

Paradise 651

Chapter 651: Tens of Thousands of Points

As Zhao San counted down, Sun Yu hurtled towards Lin Huang without waiting for him to summon his monster. Sun Yu thought it was impossible for Lin Huang to have gotten to the 21st checkpoint on his own since he was only a blue flame-level. He had experienced it himself, and he knew how difficult it was to get through the 20 checkpoints. It was impossible for a holy fire-level to get there on his own.

Among the active members of the Genius Union, the last holy fire-level who managed to get there was a golden flame-level seven years ago. It was a supreme genius from Division 1. Now that seven years had passed, the person had already got to the 63rd checkpoint, and he was now an immortal-level rank-9. Sun Yu did not think that Lin Huang was on par with the man. He thought Lin Huang must have depended on the triple mutated immortal-level rank-2 gigantic ape. To him, most of the Imperial Censors were merely adequate. Without their powerful summoning monsters, they were just garbage.

As soon as the countdown ended, Sun Yu attacked first so that he could kill Lin Huang before Lin Huang could summon his monster. He was sure that Lin Huang was incapable of fighting without his summoning monster. Many onlookers who bet on Lin Huang were concerned as they watched Sun Yu advance before Lin Huang did. They did not have faith in Lin Huang, but they believed in his Mighty Ape. To them, Lin Huang's combat level was too low as an Imperial Censor. He could not fight Sun Yu even though he was a genius.

After all, everyone who got to this virtual world was a genius. Although Sun Yu was only an immortal-level rank-1, his ability was actually on immortal-level rank-4. Even though Lin Huang was a supreme genius who was able to fight someone one level above him, he as a blue flame-level could only fight an immortal-level rank-3. He definitely could not fight Sun Yu. In this battle, the only way for Lin Huang to turn the tables around depended on whether he had the time to call for his summoning monster.

If Lin Huang managed to summon the ape before Sun Yu killed him, the battle would be a great show with unpredictable results. However, if Lin Huang did not manage to summon the ape, there was nothing to watch in this battle as Lin Huang would definitely lose! All of the onlookers assumed that Lin Huang was incapable by himself as an Imperial Censor. Many of them smiled and shook their heads when they watched Sun Yu dash towards Lin Huang before he could summon his monster. The poor kid's points would go back to zero soon. Those who had bet on Lin Huang felt their hearts skip a beat as they realized they would lose their wager.

However, a silver glow flashed in the air. Some of the onlookers were shocked by the sight of this. Sun Yu brushed shoulders with Lin Huang while the latter stood where he was without moving. Sun Yu was appalled as he spat a mouthful of blood. They then noticed that there was blood blooming out of his left chest.

"So, you've been hiding your abilities..." Sun Yu clenched his teeth as he glared at Lin Huang.

"You're the one who asked for this." Lin Huang turned around and smirked at Sun Yu. "I shall take your 6,000 points then."

As soon as Lin Huang said that, Sun Yu's body faded into sparks and disappeared entirely within seconds. A notification from the virtual system came to Lin Huang's ears.

"You've obtained 6,102 points from killing Sun Yu!"

Those onlookers were shocked to see that Sun Yu was killed in an instant. Although some of them noticed the silver glow, they had no idea what exactly it was.

"What exactly happened?"

"Did that guy cheat?"

"What was that silver glow that came out of nowhere? Is that the new kid's technique?"

"How could an Imperial Censor be so powerful? I thought he's just a blue flame-level.

The people started discussing among themselves, most of them not knowing how Lin Huang managed to win.

"Alright, stop guessing among yourselves. This new kid is a powerful psychic. The silver glow was a flying dagger. As Sun Yu rushed towards him, the flying dagger pierced through his heart. That was how Lin Huang killed him," a tall, bald, middle-aged man among the crowd spoke. He was an immortal-level rank-4, and it was clear that he knew what Lin Huang did just now.

"I'm sure some of you recorded the battle just now. Just play the video at a slower speed, and you'll see."

Some of them who had recorded the fight then played the video. Zhao San, who started the bet, played the video ten times slower and saw the flying dagger that appeared before Lin Huang piercing through Sun Yu's chest. Many of them underestimated Lin Huang, so none of them expected such a result. The blue flame-level newbie standing in front of them was not only an Imperial Censor but also a psychic who managed to kill the immortal-level rank-1 Sun Yu in a flash.

"He's a supreme genius!" Someone exclaimed after a moment of silence. Besides fear, they now looked at Lin Huang with respect. It was rare to find a supreme genius outside of core zones, and they were lucky to see one or two occasionally. There were not many supreme geniuses in the core zones. There were only 50 supreme geniuses in the Genius Union in Division 3. All those people who were stuck on the 21st checkpoint were mostly geniuses outside of the core zones. To them, supreme geniuses were hard to come by, so it was natural that they would hold such respect for Lin Huang.

Lin Huang ignored the people's discussion about him, and he walked over to Zhao San.

"You're giving me the 2,864 points that I bet on, right?" Lin Huang asked Zhao San.

"Yes... Yes!" Zhao San nodded immediately. His ability was just slightly more powerful than Sun Yu. If he denied what he promised, this newbie would definitely send him to the bottom of the Stairway Tree.

"Five times of 2,864 will be 14,320. Deducting the deposit that you haven't paid, I'll need to give you 11,456 points."

Zhao San transferred the points immediately after he had done the calculation. Lin Huang was thrilled to see the 6,000-odd points from Sun Yu being added to his 5,000-odd points, together with more than 10,000 points that he had won from the bet.

The sky was getting dark. Lin Huang looked at the time and thought he should log out now. Zhao San noticed that Lin Huang was opening the log out page, then he quickly went to him.

“Mr. Lin, are you interested in joining our hunting team?”

“Hunting team?” Lin Huang looked skeptically at Zhao San.

“It’s a temporary team that we formed to hunt at night,” Zhao San explained to him since he was new. Lin Huang understood what he meant after Zhao San clarified. Usually, many monsters came out to look for food at night, so it was difficult for people to climb the tree. However, it was the golden hour to kill monsters for points too.

The people could hunt for monsters from sunset to just before midnight when the number of monsters had yet to reach a peak. Therefore, many people would form hunting teams on their own at the 21st checkpoint to kill the monsters together. The points would still be the same as usual, but creating a team made hunting easier, and they could look after each other.

“We’ll leave to the isolated space when the monsters get out of hand during midnight, and we’ll leave the virtual world. It’s pretty safe if we stick together,” Zhao San explained further.

“Thanks for your invitation, but I don’t plan to stay any longer below the 30th checkpoint. However, I’ll stay together to hunt together just for the experience.” Lin Huang rejected Zhao San’s invitation, but he decided to join them for the night.

Chapter 652: Zhao San’s Hunting Team

Zhao San’s real name was actually Zhao Shan, but due to his mispronunciation, people started calling him Zhao San instead. As time went by, his real name did not matter anymore. Although Lin Huang had rejected his invitation to join the hunting team, Zhao San brought him to the hunting team’s gathering point. There were a total of six members in Zhao San’s team which consisted of five men and a lady. All of them were on either immortal-level rank-2 or rank-3. They were ranked on top of the 21st checkpoint as a team.

The teammates were excited as they saw Zhao San bringing Lin Huang with him. They had participated in the bet earlier and had witnessed how powerful Lin Huang was. None of them doubted his ability. The female member named Jiang Xin could not help but to pipe up, “Brother San, is this handsome hunk joining our team?”

Before Zhao San could reply, the tall, skinny man, who looked like he was in his early 30s, smiled as he spoke, “Since Zhao San brought him here, that definitely means that he’s joining us.”

