

Pet Store 171

Chapter 171 Secondary Pet

“So this is Sector 92, right?”

People carefully checked the surrounding arid land and realized that whatever monster that lived there had to be pretty tough.

“Time to get serious, you all.” Nie Chengkong soon did his job as a leader by assigning different tasks. “Zhou Jing, you’re in charge of surveillance from the sky. Yuelin, support him from the ground. The others shall help with maintaining security accordingly. Mister Mo, I heard that you have a Terrestrial Tracker under your command that is capable of detecting the faintest sound within 30 kilometers. Can we have your help just in case?”

The old man glanced at him and nodded.

“Of course.”

He opened his pet space and released a creature that looked like a cheetah with really fluffy paws. But on closer look, that wasn’t fur covering its claws, but swaying embers. It also had a long snout like that of a tapir and spots all over its skin that looked like small eyeballs.

This was a rare, dual-type Astral Pet that was considered both fire-type and earth-type. It wasn’t very good at fighting, but was still valuable for its superior senses that allowed people to identify what was happening some distance away. The other members were quite surprised to see such an extraordinary pet joining them. This Terrestrial Tracker was no less useful than a powerful attacker in their case. A dragon-type Astral Pet would still die if it accidentally stumbled into the territory of a Beast King. But with the Terrestrial Tracker’s help, they could well avoid that.

Upon receiving an order, the beast dug a hole in the ground and dived down, before it refilled the opening to cover its tracks.

Everyone looked relieved and more confident after that.

Meanwhile, Zhou Jing and Guo Yueling also summoned their scouts.

Zhou Jing’s pet was a Hundred-Eye Eagle, which was relatively rare but could still be found among many professional settler teams. It was too timid to fight effectively, but an adult Hundred-Eye Eagle could precisely tell how many ants were crawling on the floor while hovering several kilometers high in the air, which made it a brilliant lookout.

Despite its name, it didn’t actually have a hundred eyes. Though it still looked rather creepy with two pairs of eyes.

Guo Yuelin summoned a common pet called the Ground Shaker, which was... average. It was a “better than nothing” option, but that was about it.

Nie Chengkong took out the treasure map from his backpack and looked around the area.

“We’re currently standing at the edge of the designated area, while the safest route we can use is... there, to the southeast.”

Su Ping tried to find what he could remember about this “dragon scale land” and frowned. Then he carefully took a peek at Nie Chengkong’s map.

He had already searched this “section” fully so he didn’t need the map to know how to get around. The map had shown him many elements he was familiar with.

Which means I also know where the treasures are hidden...

He discovered many valuable items whilst exploring the dragon scales, though he was unable to acquire any of them. But now... things were different.

Something in his mind urged him to leave this team immediately and start exploring all by himself. It happened that he knew about even better treasures to be found in other sectors.

“We should move as fast as possible then.”

He had decided to get the job done pronto so he could satisfy Ye Chenshan’s request and be free to explore on his own. For the moment, he didn’t wish to break his promise and put all these people at risk.

The other helpers would agree, though they didn’t like it when it was Su Ping the one offering that suggestion. It was as if a man with zero idea of what he was dealing with wished to give commands.

Nie Chengkong nodded. “Everyone, have your combat pets at the ready as well, so we can fend off threats the moment we see them.”

“Yes, captain.”

No one objected. Apart from attacking enemies, their pets would also be their first line of defense.

Following everyone’s lead, Su Ping summoned the Dark Dragon Hound.

For the moment, he considered Little Skeleton to be his “main pet,” the Inferno Dragon to be his secondary pet, while the hound and the Purple Python all sat behind. He wasn’t going to use Little Skeleton or the Inferno Dragon because the team was still far from the core and the most dangerous area.

Besides, the Inferno Dragon was a definite walking beacon that would attract enemies to them due to its size, even though it somehow knew how to stay low-profile, which was rather strange for a dragon-type creature.

Luo Guxue summoned her Holy Flame Bird, which had already recovered from the wounds it sustained when battling the Magical Corpse Beast. Moreover, it seemed it had reached the middle phase of the eighth rank after that encounter. If they were to encounter a Magical Corpse Beast again, this bird would be strong enough to get Luo Guxue to safety.

Ye Chenshan’s combat pet was an Azure Lizard, a ninth-rank rock-type pet. Although, it was currently at the eighth rank since it had yet to reach full maturity.

Also, it was the first time for Su Ping to see Ye Chenshan’s pet.

Each member had been assigned a task; Zhou Jing and Guo Yuelin were responsible for keeping watch over the area, Ye Chenshan's lizard would be the first one to engage coming enemies, Luo Guxue's bird would use large-scale attacks to pin down groups of targets, whereas Nie Chengkong's Fallen Priest would be the "executioner".

The Fallen Priest was a ninth-rank demon-type pet that looked like an eight-meter-tall pilgrim with a really dangerous look. Those extra teeth and mouths grown on its head sure helped it live up to its name.

According to Nie Chengkong, this creature was so bloodthirsty that not even the might of a dragon would scare it. Furthermore, the Fallen Priest had a humanoid body capable of mastering some neat fighting techniques. That huge cudgel held in one of its hands pretty much proved it. Nie Chengkong said he had spent a crazy amount of money getting that weapon.

The old man's pet was also a giant, ninth-rank demon-type pet called the Death Scythe. Apart from many sharp blades grown all over its limbs, it also had many small tentacles attached to its body that were capable of releasing deadly poison.

As for the muscular helper named Chen, he took out a ninth-rank Earthen Dragon, one of the sturdiest pets known to people.

Naturally, people's pets were also signs that showed their personal strength. They thought that Zhou Jing and Guo Yuelin would show them the weakest pets since they were scouts rather than fighters. However, as far as they could see at this moment, Su Ping's Dark Dragon Hound had won the "weakling medal" instead.

A Dark Dragon Hound was pretty good among sixth-rank Astral Pets, or maybe seventh, if it had somehow learned rare abilities. But it was basically useless to the team right then.

The old man and Chen gave Nie Chengkong an "is this guy serious?" look.

Nie Chengkong showed an embarrassed smile as he asked, "Mister Su, this... isn't your best, right? I heard that you have a special skeleton under your command."

Su Ping nodded. "This guy's my secondary. I'll summon the skeleton when necessary. I did this because the hound has a sharp nose that can help us tell danger. It can fight pretty well against common enemies too."

Nie Chengkong remained silent.

Zhou Jing frowned at those words. "Mister Su, this isn't a child's play. You can leave the security work to us." Guo Yuelin followed up by saying, "He's right. With Mister Mo's Terrestrial Tracker, we won't let a single mosquito slip closer."

Su Ping wouldn't agree with them.

Truth be told, he wasn't so sure about the reliability of those scouting pets. As far as he could see, those three had nothing to see through certain camouflage known by special monsters that were good at stealth. On the contrary, his Dark Dragon Hound had learned a handy ninth-rank detection skill while

evolving. When exploring the dragon scale lands, there was almost nothing that could escape the hound's keen sense.

Luo Guxue noticed the dangerous silence and did her part to lighten the mood. "Uh, guys, I believe Mister Su has his reasons. We have enough combat pets on standby, so he should have enough time to add another one if something shows up."

Nie Chengkong had more things to say but decided not to further worsen the relationship among the team when they had not started their expedition yet.

"Fine. We'll proceed as is."

Deep down, Nie Chengkong had completely lost faith in Su Ping.

Ye Chenshan sighed but didn't say anything. Su Ping was his life's savior, but he couldn't oppose his captain either.

Old Mo sneered. "I suggest you all stop babysitting this guy. My Terrestrial Tracker alone can detect most enemies from a safe distance unless we run into a Beast King. And if we do see a Beast King, nothing will save us."

The other members saw the old man getting angry for real and everyone tried comforting him.

Su Ping felt a bit pissed off since people kept blaming him when he was doing his job just fine, which even embarrassed his friend Luo Guxue. But before he could say anything else, something stopped him.

"Wait, monsters closing in."

"Huh??"

People were shocked by those sudden words at first, but everyone except Luo Guxue shrugged it off when they found out that it was Su Ping who had sent that alert.

Chapter 172 Dragon Hound's Playground

Guo Yuelin got in touch with her Ground Shaker and said, "Well, I sensed nothing."

Zhou Jing closed his eyes to speak to his eagle as well. Similarly, he got nothing in return. Old Mo glared at Su Ping. "Same here. We've had enough of your nonsense! Do you know it's a crime to raise a false alarm during an important expedition??" Most people seemed displeased as they all believed that Su Ping was causing trouble. But before anyone could further accuse him, Old Mo spoke again, anxiously this time, "Look to the front!!"

Following his hint, people saw the empty space in front of them getting blurry all of a sudden, before a generation of Soaring Vipers entered their view, hissing threateningly.

A Soaring Viper was only a wind-type Astral Pet at the lower eighth-rank that didn't pose much threat to experienced settlers. But it was a completely different matter when a swarm of them showed up.

"Combat positions!!" Nie Chengkong yelled to the team while throwing Su Ping a surprised look. He discovered something ahead of everyone?? Damn it. If only I had chosen to trust his words

It was too late to regret. They had missed their chance to launch a preemptive strike. They could only defend at the moment.

Everyone recognized these infamous vipers as skillful when covering their movements by using air currents. To make matters worse, these things always lived in large groups. Anyone caught off guard would get torn to pieces within several seconds.

The scouts were staring their eyes out upon realizing that they had miserably failed at their job. And it couldn't be helped; no one with a sound mind would believe that Soaring Vipers could use such a hot area as a habitat.

Nie Chengkong yelled again to wake his members from their stunned state.

"I'll take care of the defense!" Chen asked his Earthen Dragon to create a giant shield out of the burning earth that enclosed everyone within like a big water bowl, leaving only their combat pets outside.

Using that chance, people stretched their astral power through the shield to assess the situation.

"Eleven, twelve... sixteen of them!" Nie Chengkong declared with a grim look. Without the helpers, their team would have surely gotten maimed by so many eighth-rank monsters ganging up on them.

"I saw their alpha. I'll bring it down," said Old Mo. He felt terrible for what he had just said moments before. He wanted to do something quickly to amend his mistake.

"I see," Nie Chengkong answered, "Alright, the others shall assist by dealing with the lesser targets! Mister Mo's Death Scythe should be enough to finish off their leader."

Hiss!

Outside the "earth shield," the vipers stretched their membranous wings and charged as one. Upon adopting a battle stance, those things were at least twenty meters in length and ten in width, and they were constantly covered by dangerous wind elements.

Most of the team members could take down a Soaring Viper in a one-on-one fight. But that could definitely not be said when going against so many of them.

Several wind blades reached the shield and left a few giant gaps on it.

