here.”

Soon, he felt a chilly breeze penetrate his body. The cold breath that he exhaled became frost. He opened the thermometer on his Emperor’s Heart Ring. It measured -80 degree Celsius and was still descending.

Although Lin Huang’s body was immune to the cold since he had a layer of Life Power covering him, the cold was draining his Life Power. In less than half a minute, he had drained almost one Life Wheel of Life Power. The Mighty Ape had frost on its body too. However, it did not affect it as much as the Mighty Ape was an immortal-level. It started climbing slower as the surface was getting slippery. However, the wind was blowing strongly, and the snowfall was getting heavier as they ascended. The Mighty Ape missed its steps a couple of times as its vision was affected.

Noticing that, Lin Huang recalled the Mighty Ape and summoned the Frost Flame Ape. Because the Frost Flame Ape was a monster with frost attributes, the weather could do nothing to it. With its thick, white fur, every breath it took absorbed the cold around it, and every exhalation released heat. It was like a giant air conditioner that absorbed and release heat. It felt like spring in winter as Lin Huang rode on its shoulder as his Life Power that had been draining went back to normal.

The Frost Flame Ape was excited to be summoned. It started climbing as soon as Lin Huang instructed it and it was no slower than the Mighty Ape. It did not have to climb using the cracks as frost formed on its palms and feet that clung onto the bark as soon as they touched its surface. Climbing was like walking on flatland to it. The chilly wind that was blowing on top could do nothing to the Frost Flame Ape that was exhaling heat.

In less than five minutes, the Frost Flame Ape brought Lin Huang to arrive at the dark cloud. The black fog lingered around the ape and still could not defeat the heat that it was breathing out. Suddenly, the Frost Flame Ape slowed down its pace and said to Lin Huang, “Master, the black fog is beneficial to me. I would like to stay here for a while to absorb the cloud.”

Lin Huang know that he could not deny the Frost Flame Ape’s request.

“This is a virtual world. Theoretically, your real body won’t be affected if you absorbed the cloud here. Give me a minute. Let me ask someone about this.” Lin Huang then contacted Yao Lan.

As soon as the video call was connected, the first thing Yao Lan noticed was the change of color of the ape.

“Eh, how come your ape’s color has changed? Wasn’t it gold earlier? Does it have color-changing abilities?”

“This is another ape that I have...” Lin Huang answered helplessly. “Let’s not talk about that now. I have a question.”

“Do tell.”

“Whatever that we get from this virtual world will lose its effect in the real world, right?” Lin Huang asked.

“Why are you asking this? Did you get anything worth keeping?” Yao Lan asked with her eyes wide open.

“No, my monster would like to stay in the second checkpoint,” Lin Huang said and switched the angle of his question. “If it doesn’t work in reality, I shan’t stay here any longer.”

Yao Lan was shocked when she saw where Lin Huang was. She suppressed her curiosity and answered his question, “The cultivation in the virtual world will be the same as in reality. Everything that you get, including items, can be brought into existence.

“It can’t be. I can understand the projection of items from the real world into this world, but not virtual items into reality. Is that even possible?” Lin Huang thought he would just confirm with Yao Lan, but she gave him an answer that he never expected.

“Are you messing with me?”

“I might mess with you on other matters, but not this as it will affect your Stairway points and our accumulated Sweep Alliance points.” Yao Lan did not look like she was joking.

“All of us have an Emperor’s Heart Ring with us, but most of the people don’t know that the ring was made of a god relic called the Emperor’s Heart. The virtual world of the Genius Union is also made of the Emperor’s Heart. The power of the Emperor’s Heart isn’t the Heart Network that’s used by all humans, but the ability to make virtual items into reality. All of the items that we obtain here are real. All of the things that we consume here will work on our bodies in reality. All of the ancient relics and demigod relics will become real in reality!”

“Making virtual items into reality... That’s too mind-boggling even for a god relic.”