The teammates were excited that they had a powerful addition to the team. After all, there was no conflict of interest in the team as everyone would get points for the monsters that they killed. All they wanted was to look after each other. Moreover, Lin Huang was a psychic who was skilled at long-range attacks. With him, their safety was upgraded to the next level.

“Erm... Mr. Lin Xie isn't joining us,” Zhao San told the truth helplessly as he peeped at Lin Huang.

“I'm sorry. It's my first time in this Genius Union virtual world. There are many things that I need to learn. I heard from Zhao San that you guys are hunting tonight, so I've decided to take a look. I'll leave the 21st checkpoint tomorrow morning,” Lin Huang explained. Since everyone was friendly to him, he thought he owed them an explanation.

The teammates could not hide their disappointment. All of them thought that Lin Huang was joining their team when they saw Zhao San bringing him here.

“Mr. Lin, you mean you've gone through 21 checkpoints since your first day in the virtual world?” Jiang Xin was the first one to speak after a moment of silence.

“Mm-hmm.” Lin Huang nodded. He thought there was nothing to hide about.

“Incredibly powerful!” Jiang Xin exclaimed. The Genius Union was a competitive place where powerful people were respected regardless of one's combat level.

“Not many people can pass through 21 checkpoints within a day. Most of them would take at least a week to get here from the first checkpoint on their first attempt.” Zhao San forced a smile, thinking how different they were.

“It took me eight days to get to the 21st checkpoint. I've been defeated twice, and I had to start from the bottom again. Getting here took me three days.”

“It took me five days to get here, but I was defeated a couple of times later on. It took me a few days to get here from the bottom,” the immortal-level rank-3 man said.

Although Lin Huang was not one of the teammates, they started talking as the topic was relatable.

“Mr. Lin you must be from a genius organization in one of the core zones. Didn't your partner from the same organization tell you about the rules of this virtual world?” Zhao San was curious as Lin Huang had asked something quite fundamental about the virtual world.

“I come from Division 3. My partner only managed to guide me through roughly as her time was limited. I didn't manage to ask about the details,” Lin Huang explained.

“She only told me that there are leaves at the 21st checkpoint and that's the first gathering point for humans on the Stairway Tree. The leaves are safe as the isolation bubbles on the leaves will block out the monsters as well as humans...”

“No wonder you didn't know about the hunting at night...” Zhao San thought Lin Huang's partner was not reliable after hearing what he said.

“Mr. Lin, since you're from Division 3, you must have the detailed strategy of the 30th checkpoint? Could you sell me a copy?” The tall, skinny man in his 30s asked.

“I'm sorry, I really don't have the strategy.” Lin Huang shook his head.

“I rejected the strategies my partner sent before entering the Stairway Tree. Until now, I've no idea what's at the 30th checkpoint, let alone the strategy.”

“So, you didn’t use any strategies to get to the 21st checkpoint today?” The tall, skinny man raised his eyebrow. He thought Lin Huang had come up with the excuse so that he did not have to sell him the strategy.

“No.” Lin Huang smiled as he shook his head.

“I figured it wouldn’t be fun if I knew what it’s going to be beforehand. I prefer surprises.”

The man did not speak further since Lin Huang was determined. Including Zhao San, everyone on the team was skeptical about what Lin Huang said. Even though he had shown how dominant he was in the battle, they did not believe that he managed to get to the 21st checkpoint without using any strategies. Lin Huang could tell from that they were doubtful from the way they looked at him. He did not bother to explain as he had already said what he was supposed to say. It was up to them to believe him.

Although the tall, skinny man did not pick a fight with Lin Huang for not selling him the strategy, he was now cold towards Lin Huang. The rest did not speak further about the strategies. After all, the selling of strategy had to go both ways. If Lin Huang was unwilling to sell, there was nothing that they could do. All of them actually had the strategy for the 30th checkpoint with them, but they failed to pass through with the strategy. That was the reason why the tall, skinny man had asked Lin Huang instead,

Although it was awkward, they had a sumptuous dinner together. The sky was dark by then. Hearing the monster roars from above, Lin Huang knew that it was time for the monsters on the Stairway Tree to hunt for food.

“Is the 21st checkpoint about killing the parasitical monsters?” Lin Huang asked Zhao San.

Zhao San thought it was an odd question, but he explained anyway, “The 21st checkpoint isn’t about killing monsters. These monsters that are hunting for food at night come from the 23rd checkpoint while some of them are from the 29th checkpoint.”

The other teammates thought that Lin Huang was still going on with the lie that he had made up earlier and was pretending not to know. Lin Huang just learned from Zhao San that the 23rd and 29th checkpoints were going to be chockful of monsters.

“The monsters are here!”

Soon, there were shouts from not far away. Hearing the movement from the other teams, they headed towards the source of the sound.

“Let’s go!”

Zhao San nodded at Lin Huang and commanded the rest before dashing forward. Lin Huang and the other five members followed.

Chapter 653: The Tentacle Beetle

Soon, Lin Huang followed Zhao San’s hunting team to a branch nearby. There were more than twenty hunting teams who patiently lay in wait for the monsters to come down from the branches. Lin Huang looked up at the branch and saw hideous beetles surrounding the entire branch. The combat level of the beetles were all immortal-level rank-3 and rank-4. They were around two to three meters long and were covered both black and white spots on their backs.

The only thing worth mentioning about this monster was the weapon in their mouth. The outer layer of the weapon looked like an octopus tentacle while the inner layer looked like a meat grinder lined with sharp blades. Lin Huang figured that this was one of the methods these bugs use that he had never seen in the monster encyclopedia. They would basically grab their prey with the tentacle before the prey are pulled in and ground in their mouths.

“We must be careful during the battle. Try not to touch the Tentacle Beetle’s tentacles. Their tentacles can be both soft and hard. Aside from capturing prey like insects usually do, they can be used to pierce through bodies of its prey. Nobody below immortal-level rank-5 could break their tentacles. Even if anyone managed to break them, the Tentacle Beetles could regenerate new ones immediately.” Zhao San reminded Lin Huang and the rest.

“The Tentacle Beetles only have two weakness. The first was the point where their head connects to their back while the second was located within their mouths. Usually, we’d only manage to attack the connecting point while others who excel in long-ranged attacks could try their hand at attacking the insides of their mouth. There was a gun master last year who managed to shoot into their mouths whenever it opened. All of them died immediately, and that particular gun master alone was more efficient than the entire team added up.” Zhao San used a tone of respect every time he spoke of the gun master.

“Is the gun master still here?” Lin Huang asked. It was natural for him to be interested in other gun masters as he was a gun master who had never obtained an official license.

“He left since the very beginning and had only stayed on the 21st checkpoint for three days. The gun master left after asking around for some stuff. I heard he broke through the 30th checkpoint without stopping or he would’ve come back again.” Zhao San smiled as he shook his head.

Lin Huang had expected this before he even asked his question. A powerful person would not stay too long on the 21st checkpoint. After a short conversation, the first Tentacle Beetle horde arrived from the branches. The hunting teams dashed toward the beetles accordingly. Since the sky had just turned dark, the Tentacle Beetles seemed to have only woken up and were moving slowly. It was the perfect time to kill them.

“The first monster horde is basically giving us points for free! Let’s start killing.” Zhao San stopped chatting with Lin Huang and dashed toward the monsters along with the rest. Lin Huang followed suit shortly after. The first monster horde seemed to be rather underwhelming. Although the combat level of the monsters was rather high, they were basically sheep ready for slaughter. There were less than thirty teams of over 200 people going against a horde of tens of thousands of monsters. However, the hunting teams were like tigers among the goats where all of the monsters were killed and disappeared immediately.