Chen sensed the dangerous attacks and uttered to Su Ping, "Sh*t. I forgot to bring your hound inside!" He had realized that Su Ping's Dark Dragon Hound was rather good at surveillance, which meant they should keep it under protection. Otherwise, it would get torn to shreds out there really soon.

Even a ninth-rank Astral Pet would be unable to survive a face-off against that many Soaring Viper unscathed, let alone a sixth-rank one.

"What are you waiting for?? Open up and let it inside!" Luo Guxue demanded.

Chen and Nie Chengkong both shook their heads.

"We can't afford to expose people to danger." Chen gave Su Ping an apologetic look. "I'm really sorry for this, young friend." Previously, Chen would not care less about what happened to the Dark Dragon Hound. Then, however, he knew he had made a huge blunder.

Ye Chenshan clenched his teeth and offered, "I'll use my Azura Lizard to cover it! It's good at defending!"

Ye Chenshan didn't order his lizard to confront the vipers already because the creature wasn't enough to fend off that many of them. But after some faltering, he decided to take the risk and assist Su Ping.

"Do it then." Nie Chengkong looked relieved. "But be careful."

Ye Chenshan nodded and quickly got in touch with his lizard, only to find that Su Ping's Dark Dragon Hound was nowhere to be found. "Did-did it die already?? Wait..."

Using the vision sent by his lizard, he quickly found the hound in the midst of the viper swarm instead of staying close to their shield.

"What is it doing??"

Su Ping spoke to him, "You can leave it be. Tell your lizard to help the Death Scythe so we can kill the alpha viper as soon as possible."

Through their "pet connections," people watched in awe as they saw the snake swarm turning into utter chaos, as the Dark Dragon Hound somewhat playfully dashed among the vipers while randomly knocking them aside. Because of this, none of the vipers could follow their alpha.

"What is—How is it doing that??"

People couldn't believe that a sixth-rank pet was moving so freely under the assault of a group of eighth-rank monsters, but they couldn't be seeing things at the same time either, so they had to trust it.

Luo Guxue suddenly remembered Su Ping's "exceptional training sessions" and suddenly found the matter to be more understandable. "My word... I need to pay his shop a visit," she mumbled. "Mister Su?? What is going on?" Nie Chengkong asked with widened eyes. His Fallen Priest had not joined the battle yet because most vipers had been attracted by the Dark Dragon Hound. Besides, he was too astonished right then to give any commands to his pet.

Su Ping maintained his casual look. "As I said, my hound is good at not only detection, but also combat, as long as we're facing common enemies."

"Common enemies??"

Those are NOT common enemies! Nie Chenshan protested in his mind. If we didn't know already, we'd believe that there was a ninth-rank pet helping us!

All those who doubted Su Ping earlier changed their minds right then; if the Dark Dragon Hound was only Su Ping's "secondary pet," they would expect even more reliable help at this rate.

Chen and Old Mo also exchanged a knowing look as they agreed to treat Su Ping more fairly. They finally understood why Su Ping was promised the privilege to pick a treasure first. It was clear that Su Ping had enough time and resources to become a titled battle pet warrior in the future. They would not get on his bad side.

"All right, here I come!" Nie Chengkong ordered his Fallen Priest to join the fray as well. With the hound disrupting them, the vipers were no longer a threat.

The alpha viper had been completely isolated. Using this chance, Old Mo focused on controlling his Death Scythe so they could pick out the “enemy commander” in time.

This alpha viper was only an intermediate eighth-rank monster, whereas the Death Scythe was at the lower ninth-rank. Soon enough, the viper was on the losing side.

Luo Guxue and Ye Chenshan exchanged an embarrassed glance when they found nothing to do.

Similarly, Guo Yuelin and Zhou Jing both understood how Su Ping had managed to save Luo Guxue and Ye Chenshan from a life-threatening danger.

Woof! Wuff!

The Dark Dragon Hound was having fun playing “cat and mouse” with a bunch of enemies it was most familiar with. On the other hand, the vipers were getting restless after being played around by a dog. Their wind blades, tornado traps and poisonous bites... Nothing seemed to work against the hound at all.

In addition to the hound’s burning coat that easily deflected most attacks, it also had three different types of defensive enchantments protecting its body, making it more robust than the Earthen Dragon.

Chapter 173 Rare Treasure

The Soaring Vipers could not inflict any harm on the Dark Dragon Hound since it was protecting itself with several layers of defensive screens. On the other hand, during the battle, the Soaring Vipers had been bitten by the Dark Dragon Hound. To make it worse, this low and degrading dog had such sharp claws that they could tear into the Soaring Viper’s scales!

The dog’s claws were not only covered with dark flames, but also a potent poison!!

The poison was so powerful that those Soaring Vipers—which were considered experts in using venoms—were unable to handle it. Soon, the Soaring Vipers swelled up and their combat abilities went down!

This was...

Soaring Vipers were advanced beasts that had a simple-level of intelligence. They had never met such a strange beast.

The Dark Dragon Hound had claws and fangs so it should be a beast proficient in close-quarter combat.

However, this guy had used three protective layers on itself, and they were made with three different elements!

As if that wasn’t enough, this dog had poison on its paws!

What the hell?

The Soaring Vipers felt very upset and frustrated.

The Dark Dragon Hound gladly bounced here and there among the Soaring Vipers.

As the Fallen Priest joined the fight, some Soaring Vipers that were attacking the Dark Dragon Hound shifted their focus to the Fallen Priest. Soon, two of the Soaring Vipers had been killed by the golden rod wielded by the Fallen Priest.

The two Soaring Vipers had their heads crushed by the golden rod. The earth shook as they fell to the ground.

The Fallen Priest was a ninth-rank pet with agile movements. Soon, it dashed into the crowd of Soaring Vipers. It was fierce and ferocious. Several Soaring Vipers perished. Their scales and blood was scattered around.

The other Soaring Vipers were scared out of their wits. They slipped away at once. The alpha of the Soaring Vipers was beaten black and blue by the Death Scythe's huge skeleton reaping hook. As such, the alpha could no longer divert its attention to control its minions to protect itself. It was steadily losing ground. All of a sudden, a tornado sprang up. The alpha was trying to escape. Old Mo would not let that happen. He would be utterly ashamed if a ninth-rank Death Scythe was unable to kill a Soaring Viper at the intermediate position of the eighth rank. The Death Scythe roared. Some dark energy seeped out and enveloped its entire body. The Death Scythe threw itself into the tornado. Then, the tornado began to disperse, expelling a snake that was over thirty meters long. The snake smashed into the ground.

With a bang, a rod landed on the snake. The Fallen Priest just happened to be near this Soaring Viper. The Fallen Priest swung its rod and crushed the head of the Soaring Viper ending its life once and for all.

After the death of their leader, the other Soaring Vipers were no longer courageous enough to continue the fight. They fled to all directions as they uttered shrill cries.

The Fallen Priest and the Death Scythe chased after them. The Dark Dragon Hound noticed that its play dates were leaving, so it went after one of the Soaring Vipers, bit it, and then smashed its head with its dark flames and sharp claws.

The aggressive Soaring Vipers scattered about in all directions. Some had died and some had fled.

When everything quieted down, Chen told his Earthen Dragon to remove the earth shield. Everyone looked around and saw the dead vipers on the ground. Blood was still seeping out from the dead bodies, filling the air with a pungent smell.

Ye Chensha, Zhou Jing, and Guo Linyue were stunned to see this deadly scene. They weren't afraid of the blood. They just didn't expect that such a group of heinous beasts would have been defeated so quickly.

Some of the Soaring Vipers escaped but most of them had died there.

If it weren't for Old Mo and Chen, Team Polaris would have had to pay a great price to defend against those Soaring Vipers.

That young man became the center of attention. The most surprising of all had to be Su Ping's Dark Dragon Hound. It outperformed the two ninth-rank pets in this battle. The Dark Dragon Hound remained unharmed while being enveloped by so many Soaring Vipers. That was unbelievable!

"No one is hurt. This is a complete victory for us!"

Staring at the dead bodies across the ground, Nie Chengkong smiled. This danger had been resolved easily. He was more confident about their upcoming exploration.

“Mister Su, your Dark Dragon Hound is amazing!” Nie Chengkong said to Su Ping; he was quite surprised by this youth’s performance. The abilities demonstrated by this Dark Dragon Hound were equal to that of the upper position of the eighth-rank and was as good as the skeleton mentioned by Luo Guxue and Ye Chenshan. That was to say, Su Ping had two strong pets; if they were summoned and could work together, the two pets could fight against ninth-ranked opponents! Naturally, Nie Chengkong would be glad that another person with such strength was on their team, in addition to the three master battle pet warriors.

“It’s doing okay, just average,” Su Ping said. “Su, you are being too modest. If your Dark Dragon Hound is regarded as average, then all of our pets would be considered below average.” Nie Chengkong laughed.

Su Ping shook his head. You wish, he thought, Your pets are considered poor.

Of course, he couldn’t have said those hurtful words.

“I didn’t know that you were a young hero. Well, well, I believe our trip from here onward will be easier.” Chen smiled. He recognized Su Ping’s abilities with this fight. He realized he had misunderstood him; he thought better of him after this.

Old Mo frowned; he was upset since Chen had become too polite to Su Ping, when the man previously disliked the youth as much as he did. Even though Old Mo had also acknowledged Su Ping’s strength, it didn’t mean that he would treat Su Ping nicely. No matter how powerful Su Ping was, Old Mo didn’t have to cozy up to him as long as he didn’t have to request any favors. Besides, Old Mo had lived enough years to want anything in his life at this point.

“Since the battle is over, this isn’t a place for us to stay. Captain, let’s go.” Old Mo sounded indifferent.

Nie Chengkong nodded. “Let’s go.” The smell of blood would most likely catch the attention of other beasts. They couldn’t stay there for long.

“Mister Su, we’ll have to bother you on the scouting front,” Nie Chengkong said to Su Ping.

Su Ping didn’t give a definite answer. But since this concerned his own life as well, he would naturally exercise prudence.

Old Mo’s face darkened when he heard Nie Chengkong’s words. That being said, Old Mo didn’t say anything. He just had his pet to brace itself up and work better. He would be humiliated if Su Ping was the first one to detect the next round of danger.

Guo Yuelin and Zhou Jing each assumed their duties. They checked the surroundings quite carefully.

Luo Guxue took a look at the dead bodies and asked, “Do we need to harvest the materials on the Soaring Vipers?”

Her question reminded the others. Nie Chengkong thought about it. “Just take their energy crystal and scales. Don’t mind the rest.”

Luo Guxue nodded and harvested those materials with Ye Chenshan.

