

Pet Store 201

Chapter 201 Undead Goblin

Su Ping kept Tang Ruyan captive. After that, he threw a look at her dying pets.

Those pets were rare, with bloodlines of the ninth rank. They could be sold at a good price; it would be a pity to kill them.

Among all of them, the Fallen Angel was a pet at the ninth rank and could be on par with an average advanced-rank dragon. The Fallen Angel had become outstanding after cultivating. Its aptitude was rated as lower than average.

Apart from the pets trained in his store, it would be rare for him to see any pets with an aptitude that was not poor.

The Fallen Angel could fight pets at a higher position and had reached adulthood, close to reach the prime of its state. On the market, this Fallen Angel could be sold at hundreds of millions. After all, the Fallen Angel's strength had already reached the intermediate position of the ninth rank.

Su Ping thought about it and decided to throw all the pets into his scroll.

Inside the scroll, Tang Ruyan was surprised to see her pets falling right in front of her. She couldn't believe that Su Ping would not kill her pets but instead keep them in prison with her. Wasn't he giving her a chance to run away?

She was gloating in secret.

However, the emerging light of hope dimmed down when she had a clear look at her pets. She understood why Su Ping would give them back to her.

Those pets were so severely injured that they could no longer fight. They were of no help to her. Rather, she would have to use her astral powers to heal them. Otherwise, whether those pets could stay alive or not would be uncertain.

"Damn it!"

Tang Ruyan clenched her teeth in fury.

She opened up her contract space and recalled all the pets to recover inside. I am inside a miraculous scroll... and this is an independent space. This scroll should be a rare space treasure. It's a surprise to see that the space here is huge and even living beings can stay here!

If news about this treasure got out, I think even legendary battle pet warriors would be intrigued...

Tang Ruyan looked around. Soft green grass carpeted the ground. The place was as large as a small village.

The price of this treasure had to be stunning. However, since she was stuck here, she couldn't get out, not to mention being able to spread information about this article.

I must find a way to get out... Tang Ruyan was unwilling to accept her fate. She wandered around to look for a means of escape.

Tang Ruyan's problem was over. Su Ping cast his eyes on that fruit tree.

This was also a precious tree. He could grow it in an uncultivated site together with the Astral Spirit Fruit tree.

Su Ping looked around and saw the mundane pile of dirt in front of the fruit tree.

That was a mound.

A solitary tomb.

The dead bodies of powerful beasts were buried here. The corpses had been used to nurture a rich death aura. The aura absorbed the essence from the dead bodies and gradually grew to become an Undead Goblin at the upper position of the ninth rank.

Su Ping had to admit that he admired how courageous the Tang Family was, to recklessly snatch the fruit right under the nose of a creature at the upper position of the ninth rank.

"Dig it up," Su Ping ordered the Inferno Dragon.

The Inferno Dragon followed his order and raised its huge paw, ready to dig out the tree from the roots. The moment the Inferno Dragon raised its paw, a crack appeared on the ground. From inside floated out a puff of smoke which gradually rose to the air. The puff of smoke grew to the size of a cloud with a diameter of over a dozen meters. This dark cloud hovered around the pile of dirt and the fruit tree.

From the mass of dark smoke, a hideous, violent face gradually came into being.

"Little Skeleton!"

Su Ping gave the command.

Roar!

The Little Skeleton arrived close to the dark smoke that formed the body of the Undead Goblin. Little Skeleton roared and the shadow of that stunning being appeared behind it. The shadow seemed to be bellowing as well. That bellow came from another time and space and it was filled with a sense of majesty that could not be challenged.

Due to the Deadly Roar, the thick mass of dark smoke tumbled around. The hideous face was giving out shrill cries as well. A fit of indiscriminate spirit attacks swept across the place. The Inferno Dragon uttered cries of pain and its eyes turned milky. The Inferno Dragon smashed at the mass of dark smoke.

The smoke dispersed and then converged again.

Little Skeleton was not affected by this. The crimson color in its eye sockets deepened. The Little Skeleton threw itself into the dark smoke and waved its blade to disperse the smoke.

Su Ping didn't mean to be stuck in a battle against this Undead Goblin. While the Little Skeleton distracted the Undead Goblin, Su Ping cast the "killing intent" buff on the Inferno Dragon. The strong sense of murder surged in the Inferno Dragon's mind to further stimulate its chaotic brain.

Su Ping disengaged the skill right after it was released.

The killing intent died down in the Inferno Dragon's mind. It regained consciousness. The Inferno Dragon was in a trance for a moment before it received another order from Su Ping. The Inferno Dragon dug out the tree and then ran away.

Squeak!!

A shrill cry burst out from the pile of dirt. The Undead Goblin was completely enraged.

The Undead Goblin revealed its true appearance. It was a shadow mass of four to five meters in size. The shadow made threatening gestures. It leaped out from the pile of dirt and charged at the Inferno Dragon. The dark aura tumbled around. There seemed to be something roaring amid that mass of darkness.

The Inferno Dragon bellowed. When it did, its mind was concentrated. As such, the Inferno Dragon managed to stay clear from the effect of the evil and shrill cries. The Inferno Dragon threw the fruit tree to Su Ping.

Su Ping flicked his finger. The scroll flew up and then unfolded. The force from within sucked the fruit tree in.

Su Ping took the scroll back and closed it in case Tang Ruyan would take the chance to escape. He could throw her back inside again but that would cost him more time. Besides, on the off chance that she would be killed by this Undead Goblin the moment she came out, he would have to find another captive that was familiar with the Tang Family, which would be troublesome. He put away the scroll. He asked Little Skeleton to cover their retreat, then he called the Inferno Dragon back and told the Dark Dragon Hound to lead the way. The Purple Python followed them closely. The gang turned around and ran like hell to make their escape.

The Purple Python slithered across the forest, smashing the huge vegetation to clear out the path.

Su Ping checked the Little Skeleton's situation on his mind at all times but felt no sense of danger or pressure from their connection. He knew that the Little Skeleton could deal with the Undead Goblin; it would have probably had a chance to get rid of this Undead Goblin if it had a physical body. Unfortunately, the Undead Goblin was just a spirit; it could only be hurt by energy and spirit attacks.

They dashed out of the forest. Su Ping estimated how far apart they were from the Little Skeleton; it had already left the solitary tomb and was moving behind them, albeit slowly. It was surely battling against that Undead Goblin.

"Death Deceit."

Su Ping ordered the Little Skeleton to use its most proficient skill.

Soon, the Little Skeleton stopped.

Su Ping tried to summon the Little Skeleton back. With the help of the contract, his spirit was connected to the Little Skeleton. In the next second, the Little Skeleton was called back to the contract space.

Su Ping opened up the contract space and the Little Skeleton came out as a pile of bones.

Chapter 202 Taking the Treasure

Like always, the bone pieces were magically reset on their own, until Little Skeleton came back as a whole. Little Skeleton could always do this even if its bones were ground to fine powder, as long as its core was not harmed; such a skill was a must-have for all Undead-type Astral Pets if they wanted to fight efficiently.

The skeleton looked at Su Ping, then checked its bone blade which was safely tucked between its ribs, and somewhat showed a “relieved” look.

Together with his pets, Su Ping managed to leave the black forest unharmed. By this point, he no longer needed to worry about the wraith because it couldn’t move away from its habitat for some reason. He had confirmed this many times inside the dragon scale land.

As he expected, the monster’s deadly aura soon came, and stopped at the edge of the woods. The wraith howled at him madly as its concentrated grudge was almost materialized. Though there wasn’t much else it could do.

Su Ping sighed in relief and ordered his pets to back away, while returning to their “stealth mode,” to avoid accidentally attracting something else.

He found a place that seemed safe enough and hid behind the Purple Python’s scale formation again, before he took out the scroll to check inside.

He saw Tang Ruyan staring at the tree with broadened eyes, probably because she never thought he’d go this far.

But on second thought, Tang Ruyan believed that she’d do the same if she had ended on top. Or she would have destroyed it if she couldn’t take it away, to prevent it from falling into someone else’s hands. After all, giving a valuable treasure to another settler was equal to helping a potential enemy.

She wondered if she should sabotage the tree to annoy Su Ping, but decided against it since that would definitely get her killed faster. She wanted to stay alive to gamble for an escape.