Zhao San’s team was performing well. The six of them had managed to kill all the Tentacle Beetles they faced with one hit. Zhao San was an expert with the sword, and was at level-3 of the Sword Dao. He had trained extensively in speed, allowing him to move at breakneck speed while still maintaining the efficiency of his attacks. His attacks were accurate, and pretty much severing the heads of the beetles from their backs with just a slash. He would require explosive strength to be able to achieve such a feat

if he were going up against another person as this attack of his would definitely fail if it was defended against.

Jiang Xin who was the only lady in the team was using a rather special weapon. She used a pair of short blades that were more than thirty centimeters long and two centimeters wide. Her movement seemed to match her weapon, making her look like a silent spirit when she was drowned in battle. She would stab her blades through the point that connects the beetle's head and back. She lost the gentleness she had from when she was speaking to Lin Huang earlier.

The rest of the team was performing well too. The most powerful among them was the immortal-level rank-3 hunk who was holding a gigantic ax and managed to chop off the beetle's head with almost every slash. Meanwhile, Lin Huang seemed rather uninterested in killing the monsters. All he did was follow the rest from the back, killing the monsters that the other's had missed out on. He was so relaxed that he looked like a tourist who had just wandered his way into the midst of a war.

With Lin Huang's help in killing the monsters, Zhao San and the rest did not have to worry about the monsters that they missed. This allowed them to move twice as fast as they usually were. Since they did not miss many monsters, Lin Huang was only killing the stragglers with his telekinetic flying dagger. The flying dagger would pierce through the mouth of the beetle before it came out from its head. All of them were killed by their exploding heads. To Lin Huang's flying dagger, it made no difference regardless if the beetles' mouths were opened or not. Apparently, his method of killing was much crueler than the gun master they encountered a year ago.

Soon, an hour and a half had passed. The first monster horde finally ended when it was almost 9 p.m.

"The first monster horde is usually the easiest. The upcoming ones would get increasingly difficult. Each horde would usually end in an hour and a half to two hours, and we'd usually stay until the third horde before we leave halfway through." Zhao San and the rest gathered once more as Zhao San explained how they did things to Lin Huang before the second monster horde came.

"Why do we have to leave halfway through the third horde?" Lin Huang could not understand.

"The monsters in the first horde are usually not from this zone so they're basically free points. However, the monsters in the second horde are kind of hyperactive, like they've been drugged or something. The third monster horde will be rather difficult since there'll be some monsters from the 29th checkpoint." Zhao San explained.

"Are the monsters in the 29th checkpoint very powerful?" Lin Huang had no idea what kind of monsters were there on the 29th checkpoint.

"The monsters on the 29th checkpoint include the Velocious Swordfiend. They're immortal-level rank-4 but their speed is on par with monsters from immortal-level rank-6. Not only can they jump exceedingly far, they can fly as well. Their four sword arms are as powerful and sharp as a supreme relic." Zhao San explained.

"Another monster that's not in the monster encyclopedia..." Lin Huang imagined the monster's appearance in his mind after hearing the explanation.

“The monsters aren’t that scary but they’re quite sly when it comes to battles. They’d usually hide among the insects while waiting for the perfect opportunity to launch an attack. If we show just a slight flaw in our formation, we might actually be killed by the monsters immediately.” It was clear that Zhao San had seen such monsters before as he explained in all seriousness.

As they were chatting, there were bugs chirping coming from the branches above. The second monster horde had arrived!

Chapter 654: The Second Monster Horde

It was still the Tentacle Beetles that attacked in the second monster horde. However, they were different this time. Standing near the branch, Lin Huang noticed that the Tentacle Beetles were almost twice as fast compared to the first wave. Moreover, they were more than double the sizes before, and all of them were roaring curiously. Lin Huang also noticed that what used to be white spots on their backs were now bloody red spots.

“Collective Infuriation?” Lin Huang could not understand what he was seeing. He did not find it odd as he had never seen such a monster in the monster encyclopedia, so he had no idea what kind of ability the monsters had, and the individual phenomenon was not surprising to him. What he found astonishing was the tens of thousands of monsters becoming infuriated together. It was his first time witnessing this. The infuriated Tentacle Beetles were different from before as they were now all pumped up.

Before the beetles even got to the branches, from tens of meters away, they started jumping toward the people. Now, Lin Huang finally understood why the hunting teams retreated to a distance before the second monster horde arrived, leaving a gap between the trunk and the branches. If they had been standing where they were, many of the beetles would have attacked them directly from behind.

As soon as the first batch of Tentacle Beetles pounced down, they did not charge toward the beetles immediately. Instead, they waited for the beetles to come nearer to attack them.

“Follow us from behind. Don’t go among them. If you step into their jumping territory, they’ll jump at you in a frenzy. No matter how powerful you are, you’ll be drowned by the mass of beetles.” After Zhou San explained it to him, Lin Huang finally understood why the other hunting teams patrolled the perimeter around the beetles without going in.

Lin Huang nodded and started killing the monsters together with Zhou San’s team. He remained relaxed with his single flying dagger. However, Zhou San and the rest were not as laid-back as before. The infuriated Tentacle Beetles were not only exuberant, but they were also at their peak performance whereby their speed, strength, and defense levels were doubled and even tripled compared to before. Even the regeneration of their tentacles was a few times quicker than before. They almost fully healed within a second.

Their 12 tentacles dashed forward, some of them pliable like rattan while some were hard as thorns. They used various modes to fight the humans that were coming for them. Zhao San and the rest were pressured since the Tentacle Beetles were infuriated as they were now challenging to kill compared to

the kills they made in a single blow earlier. Now, Zhao San needed at least three slashes to kill one beetle. His movement was just mediocre, and avoiding the tentacles became strenuous for him.

Although Jiang Xin's moved like a phantom, her efficiency had dropped immensely. Ever since the beetles' defense became more powerful, she failed to pierce through the connecting thorax of the beetle's head and back in one slash. Now, she needed two to three attacks to kill one beetle. The entire team saw a drop in efficiency, including the most powerful hunk with the giant ax. Although he was still destroying the beetles in a blow, his weak movements made him clumsier than Zhao San under the beetles' siege.

Lin Huang looked away from Zhao San and the rest while he studied the other teams. They were experiencing the same thing. In the first monster horde, everyone was like a warrior dashing into the beetles. They were glorious and brave. However, they now looked serious and tensed. They would avoid the creatures as much as they could whenever the beetles moved. It was apparent that they had lost the courage they possessed before.

Lin Huang became the most relaxed person in the battle. He was the only one who was calm. The flying dagger floated in front of him like a living thing as it pierced through all the monsters that attempted to come near him. His strategy remained the same whereby the flying dagger would pierce through the beetles' mouths and come out from their heads which exploded. A radius of ten meters around him was empty. He followed not far behind from Zhao San and the rest. Whenever tentacles surrounded them, Lin Huang would kill those monsters for them. Besides that, Lin Huang did not interfere with their battle with the monsters at all. They knew that if Lin Huang were to kill the monsters together with them, they would not be able to touch any of them at all.

Soon, more than two hours had passed. The second monster horde finally came to an end when it was past 11 p.m. The hunting teams retreated immediately as soon as the monster horde stopped.

"So, are we giving up now?" Lin Huang raised the question as he followed Zhao San and the rest to leave the place.

"Retreating is a better solution." Zhao San did not explain any further.

The 28 hunting teams soon came to a fork in the branch and proceeded to the branch on the right.

Zhao San finally explained further, "Most of the monsters will go along the main branch to look for humans. That's the reason why we come here to reduce the number of monsters that come for us. Fighting here is less pressure than fighting on the main branch."