Yao Lan’s explanation made Lin Huang’s jaw drop. He thought such an ability was even more powerful than Xiao Hei his Goldfinger.

“The Emperor’s Heart shouldn’t be a god relic. It’s impossible for an ancient god relic to make virtual items real. Even I can only use part of the virtual world to make a slight shift in reality. There is a 99.998% possibility that the Emperor’s Heart is a Goldfinger that was manufactured from the same place that I was.”

Xiao Hei’s notification popped out of Lin Huang’s eyes all of a sudden.

“Then, how about the 0.002%?” Lin Huang asked secretly.

“The 0.002% could possibly be a relic that’s gone through an advanced evolution either on its own or through the powerful people that owned it and eventually were got rid of, but the likelihood of this is almost impossible.”

“However, there’s a condition to bringing virtual items into reality. You must place the items into the storage space in your Emperor’s Heart Ring. If you hold the items in your hands or hide them in your clothes as you exit the virtual world, the items won’t be brought into reality. The next time you log in, the items that you didn’t place in your Emperor’s Heart Ring would have disappeared,” Yao Lan added.

“So, whatever that you got in the virtual world... either use them immediately or keep them in your storage space. Don't bring the items that you'd like to trade with you. Only bring them out from your Emperor's Heart Ring when you're ready to trade.”

“Alright, I understand now. Thanks for reminding me,” Lin Huang said.

Lin Huang was shocked to find out about that from Yao Lan. He took a while to calm himself down after hanging up the call and said to the Frost Flame Ape, “You can stay here to absorb the cloud then. I'd love to conduct an experiment as well.”

As soon as getting Lin Huang's permission, the Frost Flame Ape started absorbing the black fog around it. Lin Huang then left its shoulder and climbed down to leave the dark cloud. Under the snow, he found a crack in the bark and hid in it. He activated his Army Attack Tactics to recover his Life Power. The experiment he was trying to conduct was to give himself pressure in the cold weather to see if he could accelerate his cultivation in the Army Attack Tactics as his Life Power was rapidly draining.

Chapter 648: Difficulty Beyond His Expectations

As Lin Huang sat in the crack of the bark, he was activating his Life Power to prevent the cold from entering his body. He was like a candle swaying in the wind, and he looked like he was going to be put out anytime. Without the Frost Flame Ape's protection, he was exposed to -200 degree Celsius conditions. The draining of his Life Power was much faster than before.

In such a horrible environment, Lin Huang activated the Army Attack Tactics' rotation. He did not want to stay there, but he wanted to see if he could accelerate the speed of his Army Attack Tactics' card accumulation under such circumstances. If this worked, he planned to train his Army Attack Tactics there whenever he had the time.

This only proved that Lin Huang's speculation was true. Under the quick draining of his Life Power, the Army Attack Tactics level-9 which required one second to complete a cycle was increased in less than five minutes to 0.5 seconds per cycle. Besides, it was not the end yet. He could feel that the speed was accelerating. Noticing that his last Life Wheel was depleting, he used a Life Power Refill Card immediately and climbed back to the Frost Flame Ape immediately.

As soon as he got back to the Frost Flame Ape, Lin Huang started the rotation of his Army Attack Tactics again to restore the Life Power that was depleted. Without the pressure, the rotation went back to one second per cycle. Time went by on the Stairway Tree. The gigantic Frost Flame Ape attached itself on the bark as it absorbed the black fog with its mouth wide open. Lin Huang had no idea what the fog was, but he could feel the deadly threat looming behind it. He could also feel the chill when he used the telekinetic thread to touch it. He figured he might become frozen if his body were to touch the fog.