Su Ping noticed that his Dark Dragon Hound was eating something from the alpha's body. He told it to return.

The Dark Dragon Hound was dining with keen pleasure. It came back at Su Ping's command reluctantly. But before it went back, the Dark Dragon Hound used its mouth to pick up its food. It was a string of eggs. Those eggs were still hatching. The snakes had yet to come into being. Those eggs, or masses of flesh, were linked by something like an umbilical cord. The Dark Dragon Hound had carried them over to Su Ping. Su Ping raised his eyebrows. Against his expectation, this alpha Soaring Viper was a female and was laying eggs. Those eggs contained essential life energy. No wonder his dog liked them so much.

Su Ping didn't stop his dog and told it to eat them up quickly. Having gained permission from Su Ping, the Dark Dragon Hound roared happily and wolfed down the eggs.

The others noticed the eggs the Dark Dragon Hound had dragged back. They all knew that the value of those eggs was the same as the energy crystals inside the Soaring Vipers. Those eggs were very nutritious for all the beasts. On the black market, those eggs could be sold at four or five million.

The Dark Dragon Hound gobbled down its food. The others could not help but feel jealous.

But they didn't have the guts to ask Su Ping to share them. They just regretted that their pets had failed to find this.

Nie Chengkong felt sorry as well. His Fallen Priest had delivered the killing blow to that alpha Soaring Viper. However, he ended up missing those eggs. He was too focused on killing those vipers to think about the loot. "You are quite lucky." Old Mo grinned coldly.

This alpha Soaring Viper had been defeated by his pet but the valuables ended up in Su Ping's hand. This made Old Mo feel uncomfortable and unhappy.

Su Ping darted him glance but turned a deaf ear. When the Dark Dragon Hound finished its meal, Ye Chenshan and Luo Guxue had finished harvesting the energy crystals inside the Soaring Vipers. The hardest scales were picked as well. Nie Chengkong ordered the team to start off.

They left this area and pressed forward to the southeast side according to the map.

Much of the land they saw along the way was scorched and desolate.

There were the occasional dead trees and dried pools.

This seemed to be a world burned by flames.

They saw no beasts after they traveled for a long distance. It appeared that this area was the Soaring Vipers' territory. No other beasts seemed to live there.

"That is the location of the first rare treasure!" Nie Chengkong stopped all of a sudden. His eyes were glowing as he started at the front.

Chapter 174 Dragon Roar

People looked toward the place the leader was pointing at. It seemed to be an entrance to a valley clasped between two high cliffs that prevented most sunlight from reaching in, so no one could see what was further inside.

The sound of whistling wind traveling through the entrance appeared to be almost like the cries of ghosts, sending a chill down everyone's spines. Even from a distance, they could sense the sharp smell of rotting bodies and excrement mixed together, which was strengthened to a very terrible extent thanks to the hot environment.

Su Ping silently recalled useful clues he could remember. During his training, he had fought and died many times at this place.

"Keep a watchful eye, everyone," Nie Chengkong ordered using a small voice, "Tell me as soon as you notice the slightest clue."

Zhou Jing and Guo Yuelin agreed without lifting their concentration from their pets, while Old Mo slightly nodded in acknowledgment.

"Grrrr..."

The Dark Dragon Hound was getting restless as its eyes showed the gleam of excitement and bloodthirst. It would have charged into the valley already if not for Su Ping to constantly restrain its actions.

"Is something the matter, Mister Su?" asked Nie Chengkong, when he noticed the unusual reaction of the hound.

Old Mo also gave Su Ping a careful look, fearing that he'd overlook important clues shown on Su Ping's face.

"... If the senses of my pet are not off, there should be a group of Hell's Spiders in there. Stay cautious." In fact, this had nothing to do with the Dark Dragon Hound. Though Su Ping would gladly use this as an excuse rather than telling everyone that he had known about this area beforehand.

"Hell's Spiders?" Nie Chengkong frowned in bewilderment. "I'm afraid I had never heard of such a thing before."

The looks of all those present suggested that they were all uninformed about it.

Su Ping had just remembered that these spiders were supposed to be long extinct. Modern illustration books published by the Federation no longer included them. "It's, well, a rather old species. Maybe it's only known to certain archaeologists today, so it's quite normal that you don't know about it."

That made everyone feel more concerned. If that was the case, where did a young man like Su Ping learn about such a creature? Did this mean he was as wise as senior scholars?

Though Nie Chengkong only cared about their safety rather than where Su Ping got that knowledge, he asked, "Can you tell us their rank?"

"High seventh rank," said Su Ping, "However, their sheer number is enough to help them fight off ninth-ranked opponents. Don't worry though, as this is not a big problem for us. The only thing we should be

careful of is to avoid their poison. Meaning, do not get bitten. As I said, you don't find these spiders elsewhere, so hospitals would probably no longer remember how to treat the poison. If anyone is careless, you could be forced to drop out of our mission, or in worse cases, die."

People were clearly not happy to hear about something so deadly.

Chen stepped up. "I'll tell my Earthen Dragon to shield us, while the captain and Mister Mo shall use their pets for offense, sided with extra help provided by others, just like what we did a moment ago. How's that sound?"

Nie Chengkong considered and looked at Old Mo, hoping for an opinion.

The old man nodded back. "That's our plan then."

Deep down, the old man wished to get the Dark Dragon Hound on the front line as well, but didn't find that suggestion to be proper since Su Ping had already contributed greatly to the team. He would be put in a very embarrassing situation if the others all rejected his idea.

Even though he didn't like Su Ping, he wouldn't say it out loud and ruin their mission.

"Okay. Prepare for entering." Nie Chengkong gave the command.

Chen ordered his dragon to apply a high-level defensive enchantment onto everyone's bodies, causing them to glow slightly. In a matter of seconds, they were covered by armor made from stone and dirt that protected their entire bodies except for their eyes and ears.

Nie Chengkong told his Fallen Priest to move to the front, while the old man's Death Scythe followed closely behind. Meanwhile, everyone stayed behind the Earthen Dragon while keeping their astral perception expanded.

Soon, they saw broken cobwebs and monster corpses randomly scattered here and there, which was enough to prove Su Ping's words.

They had been proceeding for some time without finding any spiders. Still, they continued to move as slowly and carefully as possible because Su Ping had just told them that these bugs were good at hiding inside stone gaps and concealed corners.

After some walking, Su Ping lost patience. He ordered his Dark Dragon Hound to rush ahead.

Roaaar!

A deafening growl that carried the menacing will of a dragon echoed inside the valley, causing the Earthen Dragon to suddenly flinch in fear. Then it grew angry as it noticed that it was a "black dog" who had made that noise, but not a high-level dragon as it had imagined

The Dark Dragon Hound howled again, almost forcing the Earthen Dragon to back down.

"Mister Su??" Nie Chengkong gave Su Ping a questioning look. There was no doubt that it was Su Ping who had made the hound act in such a manner.

"Get ready for a fight. We'll do it the quick way."

Crack, crack! Pieces of rocks and stones suddenly fell from the nearby cliff walls, revealing several large, black spiders that looked as big as small transport vans. Each of them had an extra, fanged mouthpart at the rear, from where a slim, extendable tongue was stretching out; its tip was yet another sharp jaw used for biting.

People's mental peace was instantly broken down by the creepy sight.

Chen reacted first by ordering his dragon to summon an earth shield again. The dragon was still frustrated at the Dark Dragon Hound, though it heeded the order in time.

"Kill them!" Nie Chengkong also began commanding the Fallen Priest to fight. It was actually a good thing that those spiders chose to come out in the open instead of waiting in the dark for an ambush.

"Damn it! I forgot to—" Chen looked at Su Ping and suddenly felt a terrible *déjà vu* hitting his mind. "I—I didn't mean it!"

Inside the shield, they could hear the hound still drawing the attention of more spiders by roaring madly. It was obvious that it would be for the better to keep the hound protected rather than leaving it outside.

The others gave Chen a blaming look as they wondered whether this man was intentionally making it hard for Su Ping.

Chapter 175 Unstoppable

"Mister Su, captain... Trust me, it slipped from my mind. I swear!" Chen tried to explain even though he couldn't make himself sound very convincing right then.

Nie Chengkong chose to believe him. He didn't think Chen would willfully cause trouble at such a moment, putting the entire team at risk in the process. That would be too stupid.

On the other hand, Su Ping didn't seem to care. Or, he was glad that the Dark Dragon Hound could freely move outside so they could get rid of the spiders and find the treasure as soon as possible.

"Mister Su, I'll help your hound so it can run back for cover," Ye Chenshan offered. He didn't think the hound was sturdy enough to resist the deadly spider poison, even though it looked pretty fast when fighting the vipers.

Nie Chengkong thought to agree, but didn't get to say anything when he heard the hound roaring again.

The hound was heading straight into the approaching spider swarm while not forgetting to invite more of them, as if it were some kind of movie actor who had to die to give his friends a chance to escape.

As one, the spiders unleashed clusters of thick, black fiber that fully engulfed the running hound.

As the hound vanished from their sight, everyone slowly gazed at Su Ping again and wondered why he had taken such a crazy decision.

Did he hate his pet so much that he'd send it to its death without a second thought?

As people believed, the hound had what it took to stay alive under the spider assault even without the shield, as long as Su Ping gave it "smarter" commands. But not... this!

Old Mo glanced at the place where the hound had disappeared and sneered. He wasn't going to rescue it for obvious reasons.

Nie Chengkong looked at the moving spider pile and felt goosebumps. As the team leader, he wasn't willing to see one of their pets dying that easily, even if that was what Su Ping wanted. They couldn't afford to lose any combat asset.

Whoosh!

Upon receiving his command, the Fallen Priest knocked several spiders away and charged at the swarm still gathered on top of the "cocoon."

More spiders came and attempted to stop the Fallen Priest in vain. Being something two ranks higher, the Fallen Priest could kill one or more spiders easily with each cudgel swing. By the time it finally reached the place where the hound had been entrapped, it had left a trail of broken spider bodies along its path.

However, before it could do something to get rid of the cocoon prison, the cocoon started burning with a black flame all of a sudden, forcing all the spiders still clung to it to back off.

Sensing the deadly temperature of the flame, the Fallen Priest also took several steps back out of instinct. Somehow, that fire felt more dangerous than all the spiders around it combined.

Roar!

They heard yet another dragon roar booming in the middle of the spider swarm. The sound was so powerful that it knocked many spiders away, some of which had accidentally caught the black flame on their haired bodies and began shrieking in pain.

The Dark Dragon Hound emerged from the flame and sank its teeth inside the closest spider it could reach.

Telling from the scars on the hound's body, it did not stay completely unharmed when fighting against the spiders. The corrosive poison of the spiders was so potent that it could burn through the Earthen Dragon's scales given enough time, so it wasn't surprising to see the hound already suffering injuries.