Lin Huang finally understood that the main branch was like the main water pipe while they hid in one of the smaller pipes. The monsters were like a stream of water flowing toward the main pipe, so hiding in the smaller pipes would mean fewer monsters.

"That's a great idea."

Lin Huang had to admit that the idea was brilliant especially to relieve some stress off everyone.

"One senior from Division 6 came up with this idea more than 20 years ago. It was said that many people were disqualified from this round of monster horde due to the number of monsters, so they decided to give up. As soon as the second monster horde ended, they either logged out of the virtual

world or retreated to the isolated space in the leaves.” Zhao San was proud when he recalled the senior who came from the same division that he did.

“The senior made it to the 63rd checkpoint and stayed there until he was 40 before he retired from the Genius Union.”

As he listened to Zhao San, Lin Huang could not help but think about Division 7. He thought of his sister Lin Xin and his friends such as Leng Yuexin and Yi Yeyu.

“If I manage to make it to the 63rd checkpoint one day, all of the newbies from Division 6 will definitely remember my name,” Zhao San said to himself.

“Isn’t your name Zhao San? It’s a number. How difficult it is to remember that?” The man with the giant ax teased.

“Damn it! My name is Zhao Shan!”

Soon, a loud voice came from not far away as the both of them exchanged banter.

“Buckle up! The third monster horde is coming!”

Chapter 655: The Velocious Swordfiend

The 28 hunting teams waited patiently on the branch opposite the main branch on the 21st checkpoint of the Stairway Tree. The third monster horde was more arduous than the second one. Besides the furious Tentacle Beetles, there were also the Velocious Swordfiends from the 29th checkpoint. The Velocious Swordfiends were immortal-level rank-4 creatures that possessed terrifying speed like an immortal-level rank-6 monster. Half of the 200-strong crowd could not fight the Velocious Swordfiend on their own. It was even trickier as the Velocious Swordfiend would always hide among the monsters and attack sneakily.

All of them had grave expressions as none of them wanted to die there. If they were killed, not only would they be sent back to the first checkpoint of the tree, 50% of their points would be deducted. Soon, the monster horde finally came. Countless black beetles were leading the pack. Lin Huang was watching from a distance, but he did not see the Velocious Swordfiend that Zhao San mentioned.

The hunting teams did not move as well. They only started attacking when the beetles got nearer to them. However, the teammates were not fighting on their own anymore. Instead, they were split into two groups. The same happened to Zhao San’s group whereby the six of them formed three groups. They ignored Lin Huang completely. Judging from Lin Huang’s ability to kill the furious Tentacle Beetles within a second, he had proven that he was much more powerful than them. They were sure that as a psychic, Lin Huang could control at least hundreds of telekinetic weapons by himself. However, he had only been using one telekinetic flying dagger so far and did not show what he was really capable of. Therefore, they would rather focus on themselves than on him.

Just like before, Lin Huang walked before Zhao San’s team like a tourist. He was like an odd species among the people who were fighting the beetles to death. All of the Tentacle Beetles that dashed toward him died following a silver glow that flashed by. There was nothing alive ten meters around him besides the fading monster carcasses.

As he walked further into the monster horde behind Zhao San's team, he realized he had yet to see the Velocious Swordfiend.

"Are the monsters so skilled at hiding or are they not even here?" Lin Huang was interested in the unknown monster as he had never seen it in the monster encyclopedia. On the other hand, the monster's attack technique was a sword skill. Just as he was thinking to himself, a couple of black silhouettes darted out from the monster horde. They were like black bolts of lightning that were advancing toward him.

Lin Huang noticed the black figures as soon as they appeared. He knew that those were definitely not the Tentacle Beetles as they were not that nimble.

"They're finally here!"

Lin Huang smirked as two more flying daggers appeared before him. The three silver glows aimed for the three black shadows that were coming toward him. In the next second, the silver glows pierced through the black shadows and groans were heard. The cries did not sound like the screeching chirps from the Tentacle Beetles when they were killed. They sounded more like groans of ferocious beasts.

Many of the humans looked at Lin Huang's direction when the odd groans broke out. Even Zhao San and the rest turned around to look. Suddenly, a couple of black figures hurtled toward Zhao San and the rest who were not paying attention. Seeing the black glow heading toward them, it was too late for them to do anything although they noticed them at the last second.

The three silver glows in front of Lin Huang barreled at a speed faster than before. Just when the black shadows almost got to them, the three silver glows cleaved through the black shadows as Zhao San, and the rest gaped in shock.

In less than two seconds, Lin Huang had managed to kill six Velocious Swordfiends. All of the people around watched with their jaws slack. Even some of them who had not noticed him as a newbie were stunned by how powerful he was. Zhao San and the rest had a new impression of Lin Huang's real ability. However, Lin Huang did not bother about what the others thought about him as he watched the Velocious Swordfiend's carcass that was fading away. He finally got a decent look at how the monster looked like.

The Velocious Swordfiend had a triangular head with its eye occupying half of its face. It had a saw-like mouth, and its upper body was covered in a hard pod with four sharp sword arms and a pair of black wings. On the lower part of its body was a pair of long, spiky legs which could undoubtedly jump impressive heights. Although the monster walked on both legs, from its body structure, it resembled an insect. It was completely different from what Lin Huang's imagination illustrated from Zhao San's description.

"I thought it was a human-form monster, but it's an insect instead." Lin Huang shook his head in disappointment. He now understood why he had not noticed their existence as the Velocious Swordfiend possessed a dynamic mimicry ability which allowed it to blend into the environment without being noticed.

"It's got great speed and amazing mimicry, but overall, such a monster is only talented at assassination," Lin Huang mumbled to himself after having overcome the Velocious Swordfiends.

“Its attacking ability isn’t bad, but it has a weak defense. Its ability is just mediocre as a whole. As soon as its killing plan failed and it revealed itself, it was easily killed by people who are skilled in close-range attack.”

However, the hunting teams on the 21st checkpoint were afraid of such a monster’s abilities. As soon as Lin Huang killed the six Velocious Swordfiends, the beasts knew that he was tough and did not target him anymore. They vented their anger on other humans instead. Many of the teams were attacked by the Velocious Swordfiends, and some of them were killed. Unfortunately, Lin Huang did not manage to save them.

As he witnessed more and more people getting disqualified while Zhao San and the rest attempted to retreat, Lin Huang thought he had to offer his true abilities.

“Come out, Lancelot.” Lin Huang waved and summoned the Ruthless Sword Dominator Lancelot. He was now almost two meters tall in his maroon armor and exuded a dangerous aura. Some of them, who were sensitive to the change, noticed something odd coming from Lin Huang and looked at Lancelot.

“Kill all those monsters with the mimicry ability as fast as you can. As for the rest, kill them if you want to or just leave them to the others,” Lin Huang instructed.

Lancelot nodded and stared at the monsters. He held his sword in front of his cheek and raised it above his head as he mumbled to himself. Soon, nine sword servants appeared and squatted in front of him in a single line.

“Kill them!”

The blue glow in Lancelot’s eyes sparkled as he pointed his sword at the monsters. The nine sword servants then stood up and lunged toward the monsters. Lancelot followed behind them.

Chapter 656: Kill All the Bugs!

Although Lancelot was only an immortal-level rank-2, he was a triple mutated god’s blood monster after all. He was like a ferocious tiger prowling into herds of goats. All of the monsters were killed wherever his sword swung. Although his nine sword servants were only on double mutated immortal-level rank-2, they were no slower than Lancelot as they fought together. In less than a minute, Lancelot and the nine sword servants were deep into the monster horde and had left Lin Huang’s sensing coverage.