Heh. You really shouldn’t have put this thing so close to me, my friend. Now I have something to bargain. Before she could finish that thought, Su Ping’s face appeared inside the scroll space and almost covered the entire sky above her.

“Look after that tree. If I find even a single leaf missing, I will kill you, humiliate your body, and make sure the whole world sees it so that your family can never lift their heads again.”

Su Ping disappeared after leaving those cold words.

Tang Ruyan stared at the sky in shock.

But-but what about-he threatened ME first?? Can't he figure out I haven't killed this tree just because I haven't felt like it??

Tang Ruyan was so furious that she almost changed her mind to proceed with her reckless plan. However, what Su Ping said in the end successfully hit her biggest weakness; she surely didn't want to see her family suffer because of her death.

"Damn damn damn DAMN YOU!!" She clenched her teeth so hard that she almost cracked them.

Su Ping had just denied her the chance to negotiate with him. No matter what kind of plans she had come up with earlier, she had to forget about them and bear the great depression all by herself.

Her sanity prevailed in the end, so she managed to stay put for the moment.

While cursing Su Ping's name, she walked in circles to help herself vent out the accumulated rage inside her, even if it was just a little.

Outside, Su Ping put away the scroll and prepared to move on. He believed that, as long as the woman didn't completely give up her life, the tree would remain safe.

Following their previous plan, he asked the Dark Dragon Hound to scout ahead so they could find the first treasure he had originally planned to get.

Going by his memory, he successfully avoided all the troublesome ninth-ranked enemies. The occasional weaker enemies that stumbled upon them had all been dealt with by Little Skeleton and the Inferno Dragon, nice and clean.

He finally reached his target two hours later

-an old, tattered temple that seemed about to collapse on itself at any moment. From his training sessions, he knew that the treasure had been placed right inside this temple and was being protected by two upper ninth-rank humanoid monsters who looked half-human and half-snake. They were tough enemies because their human parts allowed them to use some very dangerous battle techniques.

With the Dark Dragon Hound's help, he quickly ascertained the positions of all the enemies hidden inside the building. The two "human-snakes" were right inside, together with several random spiders and bugs that could use poison attacks.

Su Ping thought long and hard to come up with a plan.

A direct confrontation was unwise, even though he was confident that he could win in the end. The battle would come with a great cost. Besides, doing so would allow other explorers to take the loot away for free. As illustrated by stories and movies, such nuisances always showed up at the right time.

He decided to proceed with a feint attack so he could steal the treasure while the monsters weren't looking.

After telling the Dark Dragon Hound to activate its barriers, Su Ping ordered Little Skeleton to charge into the temple first. With Little Skeleton's skills, it should be able to keep one of the human-snakes busy. Su Ping was well aware of the layout inside the temple. By listening to the sound of the battle, he could tell where the monsters were located.

Little Skeleton soon came out from the entrance with two human-snakes in hot pursuit. Both of them were above ten meters in length; while their upper body was human-like, save for their scaled skin and wriggling strands of hair, each of which was a large living snake.

Upon reaching the door of the temple, the human-snakes stopped and retreated, for they knew they couldn't keep up with Little Skeleton's speed outside.

Seeing this, Su Ping ordered Little Skeleton to come back and taunt the enemies by dancing under their noses. At the same time, the Inferno Dragon and the Dark Dragon Hound came out of hiding and charged at the human-snakes together.

Su Ping asked the Purple Python to dig a tunnel underground so he could enter the temple that way.

The inside of the temple was a filthy graveyard of dead monsters, rotten bones and feces. Once the Purple Python emerged from the tainted dirt, Su Ping immediately saw a luxurious-looking throne at the other side of the space, upon which a treasure coffer was resting

This had told him that no one had visited this place yet.

He quickly went there. The lock on the coffer seemed broken due to age, but it was still protected by an energy matrix that could only be solved by the right means. Still, the matrix was badly worn as well.

Su Ping simply told the Purple Python to slam the lock open with its tail.

The lid of the coffer snapped open, revealing a fist-sized gem that brimmed with energy.

Su Ping immediately grabbed the gem in one hand and prepared to leave.

The human-snakes suddenly howled furiously outside the building. At the same time, Su Ping felt the ground quake as if something was approaching fast.

Chapter 203 Star Prism

Su Ping didn't need to check the treasure since he had seen it many times inside the corresponding dragon scale land. Without tarrying any second, he ordered the Purple Python to dive underground again.

This handy skill was usually only available to rock-type Astral Pets. And yet, the python had somehow learned it while trying to survive during Su Ping's deadly lessons.

The human-snakes rammed through the temple's wall and returned; they checked the treasure's position in both rage and fear. Their kind had been eternally tasked to protect the treasure. Should they fail their job, their souls would be condemned to suffer forever.

While they were distracted, Little Skeleton approached and successfully wounded one of them. But this didn't prevent the human-snakes from hurrying back to the throne.

The Purple Python had already taken Su Ping to a safe distance outside the temple by then. He remotely ordered Little Skeleton and the Inferno Dragon to retreat. The human-snakes were too busy to care about Su Ping's pets.

As soon as Little Skeleton and the Inferno Dragon were safe, Su Ping summoned them back inside the pet space. He couldn't do this in the middle of a fight because that would put his spirit connection at risk.

With all of his pets secured, Su Ping told his python to head to the entrance of this sector by retracing the path they had used. The enraged howling of the human-snakes was heard behind them, which was further dampened by the distance.

Su Ping waited until he was sure about their safety, then he took out the gem to examine it.

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According to the identification skill he had purchased from the system, this gem was called the "Star Prism," which was believed to be made from a special mineral found in outer space. It had only one property that was extremely valuable by itself—astral power enhancement. Like a magnifying tool, it could absorb astral power before sending it back out several times stronger, thanks to its mysterious structure and composition.

Su Ping used to use this item a lot inside the dragon scale land, during which the gem could boost his level to the seventh rank, three ranks higher than his current level. Unfortunately, he couldn't actually take the gem back to reality back then.

He channeled some astral power through the Star Prism and aimed an energy bullet at a giant tree nearby, successfully digging a hole in the middle of its trunk.

"Nice. It's the same thing."

Finding the prism had concluded his exploration for this sector. Next, he would head into the other sectors to find as many treasures as he could before other settlers took them.

Xie Yuexuan weakly limped her way among some messy brambles while suppressing a large claw mark on her shoulder.

"Gods. I should have never come here..."

By submitting her recent "homework," she didn't just earn an A+ from her professor, but also gained a precious chance to enter the Mysterious Realm. She had thought it was a free ticket to a treasure vault, because the young master of the Qin Family was her team leader, combined with a titled warrior as their guard. Everything was in order until they entered this "Sector 83." By paying a great price, they had learned the hard way that titled warriors were not enough when going up against all the crazy monsters in this area.

Most enemies they ran into so far were of the ninth rank. In this place, the usual "dangerous enemies" they were expecting—average eighth-rank monsters—had become insignificant minions.

The first part of the journey was fine when their titled warrior and several ninth-rank Astral Pets could keep them safe just fine. However, everything went south as soon as they arrived at the estimated location of the secret treasure.

There, they stumbled into three ninth-rank monsters at the same time, one of which was even at the apex of the ninth rank.

None of their tricks worked against such a terrible foe. Their lower ninth-rank Astral Pets were like defenseless babies in front of an apex ninth-rank enemy. The team was utterly destroyed in a matter of seconds.

As the last straw—the titled battle pet warrior sadly told them that he wasn't up for the job. The only thing they could do was to run for their lives.

Naturally, that titled warrior focused on protecting the young master, while “outsiders” in the team became cannon fodder.

Lucky for Xie Yuexuan, she did better when it came to outrunning her unfortunate friends with the help of her Wind Bird.

Her luck didn't last very long, however. As soon as she escaped from the main battlefield, another upper eighth-rank monster appeared and almost killed her.

Even if she had gotten away in the end, she was as good as dead while she walked inside this strange forest with no one to help her. Her team had gone pretty deep inside the forest while searching for the treasure, placing her at a great distance from the teleportation node. She could try walking back, though anything that found her on her way would easily finish her off.

Telling from how many monsters the team had seen earlier, she couldn't put her hopes up.

Hiss!

As if to answer her jinxing thought, a glossy, green lizard that looked as big as a small truck bounced into her view.