Although getting hurt didn't discourage the hound from going after its enemies. Instead, it was getting increasingly thrilled when its old training memories were rekindled. As Su Ping's pet, it had already "graduated" from this spider fight. This was nothing compared to some of the deadlier training grounds. It was fun.

Roaaar!

As if high on drugs, the hound dove toward the place with more spiders and began tearing at anything it could reach.

The spider poison was, in fact, completely useless. After "dying" countless times in the corresponding dragon scale land, the hound had already grown immune to it.

Without the poison, the spiders were just edible chew toys.

Just like this, the hound rushed around the valley, leaving heaps of dead spiders in its wake.

The team observed the absurd sight inside the shield and were left speechless.

What happened to the “ancient poison that no hospital can treat”?

They could clearly see the hound bleeding from several small bite marks, and yet, the creature wasn’t slowing down in the least.

Was that not poison, but some kind of stimulant? People stared at Su Ping again. Is that Dark Dragon Hound super strong, or are those spiders not as dangerous as we thought?

Soon, the remaining spiders realized that they were powerless against the hound and began scrambling to the other opponents, causing the Death Scythe and the Fallen Priest to suddenly receive more enemies to deal with. During the chaos, several spiders went too close to the Earthen Dragon and were squashed flat under its claws.

A few minutes later, the valley grew quiet as most spiders had turned to corpses scattered among messy webs and silk.

As Su Ping remembered, those Hell’s Spiders were the only inhabitants living there. After that, they only had to take the treasure away.

After making sure the scouting pets could not detect another living spider, Chen’s Earthen Dragon removed the shield, allowing the team to finally witness the brutal aftermath of the battle, which had ended way faster than they had expected.

Nie Chengkong found the Dark Dragon Hound scavenging the dead spiders quite happily and gave Su Ping an odd look. “Mister Su. I must say, your pet is... remarkable.”

He wanted to use the word “freak,” which was more correct in this case. But that would sound offensive.

The old man frowned and approached his Death Scythe. He saw one of the creature’s blades turning dull as if it had deteriorated.

Looking down, Old Mo saw a bleeding hole on the creature’s arm. The skin around the wound had become badly swollen.

“It’s the poison?” People glanced at the wound and then looked at the Dark Dragon Hound still gobbling down spiders. It had multiple injuries on its body, which meant its exposure to poison had surely been greater while it had been trapped by the spiders. But... it looked completely energetic.

Old Mo also checked the contrasting signs and felt his face burning in awkwardness.

“Antidote. Quick!” Nie Chengkong reminded him. The old man quickly found a metal case on his backpack and took out one of the six syringes stored inside.

Chapter 176 Fast Progress

The green potion antidote was injected into the Death Scythe’s arm. The lump on its arm shrank down for a little bit. However, the pus inside the lump was still there and there was no sign of it going away.

Old Mo's face was clouded. He didn't know that the Black Spiders' toxins would be potent enough to hurt the Death Scythe, a ninth-rank beast.

The others also noticed that the wound was not getting better. This sign made them nervous. They realized that the Black Spiders' poison was not something to be underestimated.

On the other hand, the Dark Dragon Hound was still full of vim and vigor. It was hunting for food among the dead Black Spiders.

Nie Chengkong threw a glance at the Dark Dragon Hound and then said to Su Ping, "Brother Su, your Dark Dragon Hound is very resistant to the poison."

Su Ping nodded. The Dark Dragon Hound was practically immune to all the toxic beasts on the dragon scale lands.

Of course, the same was true for the Inferno Dragon and the Purple Python. Naturally, the three pets had adapted, achieving this level of immunity after dying time after time.

Adapting was evolving. The three pets' combat abilities were still the same as before and their appearances did not change. However, their inner structures were rapidly evolving at all times! The level of resistance could be visibly demonstrated in special situations, such as the one encountered that day. The internal structure was different when compared to the progress in combat abilities but this was one of the parameters considered in the evaluation of the pets' aptitude.

Su Ping nodded to Nie Chengkong's comment. Nie Chengkong and the others stared at the Dark Dragon Hound. Some of them found this pet strange and odd, while others became a bit jealous.

Under normal circumstances, none of them would have bothered to build a contract with a Dark Dragon Hound, even if they were given one for free. After all, middle-rank pets were of no use to them. Rather, those pets would waste space in their spirit.

But this Dark Dragon Hound was different. It was very powerful, talented and it had just proven to be resistant to toxins. The Dark Dragon Hound was the best of the best, a rare one. This Dark Dragon was just as valuable, or even more valuable than an average ninth-rank beast!

They were envious of Su Ping, since he had been able to get such a precious pet. Luo Guxue was the only one who knew better. This Dark Dragon Hound had most likely been trained in Su Ping's store. Pets born with such rare talents did exist. But the ones as precious as the Dark Dragon Hound were few and far between.

Besides, if such pets were auctioned, the organizer would promote the news everywhere. All of them would have known about it. It was unlikely that Su Ping would have bought his pet without leaking any information.

The only thing they felt sorry about was that this Dark Dragon Hound had a middle-rank bloodline. If it had had an advanced bloodline, then the Dark Dragon Hound would truly be priceless. Such a pet would be coveted by some titled battle pet warriors that had retired from society.

"This potion cannot remove the poison but it can stop it from spreading. Let's go," Old Mo said with a sour face. He didn't want the others to check the Death Scythe's wound any longer. It was humiliating.

Nie Chengkong felt he could breathe again. "Let's go get the treasure," He proposed.

Everyone's eyes glowed at the mention of their goal.

Guo Yuelin and Zhou Jing explored the way. Soon, they were deep into the valley. Inside, they found a tunnel-like cave. They stepped into the tunnel. Luo Guxue used her Flare Bird's flames to light up the way.

Spider webs were found at every corner; this had obviously been their den. However, no spider could be found inside. All of them had perished in the previous battle.

The cave was empty. They pressed forward. Finally, they found the treasure they were looking for.

The treasure was a sword that had been stuck in one of the walls deep inside the cave. The air around the sword was rippling. This was a piece of treasure that had come into being in ancient times. The recent technology was unable to manufacture this sword.

Rare treasures could generate miraculous effects and could work well with the astral powers cultivated by the battle pet warriors. They could use their astral powers to control those treasures. Many such precious weapons could inflict more harm and do more wonders than those produced with titanium alloys and modern technology.

Although titanium alloy swords were hard and sharp enough, they lacked the mysterious and magical functions found in secret treasures, which could not be replicated by technology.

"Are there... any traps?"

They stopped in front of the sword, looking around nervously.

It was said that, other than the beasts on guard, there would be additional traps around a piece of treasure.

Su Ping was speechless after seeing Guo Linyue act so timidly. But soon, he realized that Nie Chengkong, Chen, and everyone else were also acting with an intense mood. They were checking around as if there were indeed

a trap.

Su Ping did not stop there. He stepped forward and pulled the sword out.

"No—!" Everyone else shouted at the same time when they saw Su Ping moving forward, which was considered reckless.

Before they could finish screaming the word, the sword had already been pulled out. Everyone was frightened stiff.

Nie Chengkong was the first one to come back to his senses. He threw a look around on high alert, just to make sure that no trap had been activated. Relieved, he said to Su Ping, "That was too impulsive. How dangerous would it be if there were traps!"

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Su Ping didn't reply since Nie Chengkong said those words out of worry. He decided to accept this and let it go.

Before that old dragon had passed away, it had scattered all of its treasures across all the dragon scale lands and had beasts guarding those treasures. Everything the old dragon did was to increase the difficulty of receiving its legacy.

Dragons had simple and violent minds. To set up those tests were the best the old dragon could do. The old dragon would not think of setting up traps of any kind.

Besides, this sword had most likely not been left by the dragon, to begin with. Some of the spiders must have found the sword and accidentally stuck it into the wall.

Maybe the next piece of treasure could be found in a pile of beast feces.

Of course, if that were the case, Su Ping would step in to pick up the treasure.

Su Ping wielded the sword. It felt the same as the one he had found in the heritage ground. The heritage ground did a nice job replicating the real thing.

"Who wants it?" Su Ping turned around and asked.

Nie Chengkong was surprised to see that Su Ping was giving it up without looking carefully.

The others were just as stunned. Su Ping was the first one to choose the treasures he liked. Why did he give it up? That being said, none of them voiced their surprise. Perhaps Su Ping didn't like swords.

"Let me see," Old Mo said.

Su Ping gave the sword to him.

Old Mo took over the sword and infused it with astral powers. A visible stream of white aura oozed out from the sword.

Old Mo was intrigued. He slashed at the ground with the sword. With a crisp sound, the stone on the ground was easily cracked. It was as if Old Mo had cut a piece of tofu!

"That is sharp!" Old Mo exclaimed. He said to Nie Chengkong without hesitation, "Captain Nie, I'll take the sword."

The others saw how sharp the sword was. This was an amazing sword that would cut clean through iron as though it were mud. This sword could hurt eighth or ninth-rank beasts. Such a sword was precious.

They felt sorry that Su Ping had given it up. Old Mo was happy. He waved the sword. He could hardly tear himself away from it. At the same time, he glared at Su Ping from the corner of his eye. Su Ping was too young and had missed his chance of owning such a treasure.

Old Mo didn't know what other treasures could be found later on. But he was glad enough to have this sword. After all, who could tell what they were going to encounter? Maybe the other treasures they could find were useless or less valuable.

Chen felt pitiful. He would have asked for the sword if Old Mo had not claimed it.

Nie Chengkong threw more looks at this sword without showing his intent. In the end, he said, "Let's move on, since we already got the sword."

Guo Yuelin stared at Old Mo with envy and asked, "May I have a look?"

Old Mo was in a good mood after having picked up this treasure. He agreed. "Of course." Then, he gave the sword to Guo Yuelin and let her look. After all, this sword was his and no one could take it away.

Guo Yuelin took it gladly. She observed the sword and Zhou Jing moved closer as well. Then, Ye Chenshan and Luo Guxue took turns to see the sword as well. Ye Chenshan used his Azure Lizard to build an earth shield and test the sword. To everyone's astonishment, the Azure Lizard's earth shield was cut open as if it were a piece of wood!

Old Mo was even happier.

"That is awesome. Even a ninth rank beast may be hurt by this sword with one cut!" Ye Chenshan exclaimed.

Old Mo enjoyed the looks of admiration and envy from everyone.

Nie Chengkong was less envious. He just kept the smile on his face as everyone took turns to see the weapon. Afterward, he urged everyone to check around to make sure that they didn't miss anything else. Then, he led the team out of the cave.