Lin Huang was not worried about Lancelot as he had his Dark Mirror, so the monsters could not break through his defense at all. After summoning Lancelot, Lin Huang got busy himself as he planned to kill the Velocious Swordfiends to relieve the teams of their stress. He greeted Zhao San and circled the team while killing the Velocious Swordfiends that were hiding around. He then proceeded to help the next team.

Although the Velocious Swordfiends’ mimicry ability was powerful, Lin Huang’s ocular skill was just as terrifying as the Velocious Swordfiends could not escape from him. The next hunting team was less than 300 meters away from Zhao San’s team, and three Velocious Swordfiends were attacking them. They were suffering as the monsters surrounded them. Once attacked, The Velocious Swordfiends would usually back off. If they missed their strike, they would hide and find another opportunity to attack again.

The eight members of the hunting team had their guards up against the three Velocious Swordfiends as they were busy killing the Tentacle Beetles. As soon as Lin Huang got to them, he headed straight towards the Velocious Swordfiends that were hiding among the monsters. With his ocular skill, the Velocious Swordfiends that were cloaking themselves were like candle lights in the dark.

His three telekinetic flying daggers shot out in three silver glows. The Velocious Swordfiends that thought were invisible did not expect the three silver bolts of light to assault them in an instant. However, it was too late when they sensed the danger upon them as the silver glows slashed right through their heads. Their carcasses faded into pieces and disappeared.

The eight members of the hunting team did not even see the three Velocious Swordfiends that were being cloaked. All they saw were the disappearing monster carcasses after witnessing the silver flashes. They then realized that it was Lin Huang who had helped them.

“Bro, thanks!” A person shouted at Lin Huang while the rest looked at him in gratitude. Lin Huang nodded at them and looked around. He then killed another two Velocious Swordfiends before leaving for the third hunting team.

In less than a minute, Lin Huang had helped the third hunting team kill the Velocious Swordfiends that were surrounding them before heading to the fourth and fifth hunting teams. As the 28 teams were not too far apart from one another, he spent around half an hour killing all of the Velocious Swordfiends that were hiding. Most of the teams were grateful for his help as they would not have been able to hold on for long if not for his support.

Without the Velocious Swordfiends, the killing efficiency climbed up again. Lancelot and the sword servants seemed to be doing well. In the next hour, the 28 hunting teams soon cleared all of the monsters on the branch. It was their first time managing to kill all of the monsters on the branch as they would usually only last for half an hour and leave the virtual world or hide amongst the leaves when it got too overwhelming.

After clearing the branch, there were not that many monsters left on the main branch. The 28 hunting teams charged into the monsters, and the third monster horde was over in 20 minutes. That night saw the highest number of kills that most of them achieved on the 21st checkpoint. Zhao San and his team were excited as they had never obtained so many points at once before. Lancelot then recalled his sword servants and returned to Lin Huang.

Many were envious of the handsome human-form summoning monster in dark red armor. Lin Huang did not recall or compliment Lancelot. Instead, he handed him a packet of dried vegetables. Lancelot took the dried vegetables blissfully and started eating while he stood where he was. The onlookers pitied Lancelot as they thought he had decided to follow a cheapskate master who rewarded him with dried vegetables instead of dried meat.

“Erm, is that dried vegetables?” Zhao San, who was watching, could not help but to ask. He was hoping to hear something else such as it actually was some other food that resembled dried vegetables.

“Yes.” Lin Huang nodded, but he soon noticed that the people were looking at him like he had done something wrong, so he explained further, “That’s his favorite.”

“Yeah, right!” All of them had the same thought when they heard what Lin Huang said.

Lin Huang noticed their doubtful expressions, but he did not bother to explain and changed the subject instead.

“What’re the monsters in the fourth monster horde?”

“I don’t know. Nobody knows.” Zhao San shook his head helplessly.

“Ever since the Stairway Tree existed, nobody on the 21st checkpoint managed to witness the fourth monster horde. Not only this branch, but it’s also the same with the other five branches. Everyone was either disqualified in the third monster horde or logged out of the virtual world. The fourth monster horde won’t come if the third one isn’t completely cleared, so even the people hiding in the isolation bubbles in the leaves have no idea what the fourth monster horde is like. We’re not even sure if there’ll ever be one.”

“We shall wait and see then. I’ll log out to sleep if nothing happens in ten minutes.” It was 12.30 a.m. when Lin Huang checked the time. He planned to get a good night’s sleep and proceed to climb the tree tomorrow. All of the other hunting teams did not log out as well. It was not that they were confident of beating the next monster horde, but they wanted to witness how would the fourth monster horde looked like. After all, nobody had ever seen that before. Staying here would make them witnesses of history.

After they waited for two to three minutes, the monsters’ roar was finally heard. They craned their necks to look in the distance, trying to see how the fourth monster horde looked like. Lin Huang activated his ocular skill and soon saw the so-called fourth monster horde. To his surprise, the monsters that were coming were still Tentacle Beetles and Velocious Swordfiends. However, there were many more Velocious Swordfiends this time. During the third monster horde, there were only one or two occasionally, but they now occupied half of the mob.

The Velocious Swordfiends no longer hid themselves among the monsters. Instead, they formed an army. Their black eyes were blood red, and even their four sword arms were carmine, seeming like they were splashed in blood.

“The Velocious Swordfiends are infuriated as well...” Lin Huang turned serious. The average Velocious Swordfiend was already fast, but now that they were infuriated, their speed must be accelerated. Perhaps not many among the teams would manage to hold up for long with this horde.

“Let’s retreat. There’s no way that we can win this time,” Lin Huang said to Zhao San. From a distance, Zhao San and the rest noticed that the Velocious Swordfiends were infuriated. They were concerned while the other teams were attempting to retreat too.

“Retreat!” Zhao San nodded and made his decision.

They then logged out of the virtual world one-by-one.

“I shall leave too. I’ll see you tomorrow morning then,” Zhao San said to Lin Huang and logged out.

The other hunting teams noticed that many teams had retreated, so they logged out as well because it would be meaningless for them to stay. Soon, only Lin Huang was left on the branch. He smirked as he looked around.

“I shall get all the points this time!”

His summoning monsters were summoned one by one in front of him — Bai, Charcoal, Tyrant, Kylie, Clown, Bloody...

“Our mission today is to kill all the bugs!”

Chapter 657: Lin Xie Cheated?

Looking at the monsters coming their way, Lin Huang used his ultimate move by summoning Bai, Charcoal and the rest. He summoned a total of ten of them. It was the first time in history that he was summoning the maximum number of monsters that he was allowed to. Tyrant was now in his original giant form as he dashed towards the monsters like a gigantic tank. Even though he was only an immortal-level rank-2, the immortal-level rank-3 and rank-4 bugs could not do anything to break through his defense. All he had to do was to wave his hands, and the bugs were slaughtered.

Bai, who was not far away, transformed the 12 bloody wings at his back into blades and sometimes into sharp thorns. The monsters that passed through were slashed into halves, or their heads were pierced through. None of them managed to escape. Bloody appeared as a cloud of purple haze in the battle as it extended its hundreds of purple tentacles everywhere. While its tentacles pierced the monsters, they were cast with parasites at the same time. If Bloody were not restricted to only cast parasites on monsters that were on immortal-level rank-2 or below, the number of monsters that were available there might not satisfy Bloody.

Meanwhile, Charcoal returned to its body length that was thousands of meters long among the monsters. Although a part of its ability was restricted since flying was prohibited on the Stairway Tree, its Dragon Flame was as powerful as ever. The black Dragon Flame burnt the monsters into ashes. Its efficiency was just as mighty as Tyrant that was killing like a human tank.

