

The Good 461

Chapter 461: Enemies on a Narrow Road (3)

Shen Ling had seen Shen Yanxiao in a new light just moments ago, and so he did not appreciate Shen Yue's rudeness and arrogance.

"Hmph." Shen Yue crossed his arms and looked at Shen Yanxiao with disdain.

"Jiayi had broken through to the sixth rank, and since I am here today, I shall take her to the Saint Laurent Academy's Magus Division for her enrollment," Shen Yue had a proud look on his face as he said that.

"Jiayi had broken through to the sixth rank?" Shen Ling looked at Shen Yue's proud expression in surprise. Shen Jiayi had only been at the fifth rank just several months ago, so how did she break through to the sixth rank in just a few months? Was that not too fast for her?

Shen Yue was delighted when he noticed the surprise on Shen Ling's face.

"Yes! So you shouldn't waste your time here any longer. What's there to talk to her? Why don't you follow me to the Magus Division while I take Jiayi there." Shen Yue was over the moon about his daughter's rapid progress. When he looked at his daughter, and then at that trash, there was simply no basis for comparison.

What kind of accomplishment could a herbalist achieve without any solid foundation?

"Brother Siyu, would you accompany me, please?" Shen Jiayi completely disregarded Shen Yanxiao and shyly approached Shen Siyu with a supposedly adorable appearance.

In the corner of her eyes, she stole a glance at Shen Yanxiao as she floated with a sense of pride.

"Sure. Xiaoxiao, since you're more familiar with the academy, please come along with us as well." Shen Siyu paid no heed to Shen Jiayi's maiden-in-love look, and instead, he had invited Shen Yanxiao to go with them.

Shen Yanxiao brushed her nose and thought about how none of them had wanted her to go with them.

However, their displeasure was her joy!

"Sure." Shen Yanxiao immediately agreed.

Shen Jiayu pouted and secretly scolded Shen Yanxiao a hundred thousand times over in her mind. However, since Shen Siyu was present, she could only put on a pretense of kindness.

The six of them then left the Herbalist Division as Shen Yanxiao led them toward the Magus Division.

Along the way, Shen Jiayi had blabbered like a little bird and pestered Shen Siyu without an end.

"Brother Siyu, I have already broken through to the sixth rank now. Do you think I'm well-suited as a Magus?"

"Brother Siyu, what did you specialize in? Are you also a Magus?"

Shen Jiayu chatted incessantly, but Shen Siyu did not answer any of her questions. It was apparent that he was not interested in speaking to her.

When she noticed Shen Siyu's lukewarm attitude with her, anger bubbled within Shen Jiayi. She was only 14 years old, and she had broken through to the sixth rank. Her talent was only slightly inferior to Shen Yifeng, and one could say that she was pretty good for a girl. She thought that Shen Siyu would give her a compliment or two, but he did not.

When she did not get any response from Shen Siyu, Shen Jiayi could only vent her anger on Shen Yanxiao.

"Hey, you've been in the Saint Laurent Academy for several months now. So how are you coping?" Shen Jiayi asked with a smirk. Unlike the other professions, there was no strict requirement for one to become an herbalist, and it was a path that anyone could attempt. Shen Jiayi thought that the herbalist profession was a job that waited for death.

Shen Yanxiao glared at her, but she did not say anything.

"Sister, you shouldn't make things difficult for her. She has only been here for several months and I reckon that she is still an apprentice. How well do you think she'd be? I presume things would stay the same for her for about three to five years. She's not as talented as you, Sister. I even think that you can become a Junior Magus in less than a year," Shen Jiawei sang in the same tune as his sister.

Chapter 462: Pulling Strings (1)

Shen Ling frowned at their conversation. Even if they did not like her, she was still the next family head.

However, Shen Yanxiao paid them no heed. She looked at Shen Jiayi and Shen Jiawei with a smile and remained silent as if she had heard nothing.

A short while later, they had arrived at the Magus Division's gate. Shen Jiayi was excited to finally see the division that she was about to enroll in.

Shen Yue puffed his chest in pride. Shen Jiayi's advancement had boosted his ego, so how could he not be proud?

It was already late in the afternoon, so there were not many students in the Magus Division. However, a few students went past them in a rush.

Shen Yue went up to a student with the Magus Division's badge and asked with a smile, "May I know where is your headmaster's office?"

The student stared at the lavish Shen Yue and furrowed his eyebrows before he pointed to a direction in annoyance.