Su Ping was surprised to see how happy they became with a mere sword. He wondered if he had become a bit too demanding after being educated by the system... They left the corpse-filled valley and then followed Nie Chengkong to the next location.

On the way, Su Ping pointed out some potential habitats of beasts that he already knew but he pretended that it was because of the Dark Dragon Hound's perception. He managed to save the team from many potential dangers and thus avoided wasting much time.

In regards to scouting and checking the way, Su Ping did better than Old Mo. However, since Old Mo had obtained the sword, he was less depressed than before.

He was no longer in the mood to compete against Su Ping about their pet's skills. During that battle at the valley with the spiders, he had realized that his pet was weaker than Su Ping's Dark Dragon Hound in some areas.

After all, Old Mo didn't find out that there were spiders in the valley, not to mention their exact ranks. This was beyond what scouting could do. This was smart all-round scanning!

To compete against such a pet was asking for annoyance. Old Mo had moved on. They killed some seventh-rank beasts along the way, including a small herd of eighth-rank beasts. Soon, they arrived at the second location.

Su Ping gave them instructions once they arrived and they quickly finished exploring the second location. This place was similar to the spider valley. The treasure found was a damaged armor. It had been there for such a long time that the beasts had broken it.

Naturally, Su Ping didn't take it and Chen was not interested. No one else was. This armor was put away. When they went back, they would convert the armor into merit points and share them among the team.

Chapter 177 Soul Lantern

The exploration went on.

Su Ping noticed that this dragon scale land was almost identical to the one he remembered. The number of changes was minimal. This land didn't develop toward a different path just because this was reality and the beasts living here could grow and perish.

The beasts they had met near the treasures had powers similar to what he had expected. The beasts weren't any stronger than he remembered.

Su Ping wanted to ask the system for the reason. Could it be that the heritage ground listed in the cultivation site was being updated according to reality?

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This seemed to be the explanation according to the current situation. Su Ping thought a bit more and rejected this explanation. If there was a synchronized update, then the dragon king's heritage ground should have been updated every day as well, while in fact, it wasn't.

Could it be that the soul of the old dragon king is controlling everything? Is it suppressing the strength of the beasts in the dragon king's heritage ground? Su Ping thought of this other possibility. He squinted. This seemed to be the only idea that could make sense.

Otherwise, after so many years, beast kings would have come into being and the number would have been large. Maybe there could be a creature that came into being that could exceed the control of the dragon scale lands.

While Su Ping was still buried in his thoughts, the team had arrived at the third location.

With Su Ping's "scouting," the location of the treasure was soon found. Then, they discussed a plan and forged in.

A moment later, the place was secured. There were very few beasts there. The strongest of all was a beast at the lower position of the ninth rank. The Death Scythe, the Fallen Priest, and the Dark Dragon Hound cooperated and soon killed the beast.

During this fight, the Dark Dragon Hound's performance was remarkable, astonishing everyone.

The Dark Dragon Hound had fended off a crazed strike from the beast on its own. The Dark Dragon Hound had proven to be as powerful as a ninth-rank beast!

At this moment, Chen was seeing Su Ping as an equal. As a matter of fact, he actually thought Su Ping was better than himself. He began to be polite and even respectful to him.

Su Ping could demonstrate such formidable powers at this age. When Su Ping reached their age, he would be even more horrifying than they were!

Besides, Su Ping could not be viewed as weak considering the strength he had. He had enough abilities to protect himself. As long as he didn't take the road to ruin, it was very unlikely that Su Ping would perish.

After the path to the third piece of treasure had been cleared, they went forward and soon found the hidden treasure.

That item was special. It was a yellow lantern that seemed to be aged. There was nothing unique about it.

They picked up the lantern, checked it carefully, and poured in astral powers which would light it up. It would give out an orange glow. Other than that, there was nothing else of note.

They tried the temperature of the flame inside. It was just warm, not burning hot. The flame could not inflict any harm.

This time, Su Ping chose to keep the lantern.

This lantern was the only thing he liked in this dragon scale land. Su Ping didn't even care about that "Astral Spirit Fruit" that Nie Chengkong was after. Of course, for many people, that fruit could be considered priceless. After all, it could enable anyone below the peak of the ninth rank to move up a position!

If a person at the peak of the eighth rank consumed the fruit, that person would reach the ninth rank directly!

A person at the upper position of the ninth rank could reach the peak of the rank after eating this fruit!

However, this fruit could not be consumed by people at the peak of the ninth rank. It was only effective to those below the peak of the ninth rank.

As far as Su Ping was concerned, this was a stronger version of the Original Force Pellet.

Su Ping believed that his store would also have it once it was upgraded. He might be able to find advanced Original Force Pellets in the shop!

He had already seen middle-level pellets. The day he saw advanced pellets would come soon.

As such, Su Ping did not care for the Astral Spirit Fruit. It would be a waste for him to have one. This fruit was the most suitable for those who were stuck at the peak of the eighth rank.

The common-looking lantern in Su Ping's hand was a treasure to strengthen the spirit!

In addition to strengthening the spirit, the lantern could protect the owner's spirit from external attacks. If the enemy used illusions, spirit impalement and other similar skills, the strikes would be fended off by the lantern!

The lantern was lit by astral power. The flames inside could nurture the spirit so it would slowly grow and develop.

At the same time, as long as the flame inside the lantern was still burning, the lantern could protect Su Ping against all spiritual attacks!

The others didn't understand why Su Ping had picked this strange lantern when he gave up on that sword. They thought it was because Su Ping had found something unique about this lantern. Each of them held the lamp and checked it but found nothing.

"Why are you going with this?" Luo Guxue was puzzled. She could tell that the others were confused and suspicious. She thought she just might as well pose the question directly to Su Ping. Knowing the answer was better than having everyone speculating. Speculation was the worst. There was no telling where people's minds could wander off to.

Su Ping gave a random answer, "We have only found a broken set of armor and now this lantern. I am just worried that we won't even find lanterns later on, just some stones."

This excuse was far fetched and nobody believed him. However, they could tell that Su Ping was unwilling to say more. No matter what secret Su Ping had stumbled across in regards to this lantern, since he had picked it, they could not take it away from him.

Besides, they had checked multiple times and didn't see anything. If Su Ping knew some hidden secrets, then they would only have themselves to blame for not having a good eye. Nie Chengkong tried to talk Su Ping out of taking this lantern but Su Ping insisted. Nie Chengkong's attempt was in vain. A kind of gloomy look flashed past Nie Chengkong's eyes.

The team set off.

They were heading for the fourth location. Same as before, they cleaned the beasts easily and obtained the treasures. This treasure, just as Su Ping said, was a stone. To be exact, it was a pale gold brick. When astral powers were poured into the brick, it would enlarge by several times and its weight would increase to over five hundred kilograms. But that was it. Nothing else was special about it.

None of them was interested in keeping this brick. It wasn't like they could have smashed this brick on some beasts' faces.

Since nobody wanted to take the brick, it was put away for the time being. Everyone was speechless since they recalled Su Ping's prophetic words. He said the next one might be a stone and they did find a stone.

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Su Ping was surprised when he saw this brick. The brick should have been found in the next location. However, a long time had passed, and the brick had actually ended up at the fourth location.

They didn't waste time and continued their trip. They explored the fifth, sixth, and seventh locations. They found a dagger that was similar to the sword Old Mo took. The dagger was sharp but the aura coming out from the dagger was dark. It was as if the astral powers poured into the dagger had transformed into undead energy.

Another piece they discovered was an item like a gauzy dress. It was quite dirty after being in the mud for ages, and it had been contaminated with beasts' feces. The first impression the dress left was that it was shabby. However, after they poured in astral powers, the dress emitted a holy light.

By the looks of it, this was an armor designed for ladies.

Of course it was fine if men wanted to use it. This item could change its shape automatically according to the wearer's body. The dress could cover up all the body parts that should be protected. The only disadvantage for the men wearing it was that the dress could be tight.

They tested the dress, called the Mist Dress, and noted that it was very strong. The Death Scythe failed to leave a mark on the dress with its sharp claws. Of course, the Death Scythe did not exert its full strength. Then they used the sword and the dagger and tried to cut the dress. Only some slight marks were left on the dress. With more astral powers imbued, even the slight marks disappeared.

Everyone was intrigued by this item. It was Chen's turn to pick. Su Ping and Old Mo had already chosen. Now Chen enjoyed the priority to choose.

It was just this graceful vintage dress gave him mixed feelings.

He hesitated, struggled... and hoped.

Eventually... His personality won against his desire. He asked Luo Guxue to take the dress and he took the dagger.

Apart from the two that were useful, another piece of treasure had been destroyed by time. They poured astral powers in but there was no reaction from that item. When they went back, they were going to deal with that item as waste material.

Chapter 178 All In

Soon, half a day had passed.

All the thirteen treasure locations marked on the map had been explored. The only place left to be explored was the core region which housed the major treasure.

In total, nine pieces of useful treasures were discovered from the thirteen locations. Each person had one item and there was an extra remaining. Nie Chengkong took the chance and gave this item to Su Ping.

Su Ping didn't care much for this item. It was one that nobody wanted, and was not valuable. It was an armor but it could only fend off the strikes from average middle-rank beasts. For Su Ping, this armor was of no use. It was less effective than his Solar Bulwark.

That being said, he did accept it. This was of no use to him but he could sell it for millions. It just so happened that he lacked the money to upgrade the store.

The others had no problem with Su Ping taking an extra piece. During their whole excursion, Su Ping's Dark Dragon Hound had demonstrated amazing abilities. They knew that this was Su Ping's first time there and it was the first time the land had been explored. Otherwise, they would have thought that Su Ping had been there before.

Thanks to Su Ping's information, they had managed to avoid many dangers. Every time they arrived at a location, Su Ping could find out the general situation of the place. Their exploration went on smoothly thanks to his help. Su Ping had clearly made the greatest contribution.

The biggest danger when they scoured the thirteen locations was when they met a beast at the intermediate position of the ninth rank. They had prepared a plan beforehand thanks to Su Ping's heads up and they managed to kill that beast. However, Luo Guxue's Flare Bird had been hurt while giving support and could no longer join in the fight.

The item they discovered in that location was not a precious one as they had originally thought. It was a broken item. They were unhappy since their efforts went down the drain.

"Up ahead is the core area." Nie Chengkong was visibly thrilled. This was the moment he had been waiting for.

Everyone looked over. It was a massive cave, deep like a tunnel. They couldn't see the end of this pitch-dark hollow.

A pungent smell came out from within, mixed with the stink of beasts' feces. Surely some beast had taken up residence there.

"That's our destination."

Everyone's eyes glowed. Taking the treasure from this place was the main goal of their trip.