It was an eighth-rank monster good at ambushing its prey. And that was what it tried to do at such a moment—spitting out a green cluster of poison mist at Xie Yuexuan's general position.

Xie Yuexuan managed to hold her breath in time, but the poison still entered her blood through her eyes and skin, sending a numbing sensation into her body that almost knocked her out.

Desperate, she ordered her Earth Tortoise to use Earth Prison.

The ground beneath her shattered as several stone pillars shot up to create a blockade around her.

But the lizard was faster. With a swift move, it slid through the pillars and reached her.

Chapter 204 Return

Xie Yuexuan hastily put up an astral shield and unleashed several astral chains in an attempt to restrain the lizard. But the chains disappeared instantly when they reached the lizard's scales.

Next, the lizard spat out a poison puddle that easily burned through her shield. I'm done. Xie Yuexuan completely gave up hope. This is it...

She didn't feel the poison on her skin. Instead, she felt a great force knocking her aside, making her tumble several meters away.

“What is—”

She reopened her eyes and saw the majestic form of an Inferno Dragon looming above her.

That’s one of the rarest Astral Pets in this world! But how...

Roar!

The dragon’s thunderous bellow pulled her out of her trance. She saw the lizard trembling at her original position, while all of its scales rattled as if they were about to come off.

It seemed the lizard had completely lost the will to catch her. It bolted further into the forest while turning transparent like a chameleon.

The Inferno Dragon stayed behind and gazed at her.

Xie Yuexuan was petrified by the dragon’s cold leer. It appeared she’d die anyway.

Heh. Can’t blame anyone. Weaklings become food of the strong...

She wondered which was better to be eaten by the lizard or the dragon.

Maybe the latter?... It’s a famous Astral Pet, which means I’ll die famous... Blegh, what am I thinking?

She blamed herself for being a fool at the last moment of her life.

She waited for the inevitable, which... didn’t come as fast as she expected. The Inferno Dragon stayed still and looked at her. It appeared confused rather than hungry for food.

“How long are you going to sit there?”

Xie Yuexuan jolted up due to the sudden voice that came from behind her. She quickly looked back and saw a large snake, as well as a man sitting on top of its head, who appeared too young to be real.

It was true that many young members from famous clans and families would go to this sector to explore. But most of them at least looked experienced and well-trained on the outside. Still, the man in front of her looked like a student who had never spent much time outside his campus.

“Are you... human??”

She said that because her sanity was telling her that finding a common young man on top of a monster snake in these parts was definitely not a common occurrence.

Su Ping looked down to examine his body, which looked completely normal. “Don’t I look like a human to you?”

“Well, yes.”

“Guess I’ll just forget that. So, what are you doing here? Looking for a faster way to die?”

Xie Yuexuan didn’t mind those words because she just felt too glad to run into another human. Then she suddenly remembered that she wasn’t safe yet.

“We—we should run! There’s an Inferno Dragon over there!”

“You mean this guy?”

Su Ping raised a hand and beckoned; the Inferno Dragon moved quickly and lowered its large head for Su Ping to pet.

Su Ping opened the pet space and recalled the dragon.

“What-why-how-” Xie Yuexuan’s eyes almost fell out of their sockets. “That was YOUR pet?”

Su Ping left on his python without answering. Xie Yuexuan quickly caught up. “Was that Inferno Dragon your pet? For real?” Su Ping glanced at her impatiently. “Do you have to ask? Wasn’t that obvious enough?”

Xie Yuexuan failed to think of anything else that could explain how Su Ping made the dragon magically disappear.

“But-” She couldn’t help but inspect Su Ping from head to toe again and again.

What kind of crazy clan would give one of their young members an Inferno Dragon? Also, did he come here alone?? His seniors aren’t worried that he’d die out here??

She wasn’t going to actually ask any of those questions, for she didn’t want to lose the only man that could save her.

“I’m leaving, by the way,” Su Ping said without looking at her.

“Nice, I need to get to the exit as well!”

“Well, go ahead then. I’m not stopping you.”

Xie Yuexuan frowned as she wondered how slow this man could be, to not understand what she was implying.

“Ahem. Can I come with you? I-I promise I’ll be quiet.”

Su Ping chose to agree since he had already saved her from that lizard. It would be strange if he left her there to die again.

“Okay, come on up. Keep in mind that I’ll drop you if there’s something I can’t deal with. Don’t blame me for that.”

Xie Yuexuan showed an embarrassing smile. That was the right thing to do, though she didn’t expect Su Ping to say it so bluntly.

She quickly retrieved her tortoise and jumped onto the python.

The Purple Python glanced at the uninvited passenger and hissed at her threateningly. But it soon looked away upon receiving Su Ping’s order.

Xie Yuexuan found a spot beside Su Ping and sat down. “May I know your name, good sir?”

“It’s Su Ping.”

Xue Yuexuan searched her mind without remembering any noticeable family surnamed "Su." She believed the young man was surely an explorer from another base city.

"Sir, I must say you look brilliant. Just at the prime of your age."

"Of course I do. I also look handsome, no?"

"...Yes."

End of the conversation.

The Purple Python was traveling so fast that Xie Yuexuan had to use her astral power to steady herself and avoid being blown off by the strong wind.

On their way, she spent a moment carefully checking Su Ping and noticed that he appeared much much different from all the prominent members of the big families and clans. But when she thought that Su Ping was friendly and tried to make some eye contact, she suddenly felt a sharp fear from the depths of her soul.

This man's eyes were tranquil, terrifyingly so. Looking into them felt like staring into a bottomless abyss.

She quickly looked away so as to not appear offensive. While looking around for excuses to strike up conversations, she saw the Dark Dragon Hound walking in front of the python and thought it would be a perfect choice. "Sir, is that your pet too?"

"Yup."

"That's a... Dark Dragon Hound. Isn't it?"

"Yeah."

"Well um, it's just a Dark Dragon Hound. That average demon-type pet. Right?"

"Um-hmm."

"... Sir? I mean, shouldn't we be a little more careful?" Seeing Su Ping unresponsive again, Xie Yuexuan decided to make it plain. "You have an Inferno Dragon. Why don't you use that to protect us?"

"The hound is enough for now."

"En-enough?" Xie Yuexuan felt like the slow one this time. What does he mean with 'enough'??

She found more questions popping up in her mind but couldn't ask them for fear of angering Su Ping.

The trip went on in complete silence. Similar to before, Su Ping told the Dark Dragon Hound to evade the territories of ninth-rank monsters. They would occasionally come upon eighth-rank monsters, though they didn't need to do anything in particular to get rid of them; the Dark Dragon Hound could keep them at bay by roaring. A Dark Dragon Hound can scare off eighth-rank monsters?? Xie Yuexuan would have never believed that if she had not seen it with her own eyes.

Then she understood what Su Ping meant by "enough." Of course the hound was enough to protect them. It must have gone through some serious training.

In Xie Yuexuan's view, Su Ping had to be a ninth-rank battle pet warrior already, since he possessed so many powerful pets. With this in mind, she decided to note down Su Ping's name in case she'd encounter such a young genius again in the future.

It took them two hours to reach the edge of the sector. Seeing the teleportation node just ahead, Xie Yuexuan released a long breath she had been holding.

"I'm saved... Sir, may I have your phone number? So I can properly pay you back someday."

"Pay me back? You hate me or something?"

"No! I'm talking about compensating you, for your great kindness."

"How exactly?"

"Well, I can do anything within my ability." "How about giving me money then?" "Huh??"

Chapter 205 Climbing the Dragon Bones

Xie Yuexuan couldn't believe that Su Ping was asking her for money.

You should be a talent with strong connections, right? Why would you want money when you have the Inferno Dragon?

Xie Yuexuan was dumbfounded by Su Ping's out-of-box thinking. At the same time, she was nervous.

"How much do you want?"

"How much can you give me?" Su Ping replied with a question.

Xie Yuexuan determined that Su Ping didn't seem to be joking. Timidly, she answered, "How about ten million?"

"Sure." Su Ping nodded.

He didn't have a set amount of money in mind. Saving her didn't bring him extra trouble and he just randomly asked for money. He didn't care about the exact number and was willing to accept whatever she wanted to offer. Paying him would mean that she had repaid his kindness. However, he didn't mind that. After all, they probably wouldn't see each other again in the future.