The arrogant Shen Yue took the lead and walked in front of the rest of the party.

That student was somewhat speechless. Shen Yue had an irritating expression on his face, and just as the student was about to cuss him discreetly, he caught a glimpse of someone familiar in that group.

“Isn’t that Shen Jue?” Shen Jue had a good relationship with Qi Xia, and everyone in the division knew about their friendship. The student felt even gloomier. Why did that man ask for directions when he had Shen Jue with them?

When they arrived at the division head’s office, Shen Yue tidied his attire and knocked on the door.

“Please come in.” A somewhat aged voice sounded from behind the door.

Then Shen Yue pushed the door open and entered the room.

Inside the spacious office, an old man with a white beard sat behind a table.

“You must be the Magus Division’s head, it’s a pleasure to meet you. I am Shen Yue from the Vermilion Bird family and this is my daughter, Shen Jiayi. She had been in the Magic Division, and she had just broken through to the sixth rank not too long ago. She had passed the Magus Division’s test too. I have brought her here for her enrollment.” Even while Shen Yue said all that with a smile, he did not forget to mention his identity.

The headmaster glanced at Shen Yue before he turned his attention toward Shen Jiayi.

“Are you Shen Jiayi? You must be very talented to have broken through to the sixth rank at the age of fourteen,” the division’s head said with a smile.

When Shen Jiayi heard his compliments, she immediately smiled. Then she acted like a good student and stood forward to greet him, “Nice to meet you, headmaster!”

The headmaster smiled and nodded at her.

The Saint Laurent Academy only enrolled students twice a year. Still, students from their affiliated Magic and Battle Aura Division were an exception as they could enter the respective divisions at any time when they were ready.

“I have gone through your particulars. However, as you have arrived too late, we will have to put you in the red class.”

“Red class?” Shen Jiayi asked the headmaster in doubt.

The Magus Division’s head smiled and answered, “In the academy, all the levels in a single division are divided into seven classes, and they are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and purple. The red class has the lowest rank, while the purple class ranked the highest. A student’s robe would also match their allocated class. For example, this student standing beside you is from the Herbalist Division, and his purple robe represented his status as a student from the purple class.”

The headmaster pointed toward Shen Yanxiao who had acted as if she was a bystander while she was with them.

His casual mention of Shen Yanxiao had caused the faces of Shen Yue and his children to ashen almost immediately.

The trio looked at Shen Yanxiao in disbelief as they had not noticed the color of her robe.

Chapter 463: Pulling Strings (2)

They did not pay any attention to her clothing; they only thought it looked dim and dirty. They never thought that the uniform was for the purple class!

Shen Yanxiao belonged to the top class? What kind of a joke was that?

“Headmaster, may I know the requirements for the purple class?” Shen Yue’s lips twitched. He would never believe that the idiot had any skills, and Shen Feng must have arranged for her to be in the top class.

With that conjecture in mind, Shen Yue tried to hint at the division’s head to send his daughter to the purple class.

Unfortunately, the headmaster did not catch that.

“Any student can challenge another student from a better class to a challenge. If you could win it, then you can take their place in that class.”

Shen Yue continued, “A challenge? But Jiayi just broke through to the sixth rank, and she’s also a girl. How is that appropriate? Shen Jiayi is very talented and my father, the head of the Vermillion Bird family, had always loved this child. I’d be very grateful if you can do this favor for us.”

The division’s head smile immediately tensed after he heard Shen Yue’s words.

“There had never been any questions about the rules at the Saint Laurent Academy, nor do we allow any nepotism here. Please do not repeat your words today. As for your daughter, her future achievements would depend on her skills. We do not allow shortcuts here.”

Shen Yue’s face darkened at the headmaster’s candidness.

He did not understand what had happened. How could an idiot like Shen Yanxiao attend the purple class while his daughter had to make her way up from the red class?

Was it easier to bribe the Herbalist Division’s head?

In any case, since the headmaster had already stated his stance, Shen Yue did not dare to say anything else.

The headmaster’s impression of Shen Yue took a dive when he hinted at shortcuts.

“Alright, these are the materials for your daughter’s admission. Please take them and have a look at them later. I shall arrange for someone to take Shen Jiayi to the dormitories shortly.” It was apparent that the headmaster was annoyed. He had never encountered anyone who would dare to take shortcuts in the academy. The Vermillion Bird family? They’re simply too unreasonable!