Su Ping was also excited. Once the Astral Spirit Fruit was grabbed and everyone left, he could go on exploring other dragon scale lands. There were several places he wished to visit. He wondered if the treasures there had already been taken away.

"My hawk cannot sense what's inside," Zhou Jing said. He had his hawk fly up high to monitor the overall situation.

Su Ping was the center of attention. He had been the one probing for information at each previous location.

All eyes were on him. Su Ping didn't withhold any information from them. He said, "The beast residing here is a beast at the upper position of the ninth rank, a kind of sub-dragon species, the Flame Flood Dragon. It is very destructive and skilled at spirit attacks."

"The upper position of the ninth rank?!"

This information had stunned all of them. They looked at Su Ping with frightened faces.

Nie Chengkong was just as scared. "Are you sure?" He kept his eyes on Su Ping. The higher the rank, the bigger the gap was in strength. At the ninth rank, the difference between positions was like those between the eighth rank and the ninth rank. Each beast at the upper position of the ninth rank could easily defeat over a hundred beasts at the intermediate position of the ninth rank!

That was the truth!

To make it worse, the beast they would face was a sub-dragon. Of all the beasts of the upper position of the ninth rank, this beast would be considered superior!

Old Mo and Chen looked at Su Ping and then at Nie Chengkong. Given their previous experience, although the information Su Ping had spilled out was shocking, neither of them doubted him at this point. The only thing they were nervous about was Nie Chengkong's decision.

Nie Chengkong's goal for this trip was to obtain this major treasure.

Would he give up?

"Captain Nie..." Old Mo was having second thoughts. He wanted to advise Nie against it.

Old Mo's Death Scythe was at the lower position of the ninth rank and had suffered from some minor injuries in the previous fights. Besides, the Death Scythe had yet to recover from the infection inflicted by the spiders' poison and thus could not perform at its best. If they pooled everyone's strength together and the beast was at the intermediate position of the ninth rank, there was a chance of winning for them. However, the beast was in the upper position. The gap between the beast and the Death Scythe was like the gap between the seventh and the ninth ranks!

Chen was thinking about giving up as well. His dragon had a bloodline at the upper position of the ninth rank. That being said, the dragon had yet to grow to its prime state and was currently at the intermediate position of the ninth rank. Besides, his Earthen Dragon' was not powerful when it came to attacks; it was merely good at defense. If Su Ping and the others were defeated, having defensive properties would only delay a certain death. Chen was unwilling to take this risk.

Nie Chengkong lowered his head. He was vexed.

He didn't have to look to know what Old Mo and Chen were thinking.

Old Mo and Chen were not alone in this. Nie Chengkong could feel that Guo Yuelin and Zhou Jing were uneasy. Perhaps, they wanted to leave more than Mo and Chen.

"Should we... try it?" Nie Chengkong clenched his fist and bit his teeth.

Old Mo and Chen's minds were weighed down when they heard Nie Chengkong's words. He had not given up.

Old Mo heaved a sigh inwardly. When he accepted Nie Chengkong's offer, he had agreed to help Nie Chengkong obtain the main treasure. They were at the final step now. To leave at this point would offend Nie Chengkong. Besides, Mo would lose his credibility in this community and no one would look for him in the future.

Chen was sighing as well. He even regretted taking this offer.

Nie Chengkong raised his head and glanced at them. He noticed Mo and Chen's troubled expressions. Nie Chengkong curled his lips. He said nothing and turned to Su Ping, only to find that the youngest and most talented Su Ping was also the calmest of all. He saw no signs of retreating in his expression.

Nie Chengkong's eyes glowed. He asked Su Ping, "Brother Su, are you willing to go with me?"

Su Ping was surprised by this question. "Isn't this what we had agreed upon in the beginning?"

Nie Chengkong felt a spread of warmth in his heart and a lump came to his throat. He took a deep breath and said, "Thank you!"

No one expected that Su Ping would be willing to face the dangers with Nie Chengkong, because even if they could get the treasure, it would be Nie Chengkong's, not Su Ping's.

Old Mo and Chen found it hard to understand. Even other teammates like Zhou Jing were puzzled. They didn't know if Su Ping was too innocent or too honest. Either way, they could tell that Su Ping was someone they could befriend.

"Since Su has said so, then let's go and find out." Chen knew that his words could not change the decision by then, so he could only voice his agreement.

Old Mo threw Chen a look, regarding the latter a sly person. "Let's have a try, then. But we do need a detailed plan. Besides that, summon the rest of your pets if you have any others. This is the final battle!" Old Mo said.

Nie Chengkong was relieved since they had agreed to go on. He opened up his contract space at once and a violent surge of air swarmed out. A ninth-rank Bloodthirst Snake came out!

This pet was at the intermediate position of the ninth rank and was close to breaking through to the next step. The snake was over a hundred meters long and thick like a railroad track. The snake was covered with crimson scales. This was a pet that was incredibly violent and hard to tame.

Nie Chengkong had done his best to control this pet at the intermediate position of the ninth rank when he was at the eighth rank.

Usually, battle pet warriors could use pets two ranks higher but that rule didn't apply to ninth rank pets. Every position in the ninth rank would make a world of difference.

Old Mo and Chen were stunned by this Bloodthirst Snake. They didn't know that apart from the Fallen Priest which was at the lower position of the ninth rank, Nie Chengkong had another pet at the intermediate position of the ninth rank. Two pets at the ninth rank. Nie Chengkong had a great backing!

Zhou Jing and the other teammates darted a look at the Bloodthirst Snake in fear. They were not as stunned, though. Since they were used to fighting together, they knew something about Nie Chengkong's pets.

Old Mo didn't hesitate to open up his contract space as well. From inside hopped out a Blood Flood Dragon, a pet at the peak of the eighth rank, and also of the sub-dragon kind.

This was a mixed blood pet with traces of a beast king bloodline. However, the pet had only inherited the beast king's body shape, not the huge size or strength. On the other hand, the Blood Flood Dragon was cruel, brutal, and it had strong abilities. Some average beasts at the lower position of the ninth rank were unwilling to provoke this Blood Flood Dragon.

Chen also summoned his second pet, a Flaming Lion, which was at the lower position of the ninth rank. The Flaming Lion was proficient in combat and could work well with the Earthen Dragon. Combined, the two pets were not worse than Nie Chengkong's pet.

Zhou Jing didn't know that Mo and Chen had such powerful pets. Instantly, Zhou Jing's confidence was boosted.

After the three of them summoned their pets, they shifted their attention to Su Ping.

They believed that Su Ping's major pet had to be quite formidable since the Dark Dragon Hound was his secondary pet.

Su Ping didn't hesitate. Everyone was convinced that to battle against a beast at the upper position of the ninth rank, Su Ping would have to do his best.

When the contract space was opened, a scary aura oozed out from the inside. All the summoned pets became unsettled.

The temperature rose rapidly as the Inferno Dragon crawled out. It had grown to be more than 10 meters long. Although the Inferno Dragon was shorter than the hundred-meter Flame Flood Dragon and the Blood Flood Dragon, the overwhelming sense of the Inferno Dragon was stronger than that of the two flood dragons. "Inferno... Dragon?"

Luo Guxue was the only one prepared to see this pet. The others stared at the Inferno Dragon with their eyes wide open.

The Inferno Dragon was the best of all dragons. To have a dragon with a ninth rank bloodline was costly enough, not to mention to have the best there was, the Inferno Dragon!

The Earthen Dragon next to Chen was standing straight with its head raised. The moment the Inferno Dragon came out, the Earthen Dragon began to tremble and it retracted its wings. The pressure of a superior dragon instilled fear in the Earthen Dragon.

Since the Earthen Dragon had reached the intermediate position of the ninth rank, it could withstand this presence. But if the Earthen Dragon were of a lower rank, it would have prostrated itself in front of the Inferno Dragon.

Chapter 179 Full Strength

"Where did you get this Inferno Dragon?"

Old Mo and Chen stared at Su Ping in utter astonishment. How much wealth and how many connections did Su Ping have to enjoy being able to buy a pet that was the best of the best?

Nie Chengkong was also startled. He thought Su Ping would have summoned that special skeleton. He didn't know that Su Ping had this rare Inferno Dragon!

Gou Yuelin, Zhou Jing, and Ye Chenshan were all stunned stiff.

Su Ping didn't stop there. He also called out the Little Skeleton.

The Little Skeleton's entry was quiet. If the Inferno Dragon coming out was like throwing a meteorite into a lake, stirring up waves and tides, then the Little Skeleton was like a pebble thrown into the water, stirring up some ripples.

Looking at the Little Skeleton which was a bit over a meter tall, everyone was speechless.

Nie Chengkong was surprised. "Is this the skeleton?"

"Yes." Luo Guxue nodded. This Little Skeleton had managed to kill a Magical Corpse Beast in the past and could at the moment defeat a ninth-rank beast easily. This Little Skeleton was a freak!

Su Ping then went on to summon the Purple Python.

The Purple Python was over one hundred meters long, just as big as that Bloodthirst Snake and the Blood Flood Dragon. Su Ping didn't summon the Purple Python to battle, but to be his guard to protect himself.

Su Ping was not confident that the Earthen Dragon could provide enough protection.

The size of the Purple Python came as a surprise. This one seemed to be bigger than regular Purple Pythons.

However, Purple Pythons were beasts with middle-rank bloodlines; they were cheap and unwelcomed. The others didn't understand why Su Ping would keep an ordinary pet like the Purple Python when he had the Inferno Dragon. It was unnecessary and the Purple Python would only waste the space available in his spirit.

"Since Mister Su has summoned the Purple Python, I cannot be stingy myself." Nie Chengkong glanced over the pets Su Ping had summoned and his eyes paused for a moment when he saw the Inferno Dragon. Nie Chengkong raised his hand and summoned two more battle pets at the intermediate position and the upper position of the eighth rank respectively.

Theoretically speaking, in a battle against ninth rank beasts, those two battle pets would not be of much help. However, since Su Ping had even summoned the sixth-ranked Purple Python, Nie Chengkong felt he couldn't keep his two pets stashed away. They were sparing no effort! Old Mo and Chen curled their lips.

They hesitated for a moment and then each summoned a secondary pet, both at the intermediate position of the eighth rank.

"Secondary pets assist and ninth-rank battle pets, charge."

Nie Chengkong looked at the team. His confidence was boosted after seeing the added pets. The only thing bothering him was that Su Ping's Inferno Dragon seemed to have just reached adulthood, so its abilities would probably be not that great. If the Inferno Dragon were at the ninth rank, it could have defeated that sub-dragon in the cave by itself; it would have been unnecessary for the other pets to join. Old Mo and Chen were relieved to hear Nie Chengkong's strategy. If the secondary pets were sent to battle against a sub-dragon at the upper position of the ninth rank, it would practically be suicidal.