Kylie, who was decked in black armor, flapped the dozen black wings on her back and dashed out like a bolt of black lightning. There was an army of 300 in silver armor who were on the same combat level as her following behind. They transformed into silver lightning bolts as they rushed forward. Even Kylie and her army were affected by the restriction. Although they looked like they were flying, all they did was move at the speed of light. The paths were destroyed as they made strips of holes among the monsters.

In his dark red armor, Lancelot led his nine sword servants as they marched into the monster horde. To increase the efficiency of killing them, he used the Sword Dominator's Sword Manipulation as hundreds of Life Power swords came out of his body and pierced through the monsters' bodies. Among the monsters, the Clown was the most independent one as he danced around the monsters while singing. All of the monsters became frantic and started killing each other. None of the monsters managed to escape his Deception Magic. He would occasionally control the monsters with his hands like a kid playing with puppets. The battle turned into his playground while the monsters were his toys.

The Sanguine Overlord and the two fiends joined the battle too. They were performing well. The Malachian Fiend's defense was just slightly weaker than Tyrant's. It was also charging among the monsters like a tank while the Hellion Imp summoned a meteorite to hit the ground, creating a wide range of damage while the Sanguine Overlord took the monsters' Life Power away with his Punishment Chains and burned them into ashes.

As soon as the ten summoning monsters appeared, Lin Huang was on the winning end of the battle. Although all of the monsters were infuriated and more powerful than before, they were helpless under the siege of Lin Huang's triple mutated monsters with advanced bloodlines. The battle lasted for more than three hours. When it was almost 4 a.m., all of the monsters on the branches were killed and had disappeared.

After the fourth monster horde ended, Lin Huang recalled all ten of his summoning monsters. He did not care if there was a fifth monster horde or not as he did not plan to fight anymore. The sky was getting bright, and the people who logged in might see him if he proceeded to fight. He then looked at his accumulated points. The entire killing spree had given him a boost in his points, totaling over eight million. What made him speechless was that he was now ranked No. 2 on the leaderboard.

"No. 2: Lin Xie"

"Organization: Sweep Alliance"

"Points: 8,211,586"

"Current Checkpoint: 21"

"Oh, I've now become high profile again..." Lin Huang did not expect to be getting such recognition. All he wanted was to collect points to redeem resources when nobody was around, but he clinched the No. 2 spot on the leaderboard. He was only less than 300,000 points behind the person who ranked No. 1 and more than a million points ahead of No.3.

He was just surprised at the results, but he did not dwell on it. Lin Huang then logged out of the virtual world so that he could get some rest to continue climbing tomorrow. As he logged out, he took a shower and fell asleep when it was around 4.30 a.m. After sleeping for two hours, he was woken up by the vibration of his Emperor's Heart Ring before 7 a.m. He glanced at it with his bleary eyes and realized that it was Yao Lan who was calling. Figuring that there might be an emergency, he picked up the video call.

"Hey, Lin Xin, did you cheat yesterday?" Yao Lan asked directly.

"What? Cheat?" He asked her back while yawning. Lin Huang thought what she was accusing him of was ridiculous.

"Your points... How did you manage to get more than eight million points without cheating?" Yao Lan asked as though what she was asking was not wrong.

"You sure have got balls! You're now ranked No. 2. The Genius Union is now in chaos since morning. All of the people who logged in are talking about you especially those from Divisions 1 and 2. I've heard that many people have reported you. I guess you might be disqualified from the Genius Union today..."

"Tsk, tsk, look at you. Why can't you be more low profile since you're cheating? Nobody might notice if you cheated by 100,000 to 200,000 points, but you cheated all the way to No. 2 on the leaderboard. Karma is here for you now," Yao Lan lowered her voice.

"Since you'll be removed from the organization soon anyway, why not you tell me how you cheated so that I can get myself some points to rank higher on the leaderboard?"

"Who told you that I cheated?" Lin Huang raised an eyebrow.

“Nobody told me, but everyone in the Genius Union knows that. Do you think we’re idiots to believe that you managed to get eight million points within a night?” Yao Lan rolled her eyes.

“I got those points from killing monsters last night,” Lin Huang told the truth.

“You’re too much! To be able to get eight million points, you’d have to kill 100,000 immortal-level rank-4 monsters worth 80 points each on the 21st checkpoint. Even an infuriated immortal-level rank-4 monster is worth only 160 points, which means you’d have to kill more than 50,000 of them. Since you’re only a blue flame-level, I believe you can kill one or two immortal-level rank-4 monsters, but tens of thousands of them?! I don’t believe you!”

“It’s your problem that you don’t believe me. What I told you is the truth.” Lin Huang did not bother to explain further.

“Alright, I’ll go back to sleep. I’m going to climb the tree again after lunch.” He covered himself in his blanket and fell asleep after hanging up.

Chapter 658: Leaving the 21st Checkpoint

The Genius Union was in chaos since the wee hours of the morning as there was an unfamiliar name that popped up on the leaderboard. It was normal for the rankings on the leaderboard to change and it was not that surprising when a black horse appeared occasionally. However, the unfamiliar person that everyone was buzzing about was a person who was stuck on the 21st checkpoint on the Stairway Tree. To those on the 50th to the 60th checkpoints, anyone who was stuck on the 21st checkpoint must be a weakling. It was ridiculous for such a person to obtain more than eight million points overnight and rank No. 2 on the leaderboard.

“Since he’s so shameless, why didn’t he get No. 1 instead?”

“Eight million points overnight! Wouldn’t he be a god if he’s given a year on the tree?”

“This kid is too much! I’m on the 59th checkpoint, and I can’t get 800,000 points if I were to kill monsters for the entire night. How could he get eight million points?”

“I’m not going to say anything anymore. I’ve reported him!”

“Report +1. This kid is waiting to be suspended!”

...

The only topic in the Genius Organization that was on everyone’s lips that day was Lin Huang. The same happened in the virtual world whereby everyone was talking about how Lin Huang cheated to get his accumulated points. Up to tens of thousands of people reported the issue, asking the Genius Union to suspend Lin Huang. Some of the geniuses from Divisions 1 and 2 even humiliated the entire Division 3 and the Sweep Alliance, saying that there must be more cheaters besides Lin Xie. It caused an uproar between Divisions 2 and 3 while the safe zones outside of the core zones were enjoying the show.

It was past noon when Lin Huang woke up. He set his communication page to silent mode since he ended the call with Yao Lan. He noticed there were five missed calls when he checked his device. Three were from Yao Lan, one was from Huangfu Hao, and there was one unknown number. Lin Huang

ignored all of the calls as he knew that Yao Lan and Huangfu Hao must be contacting him about the Genius Union while the unknown number must be a mistake.

He took a shower and had a sumptuous lunch while he relaxed. He then logged into the virtual world after returning to his room. As he appeared on the 21st checkpoint on the Stairway Tree, Lin Huang noticed that many people were gawking at him. He figured that it had to do with his ranking on the leaderboard. After all, he was now ranked No. 2, so it was natural for people to stare at him. Although he had helped many of them during the monster hordes last night and they had witnessed Lin Huang leading the teams to kill the third monster horde for the very first time, most of them still thought that he had cheated to obtain more than eight million points overnight.

Lin Huang did not care about what people thought of him. The truth was the truth. No matter how the rumors were spreading like wildfire, time would reveal the truth. As soon as he logged in, he did not plan on staying on the 21st checkpoint. He walked towards the gathering point where Zhao San's team was so that he could bid them farewell. As he arrived at the gathering point, he noticed all six of the hunting teammates there. They walked towards Lin Huang when they saw him.