Despite the ugly expression on Shen Yue’s expression, he could only agree to it.

Shen Yanxiao secretly laughed as she stood at the side. It looked like Shen Yue was still as brainless as before; he even dared to bribe people from the academy. Everyone knew that the teachers there were as unyielding as a rock. They advocated for one’s talent and strength, and it was their lifelong pursuit to discover potential students. As for a bribe, was that something that they could eat?

Shen Yanxiao’s mood lifted when she saw Shen Yue’s gloomy appearance.

Shen Jiayi stood obediently at the side as she did not dare to make any mistakes in front of the headmaster. However, she had the same thoughts as her father; how did Shen Yanxiao ended in the purple class?

Suddenly, there was a knock on the headmaster's door.

A purple-robed Qi Xia walked in with a lazy and comfortable smile on his handsome face. Even his movements had an air of nobility, like a cat with imperial blood.

The moment Shen Jiayi saw Qi Xia, her eyes nearly popped out, and her maiden's heart pounded wildly.

Where did that handsome youth come from? His good looks were comparable to Shen Siyu!

If Shen Siyu was a gentle and flawless jade, then the beautiful young man in front of her was a dazzling sapphire.

Chapter 464: Pulling Strings (3)

"Qi Xia, perfect timing. We have a new student with us. Please show her to the first-year's dormitory." As soon as the Magus Division's head saw his star student, a smile blossomed on his face.

Qi Xia was there to deliver something, so he did not expect to see that many people in the room. His eyes glimmered when he saw the petite figure amongst the crowd.

"Sure." Qi Xia accepted the task with another smile.

Shen Jiayi could not hold herself back. She hurried toward Qi Xia. She was in such a rush that it was a miracle that she remembered how to behave as a fair maiden. She took small steps and twisted her waist as she sauntered toward Qi Xia. It was as if an engine powered her movements.

"Senior Qi, it is nice to meet you. I am Shen Jiayi. From today onward, I will be a student in the Magus Division. I'd appreciate your kind help in the future." Shen Jiayi spoke in her sweetest voice as she wanted to make a good impression.

Qi Xia was startled for a brief moment before he glanced at Shen Jiayi, who looked as if she had dancing hearts in her eyes. Then he shifted his attention to Shen Yanxiao, who hid behind a young mind. No one could tell what was on Qi Xia's mind.

"Nice to meet you."

"Senior Qi, I have just reached the sixth rank. I still don't know much about being a Magus. May I ask for your help if I were to encounter any problems in the future?" Shen Jiayi was utterly possessed by the romantic thoughts that she had for her senior. She continued to blink and make eyes at Qi Xia.

Qi Xia smiled at her, but he offered no reply.

"Qi Xia—that name sounds familiar. Is he from the Qilin Family?" Shen Yue had a more acute perspective. It only took him a moment before he guessed Qi Xia's identity.

He was the third young master of the Qiling family, and the public also knew him as the Qilin's next Family Head. Shen Yue hoped that his daughter would have a relationship with Qi Xia. Shen Feng had already passed the Vermilion Bird Family to Shen Yanxiao, and Shen Jiayi had always been obsessed with

Shen Siyu, so she was unlikely to get ahead. However, if they were to ally with the Qilin family, then his daughter would have a chance to be the wife of the Qilin Family's head.

Shen Yue had always engaged in fanciful dreams, and he had never stopped his daughter's obsession with boys. He dreamt about the pretty picture when his daughter would marry Qi Xia in the future.

Shen Yanxiao was stunned into speechlessness when she noticed how Shen Jiayi behaved like a child with a crush. Shen Yanxiao remembered how Shen Jiayi had clung onto Shen Siyu, and it had been 'Brother Siyu this' and 'Brother Siyu that' just moments ago. How could she transfer that obsession onto Qi Xia in the blink of an eye?

Did she not shift her love onto another person a little too quickly?

Shen Yanxia, who had zero experience in love, could not understand why those teenagers seemed to be obsessed with Shen Siyu and Qi Xia's supposedly handsome features.

It looked like Qi Xia was entrusted with an important mission. He wore the usual smile that he reserved for such a situation, and then led the group toward Shen Jiayi's dormitory.

Shen Jiayi no longer bothered Shen Siyu while they made their way there. Instead, she chatted on and on with Qi Xia.