Xie Yuexuan was relieved to see that Su Ping had accepted. Ten million was the best she could do within a short period of time. If he were to ask for more, she would have to sell some family possessions and collectibles.

"I don't have that much on my bank card. Can I give you five million for now?" Xie Yuexuan asked, chilled with fear.

Su Ping nodded.

He gave her his bank account number.

Xie Yuexuan noted it down and typed it on her phone to initiate the transfer.

The successful transfer somehow made her feel at ease. "Sir, can you give me your phone number? I will transfer the other five million when I get back." "Okay." Su Ping nodded.

Five million for a phone number. What a great deal this was! Besides, Su Ping never saw himself as a big potato. He wasn't afraid of giving people his number.

Xie Yuexuan was glad that Su Ping gave his consent. She typed his number on her phone. A message popped out when she clicked to save the number: "This number cannot be saved. Remove from the blacklist?"

Xie Yuexuan didn't understand.

Remove from the blacklist?

Did she add the number to the blacklist?

How... was that possible? She was a person of integrity. She would never blacklist anyone for no reason at all, not to mention that she and Su Ping had never met before that day. Su Ping had just given her his number. How could she have possibly blacklisted him?

"What is it?" Su Ping asked. He noticed Xie Yuexuan looked funny.

Su Ping's question startled Xie Yuexuan. She put her phone down and said, "Nothing."

Su Ping was unconvinced but he didn't ask further questions. He commanded the Purple Python to take them away from this dragon scale land.

Xie Yuexuan felt she could breathe again since Su Ping didn't care. She turned her back to Su Ping and searched the blacklist. She was still puzzled as to what had happened. Was her phone acting up? Soon, she found a number in the blacklist, just the one Su Ping had given her.

It was indeed registered in the blacklist.

Xie Yuexuan didn't know what to say. She couldn't believe this was really happening

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Then, she noticed the time and date she called this number and the remark she added... fake tutor?

Xie Yuexuan was stunned stiff.

She remembered this "fake tutor" very well. She had received the instructions not long before. Thanks to the "fake tutor" she was able to finish her thesis. Back then, she was occupied with something else after she submitted her thesis. Not long afterward, she went to the Mysterious Realm and ended up forgetting about removing that number from the blacklist.

The number Su Ping gave her was this number? That was to say....

Xie Yuexuan turned around to look at Su Ping.

"Am I handsome?" Su Ping looked at Xie Yuexuan who had been acting secretly from the corner of his eye.

“...Yes.”

Xie Yuexuan turned away to remove the number from the blacklist. Then she saved the number, adding it to the list of friends. After she finished this process, finally, her pounding heart slowed down a little bit. She threw another look to Su Ping nervously.

Su Ping, who had been gazing into the distance, darted her a look.

Xie Yuexuan’s heart skipped a beat. She felt he had discovered her secret.

But Su Ping looked away at once.

Xie Yuexuan breathed in relief. There was still a lingering fear in her mind. Luckily, Su Ping was still oblivious to the situation, or she would have been in trouble.

She remembered clearly how she scolded him when she called him. She didn’t leave any time for him to explain. She didn’t have to think about how angry Su Ping must have been at that time. If Su Ping were to know that she had been the one who verbally abused him, he might beat her to death right there.

I don’t think he noticed that just now. Well, good for me... He seems to have forgotten my voice as well. Right, the voice on the phone sounds different from when we talk person to person. I hope he will never remember that... Xie Yuexuan prayed in her heart. She stole a look at Su Ping; she didn’t dare to openly stare at him. She was carrying a guilty conscience with her.

“You’re nervous?” Su Ping asked.

Xie Yuexuan felt her heart stopped for an instant. “Am, Am I?”

“Yes.”

“Maybe I am too thrilled since I can leave this place soon.” Xie Yuexuan came up with an excuse quickly. She was secretly happy about her wit. The excuse could perfectly explain her nervousness and sweat.

Su Ping raised his eyebrows but didn’t press further.

Soon, they arrived at the portal and were teleported back to the plaza.

There were some other teams there. They had just come out from the Mysterious Realm and were resting at the moment. Su Ping sent his Purple Python back to the pet space and said to Xie Yuexuan. “Time to say goodbye. Take care. Also, I suggest you stay away from the Mysterious Realm. You won’t be this fortunate every time.”

“Of course.” Xie Yuexuan nodded. Su Ping’s advice was sincere.

Su Ping waved goodbye and left without further ado.

Xie Yuexuan watched as Su Ping stepped into the checkpoint room. Finally, she was able to loosen herself up, but soon realized something she had neglected. If Su Ping was the private tutor, that would imply that Su Ping... was a titled battle pet warrior.

Were there titled battle pet warriors this young?

Xie Yuexuan didn’t understand.

The success of her thesis was proof that this “private tutor” was real. Still, she didn’t expect that the titled battle pet warrior was a young man!

What the hell!

Su Ping had become a regular visitor. He soon passed the check and indulged in some small talk with Qin Shuhai.

Su Ping went to have a rest after he left the checkpoint. Then, he headed to other dragon scale lands to search for other treasures.

Time zipped by. Five days passed.

Su Ping stayed for a week in the Mysterious Realm thus far. The Mysterious Realm would be kept open for half a month. Thanks to his relentless effort, Su Ping had managed to search all the dragon scale lands.

Su Ping combed through all the dragon scale lands according to their numbers and what he experienced in the cultivation site. By then he could tell with the number which dragon scale land he was in and what the environment, treasures, and beasts were like.

In some of the quite perilous lands, Su Ping only stayed for a short time to avoid risking his life. Apart from those lands, Su Ping had explored all the other lands with important treasures.

Some of those treasures had already been taken away, some had been destroyed, some had been worn away by time and some were gone. He didn’t know if those items were taken away by someone, or whether they had been relocated by the beasts since such a long time had passed. He could only find those lost items if he searched every corner of those lands. But clearly, Su Ping didn’t have that time, and doing so would impose great risks.

Some of the treasures that Su Ping hoped to find were gone. That being said, in general, this trip was rewarding and fruitful. He had become a nouveau riche. Any of the treasures he had could be sold at a whopping price.

The Star Prism that could enhance astral powers was a piece that titled battle pet warriors would want to fight for.

That item was effective for all pets that were weaker than beast kings. Even when it came to beast kings, the Star Prism could produce a slight effect in them as well. The Star Prism was definitely a valuable article.

The journey has not been made in vain...

“I heard that there are three Mysterious Realms in total and the Longtai Mountain is one of them. When time permits, I should go and explore the other two Mysterious Realms. But I do have to find the corresponding cultivation sites first. That will give me the confidence to explore them in real life. If I weren’t that familiar with the Longtai Mountain, I could have barely kept my life when I entered those dragon scale lands with beast kings,” Su Ping said to himself.

He had finished his exploration and it was time for him to leave.

But before he did, he had to go to the dragon bones to be eligible for the dragon king's legacy.

When all the dragon scale lands were opened up and the process for inheriting the legacy was initiated, he could come back to the Longtai Mountain to receive the legacy!

Su Ping looked forward to seeing those treasures left behind by a dragon that was more powerful than a beast king.

Su Ping went to the dragon monument.

The pressure was still great outside on the stairs but was weaker than the inside.

Many teams were gathered there. They had come out from the Mysterious Realm to have a rest. Some battle pet warriors were not that powerful. They had not made the trip to visit the dragon scale lands, but to climb the dragon bones to test their spirit and courage.

Chapter 206 Speedy Ascension

Several groups were waiting in an orderly line in front of the tower entrance; all of them wished to test their strength through this ancient trial. It was a pretty good place to hone their spirits and endurance because that lingering soul of an elder dragon was a perfect training target.

They still needed to be cautious though, because the fragment of a dragon soul could still hurt or even kill them if their visit was untimely.

"Hey look. Someone reached the fourth level." A man pointed to the 4th section of the tower which was glowing at the moment.

"He's pretty good. An eighth-rank battle pet master or above, I reckon?"

Being an eighth-rank battle pet warrior was already impressive in this mysterious realm. Back in the base city, they were either leaders of prominent settler teams, or influential figures respected by many.

Unamused, Su Ping glanced at the glowing tower and found a spot at the very end of the line. He wanted to enjoy some peace while waiting, though the chattering crowds wouldn't let him since most of them had gone there with many friends or teammates tagging along, all of them talking excitedly about all the fame and glory they could attain by leaving their names on the Pioneer's Ranking list.