Lin Huang and the Frost Flame Ape were stuck at the second checkpoint for more than three hours. The ape stopped absorbing the fog, and it seemed like it was now full with the fog in itself. Meanwhile, seven out of ten Life Wheels in Lin Huang's body were filled. It was past noon when he checked the time. He did not plan to stay any longer, so he instructed the ape to move on. In less than three minutes, they passed through the second checkpoint. Looking at the area that was covered in black fog beneath,

Lin Huang knew that he would be back one day. However, he shook his head while forcing a smile when he recalled the chill in his bones.

“I guess many geniuses that are below immortal-level will be stuck in this checkpoint for a while...”

Just when they left the second checkpoint, the Frost Flame Ape spoke to him., I’m sorry, Master. Since I’ve absorbed a massive amount of black fog earlier, my bloodline thickness is going to level up soon. I might not serve you at the moment.”

“Don’t worry about it. Focus on breaking through.” Lin Huang nodded and leaped to a crack in the bark. He summoned the golden-haired Mighty Ape again after recalling the Frost Flame Ape.

“Let’s go up!” Lin Huang climbed on top of the Mighty Ape’s shoulder and instructed.

The Mighty Ape was exuberant as it claimed. It was worried that Lin Huang might not summon it again since it had made mistakes earlier. Without the snow, the Mighty Ape’s performance peaked as it was reaching more than 30,000 meters. Lin Huang looked up as he noticed that the reading on his Emperor’s Heart Ring showed 30,000 meters. He could not wait to see what the third checkpoint was about. The clouds were gray this time, and it looked like it was going to rain.

“It was a snow storm on the second checkpoint. Could this be rain?” Lin Huang thought it would be lack of creativity if the third checkpoint were as he speculated.

Just when he was going to get the Mighty Ape to pass through the cloud, there were purple flashes of lightning on top of the clouds coming towards them. The Mighty Ape sensed danger by instinct and leaped aside, managing to dodge the attack.

However, that was just the beginning. Right after the Mighty Ape dodged it, the gray cloud was like an angry beast that was awoken as purple lightning bolts struck towards them. It felt like there was a giant purple squid on top of the sky that was attacking Lin Huang and the Mighty Ape with its lightning-like tentacles.

“It’s useless to hide like this. Let’s go through it.” Noticing that the Mighty Ape was dodging the attacks clumsily, Lin Huang thought avoiding was a waste of time and strength as they could not move with the lightning bolts striking them.

The Mighty Ape noticed that it was impossible for it to dodge every single lightning bolts that were coming their way at such a high frequency. It made more sense to just go through it. After hearing Lin Huang’s instruction, the Mighty Ape gave up on dodging and proceeded to climb up after covering its body with a layer of Life Power. Lin Huang, who was sitting on the ape’s shoulder, activated his Dark Mirror as his defense.

Along the way, the purple lightning bolts hit the Mighty Ape’s body, but it did almost nothing to it as it was an immortal-level. After confirming that the lightning was not a threat, the Mighty Ape climbed as fast as it could. Lin Huang was a smaller target. Although he was hit by lightning occasionally, the lightning would be reflected away by the Dark Mirror. This checkpoint was nothing difficult for him. However, the deeper the Mighty Ape got into the gray cloud, the purple lightning turned into blue, and it was more powerful now.

Every strike of blue lightning would drain tens of times more of the ape's Life Power than before. The bolts of lightning could occasionally break through the Mighty Ape's Life Power shield and cause it to be stiff. Lin Huang could feel that the Life Power of the Mighty Ape was tapering and its body was stiff. He did not expect that it was merely the third checkpoint that would be such trouble to an immortal-level Mighty Ape. He then urged the Mighty Ape to climb at its peak speed.

As the Mighty Ape climbed as fast it could, they finally passed through the gray cloud more than two minutes later. After passing through the third checkpoint, Lin Huang had a new understanding of the challenges of the Stairway Tree. It was a few times more difficult than he imagined. The third checkpoint could stop more than 90% of holy fire-level humans and even some less powerful immortal-levels. They might even be stuck at the second checkpoint.