"No matter what other people are saying, I, Zhao San, believe that you've never cheated!" Zhao San declared directly.

"Although I've no idea how you did it, I know you didn't cheat." Jiang Xin looked at Lin Huang in all seriousness with her beautiful eyes.

"Those who are doubting you will realize that they're wrong one day."

All of the teammates chose to believe that Lin Huang did not cheat. It was out of his expectations because he was unfamiliar with Zhao San and the rest after all. He did not even know some of their names. He only knew them by the nicknames that Zhao San called them. However, these people, who had only spent a night with him, chose to believe him while the rumors were rife.

"Thanks." Lin Huang felt a warmth flooding his heart. He did not say anything else after thanking them.

"I'm leaving the 21st checkpoint."

"Make yourself known. Show everyone that you deserve to be ranked No. 2 on the leaderboard!" Zhao San patted his shoulder.

"What I want isn't No. 2." Lin Huang raised his eyebrow. Zhao San was surprised to hear what Lin Huang said and gave him a thumbs up.

"All the best. I believe you can do it!" Jiang Xin was his little fan.

After bidding farewell to them, Lin Huang returned to the Stairway Tree's main branch and started climbing again. It was not difficult to go through the 21st to the 29th checkpoints. Lin Huang had passed through the nine checkpoints before 6 p.m. and arrived at the 30th checkpoint where many geniuses were stuck. However, Lin Huang did not hear anything about this checkpoint when he was on the 21st checkpoint.

Standing on the Mighty Ape's shoulder, Lin Huang looked up when he arrived at the 30th checkpoint. There were dark clouds above him that seemed similar to those on the second checkpoint.

“Is it going to be another snow storm?” Lin Huang still remembered the chilly weather on the second checkpoint.

As the Mighty Ape climbed up, it started to rain. The higher they went, the stronger the torrents.

“If it’s just rain, no one should be stuck here for too long. There should be something else.” Lin Huang knew that the checkpoint would not be this simple or else, tens of thousands of people would not have gotten stuck on this checkpoint.

Soon, Lin Huang found out what was so tricky about this checkpoint. As the Mighty Ape climbed less than 1,000 meters up, the rain poured down like a waterfall. The higher they went, the stronger the water flow. Due to the constant wash of water, the cracks between the barks became slippery, which caused the Mighty Ape to slip occasionally. As the waterfall was pouring down like a tsunami, the Mighty Ape held tightly onto the bark. It was already difficult enough for it just to stay put.

Meanwhile, Lin Huang held the Dark Mirror in his hand to prevent himself from falling off the Mighty Ape’s shoulder.

“It seems like we can’t just go through it this way.” Lin Huang knew that the Mighty Ape was already doing its best and he should not go on with this anymore.

He then held the Dark Mirror on top of the Mighty Ape’s head as he shook his head to form a giant umbrella. The water that was pouring down was blocked entirely out now, while the steady flow of water poured on the other side of the mirror where Lin Huang was bearing less than 1% of the flow. The Dark Mirror had solved the issue that caused so many others to be stuck on this checkpoint easily. Soon, the Mighty Ape passed through the clouds in less than five minutes, and they made it to the 31st checkpoint.

Chapter 659: The Second Report

“Eh, I thought Lin Xie was still on the 21st checkpoint at noon. Why’s he on the 31st checkpoint now? Did I misread or something?” A person mumbled to himself as he noticed the changes on the checkpoint that Lin Huang was currently on when he logged into the virtual world after 6 p.m.

He was not the only one who noticed the changes. Many people had been paying attention to Lin Huang ever since the rumor spread. They noticed that the checkpoint that Lin Huang was on kept changing since the afternoon. They saw that he passed through one checkpoint every half an hour.

Many people thought that Lin Huang would be stuck on the 30th checkpoint, but they did not expect him to go through it in 20 minutes, which was even shorter than the time he took for the previous checkpoints. The person who noticed that spread the news and accused Lin Huang of cheating again. Before the first heat was over came the second one when Lin Huang was minding his own business.

However, Lin Huang logged out of the virtual world when he arrived at the 31st checkpoint as the sky was getting dark. Many people on the Stairway Tree were still discussing the same topic.

“In just one afternoon, less than six hours, and he managed to climb from the 21st checkpoint to the 31st checkpoint? Furthermore, he only used 20 minutes to get through the 30th checkpoint. This guy must have cheated again!”

“He managed to get through ten checkpoints in one afternoon. That would mean 20 checkpoints in a day. Looking at his progress, wouldn’t he get to the 80th checkpoint in four days?!”

“Not only did he cheat on the way he got his points, but now he’s also cheating to pass through checkpoints. This guy is so shameless!”

“Let’s report him again!”

“I’ve reported him!”

“Report him +1!”

In reality, it was pretty easy for people who were on the 50th to the 60th checkpoints to get through ten checkpoints in one afternoon. One reason was that they were already on immortal-level rank-8 or rank-9. Some of them even had the ability of an imperial-level, so the checkpoints below the 50th were nothing to them. On the other hand, all of them had strategized. Therefore it was easy for them to climb the stairs again. It was possible for one to climb from the first checkpoint to the 40th in one day, let alone ten checkpoints in an afternoon.

What everyone was mad about was that Lin Xie had appeared out of nowhere. Since everyone was convinced that he had cheated earlier, they believed that he had done it again to get through ten checkpoints in one afternoon. Once he made such a terrible first impression, whatever he did, later on, would be judged anyway. Many people had heard about Lin Xie due to the “cheating” incident. With that impression, no matter what Lin Xie achieved after that, he would always be accused of cheating.

However, a person from Division 3, who was on the 61st checkpoint, spoke up after hearing about the second accusation.

“It’s nothing for an immortal-level rank-8 or rank-9 to climb from the 21st checkpoint to the 31st in one afternoon. It’s achievable even without any strategy.”

Some of the people from Division 3 supported what the person said.

Soon, a person who claimed to be on the 21st checkpoint revealed that Lin Xie was only a blue flame-level instead of immortal-level. Later on, more people who were on the 21st checkpoint revealed more about Lin Huang, including how he looked like, his identity as an Imperial Censor and a psychic.

Those from Division 3 who spoke for Lin Huang became silent.

“I don’t believe that a person who’s only on blue flame-level could get to the 31st checkpoint without cheating!”

“I couldn’t even pass the second checkpoint when I was on blue flame-level, and I only managed to pass through the 10th checkpoint when I was gold flame-level. Even if he’s a supreme genius, it’s impossible for him to get to the 31st checkpoint when he’s only a blue flame-level.”

“Now, it seems like he didn’t just cheat his way from the 21st to the 31st checkpoint. I bet he even cheated his way up to the 21st checkpoint.”

Zhao San and the rest attempted to reveal the truth on behalf of Lin Huang, but it backfired. Their comments were drowned in those hateful comments that the others posted.

“This Lin Xie won’t be around for long. The Emperor’s Heart will act on the reports within 24 hours. People have been reporting him since six in the morning. I bet his account will be suspended tomorrow morning.”

“That’s what I’m talking about!”

“I shall report him again before he gets suspended!”

Lin Huang had no idea that his getting to the 31st checkpoint had caused another uproar. He had dinner after logging out of the virtual world. Yao Lan called again when the sky was getting dark. Lin Huang hesitated before picking up the call.

“What’s wrong with you? Why didn’t you pick up my calls earlier? Are you afraid of being criticized?” Yao Lan said with a huge grin.

“Scared, my a*s! My communication page was on silent in the morning, and I spent my afternoon climbing the tree. I’ve been busy. What do you want from me?” Lin Huang asked.