"Do you think we should set up some traps outside to lure that sub-dragon out?" Zhou Jing asked. He had nimble wits and a gift for unconventional ways.

Nie Chengkong had the same idea. "Yes."

Su Ping, on the other hand, was trying to say no because he deemed this as a waste of time. However, since they wanted to play it safe, Su Ping had to swallow his disagreement. Staying on the safe side was not a bad thing in case something went amiss.

Soon, they cooked up a plan.

They chose a nearby valley as the location for the ambush. Above, at the edges of the valley were some massive boulders the Earthen Dragon had prepared. Those huge boulders had been made from the iron element extracted from the earth. They were more like enormous iron balls instead of boulders.

Ye Chenshan and the others' pets lurked at the sides of the valley. Traps that contained flames, lava, and ice had been set up.

The traps were ready. The big question was.

Who should go and lure the Flame Flood Dragon out?

Su Ping acted unconcerned. Naturally, he didn't want to stand out. He was confident that he could kill this Flame Flood Dragon by himself. That being said, this time, he was in real life. Who could tell if something had changed?

Maybe this Flame Flood Dragon's strength had been enhanced. What if the Flame Flood Dragon was not at the upper position of the ninth rank like he had seen in the cultivation site? In that case, luring the flood dragon out would put him in harm's way.

The others were looking at Su Ping because they wanted him to take the lead. After all, it seemed that Su Ping was familiar with the situation inside the cave. However, to actually propose this out loud was hard.

"Never mind. Allow me." Nie Chengkong looked around and everyone avoided making eye contact. He knew that no one was willing to perform this task. Su Ping was familiar with the cave but he was the one providing the intelligence. During their entire trip, Su Ping had made countless contributions. Nie Chengkong could not bring himself to ask Su Ping to take this risk.

Besides, Su Ping's Inferno Dragon appeared to have just reached adulthood. Nie Chengkong thought the Inferno Dragon might not be as powerful as the Dark Dragon Hound. Su Ping's core strength was in the Little Skeleton... by the looks of it, it had just about the same strength as the Dark Dragon Hound. Nie Chengkong didn't have much hope for the Little Skeleton.

Everyone was relieved since Nie Chengkong had volunteered.

Nie Chengkong asked Su Ping about the specifics in the cave. Su Ping gave a brief introduction about the terrain but did not reveal too many specifics. After all, some details could not be found in regular scouting. Saying too much could invite unwanted suspicion.

Nie Chengkong was a bit relieved after obtaining information from Su Ping. He took some deep breaths and told the others to wait there and provide help when necessary.

He trusted his teammates.

Zhou Jing and the others nodded and told Nie Chengkong to be careful.

Soon, Nie Chengkong made the Fallen Priest and the Bloodthirst Snake lead the way and slowly entered the cave.

A moment later, Nie Chengkong vanished from everyone's sight as he went further in.

People waited quietly outside. As time moved on, some began to become anxious.

Su Ping was calm. He was counting the time based on the speed of Nie Chengkong's movement. After about seven minutes, Su Ping kept his eyes on the opening of the cave and said, "He should be out in a minute."

Su Ping's words took everyone by surprise. Hurriedly, they focused their minds on the cave.

Boom!

Something collapsed inside the cave.

The noise shocked everyone. They were coming!

In the next moment, Nie Chengkong was the first one to appear in everyone's sight. He was running like crazy. When he saw his teammates, he said to them in haste, "Go to the valley!"

Roar!!

From the cave behind him came out some angry roars. Something was bumping against the inside walls of the cave. That was an indication of a fierce battle.

Everyone turned around and hurried their way to the valley.

Nie Chengkong caught up with them and everyone returned to the valley together. Not long after they arrived, the Fallen Priest and the Bloodthirst Snake also quickly entered the valley. Along the way, the Bloodthirst Snake had been using its skills, pounding the ground with its tail. Many places on the ground caved in and that slowed down the beast that was after them.

Behind them was a flood dragon that was almost two hundred meters long and twisting like a meandering mountain road. The flood dragon was covered with burning crimson scales. The flood dragon bellowed and its movement was stunningly fast. Although it was being slowed down by the pits on the ground, the flood dragon was fast approaching the two battle pets. Nie Chengkong was worried. He clenched his fists.

Soon, the Flame Flood Dragon arrived at the valley. At the moment, it was merely a hundred meters away from the Fallen Priest. "Do it!" Nie Chengkong shouted with a hurried tone.

The traps were ready. All of them were activated at the same time. From above the valley, the heavy iron balls began to fall. There were dozens of them! Each of the iron balls could have smashed and collapsed a ten story building, to later make a huge hole on the ground. In the meantime, the Flare Bird, which had been injured before, had started to spill the lava it had previously prepared from the side of the valley. The lava was moving toward the Flame Flood Dragon.

The spikes, ice blades, storms and other skills the others had ready were released instantly, targeting the Flame Flood Dragon. Usually, not all of those spikes and blades would be able to hit the target. However, since the skills had been ready for a while, all of them landed squarely on the target. "Ocean of Stones!" Chen's eyes glowed as he shouted. He poured astral powers into his pet. The Earthen Dragon bellowed

and its strength was visibly increased. The Earthen Dragon stood in the air over the valley and passed some strength from its feet to the stone walls on the side of the valley which began to shake.

Boom!

The stone walls were closing in rapidly around the Flame Flood Dragon. It was going to be squeezed to death!

“Calling of the Earthen Stars!”

Nie Chengkong had the Bloodthirst Snake unleash a ninth-rank skill of the stone family as well. The earth elements were gathering in the air and then they formed a square boulder that could fit well with the valley. The boulder smashed down, blocking the Flame Flood Dragon’s path.

Bang!

A thunderous noise came from the valley as if it were being bombarded.

The dust was unsettled. But Nie Chengkong had already told his Fallen Priest which was holding its rod to take action.

Profound dark and foul air were emitted from the Fallen Priest. The air was corrosive and could cause hallucinations. When low-rank beasts touched this foul air, even a tiny bit, the beasts would lose their minds instantly. Their blood would flow backwards and the beasts would bleed to death!

Many augmentation skills were used on the Fallen Priest which had grown in size. The Fallen Priest was gaining more momentum.

Whoosh!

Over a hundred shadows of the Fallen Priest’s huge rod were generated. The Fallen Priest smashed its rod down and a hundred shadows became one.

With a bang, the earth shook. More clouds of dust were stirred up.

Roar!!

Amid the dust, something burst out with mad roars of fury and evil spirits.

A strong flame instantly swept out and dispelled the dust and mist. The Flame Flood Dragon stood up in the flames, bellowing and breathing fire.

The Fallen Priest tried to fight back. However, since this was a ninth-rank dragon fire with a strong impact, the rod was burnt red promptly and the Fallen Priest was smashed away.

This was appalling. Nobody expected that the Flame Flood Dragon could exhibit such power after receiving so many blows.

That being said, the previous efforts were effective. The many iron balls hurled down by the Earthen Dragon alone had inflicted great harm. There were many places caved in on the Flame Flood Dragon’s back. Its scales were broken and blood was oozing out. Amidst the flames, the blood had dried up, leaving visible marks on the Flame Flood Dragon’s back.

Su Ping was relieved after looking at the Flame Flood Dragon. This was what he had seen at the cultivation site, a Flame Flood Dragon at the upper position of the ninth rank. It was just that this Flame Flood Dragon was skinnier, colder and gloomier. This might be a different Flame Flood Dragon, a child of the one he had seen at the cultivation site.

“Let’s go!”

Nie Chengkong bit his teeth. The traps worked but they had failed to inflict the level of harm he had anticipated. The only way left for them was to fight the Flame Flood Dragon at close quarters.

Luckily, after their previous battles, all of them had developed a great sense of teamwork. They could help their pets put their abilities into full play.

Old Mo forced a smile. He had no other choice but to tell his Death Scythe to join.

Without hesitation, Chen told his Earthen Dragon to land in the valley to add an earth shield to the Death Scythe, the Fallen Priest, the Bloodthirst Snake and himself. At the same time, the Earthen Dragon used a dragon shield, dragon scale protection and other skills which were stronger than the earth shield. However, the latter skills could not be used on anyone or anything other than the Earthen Dragon itself. Not even Chen could enjoy the benefit.

Having finished building all those shields, the Earthen Dragon bellowed. It took the lead and dashed toward the enraged Flame Flood Dragon.

Chapter 180 Crushing Blow

The Flame Flood Dragon heard the Earthen Dragon’s roar. It responded in kind. The flood dragon was a combination of snake and dragon. The hoarse scream was both threatening and terrifying.

Since everyone had sent out their pets, Su Ping did not fall behind. He told the Little Skeleton to open its mouth to take out the blood crystal. The Little Skeleton then hopped onto the Inferno Dragon’s back and charged into the valley together with the Dark Dragon Hound.

As for the Purple Python, it used Snake Entangle to protect Su Ping.

The more than a hundred-meter long snake curled up into a ball. This huge fleshly shield was the perfect protection for Su Ping. Su Ping still remembered that he was a battle pet warrior at the upper position of the fourth rank. He had Solar Bulwark and his physical strength could withstand the attacks from fifth rank beasts. However, this was a dangerous place. Without the Little Skeleton and the Dark Dragon Hound with him, any seventh-rank beast could deal him a fatal blow.

Of course...

If any seventh or eighth-rank beasts were to sneak up on them, even Ye Chenshan and the other advanced battle pet warriors would lose their lives for sure. After all, their resistance was even weaker when compared to Su Ping’s Solar Bulwark.

Su Ping used his mind to sense and observe the battle while he hid inside the snake cover.

Relying on its strong defense, the Earthen Dragon was fighting the Flame Flood Dragon up close. The dragon shield was broken. The Fallen Priest and the Bloodthirst Snake assisted on the sides. Their cooperation was going well.

However, the Fallen Priest and the Bloodthirst Snake were being intimidated by the flames on the Flame Flood Dragon. The dragon flames were destructive. The earth shield on the Fallen Priest and the Bloodthirst Snake were scorched black.

The Bloodthirst Snake had been born to be ferocious and its attacks were formidable. However, as it faced this Flame Flood Dragon, the Bloodthirst Snake could not exhibit its ferocity at all. Neither did it dare to entangle nor bite the Flame Flood Dragon. The Bloodthirst Snake just waved its tail to knock off some stones on the sides and hurl them at the Flame Flood Dragon.