"The third checkpoint is already so difficult, but some people managed to get to the 72nd checkpoint when they're only on immortal-level rank-9..." Lin Huang was impressed by those people who had managed to pass through 70 checkpoints in history. Although they depended on strategies on some of the levels, looking at how difficult they were, they're not easy to go through even provided with strategies.

Lin Huang had heard from Yao Lan that the 72nd checkpoint was the highest checkpoint anyone had ever gotten to in history. However, the highest checkpoint that the current genius organizations members managed to climb to was only the 63rd checkpoint. They could not pass through that despite being provided with strategies. After some realization, Lin Huang snapped out of his thoughts and looked up to the sky, knowing that the fourth checkpoint would be even more difficult than before!

Chapter 649: Increasing Difficulty

As the Mighty Ape was clambering up, Lin Huang heard an odd sound that he could not identify. It sounded like a collision on the ground. It was so insignificant that nobody could probably notice it. At first, he thought it was just the sound of the wind, but soon he sensed something had entered his territory.

"Is there something in the bark?!"

Lin Huang clearly sensed that something was moving through the cracks not far above. They were not moving fast, but there were many of them. Looking at the way they traveled, they did not seem like humans.

"Be careful," Lin Huang was alert as he warned the Mighty Ape. He had a couple of telekinetic flying daggers in front of him.

He heard from Yao Lan that killing monsters on the Stairway Tree would earn him points. Since the moving objects did not look like humans, they must be monsters then. The Mighty Ape took a few leaps and climbed more than 1,000 meters high. Just when it was bounding in the air, a couple of white silk threads shot out of one of the cracks, heading towards the Mighty Ape. A couple of silver lights flashed in the air and sliced the threads, then shot towards the cracks where the threads originated from.

Soon, groans were heard. Lin Huang instantly killed the monsters that had attacked the Mighty Ape. He knew that the monsters would attack, so he reacted as soon as they made their move. He had no idea what the monsters looked like; all he did was to identify their locations with his Territory skill and killed them with his flying daggers.

It was a battle model that he had come up with earlier which seemed to work for now. However, the coverage area was small at the moment. Even since Lancelot had leveled up to immortal-level rank-2, his territory coverage had increased from 1,000 meters to 2,000 meters together with Lancelot's Saber Dao Territory, but he thought it was still insufficient.

After killing the faceless monsters, Lin Huang was not relaxed at all because he felt that something was wrong when he heard the groans. Just when he wanted to get the Mighty Ape to leave the area, the monsters that were hiding in the bark cracks acted up. The groans of the dying monsters were like pebbles that were tossed into the calm water, creating ripples.

Within the coverage of his territory, Lin Huang sensed that all of the monsters that were hiding in the bark were starting to dash out.

"Let's get out now!" Lin Huang shouted at the Mighty Ape when the threat intensified. The ape seemed to sense the danger as well, so it started climbing as fast as it could. Standing on the ape's shoulder, Lin Huang finally saw how the monsters looked like.

Worms were coming out of the cracks of the bark everywhere. Although they were crystal white in color, they had a sticky mucus on their bodies which was disgusting. The worms looked like maggots that were hundreds of times bigger. The smaller ones were two meters long while the longer ones were above five meters. As they got out of the cracks, they crawled sturdily towards Lin Huang and the Mighty Ape. Some of them stuck their lower bodies to the bark and spat white threads at the Mighty Ape.

Lin Huang did not hold back anymore as he got all 300 of his flying daggers to cut off the threads and kill the worms, clearing a path for the Mighty Ape. However, Lin Huang was horrified when the tens of worms exploded upon being killed. Green mucus shot everywhere before the carcasses disappeared. The corrosive slime sizzled as it clung to the bark and green smoke danced out of it.