The conversations only grew louder and louder when somebody successfully reached the fourth level, because that was a rare occurrence.

Soon enough, more people began piling up behind him.

"Wait... Mister Su? Is that you?"

Su Ping turned around after hearing the voice, but only saw a person he didn't recognize.

"You are...?"

He didn't believe any of the students who usually visited his shop were qualified to be there. Though there might be exceptions.

The man chuckled embarrassingly. "I'm Gu Beichen, Mister Su. I used to buy stuff from you. I even placed my Fantasy Beast under your care once. That rings a bell?"

Su Ping did remember something like that. It was when his shop had yet to become widely-known among people. Gu Beichen seemed to be a settler who had purchased some pet food from his shop back then.

"Oh, I know you. Heh heh."

"*sigh* Guess this happens when you have too many customers to take care of, eh?"

In the past, Gu Beichen had felt bothered by the insane price Su Ping asked of him for training his Fantasy Beast. But he changed his mind later when he summoned the pet during a barren area expedition; he realized that the unbelievable growth of his pet was completely worth 100,000 astral coins.

Unfortunately, he had been stuck in his mission so he couldn't visit Su Ping for more services. He had always planned to do this as soon as he had time. It was completely unexpected to run into Su Ping in this place.

"Are you also here to test your mettle?" Gu Beichen checked Su Ping from head to toe without detecting any noticeable astral power. In his view, someone so young might have reached the fifth rank, which was already remarkable.

Su Ping nodded slightly in return.

Gu Beichen looked behind Su Ping and showed a strange look. "Did you come alone, Mister Su?"

"Um-hmm."

"Whaaat? You're not-"

This was a risky thing to do even if someone didn't plan to enter the uncharted sectors. A lone traveler was often prey to muggers and murderers when walking in areas without proper surveillance. Even the titled battle pet warriors stationed there couldn't keep an eye on all spots at all times.

"You um, do you need me to accompany you on your way back?" said Gu Beichen. He wouldn't bother with such matters normally, though he decided to make an exception since Su Ping had indeed helped him once.

Su Ping declined the offer. As far as he could see, Gu Beichen was probably there to spend some time training, while he would leave as soon as he cleared the tower challenge. Their schedules wouldn't allow it.

Gu Beichen looked a bit frustrated after his generous offer was turned down. He was currently a sixth-rank battle pet warrior who needed to reach the next rank to enter the Elite Pet Warrior League. He knew he could make it soon because he was strong enough to fight against most upper seventh-rank monsters already. He was confident that he could protect a vulnerable shopkeeper from most trouble.

He wanted to ask again, but held back on second thought; he had never been a man of many words. Since Su Ping didn't need him, he would gladly avoid the extra work.

“Fair enough. Take care.”

Su Ping nodded slightly in return.

Both of them waited patiently without talking again.

A young lady in front of Su Ping was hopping happily while talking to an old man beside her. “Hey grandpa, I’ll reach the fifth floor this time! If that Tang Ruyan could do it at such an age, I can do it too!”

The old man smiled gently. “Of course you can, dear.”

Su Ping thought about the woman still trapped in his scroll and wondered how to deal with her later. He had to find a way to force her to talk.

The queue shortened at a steady pace. Soon, the girl in front of him had her turn.

The second section of the tower was lit up after only a minute had passed. The girl was apparently very experienced in getting past the illusion on the first floor.

The trick to succeed there was not strength, but courage. Even titled battle pet warriors would get too scared to continue if they didn’t know that the dragon lurking inside was only an illusion.

A moment later, the third section shone brightly.

Gu Beichan looked up with a frown. He could see that the lady was only 20 or perhaps younger, while he had already hit 25. Seeing such a young woman making progress so quickly stressed him out.

Soon, the fourth section glowed, causing several onlookers to yell out in surprise.

The miracle didn’t continue; after a long interval, the girl showed up at the base of the tower with sadness written all over her face.

“It’s okay, my girl,” her grandfather quickly moved closer to comfort her, “You can always try again next year. You have plenty of time.”

The girl clenched her teeth. “I—I’ll queue up and try again. I can make it to the fifth floor. I almost had it!”

The old man carefully checked whether she was hurt in any way.

11*Sigh* All right. But don’t push yourself too hard, OK?”

“I won’t, grandpa.”

Given that he wasn’t going to challenge the tower due to his old age, he turned around and was about to head to the end of the line. He stopped for a moment when he saw another young man just behind his granddaughter; he seemed to be of a similar age.

“Oh, pardon me, my friend. I’m not a challenger. You may go ahead.”

Su Ping came back from his inner musings and realized it was already his turn.

The old man shook his head as he believed that this young man was too easily distracted.

“Are you sure you’re ready, young’un? This is no child’s play. Going in there unprepared is too dangerous.” Su Ping looked at the old man. “Ready? Oh, well, yeah, I’m totally ready.”

“You—I mean... All right. Take care of yourself.” The old man moved aside as he was not interested in being too considerate to a stranger.

“Keep your eyes peeled in there, Mister Su!” Gu Beichen reminded him.

“Sure. You be careful too. The challenges are pretty harsh.”

Well you don’t have to tell me about that! Gu Beichen thought with an irritated look. Is he seriously going into the tower like a clueless sightseer??

Su Ping answered him by entering the entrance without looking back. “That man looks pretty young, doesn’t he?” the girl commented.

“Sure does.” The old man nodded. “He must have earned a ticket here through his connections. But compared to you, he’s clearly unprepared for this.”

The girl didn’t look interested. She was used to running into “unprepared guys” during her studies.

“Quick, let’s go to the end of the line and start over, grandpa.”

“Sure.”

They walked along the line, but were soon stopped by several yelling people around them.

Confused, the girl turned around and saw the fourth section of the bone tower shining in yellow.

“He—how??”

Chapter 207 Rising Wonder

Similarly, the old man also gazed at the tower with a slack jaw.

“Did that young man reach the fourth floor in three minutes?? Did he reach that place unimpeded??”

He felt bad since a mindless young man had achieved the same feat as her precious granddaughter in such a short time. But he didn’t get to go over that thought for too long when the fifth section of the tower suddenly began to flash.

“He—he cleared the fourth level already!” The girl almost stared her eyes out at the unbelievable sight. “How did he do something so fast while I couldn’t?? There’s no way he can just waltz all the way through the fourth floor like it was nothing!”

Just in front of the tower entrance, Gu Beichen was also trying his best to let reality sink in. His “best score” had been to reach the third level so far. He knew he could get to the next level if he was really desperate about it. And yet... The “weak shopkeeper” had surpassed him by a large margin! The others waiting began discussing loudly once again. It was very rare to see any challenger go this far because reaching the fifth level required for a warrior to be at the upper eighth rank or higher. An alternative would be for someone slightly below that requirement to enter with a high-rank pet. Though this was not an ideal way of taking the challenge because using a pet stronger than oneself might bring about

undesired consequences. “When was the last time you saw the fifth floor activate?” an observer asked his partner. “Several days ago? I wonder which rich kid of a big clan is in there. Or maybe it’s just a bored old geezer.”

“I’d say the former. I don’t think old men can get much by coming here.” “Well, you’re right. They say that the challenge in the higher floors changes depending on your strength and experience. Heck, even Venerable the Blade can’t get to the ninth floor. The enemies prepared for him must be crazily strong.”

Most people didn’t know who was inside the tower because they hadn’t been paying attention to every challenger. But those who did know Su Ping had been duly shocked. Knowing Su Ping’s age, they believed that Su Ping would easily enter the top 3 of the Pioneer Ranking list. And they weren’t even taking his scary speed into account.

The young girl felt her cheeks burn in embarrassment when someone she deemed “clueless” had actually performed better than her.

Her grandfather knew her character all too well so he quickly tried to comfort her, but stopped short when he noticed people exclaiming in awe once again.

“The—the sixth level! He reached the sixth level!”

“But how come?? Is he a ninth-rank warrior? Is that even possible when he’s so young?”

The girl felt as if she had been doused with something cold from head to toe. Moments before, she was still ambitious and eager to work harder. But that mindset had turned into pure hopelessness by then.

The gap was too wide. There was no way she could reach that level any time soon. Not to mention that her rival looked just as young as herself...