Qi Xia's smile stayed as it was. He did not appear to be annoyed or impatient with her, so it boosted Shen Jiayi's confidence significantly.

However, Shen Jiayi did not know that Qi Xia was born with the smile of the angel Samoyed. He could always maintain that grin on his face, even if he had to face a pile of feces.

Shen Yanxiao followed them and observed, with amusement, how Shen Jiayi tried to build a relationship with Qi Xia. However, Shen Yanxiao did not give him any warning. She was eager to find out if that smiling bastard could deal with a boy-crazed silly girl.

Qi Xia completed his task when they reached the dormitory. Shen Jiayi had wanted to talk to him more, but he found an excuse for his departure. He left without any hesitation, but with a smile on his face.

Chapter 465: Two Handsome Men Singing amid the Green; A Crowd of Handsome Men Soaring into the Blue Sky (1)

Shen Yanxiao could not wait to find an excuse to leave once they sent Shen Jiayi to her dormitory. Shen Yue and his twins were not too fond of her anyway, and the feeling was mutual. Why would she stay there to induce more hate between themselves?

Shen Siyu left with Shen Yanxiao as well. He cared more about how Shen Yanxiao was doing than Shen Jiayi's enrollment.

Shen Jiayi would usually pester Shen Siyu to stay with her. However, she did not do that, perhaps it was because she had seen a new handsome face. It was the image of Qi Xia's smiling face that spun in her head. Everyone thought it was odd when she no longer bothered about Shen Siyu.

Shen Siyu and Shen Yanxiao left the Magus Division and strolled down the avenue in the Saint Laurent Academy.

“Well, it looks like she had finally made her way here. Just don’t come to the Magus Division so often. It was a good thing that you are not in the same division as her, so I don’t have to worry too much about her bullying you.” Shen Siyu was worried about Shen Yanxiao when he looked at her thin and frail frame. Shen Jiayi’s hatred toward Shen Yanxiao’s would never be diminished. He did not want to see her bully his little sister again.

Bullied? By Shen Jiayi?

Shen Yanxiao sneered discreetly. She knew that she could crush that idiotic boy-crazy worthless girl in no time at all.

“Brother Siyu, don’t worry. I can take care of myself.” How could she call herself Shen Yanxiao if she could not sort out a spoiled kid?

It would be in Shen Jiayi’s best interest to be sensible enough not to provoke Shen Yanxiao. However, if she chose not to be, Shen Yanxiao would not show her any mercy.

Shen Siyu smiled and looked up to the beautiful blue sky.

“You have grown and changed so much that I am less worried now.” After he said that, Shen Siyu took a clear and translucent crystal ball from his interspatial ring. The crystal ball was the size of a thumbnail, but it came with absolute delicacy and purity.

“You must be careful whenever I am not with you. Keep this Star Bead with you for the time being. I wanted to give this to you before you came here but I was delayed. Fortunately, I can get it to you today.” Shen Siyu placed the Star Bead in Shen Yanxiao’s small hand with a smile.

Shen Yanxiao looked at the crystal-clear Star Bead in her palm. She could sense the warmth that flowed into her body.

“What is this Star Bead for?” Shen Yanxiao could tell that the Star Bead was not a simple item, and it must have been a precious treasure.

Shen Siyu answered, “It’s nothing special. However, if you are in any kind of danger, you can just crush it with your hand and it may just serve you well.” It was an ambiguous reply and it filled Shen Yanxiao with doubts.

“Thank you, Brother Siyu.” Shen Yanxiao did not press him with more questions, and she accepted the gift with a broad smile. Shen Siyu would never mean her any harm.

Shen Siyu patted Shen Yanxiao on her head. “You’d never have to thank me for anything,” he gently said. A trace of guilt flashed past his gentle and warm eyes. However, it had disappeared just as quickly before anyone could detect it.

While they talked, a lazy voice suddenly interrupted them.

“Shen Jue, are you not going to introduce us?” Qi Xia appeared in the blink of an eye. He stood under a tree not far from them. He was leaning against the tree trunk with his arms folded across his chest. Bright rays of sunshine reflected onto his body from the gaps amongst the leaves and it created a surreal view.

Shen Yanxiao was stunned for a moment. Did that person not snuck away with the excuse that his mentor had asked for him? Did he not have some errands to run during that short period?

“My name is Shen Siyu. You must be the third young master from the Qilin family; I have heard so much about you.” A hint of smile blossomed on Shen Siyu’s gentle face, and it was as delightful as the spring breeze.