Lin Huang activated his Dark Mirror that looked like an umbrella and held it on top of his and the Mighty Ape's head. A few drops of the green mucus fell on the ape. After switching the Dark Mirror to transparent mode, the ape's vision was no longer blocked and it started climbing up again as it ignored the corrosive pain from the mucus. Meanwhile, Lin Huang was controlling his hundreds of telekinetic flying daggers to kill the worms as he defended themselves with the Dark Mirror.

Without the Dark Mirror and the flying daggers, Lin Huang might not have been able to go through the fourth checkpoint as the least powerful worm was on gold flame-level while many of them were on immortal-level rank-1 and rank-2. There were tens of thousands of them in Lin Huang's field of vision and they were coming everywhere for him and the Mighty Ape. The mucus that was produced after the worms exploded was extremely corrosive. The Mighty Ape was unfortunate to get a few drops on it and those spots were now bald. Its skin was decaying too. Luckily, the wounds were small and with the Mighty Ape's Enhanced Regeneration, the corrosion on its skin was healing albeit at a slow pace.

Within the short seven to eight minutes, Lin Huang had killed at least thousands of worm monsters while the Mighty Ape managed to pass through the worms and complete the fourth checkpoint. After they got through, the worms did not come after them and returned to the cracks in the bark. In less than 20 seconds, the barks that were filled with white worms were nowhere to be seen. It felt like everything had just been a figment of Lin Huang's illusion. If not for the wounds on the Mighty Ape's skin caused by the green mucus, he would have really thought that it was all an illusion.

"There are already immortal-level monsters at the fourth checkpoint. Although the worms were slow and their defenses were weak, there were just too many of them and the corrosive effect was terrifying. It's not easy for an immortal-level rank-4 person to win this," Lin Huang concluded about the fourth checkpoint. The higher he climbed, the more respect he had for the people who made it to the 60th to 70th checkpoints.

After breaking through the fourth checkpoint, Lin Huang rode on the Mighty Ape and got to the fifth checkpoint soon. They encountered a star-beaked bird beast that Lin Huang had never seen in the monster encyclopedia before at the fifth checkpoint. It was in between immortal-level rank-1 to rank-3 and was remarkably agile. The Mighty Ape suffered at this checkpoint while Lin Huang remained safe thanks to the defense of the Dark Mirror.

It was proven that the no-fly condition on the Stairway Tree only applied to humans and summoning monsters, but not the local creatures on the tree. The bird beast was flying territorially at this checkpoint. After passing the arduous fifth checkpoint, Lin Huang rode on the Mighty Ape's shoulder and passed through the sixth, the seventh, and the eighth checkpoints...

Chapter 650: The 21st Checkpoint

After 6 p.m., Lin Huang had finally broken through the 20th checkpoint and arrived at the 21st checkpoint. He had primarily managed to break through each checkpoint within ten minutes for first to the ninth checkpoints. However, he and the Mighty Ape took more than 15 minutes to get through each checkpoint since the 10th one; some even took more than 20 minutes to break through, especially the 20th checkpoint that they had just passed. For that particular one, they needed half an hour to break through it.

From the 21st checkpoint onwards, there were finally branches on the Stairway Tree. Lin Huang looked up at the branches that extended up to the sky. All of them surpassed his field of vision. They were like pillars that disappeared into the sky. It felt like they were scaling a massive wall when they were climbing on the trunk earlier. In no way did they think that they were climbing a tree. When he saw the branches, he finally realized that they were not climbing a tree, but an ancient, gigantic tree. He finally had a sense of the proportion of the Stairway Tree.

"Yao Lan said that places above the 21st checkpoint with leaves are safe. There's an isolation bubble on the last leaf of each branch. Those are the refuge spots for humans. The Life Power in the isolation space can accelerate our recovery, and we won't be attacked by monsters when we're there. It even isolates humans from attacking us. Even an imperial-level human can't break through it."