“I want to know where you got those strategies.”

“What strategies?” Lin Huang raised his eyebrow.

“The strategies to climb the Stairway Tree. We have the strategies to pass through the 21st to the 30th checkpoint with us, but we’re not able to do that within one afternoon. Your strategies must be coming from some top organization. Can I buy a copy from you? I want those after the 40th checkpoint,” Yao Lan told him her intention.

“There’s no strategy.” Lin Huang shook his head.

“I don’t even know what’s going to happen at any of the checkpoints. How would I have the strategies?”

“Selfish. You’ll be suspended tomorrow morning anyway. Why would you want to keep them to yourself?” Yao Lan huffed angrily.

“Don’t you worry. I won’t be suspended.” Lin Huang was sure as he had read the suspension criteria on the Emperor’s Heart. Those who were reported would not be suspended directly but would be investigated instead. If the account were found to be cheating, a suspension would be the solution. However, accumulating points by summoning monsters was not deemed as cheating. The verdict was not determined by what the people said, so he was not worried that he would be suspended.

Yao Lan did not dwell on it since Lin Huang did not want to admit that he had his own strategies.

“Oh yeah, there’s another thing that I need to inform you. Huangfu Lin will return to Sweep City later, and she wants to see you.”

“I’ll spare some time to see her,” Lin Huang agreed immediately. He wanted to see how the most influential person in the Sweep Alliance, who managed to kill an imperial-level when she was only an immortal-level rank-7 looked like.

Chapter 660: The Heaven Alliance

Lin Huang received a notification when he woke up the next morning. It was the Genius Union who sent the notification, Lin Huang read it out of curiosity and found out that it was sent to the masses and was related to him.

“Dear members, we’ve investigated and reviewed our member ‘Lin Xie’ who was heavily reported recently due to an allegation of him cheating on the Stairway Tree, and we’ve concluded that he did not cheat. Lin Xie went through the checkpoints and obtained the points with proper methods which are aligned with the conditions. End of notice!”

Lin Huang grinned as he shook his head after reading the message. He figured that would be the verdict as well. Besides Lin Huang, all of the members of the Genius Union received the same notification at the same time.

“He didn’t cheat? How is that even possible?!”

“How could a blue flame-level manage to get more than eight million points overnight without cheating?”

“Even with strategies, it’s difficult for a blue flame-level person to get from the 21st to the 30th checkpoint in one afternoon. What I don’t understand is how did he manage to get more than eight million points overnight.”

“I think either the Emperor’s Heart is faulty or this Lin Xie really is something.”

“We’ve been slapped by Emperor’s Heart! My cheek hurts. Someone, please comfort me...”

“Please, your ass! I have a 21-centimeter steel rod that could comfort you!”

“Oh no, the ride has departed. Please buckle up guys.”

“This is not my ride to the kindergarten. Pull over!”

...

On the 63rd checkpoint was the Heaven Alliance from the foothold of Division 1. Three immortal-level rank-9s had promised to meet in the morning. They received a notification on their Emperor’s Heart Rings when they were just starting to chat. They read it immediately when they realized that it came from the Genius Union. The three of them frowned after reading the notification. The allegation about Lin Huang was the hottest topic for the past few days. While they knew about it, they did not follow the case. On the 63rd checkpoint, everyone was occupied with how to break through the checkpoint, and they were not really interested in what was happening below the 60th checkpoint.

The three of them had briefly discussed how Lin Huang managed to get more than eight million points overnight yesterday and they were convinced that he had cheated. Besides cheating, there was no other explanation for Lin Huang’s achievement. They were surprised to see the verdict as they read the notification.

“A blue flame-level got more than eight million points overnight, and the Emperor’s Heart said he did it without cheating. The Emperor’s Heart must be broken!” A man wearing a long-sleeved printed tee guffawed.

“Have you ever heard about the Emperor’s Heart being broken throughout the 800 years of history?” A man in a white shirt raised his eyebrow.

“So, you think that Lin Xie achieved what he did just with his own ability?” A man in a trench coat asked in all seriousness.

“Stop messing around. You and I can kill immortal-level rank-4 monsters like we’re killing dogs when we’re only blue flame-level, but we can’t kill tens of thousands of monsters overnight and get eight million points. Even if we drain all the Life Power that we have, we can only kill hundreds of monsters at once. Furthermore, we have special Life Power columns with extra Life Wheels in our bodies. It’s pretty impressive for an ordinary person to be able to kill more than 100 monsters overnight,” the man in the t-shirt disagreed.

“What we’re unable to do doesn’t mean that others can’t. What if he has unlimited Life Power as the legend says? Or maybe he has the ability to clone himself? What if he has a demigod relic that can attack within a wide range?” The man in the white shirt voiced out the possibilities. The both of them were speechless.

“Of course, he might have his own way to cheat that escaped the investigation of the Emperor’s Heart.” The man in the white shirt did not fully believe in the conclusion that the Emperor’s Heart had announced.

“So, you’re not sure if he cheated or not.” The man in the t-shirt laughed.

“Even if he did and he escaped the god’s relic Emperor’s Heart, don’t you think this guy is really something?” The man in white shirt grinned amusedly as he asked.

“If he didn’t cheat, that proves how powerful he really is.”

“Do you want to recruit him?” The man in the trench coat looked at the man in the white shirt gravely.

“It’s been almost two years since we recruited anyone. This guy’s combat level is too low.”

“Don’t forget that he’s not from Division 1 like us,” the man in the t-shirt added.

“Low combat level is something temporary. Are you worried that such a person will be stuck below immortal-level?” The man in the white shirt supported Lin Huang.

“It shouldn’t be a problem that he’s not from Division 1. It’s not like we don’t have any members that come from Divisions 2 and 3.”

“Of course, that’s just a suggestion. Whether or not my suggestion becomes action depends on you guys. The recruitment follows our usual way of voting. I’ll get everyone online later.” The man in white shirt seemed to have made a decision.

“Let’s wait until the voting session later.”

...

Lin Huang had no idea that he was being picked to be on the waiting list of the No. 1 organization among the genius organizations, the Heaven Alliance. Yao Lan called again when he was having his breakfast. He picked up her call helplessly as he knew that she would definitely call back later if he avoided her.

“What’re you up to?” Yao Lan chirped.

“Breakfast.” Lin Huang put a spoonful of salad into his mouth.

“Congratulations, you’re not a suspect of cheating anymore.” Yao Lan smiled naturally. She was shameless even to call him as she had been sure that Lin Huang was going to be suspended.

“I’ve told you that I didn’t cheat. It’s you who doesn’t believe me.”

“Are you kidding? I’ve always believed you.” Yao Lan did not even blush when she said that.

“Thanks. I’ve finally understood what shameless means today.” Lin Huang wiped his mouth with a piece of serviette.

“You’re the shameless one...”

A message popped up when they were bantering. Lin Huang ignored Yao Lan and read the message instead.

“Hi, Mr. Lin Xie. My name is Chan Dou, and I’m from the Heaven Alliance. I’m representing the alliance to invite you to join us officially. I hope to hear from you within the next three days.”

Attached with the message was a delicate invitation letter. As long as he signed his name and stamped his thumbprint on it, he would officially be one of the Heaven Alliance members.

“Hey, why aren’t you speaking? Who sent you the message? You look so serious!” Yao Lan spoke again.

“Nothing.” Lin Huang turned off the message page.

“Oh yeah, I’m calling to tell you that Huangfu Lin will be in Sweep City tomorrow. Let’s meet for dinner.”

“Sure!” Lin Huang agreed immediately.