Even Tang Ruyan—the well-known genius who had received all the funneled resources of her big clan—was unable to reach the sixth level at the age of 20!

“This is not real, this is not real...” Gu Beichen muttered to himself. “It’s my fu*king dream to reach that level, yet Mister Su did it almost instantly. No, something must be wrong. Maybe this dragon tower is fake. Maybe...”

The crowd was talking louder and louder, until they began cheering at the top of their lungs; more people learned that a young man had somehow dashed through the fifth floor without stopping. The ruckus escalated to an impossible degree, enough to alarm several mighty warriors who were present to keep order.

Venerable the Blade opened his eyes and glanced down at the glowing tower.

“Another young genius... But it’s not so commendable since many young members of famous clans have already succeeded. Heh, I remember the time when a man was able to reach the seventh floor.”

He closed his eyes again as he decided not to think about the matter too much. Being a titled warrior, he had seen his fair share of brilliant members of the young generation. Talent wasn’t enough to reach the legendary rank.

Still, he did wish to find out which clan had discovered another gifted child.

Inside the tower, Su Ping gazed at the entrance to the next level and decided to summon Little Skeleton.

According to his previous experiences, the enemies at the seventh level and beyond would be highly relevant to his own astral power level, which was... actually a good thing, because this sometimes presented him with enemies weaker than before.

This was all because he was still a fifth-rank battle pet warrior as far as his astral power level was concerned. At such a level, the tower would send eighth-rank opponents at him, at best.

“*sigh* Here goes nothing. The faster I finish this thing, the earlier I can go home.” With the help of his pets, the fight on the seventh floor was concluded fairly quickly. Clearing the seventh floor that fast was like dropping a bomb among the crowd still waiting outside. All those who didn’t care who was the current challenger a second before began asking for answers.

It wasn’t a big deal if an old veteran was doing this. But it was a completely different matter if the challenger had room for more growth.

As for those who saw Su Ping enter the tower earlier... they had been speechless for quite some time.

The yelling down below once again pulled Venerable the Blade out of his tranquil state, as he looked toward the glowing tower, a bit surprised this time.

That was too fast even by his standards.

Similarly, several titled warriors waiting in the sky joined in, giving the tower several curious looks.

The eighth section lit up under their careful watch.

Venerable the Blade could no longer sit tight; whoever was in the tower had reached his record.

By then, the age of the challenger no longer mattered. Either old or young, the challenger had to possess a terrifying competence, enough to surpass the attacks of something several ranks stronger.

With a serious look, Venerable the Blade left his usual spot and slowly descended, while intently staring at the eighth section of the tower.

At the same time, several figures showed up behind him; they looked equally shocked by what was happening right then.

Not all of them had reached the eighth floor during their challenges. They had realized that the challenger might be stronger than them, or at least had the potential of reaching that level in the future.

“Who’s this? Some old hermit who wants to play a game under our noses?”

“Nah. I know every geezer who lives in this subcontinent. If any of them showed up, I’d know.”

“I’ll just ask around later. Somebody must have seen who went in there.”

On the ground, people were too amazed to speak at this point, because the champion of the Pioneer’s Ranking list had only reached the sixth rank as far as they remembered. Never in their lives did they expect someone to beat not one but two levels beyond that.

Still, it was not the end of the wonder yet. The tip of the tower began to shine like a beacon.

Chapter 208 Alarming News

The entire waiting area fell deathly quiet as people silently gawked at the most miraculous sight they had ever seen in their whole lives.

Someone reached the ninth level, the end of the dragon tower!

The owners of the “best record” known by most people were the young masters of several famous families across the continent such as Tang Ruyan, who stopped at the sixth level. Nobody knew what the final level looked like, though they were pretty sure that it had to be insanely harder compared to the sixth.

The common folks on the ground were not the only ones stunned. In the sky, the veteran pet warriors including Venerable the Blade were also dumbstruck.

In fact, they knew better than others that beating the top floor of the tower was an impossible task. If the challenger was a titled warrior like them, it would mean that the final enemy waiting at the end was a Beast King or even something above—the king of Beast Kings.

Defeating the king of Beast Kings? It was a feat unheard of in all of human history.

Unlike common humans and Astral Pets who were categorized from the first rank till the ninth, the “king of kings” no longer needed such redundant labels because it was undeniably deadlier than the strongest Beast Kings. Even the best human warriors like Venerable the Blade could only escape while praying for forgiveness, should they actually run into a king of kings.

Furthermore, the titled warriors watching over the tower happened to know a fact which was usually kept as a secret, preventing it from becoming common knowledge. This tower was not only a training ground for testing people’s various capabilities, but also a trial site for selecting qualified winners, who would receive a powerful legacy passed down in this Mysterious Realm.

“We need to find out who’s in there! Now!”

“It can’t be another titled warrior like us. Even the best titled warrior in this country cannot slay a Beast King without help. Not to mention that this ancient dragon soul is not your average Beast King.”

“Then it must be a youngster! What should we do, Venerable? Should we tell Lord Gen about this?”

“His daughter cleared the eighth level last time, right? And he asked us not to tell anyone. But here we are, somebody openly reached the final level when everyone’s looking! Don’t tell me he’s going to acquire the legacy as well. How do we explain this to Lord Gen then??”

“Confound it! Which family sent this one?”

The true purpose of the event wasn’t to generously hand out free items to treasure hunters, but to lure free workers to explore the unknown sectors, which was mandatory if they wanted to go for the final trial, after which the true legacy held in this Mysterious Realm would be revealed.

This was why all these titled warriors who knew the secret plan felt worried when they saw that someone had already reached the final level of the tower when the sectors had not been fully cleared

out. The knowledge of the final legacy was mostly a rumor. They weren't sure if beating the tower challenge right then would impede their plan or not.

Venerable the Blade gazed at the shining tower for a bit longer, before he took out a device from his pocket.

"Lord Gen?"

"Ah, is something the matter, Venerable, my friend?" The gentle voice of an old man came from the speaker.

"... There's a man who just entered the final floor of the dragon tower, sir. Do you wish to come and take a look?"

There was a brief silence.

The old man's voice turned harsh. "Guard the entrance. I'll be there soon."

"Of course, sir."

Beep.

The other titled warriors flinched a bit upon sensing the killing intent carried by the merciless voice.

Then they all wondered what would happen to this unlucky challenger at this rate. Death, probably, because the legacy they were looking for had been strictly reserved by a powerful legendary battle pet warrior. No one in this country could live through the rage of a legendary warrior. Not even the masters of big families.

There were only two legendary warriors in the entire subcontinent, while Lord Gen was one of them. With that kind of strength, Lord Gen didn't need to do much to hold a dominating spot over people from all walks of life. And he absolutely would not allow a random nobody to take what was rightfully his.

"Sigh... A young man who reached the final floor. I must say this is new to me."

"This is downright scary, I say! If I remembered correctly, Lord Gen's daughter was born to be a high-rank battle pet warrior, wasn't she? With Lord Gen's careful teaching, she has all the perfect resources she can hope for. Even so, she was stopped at the eighth floor. Who would have thought that someone would outdo her?" "A monster. It must be..."

"Heh. Monster or not, he's not going to live another day since he pissed off Lord Gen."

"Which clan did he come from? And didn't they tell him not to go so far? This is stupid..."

They more or less felt bad, knowing that such a promising young man, who was very likely to become another legendary warrior, would be slain early in his life.

Venerable the Blade didn't join the discussion as he was once again gazing at the tower, lost in thought.

Unlike the previous floors which were mostly empty, the final floor of the tower was an ancient battlefield where piles of broken bodies and bones of monsters were all over the place.

As usual, Su Ping stayed behind the hard scales of the Purple Python, while ordering his other three pets to confront the lingering soul of an elder dragon, who seemed to be at the upper ninth-rank.

The fight was rather difficult; this ancient soul knew many strange yet effective battle techniques. Though everything was still within Su Ping's evaluation since he had challenged it many times before.

"Hound, lock it up with Dark Chain!" "Little Skeleton, use Skeleton King's Roar!"

"Inferno Dragon, dig a hole under it!"

Following his previous experiences, Su Ping successfully maintained the upper hand. He had battled and died to the dragon soul so many times that he could predict its next move by looking at its movements, before he told his pets to react accordingly.