Although Lin Huang did not see leaves anywhere, he knew that the place must be the gathering point for humans. Below the 30th checkpoint, only the 21st checkpoint had branches. It was the first formal gathering point for humans on the Stairway Tree, and it was also the most crowded point. As soon as he arrived at the checkpoint, Lin Huang did not plan to climb further up. It was late, and the parasitic monsters on the tree would be out hunting for food when the sky turned dark. He would be digging his own grave if he were to climb the tree at night. Moreover, he wanted to see how the human gathering point looked like.

Lin Huang then instructed the Mighty Ape to head to the branch that was nearest to him. Riding on the Mighty Ape, they soon arrived at that branch, and the ape leaped onto the branch. The Mighty Ape's appearance caught many people's attention. Many of them were afraid as they thought it was a local monster from the Stairway Tree while some of them noticed a person sitting on its shoulder and realized that it was a summoning monster.

Lin Huang jumped onto the branch and just when he was ready to recall Mighty Ape, a young man in white shirt walked towards him. The man was an immortal-level rank-1.

"Name me a price for the giant ape." The man in the white shirt was apparently from a wealthy family as he sounded obnoxious.

"You want to buy it?" Lin Huang thought that was a ridiculous idea. Then he looked at the Mighty Ape. "It depends if he wants to go with you."

The Mighty Ape shook its head immediately and glared furiously at the man. It did not want to leave Lin Huang as he had made it into a triple mutated monster as well as obtaining the Mighty Ape's bloodline which gave it the possibility to level up to a quadruple mutation. It was natural that it did not want to leave its master. Even without all those advantages, a Monster Card would usually have 100% loyalty towards its master (except for special conditions).

"Did you see that? It doesn't want to go with you." Lin Huang turned around and smiled at the man.

"10 million Life Crystals." The man did not give up and named his price.

10 million Life Crystals was a high offer. Although an immortal-level triple mutated monster was rare, the market value of an immortal-level rank-3 monster would usually cost around 5 million. Even a monster with ancient monster blood would require, at most, 8 million. It would not exceed 9 million if it were sold at an auction. Since the man offered 10 million, it was clear that he knew the market value.

All of the people watching discussed among each other when they heard the offer. Many of them knew the man in the white shirt and his background, so they knew he could afford the ridiculous price that he offered.

"Take a good rest, Herculean King," Lin Huang ignored the man and said to the Mighty Ape, "We shall continue tomorrow."

He then recalled the Mighty Ape into its card form.

"12 million!" The man in the white shirt insisted.

"Not selling." Lin Huang glared at him and left without bothering to talk to him.

The onlookers buzzed with conversation.

“The guy is stupid to not sell it for 12 million. He’ll be lucky enough if that triple mutated ape can be sold for 9 million at auctions.”

“The guy is an Imperial Censor. Perhaps he has feelings for his pet.”

“What can feelings do? Can that compare to money? That’s 12 million Life Crystals! He could get a pretty impressive ancient relic with that money.”

“15 million!” The man in the white shirt teleported and blocked Lin Huang’s way, glaring deadly at him.

“You must know that 15 million is enough to purchase an immortal-level rank-9 triple mutated ancient blood monster. Your ape is just an immortal-level rank-2. If you miss this opportunity now, I won’t offer such a price anymore.”

“I’ve told you that I’m not selling!” Lin Huang stared into the man’s eyes. He lost his patience with the man’s stubbornness.

“Is it so hard to understand?”

“How dare you talk to me like that? You’re only a blue flame-level. Do you want to die?” The man became mad. On the one hand, he was repeatedly rejected by Lin Huang while on the other hand, he did not like Lin Huang’s tone.

“You can try and see who’ll die first.” Lin Huang grinned as he did not mind sending the man to the beginning point of the Stairway Tree as he would obtain half of the man’s accumulated points.

The people who were watching were excited. Some of them pulled out chairs from their storage space while some even started munching on snacks as they watched.

“They’re going to fight! Who wants to bet? 1-5 for the new kid and 1-1.2 for Sun Yu!”