Chapter 466: Two Handsome Men Singing amid the Green; A Crowd of Handsome Men Soaring into the Blue Sky (2)

Two breathtakingly handsome young men faced each other with only meters apart.

Shen Yanxiao realized that her presence there was quite unnecessary. Why did she feel as if those two men were like a feast to the eyes? She touched her dull disguise and thought about how her existence was a detriment to harmony and beauty.

“Shen Siyu? I have looked forward to meeting you.” Qi Xia stepped toward the other man slowly. He looked so pleasant as his crescent-moon shaped eyes glinted with a smile.

“You flatter me. Everyone knows that the third young master of the Qilin Family is second to none when it comes to talent in learning magic. You are also very well-versed in business skills. I have admired your reputation for a while now,” Shen Siyu’s smile lingered as he replied gently.

Qi Xia glanced at Shen Yanxiao casually as she stood at the side with a complicated expression on her face. Then he sifted his attention back onto Shen Siyu.

“You are too kind. And you, Brother Shen, are the best amongst the young members in the Vermilion Bird family.”

Shen Yanxiao rolled her eyes as the two men continued to exchange praises and compliments.

Could they be more hypocritical?

The Vermilion Bird family and the Qilin family had never been on good terms. Did they need to butter each other like that?

“Brother Shen, it looks like this is a rare visit from you to the Saint Laurent Academy. Why don’t I host a reception in your honor?” Qi Xia asked with a smile.

“Then, I shall gladly oblige.” Shen Siyu did not refuse his offer.

Shen Yanxiao had the feeling that the two of them were trying to establish some discreet eye contact that she did not comprehend. Otherwise, why were they so civil toward each other, and even hold each other’s arms as they galloped away to have a good time?

Did the heads of their families know that they were in such a great relationship?

Besides, Shen Yanxiao could feel it in her bones that Qi Xia’s so-called reception would very likely be...

Shen Yanxiao wiped her imaginary tears when the three of them found themselves in front of the underground casino’s entrance.

She hoped that Mentor Xie Ling could forgive her! She did not think that she would be able to make it to the Archers Division that day, again!

"A casino?" Shen Siyu looked at the dense crowd in the underground casino with surprise.

"I wonder if Brother Shen would be interested in a game or two. We have many interesting ways to gamble here. Other than gold coins, we also accept anything of value here." Qi Xia held a white jade bone fan in his hand and waved it sluggishly.

Shen Siyu cast a brief glance at Shen Yanxiao. Since she did not object to their presence there, he nodded and accepted Qi Xia's invitation.

Shen Xianyao was dumbstruck when she realized that the profiteering merchant had tricked her kind and honest brother to that foul place.

Shen Siyu was a refined and gentle soul. No matter how one tried, one could not picture him as someone who would go to such places.

Did that bastard, Qi Xia, want to go after her family's money?

That guy was a profiteering merchant, indeed. He could not even refuse to gain some money from his partner's family.

However, in the next hour, Shen Yanxiao could finally witness what it meant to turn something terrible and rotten into rare and ethereal!

A small mountain of various priceless treasures had piled up in front of Shen Siyu. Shen Yanxiao could hardly breathe as she found the scene quite unbelievable!

She was too shocked to see a gentle and good-mannered young man at a stinking casino enjoying his victory at the gambling table.

It was so hard to accept that Shen Yanxiao did not know how she felt about it.

Brother, why did you not tell me that you are a god of gamblers?

Please show some mercy as your silly and adorable little sister had invested her share into the casino as well!

Qi Xia was not surprised by Shen Siyu's winnings. With a faint smile on his face, he draped his arm across Shen Yanxiao's shoulder and shielded his lips as he whispered, "There is more to your brother than meets the eye."

Chapter 467: Two Handsome Men Singing amid the Willows Green; A Crowd of Handsome Men Fly into the Blue Sky (3)

Shen Yanxiao glanced at her brother through the corner of her eyes but remained silent.

Shen Siyu had enjoyed a smooth ride to victory and harvested fruitful results.

Not long after that, Yang Xi and Yan Yu also arrived at the casino's lounge. The first thing that they noticed as they stepped into the room was the massive pile of spoils that Shen Siyu had won.

“This is Yan Yu, and this is Yang Xi.” Qi Xia made the introduction lazily while remaining seated on his chair. “This is Shen Jue’s brother, Shen Siyu.”