It took him less than ten minutes to finish the fight.

Since the "last boss" of the tower was not any different from the one he had met in the virtual heritage ground, he was then 100% sure that this Mysterious Realm was entirely identical to the dragon king's heritage ground.

"Heh. Thanks, system. I wouldn't have gone this far without you."

He thought the battle had ended when the dragon soul was dissipating. But instead of vanishing completely, it suddenly began to glow brighter.

Under his surprised gaze, the soul changed form and became a slim-bodied, five-clawed golden dragon.

While he was still trying to identify what was going on in the blinding light, the new enemy charged at him.

Chapter 209 Mark of Qualification

"Sh*t,"

The golden dragon was too fast for him to evade. The only thing he could do in time was putting his astral shield up. The golden figure went through the shield and hit his forehead.

Bang!

Su Ping felt the whole world spinning around him for a brief but painful moment. When he could think clearly again, he felt something strangely hot moving along his head as if he were bleeding.

He put a hand on his forehead and sensed a small bump on his skin.

What the heck?? This never happened inside the virtual dragon tower!

The hot feeling suddenly returned, not on his skin, but directly inside his brain this time.

He saw images flashing past his view. Images of an ancient and barren land assaulted by constant lightning bolts and hurricanes, as if some kind of world-ending apocalypse had arrived.

A large, five-clawed golden dragon emerged from the distance and flew into the thunderclouds above.

Su Ping saw the towering silhouette of something hidden among the clouds, from where another blade-like lightning bolt came down and shattered the dragon's scaled body.

For a moment, the image became too bright for him to watch.

When he was able to open his eyes, he was looking at the familiar "battlefield" inside the dragon tower again.

Another message magically crossed his mind, allowing him to understand what just happened. What he had just seen was the last moment of the ancient dragon king before it was slain. Also, it wasn't a "bump" on his forehead caused by injuries, but the "mark of qualification" he had received by defeating the final enemy in the tower.

He was then allowed to go for the dragon's king's heritage, the final legacy. He had to wait until all the "seals" inside the different sectors were lifted by explorers, by which time those who possessed the marks would be summoned into the final trial site.

Furthermore, the mark of qualification had many interesting effects by itself.

First of all, he could use the mark to directly enter this Mysterious Realm even if the entrance was closed.

Secondly, the mark allowed him to summon the dragon soul to assist him in a fight during dangerous situations. It seemed this ancient dragon king had generously given him this privilege to protect him, so it didn't lose a "rare successor" who could inherit its gift. The mark could also help him instantly travel to a selected sector while also telling him whether the "seal" in the sector had been lifted or not.

And he was very surprised when he read the general situation regarding the sectors. Apparently, 95 sectors had already been cleared out, not 57, like people used to tell him. This meant the final heritage trial would come up once the remaining 14 sectors were explored.

"Damn it. So this is why many treasures were already taken. 95 sectors... people can't possibly finish so many of them in only a few days. Something fishy is going. Someone's trying to hide the true progress from people."

But why?

"Maybe the managers of this place already learned about the legacy? They let people in so they can unlock the sectors faster, which in turn..."

"Wait, if this is true, then the 'best record of the tower challenge must be fake as well. Perhaps someone has already reached the final floor."

He did know about the dragon king's heritage ground, but he had yet to learn about the final trial. He needed information.

He considered for a moment, then he took out the magic scroll. Inside, he saw Tang Ruyan sitting idly beside the Anima Fruit Tree with a bored look, instead of looking for a way out.

"What do you know about the dragon tower?" Su Ping asked by sending his voice inside, which sounded like booming thunders in Tang Ruyan's perspective.

Tang Ruyan was glad that she finally had a chance to negotiate with her captor. She had been trying to break out of the strange prison without any success. Talking to Su Ping meant opening up new options.

She wondered why Su Ping wanted to know about the dragon tower. But on second thought, she decided not to ask such a silly question when this man was strong enough to murder titled warriors.

“Ahem.” She stood up and put up an unfriendly look while looking at Su Ping’s face, which appeared as a giant image above her. “I’ll tell you once you let me out. Let’s make a deal: free me, and I’ll go away and forget all about what happened. You’ll also take this stupid tree as is. Or else—”

“Answer my question. You’re in no place to bargain with me.”

“You-hmph! You know what? You can just kill me then!” Tang Ruyan threatened by putting a hand on the tree nearby. “I’m not afraid of death! But you’ll never see your precious tree again!”.

Su Ping chose to take a step back. “Fine. I’ll consider sending you away, on the condition that I learn what I need about the dragon tower.”

Tang Ruyan flashed a grin as her plan worked out.

“Let’s see...” she spoke without moving away from the tree. “I don’t know much. Mind that I can’t teach you how to climb higher. If you don’t know already, I only reached the sixth floor last time. What’s beyond that point is... well, it’s beyond me.”

“Do you know who has gone the farthest by now? Which floor have they reached?”

Tang Ruyan gave him a strange look. “What, you want to leave your name in the Pioneer’s Ranking too? I think the current champion is Ye Tianming from the Ye Family in Longjiang City. I heard that he’s going to go for the seventh floor but he hasn’t actually done it yet. People said that he’s been working very hard these years. He also got his hands on a rare pet or something. If you ask me, I think he’s going to reach his goal soon.”

Su Ping frowned. After he learned the “fake news” regarding the number of successfully-explored sectors, he would never trust these so-called lists and news available to the general public.

“Pioneer’s Ranking? What’s that? Is it reliable? Are you sure it has everyone’s name? Maybe someone went very far but without being recorded.”

Tang Ruyan looked displeased when Su Ping openly questioned the authenticity of the ranking list she had been struggling to be in. She knew Su Ping was good enough to become the next champion, but having her faith looked down upon still hurt.

“...It only shows young challengers, maybe. Elder battle pet warriors don’t bother writing their names on the list.”

“I see. Do you know that a heritage awaits at the end of the Mysterious Realm?”

Tang Ruyan frowned. “Heritage? What heritage?”

Su Ping sighed in disappointment.

“Tsk. Even the Tang Family is left out of the game? Figures.”

Tang Ruyan was smart enough to capture what Su Ping was implying. And when she did, she could no longer remain calm.

“There’s a heritage?? Whose heritage? Wait... can it be the ancient dragon king? But that would mean it’s something left behind by a king of beast kings! I would have never thought... Hey-hey, who told you this? Do you know what this means?? More importantly, how do we find this heritage? Don’t tell me it’s the tower—”

Su Ping lost interest since this woman clearly didn’t have anything he could use.

“Same as before, take care of the tree. One missing leaf and I’ll have your head on a plate.”

He left the scroll, leaving Tang Ruyan staring at the sky agape.

But—but he doesn’t think I’d destroy the tree for real??

She couldn’t do it. The tree was the only thing that kept her alive, and she knew it well.

“DAMN YOU DAMN YOU!!”

The woman stomped a foot in rage, but quickly stopped when she heard the tree rustling dangerously.

Su Ping put the scroll away and carefully went over what he just heard. Even though Tang Ruyan didn’t tell him much, he still learned something from the way she acted.

Firstly, even the biggest families and clans were unaware of the hidden truth, which meant the “mastermind” behind everything could be a legendary warrior, since titled warriors couldn’t possibly hide such important clues from the whole world.

The “Pioneer’s Ranking” wasn’t trustworthy since even the topmost rankers had no idea that someone had gone farther up.

Lastly, Tang Ruyan was smart but also simple-minded when she was upset. Using
o learn about the Tang Family should be easy.

Chapter 210 Return

Su Ping took out a bottle of water from his backpack and used the water’s reflection to check what his forehead looked like.

The mark was a winding dragon.

The power of the remaining dragon soul is hidden inside this mark. Thanks to it I can directly teleport back and forth to visit the Mysterious Realm at any time...

Su Ping gently caressed this mark, hoping that he could hide it. Otherwise, it would make him stand out too much; he would be like a fantasy version of Justice Bao who had a crescent moon on his forehead.

He felt how the surge of astral powers inside him was building a close connection with the mark. An idea came to mind: he tried to pull the astral powers back.

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A miraculous thing happened. As his astral powers were being pulled back, the mark on his forehead began to wiggle, and then the dragon mark sank along with the astral powers. The mark disappeared into his skin and his forehead was as clean as before.