“1-5 for the new kid? Isn’t that way too low, Zhao San? It should be 1-10.”

“1-10? You’ll take the lead then!” The guy named Zhao San glared at the other man who spoke.

“Never mind, I’ll bet 10 points on the new kid that he’ll win!” The man, who had shouted earlier, said.

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself for betting only 10 points?!” Zhao Yan rolled his eyes.

“Hehe, then I won’t lose much, and I’ll get 50 points if the new kid wins.”

“I’m betting 100 points on Sun Yu!”

“I’m betting 200 points on Sun Yu!”

“I’m betting 300 points on Sun Yu!”

...

Most of them bet on Sun Yu while only some of them bet on Lin Huang. Those who bet on Lin Huang were only wagering with 10 and 20 points. Only one person placed an ante of 30 points.

Zhao San was grumbling, "What the hell? Wouldn't I lose a lot as a maker?"

"Hey, can I join the bet as well?" Lin Huang asked Zhao San as he noticed that everyone was betting.

Zhao San was shocked to hear that, and he nodded immediately. "Yes you can, but you can only bet on yourself."

"Then, I'll be betting with all of my points." Lin Huang was confident in himself.

"No, you can only bet on half of your points. If you're killed, half of your points will go to Sun Yu, and you'll only be left with half," Zhao San explained.

"You don't have to transfer your points to me. I shall hold your account since everyone is watching. There's nowhere you can run to later."

"Sure, let's do that." Lin Huang nodded.

"What're your total points?" Zhao San wanted to record Lin Huang's points. Since he was a newbie, he thought Lin Huang would not have that many points.

"5,728 points," Lin Huang declared.

Besides Zhao San, all of the onlookers were shocked when they heard the figure. Even Sun Yu raised his eyebrow.

"How is that possible? Is that a mistake?" Zhao San went to Lin Huang and looked at the personal details that Lin Huang projected. Besides his name Lin Xie and the organization that he belonged to, there was only the total of his points showing. The figure was indeed 5,728 as Lin Huang had announced earlier.

"How is it possible that you already have so many points when you're new here?" Zhao San was skeptical.

"I killed some monsters along the way," Lin Huang explained.

Each checkpoint from the first to the 10th checkpoint earned one point. From the 11th to the 20th checkpoint, one would receive 10 points per checkpoint. Killing a holy fire-level monster would only gain one point, 10 points for an immortal-level rank-1, 20 points for an immortal-level rank-2, and 30 points for an immortal-level rank-3. The points would double up accordingly for every rank.

Lin Huang managed to get so many points because he had killed many monsters along the way. The least powerful one was a holy fire-level while the most powerful one was an immortal-level rank-3. Besides the monsters that he killed, the monsters that the Mighty Ape killed would add to his total tally as well.

However, Zhao San and the rest did not think that Lin Huang obtained the points by himself. They doubted that his points came from his summoning monster that would have helped him killed the monsters. They reasoned that to get more than 5,000 points below the 20th checkpoint would mean he had killed a massive amount of monsters. Many of them speculated that Lin Huang had acquired the points from other members of the Sweep Alliance. Even Sun Yu thought the same as he did not believe that Lin Huang could depend on an immortal-level rank-2 ape to obtain that amount of points.

“Half of my total points would be 2,864, so I’ll bet on that. Please record this down for me.” Seeing that Zhao San had confirmed that what he said was accurate, Lin Huang proclaimed the points that he was betting on out loud.

“If that’s what you want, I shall give it to you then.” Sun Yu laughed.

“I have 12,000 points now. I’ll bet 6,000 on myself!”

“Sure! I’ve recorded both your points. After the battle ends, the loser will transfer the points to me!” Zhao San agreed on their bets. Soon, the people gathered to watch the show. Lin Huang and Sun Yu stood 30 meters across each other, and Zhao San who was the maker became the judge of this battle.

“3, 2, 1. Fight!”