The Fallen Priest wielded his rod. While the Earthen Dragon was distracted by the Flame Flood Dragon, the Fallen Priest rapidly smashed the latter. The rod was soon burnt red by the flames. The skin on Fallen Priest's hands was grilled and blood was oozing out. Still, the Fallen Priest held on tight to the rod.

"This isn't good enough!"

Nie Chengkong and old Mo could tell that things were not looking good. They were anxious.

Nie Chengkong was struggling inside. He wondered if he should give the Bloodthirst Snake the ultimate command to attack at all costs. In that case, the Flame Flood Dragon would be severely injured. However, it was most likely that the Bloodthirst Snake would... be gone. Was it worth it?

Nie Chengkong was thinking and hesitating.

He was the only one with the knowledge that apart from the map he had shown the others, he had another treasure map that recorded the effects of all the treasures available.

The major treasure was an Astral Spirit Fruit that could help him move up one position! For him, this piece of fruit was valuable. Once he reached the upper position of the eighth rank, he could step to the ninth-rank directly with the help of this fruit!

The eighth rank and the ninth rank represented a completely different social status. After all, eighth-rank battle pet warriors were regarded as masters but ninth-rank battle pet warriors had their titles and were famous across the globe. The latter could move up to the high-society circle and even in this circle, they would be regarded as top influencers!

While Nie Chengkong was still hesitating, the situation had changed.

The roar from the Inferno Dragon startled everyone. The Inferno Dragon leaped into the valley and dashed toward the Flame Flood Dragon. This scene took everyone by complete surprise.

This Inferno Dragon had just reached adulthood!

This wasn't the place for the Inferno Dragon to appear when a battle between the most powerful beasts was underway. The loss would be too huge if the Inferno Dragon lost its life accidentally!

Someone noticed something was standing on the Inferno Dragon's shoulder.

It was the skeleton!

This came as another shock to them.

Dragons were born with incredible pride. As one of the best dragons, the Inferno Dragon was definitely more proud than any other dragon. The master of the Inferno Dragon would normally do its best not to provoke it, in case it went crazy even under the influence of the contract.

So, why would this Inferno Dragon allow a skeleton to stand on its shoulder?

Soon, the Inferno Dragon had dashed to reach the Flame Flood Dragon with the Little Skeleton. Next to the Inferno Dragon was the Dark Dragon Hound that was rushing on just as quickly as the dragon.

Roar!

The dragon roared to instill fear.

The Flame Flood Dragon was not intimidated in the slightest. Rather, it was enraged. The Flame Flood Dragon bellowed as well. As a sub-dragon beast, the Flame Flood Dragon did not hold dragons in high regard. Instead, there was innate hatred and hostility.

The Inferno Dragon was surrounded by raging flames. Its eyes were filled with fury. It opened its mouth and breathed out more fire.

The scorching heat even scared the Earthen Dragon in front of the Flame Flood Dragon. The Earthen Dragon moved away quickly.

The Flame Flood Dragon breathed out a fire as well. However, compared to the Inferno Dragon's fire, the Flame Flood Dragon's fire was quickly subdued. Even the flames burning on the body of the Flame Flood Dragon were dying down as if they had been scared away by the king of fire.

The Dark Dragon Hound hid on the side and added five shield levels to the huge Inferno Dragon.

That was the best the Dark Dragon Hound could do.

With the help of the five shield levels, the defensive power of the Inferno Dragon had increased to a stunning degree. Thanks to Su Ping's training, the Inferno Dragon was practically immune to ordinary fire.

Even though the Flame Flood Dragon's flames were not of the common kind, they weren't that effective against the Inferno Dragon.

When the Inferno Dragon smashed itself against the Flame Flood Dragon, the Little Skeleton stood on the Inferno Dragon's shoulder like a little knight. Its dark and deep eye sockets suddenly gave out a crimson glow.

Cruelty, coldness.

Many kinds of negative emotions were displayed by the Little Skeleton. But its movement seemed to be composed. The Little Skeleton simply unsheathed the bone blade from its waist with a slow and deliberate motion.

As the bone blade was drawn, foul air surged from it. In an instant, the small bone blade grew, turning into a huge sword four to five meters long, longer than the Little Skeleton itself!

Die!

The Little Skeleton disappeared from the Inferno Dragon's shoulder. In the next second, the Little Skeleton re-emerged in front of the Flame Flood Dragon's eyes.

The Flame Flood Dragon was still occupied with the battle. It was to its surprise that such a small thing would be involved in the fight. But, from the small thing, the Flame Flood Dragon felt something terrifying that was not even found in dragons. The Flame Flood Dragon could not help but tremble.

Poof!

The sword was swung across the Flame Flood Dragon rapidly.

Blood was spilled out. The Flame Flood Dragon had just closed its eyes when its eyelids were cut, so were its eyeballs. Around the cut was some dark aura that was eating away the eyeballs like flames.

The sharp pain made the Flame Flood Dragon cry out in misery. It fell and tumbled around in the valley.

Die! Die!

The Little Skeleton moved quickly. It had copied the Thunder Flash, developing a skill suitable to itself. This skill was a common one for beast kings. However, it was rare and difficult to learn for ninth rank beasts. The Little Skeleton dashed around and its sword was sharp. As such, the Little Skeleton was able to inflict harm on the Flame Flood Dragon at many places. The hard dragon scales could not stop the sword from making those cuts. The flames around the Flame Flood Dragon were being consumed by the dark flames from the Little Skeleton. The dark flames were an inherent skill that came with the Skeleton King's bloodline, Hell Fire!

Not even the Inferno Dragon's fire could compare against this Hell Fire!

However, since the Little Skeleton had not finished consuming the blood crystal yet, the Hell Fire was not a complete one. The Little Skeleton could not give full play to the strength of the Hell Fire yet.

The Little Skeleton's participation made a difference. The Inferno Dragon was attacking madly, demonstrating its horrifying strength. The Inferno Dragon was even more violent than the Fallen Priest and the Bloodthirst Snake. Soon, the Flame Flood Dragon was overwhelmed.

Finally, the Earthen Dragon that was here to distract the Flame Flood Dragon felt the burden lifted and it could catch a breath.

Nie Chengkong and the others stared at the battle while being completely stunned.

This had utterly disrupted their view!

The Inferno Dragon that seemed to have just reached adulthood could demonstrate abilities no weaker than the lower position of the ninth rank. How?

They couldn't comprehend the drastic contrast.

To make it more shocking, the skeleton that appeared to be nothing special could appear and disappear mysteriously. Also, the skeleton was very destructive. Every time the skeleton made a move, it could harm the Flame Flood Dragon. The latter could not fend off the skeleton at all.

Compared to the Inferno Dragon, the skeleton might even be a bit stronger!

Luo Guxue, who had witnessed the strength of the skeleton in the academy, was taken aback as well. She had thought that the Little Skeleton could at most fight against a beast at the intermediate position of the ninth rank. How could she know that the Little Skeleton could deal with a Flame Flood Dragon at the upper position of the ninth rank with such skill and ease?

Of course, the Flame Flood Dragon was fighting against multiple opponents. That being said, the Little Skeleton had been moving gracefully. It had demonstrated unexpected strength.

That is horrifying! Luo Guxue thought to herself. She couldn't help but tremble.

With the Little Skeleton and the Inferno Dragon's cooperation, the Flame Flood Dragon was a mass of bruises. The Little Skeleton could kill this Flame Flood Dragon by itself and it could do it faster with the help of the Inferno Dragon.

The Inferno Dragon was not fighting alone. The Earthen Dragon was distracting their opponent. The Bloodthirst Snake and the Fallen Priest, which were not of great help, could give assistance since they were ninth rank pets after all. This was a landslide victory for them!

The Dark Dragon Hound hopped around on the side, trying to prove its existence. But its existence was of little value at this point.

The battle soon came to an end. A few minutes later, the Flame Flood Dragon collapsed on the ground, still screaming. Its eyes had been cut in many places and the majority of its scales were broken. The Little Skeleton punched the Flame Flood Dragon's head into the ground and the Inferno Dragon jumped over and bit the head. The Inferno Dragon's teeth were giving out flames and its bite force was strong. The Inferno Dragon tore up the Flame Flood Dragon's jaw. Blood was spilled around. The view was so bloody that no one could stand the sight.

When the battle ended, it took everyone a moment to come back to their senses.

Nie Chengkong moved his Fallen Priest to check. The Flame Flood Dragon was dead. Its jaw was torn up so its tongue and teeth were revealed. Blood was still streaming out.

"It's over..." Zhou Jing and Guo Linyue felt as if everything were a dream. They were just watching and still they won.

They were all astonished by the outstanding Inferno Dragon. It had just reached adulthood but just like the Dark Dragon Hound, the Inferno Dragon was a genius.

They wondered if the Inferno Dragon had reached the peak of adulthood. It just had some bodily deformity which was why it didn't look like an adult dragon.

Anyways, the ferocity of the Inferno Dragon left a deep impression.

The one that impressed them the most was the quiet but violent skeleton.

The skeleton had returned to the Inferno Dragon's shoulder. The others looked at them with their eyes glistening with glows of curiosity. They didn't remember seeing any skeleton with black bones. But none of the advanced skeletons were this small. It was odd.

They could not tell the species of this skeleton. Either way, the skeleton was not a common one since the Inferno Dragon was willing to be its mount.

Su Ping had become a piece of mystery as well. His age, strength and pets were all part of that mystery.

Old Mo looked at Su Ping in fear. He was unwilling to admit it but the young man had exhibited strength stronger than his. Su Ping was still so young. He was no weaker than the star students from prominent households!

At the moment, Su Ping had asked the Purple Python to free him from the entanglement and both the Little Skeleton and the Inferno Dragon had come back.

Nie Chengkong looked at Su Ping solemnly. He told himself that he could never provoke this person. He was unhappy since Su Ping had taken away that lantern. However, the help Su Ping had provided during this trip was much more valuable than the lantern.

In particular, without having Su Ping's assistance, it would have been a long shot for Nie Chengkong to obtain that Astral Spirit Fruit.

"Zhou Jing, stay here and guard the body. We will go and pick the fruit, then we'll come back to clean this site," Nie Chengkong said. The thought of having that Astral Spirit Fruit excited him. He didn't want to wait another moment.

The others didn't expect that Nie Chengkong would be in such a hurry but they discarded it as unimportant. The Flame Flood Dragon was dead. The corpse would not run away on its own.

Zhou Jing accepted the task. He had his hawk monitor the area while he found a place to hide.

Su Ping was surprised to see Nie Chengkong acting in such a rushed manner. It was almost as if Nie Chengkong knew what was inside the cave. In principle, according to their previous experience, Nie Chengkong would also know whether the treasure had been destroyed.

Nie Chengkong's impatience intrigued Su Ping. He went after Nie Chengkong at once.