Su Ping knew that the dragon mark was still there but it was concealed under his skin.

That will do...

Su Ping breathed in relief. Finally, the eye-catching mark would not be a problem. His only regret was that he was still too handsome for comfort...

Anyways, now that I passed the ninth dragon bone, I must have caught the attention of this backstage manipulator... he knows about the existence of the legacy and has been deliberately withholding information about how many lands have been explored.

Su Ping dragged his mind back to this dragon king's heritage ground. His eyebrows were knitted together. He thought for a bit and decided to hurry back to the base city as soon as possible.

He would be safe back in the store.

With the protection of the system, he wouldn't even be afraid of legendary battle pet warriors. The system had boasted that not even gods or demons could hurt him as long as he was within the store's range!

Compared to gods and demons, legendary battle pet warriors were nothing.

Su Ping didn't linger after having made a decision. He activated the mark and teleported out of the Mysterious Realm right

away.

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At the dragon stand, in front of the towering dragon bones...

More and more people were gathering there. When people heard that someone had reached the ninth dragon bone, those that were resting at a distance hurried back and joined the massive crowd around the dragon stand.

All of them raised their heads to gaze at the highest dragon bone.

"Who was the guy that made it all the way there? How was he able to charge tight to the ninth dragon bone?"

"Wait, are you guys telling the truth? Someone has climbed to the ninth dragon bone? I heard that the highest someone had ever climbed was the sixth one. Are you sure about what you saw?"

"How stupid can you be! There are so many of us here. It's impossible for all of us to be wrong. Besides, didn't you see it? Even Venerable the Blade is up there. Why do you think those big potatoes are on high alert if no one reached the ninth dragon bone?" "...You're probably right. Anyways, who was that guy? Which family is he from?" "Who knows. But he is definitely awesome. He is better than anyone else who has ever tried to beat this challenge!"

“Right. Even Ye Tianming, who is No.1 on the Pioneering’s Rank, has only reached the sixth dragon bone. The record was from several years ago, so I guess Ye Tianming may be able to get to the seventh or eighth dragon bone now, but there’s no way he can climb up to the ninth.

“For him, even the seventh dragon bone is difficult, let alone the ninth one. I heard that the difficulty increases drastically from the seventh dragon bone and up. Even Venerable the Blade would have to shrink back at the sight of the eighth dragon bone!”

“Hiss. This guy will be out in a moment. We are about to lay our eyes on a legendary talent!”

The onlookers were discussing heatedly. They were all looking forward to finding out who this challenger was.

Up in the air, Venerable the Blade and the other titled warriors remained silent. All of them had solemn expressions.

All of a sudden, Venerable the Blade frowned as they stared at the dragon bones. He turned over to the entrance of the Mysterious Realm. Something got his attention.

Space twisted in that direction and someone emerged in front of them, out of thin air.

Venerable the Blade lowered his head and greeted this man with respect. “Master Yuan.”

The others were taken aback. None of them noticed when Master Yuan arrived. “Master Yuan.” They hurried to bow to him.

The man who showed up was elderly, whose gray hair and beard were dancing in the air. He was wearing a simple cyan robe and he appeared to be learned and refined. “The challenger is still inside the dragon bones?”

Venerable the Blade answered, “Yes.”

The old man they called Yuan batted his eyelids. There was a trace of frigid killing intent in his eyes but he sounded extremely calm, “When did he go in? How long has he been in the ninth dragon bone?”

“I notified you as soon as he entered the ninth dragon bone. It should be half an hour now.” Venerable the Blade kept his head low.

The others could feel the killing intent radiated by the old man named Yuan. They were shivering, fearing that Yuan would take it out on them.

“He is still in there. Have you found out which family he belongs to?” the old man Yuan asked.

Venerable the Blade replied, “I just went down there and asked around. I heard that the challenger is a young man in his early twenties from the Longjiang Base City and his surname is Su. He runs a pet store. I will ask the mayor of the Longjiang Base City to provide us information about this man from their civil affairs bureau. Then we will find out which family he is from.”

The old man named Yuan squinted and crossed his hands behind his back. He simply stared at the ninth dragon bone without uttering another word.

Time moved on. Soon, two more hours had passed.

The onlookers gathered in front of the dragon bones were losing their patience. Some people's necks had gone stiff after looking up for so long.

"Was this all a joke? Were you guys serious?"

"Yes, we were. It's just this challenger... did he die in there?"

"That is possible. After all, the ninth dragon bone is dangerous. This man was probably killed instantly when he encountered something like a beast king."

"The dragon bones are not something to be messed around with. Deaths are unusual but those who come out with wounds are many. I think this man was trying to force his way in but ended up dying since he wasn't capable enough."

Since the challenger had been in there for a long time, more and more people were thinking that this guy, most likely, had failed and died.

Some onlookers gradually stepped away while feeling sorry for this man, and resumed their own businesses.

The remaining onlookers stayed there for another thirty minutes before they began to also step away. Their time in the Mysterious Realm was precious. They couldn't stay there for too long.

"I think he's probably gone," said an old man with white hair and ruddy complexion standing next to Venerable the Blade, with a gingerly approach.

The others nodded in agreement. They were thinking about the same thing. All of them were relieved at this prospect. Master Yuan would not blame them severely if this man failed the challenge. Otherwise, they would spend some days in hardship.

Venerable the Blade frowned. He stared at the ninth dragon bone and said nothing. As a matter of fact, deep down, a part of him hoped the young man would pass.

Venerable the Blade could not tell why he would have such thoughts. However, he did feel sorry to think that this guy would fail the challenge.

The killing intent in Master Yuan's eyes began to dissipate. Entering the ninth dragon bone did not mean that this person could actually pass it. It seemed that this man had most likely failed the challenge.

Master Yuan felt better. He looked away from the ninth dragon bone and said to Venerable the Blade, "This man has most likely failed. Even so, contact the Longjiang Base City. All the information about this man has to be forwarded to me before sunset. Also, tell the explorers of the Seal Legion to slow down and leave three lands sealed." Venerable the Blade immediately understood what Master Yuan was intending. "Yes." Venerable the Blade nodded.

The Seal Legion was a team organized by several forces. The Seal Legion was in charge of undoing the seals of all the lands. Otherwise, it would take years and years before all the lands could be unsealed, if they relied on explorers alone.

"Also, the Mysterious Realm will be available for another three days and will close off ahead of schedule," Master Yuan added.

Venerable the Blade was surprised. He cast a glance at Master Yuan. It came as a surprise that Master Yuan would go to such lengths. He was clearly determined to leave the legacy to his granddaughter, making the chance inaccessible for anyone else. Venerable the Blade said nothing other than yes.

The others looked at each other, smiling bitterly. Their desire to become legendary battle pet warriors grew even more intense.

The difference between titled battle pet warriors and legendary battle pet warriors was not just in the ranks themselves. They were worlds apart.

The most valuable resources on the blue planet were in the hands of the legendary battle pet warriors who were like gods overlooking the entire blue planet. A heritage ground like the Longtai Mountain was of immense value. Whoever could receive the legacy would become a legendary battle pet warrior. However, that was a chance that was not available for the masses.

The powerful ruled.

The powerful would grow even more powerful and the weak would become even weaker.

Outside the Longtai Mountain.

At an open area in the distance, the space wiggled as a man suddenly appeared.

Su Ping landed on the ground. He looked around and saw that he was on the highway outside the Mysterious Realm. Looking back, he could still see the towering mountain that led to the Mysterious Realm.

Many cars were parked there.

Su Ping only realized at the moment that he had reached this place on Ye Chenshan's car. He would have to rely on himself to make the trip back.

He thought about stealing one of the parked cars but then gave up on the idea.

There was satellite surveillance in the area. People would pull up the surveillance video if they found their cars missing. They probably would see how he appeared out of nowhere, which would seem strange.

Su Ping traveled along the road and found the way back to the Longjiang Base City. He walked for a while before he summoned the Dark Dragon Hound.

"You will be my means of transportation for now." Su Ping hopped onto the Dark Dragon Hounds' back, pulled its hair, and yelled "Giddy up."

The Dark Dragon Hound understood Su Ping's words. It was reluctant because of its pride as a battle pet. It wasn't a saddle horse.

However, Su Ping slapped it and the Dark Dragon Hound galloped forward, faster and faster.