“Nice to meet you.” The three of them greeted each other, but all of them harbored some private thoughts about their encounter that day.

Yan Yu and Yang Xi, naturally, had heard about Shen Siyu. He was the only one that they had deemed worthy, out of all the younger members in the Vermillion Bird Family. Shen Yifeng and Shen Jiayi could not even compare to him.

Shen Siyu had heard of them as well. Shen Siyu had thought it was a mere coincidence when he met the young master from the Qilin family. However, the young masters from the Azure Dragon family and the White Tiger family had presented themselves as well. From the way they conversed with Shen Yanxiao, he could tell that they were close friends. The only missing member from the equation was a representative from the Black Tortoise family.

Shen Yanxiao had been in the Saint Laurent Academy for a few months, and it seemed like she had forged a good relationship with that group of young masters. That was what Shen Siyu had thought when he saw them together.

Unfortunately, Shen Siyu did not know that the young master from Black Tortoise Family had just packed his bags and left Saint Laurent Academy. If he had known about that, he would have been stunned by his little sister’s diplomatic skills.

The five youths spent the entire afternoon in the lounge as they chatted about everything under the sun. Shen Siyu wore a warm smile as the three younger men told him about his sister’s previous exploits.

If anyone were to step into the lounge then, the beautiful display of four handsome and elegant men would blind them immediately.

Unfortunately, Shen Yanxiao was the only one unaffected by the male hormones that brimmed in that room. She listened attentively as the four men gossip and engaged in discussions about her.

People said that birds of a feather flock together. Even though Shen Siyu was a few years older than the other three young masters, they all had talents. It seemed like there was no generation gap as they conversed with each other.

One could say that the four young masters had had an enjoyable and happy afternoon.

It was dawn when Shen Siyu had to bid everyone farewell as he was expected to head home then.

“I’m sorry that you have to see this today, Brother Siyu,” Shen Yanxiao whispered to Shen Siyu. She felt guilty that the three bastards had tormented her kind and good-natured brother for an entire afternoon.

“I had a great time today. I can finally rest easy now that I know you’ve made such good friends,” Shen Siyu said with a sincere smile. He had been worried about Shen Yanxiao, who had been sent to the Saint Laurent Academy just as she reverted to her normal self. He was concerned as he did not know if she could build a relationship with any of the students there. However, he could tell that his sister had done well, better than he expected, too.

“Brother Shen, do come and visit us when you are free!” Qi Xia leaned against the door frame lazily as he looked at Shen Siyu with a grin.

“Thank you for entertaining me today,” Shen Siyu replied with a smile. He did not take the money and valuables that he had won. Instead, he had left them for Shen Yanxiao.

Shen Siyu had arrived and left within the span of half a day. He appeared like a gentle, refreshing breeze that brought warmth and brisk air.

Shen Yanxiao waved her hand as she watched Shen Siyu leave the academy. She was sorry that he had to go so soon. She had been a free bird in her previous life, free from shackles and without any ties in the world. It looked like she had people that she cared about in her new life. Shen Feng, Shen Siyu, the four bastards, and the two mentors that she had found at Saint Laurent Academy had all become the bright jewel in her heart.

Chapter 468: Loss (1)

Life went on as usual. Shen Yanxiao, who had returned to a quiet life, committed herself in her lessons. The first day she reported to the Archers Division, Xie Ling had dragged her out of the classroom and gave her a dressing-down. She had been vigorously criticized due to her repeated absence from her classes.

Eventually, Xie Ling let her off when she sincerely apologized to him.

The Herbalist Division was like heaven to Shen Yanxiao ever since Shanguan Xiao and Pu Lisi had left. However, she was in a depressed mood because she had lost her good friend, Tang Nazhi, too.

It became quite clear to Shen Yanxiao that her life could never return to its previous peaceful nature.

After Shen Jiayi was admitted to the Magus Division, she had been well-behaved. However, she would also resort to extreme measures when she wanted to please someone.

Qi Xia did not show any resistance toward Shen Jiayi, and he always had a smile for her. Shen Jiayi’s confidence swelled whenever Qi Xia smiled at her. Unfortunately for her, she did not know that her expressions would invite a beating.

Whenever Shen Yanxiao got together with Qi Xia and the others, they would sometimes run into Shen Jiayi. At those times, Shen Jiayi would always glare at Shen Yanxiao discreetly, as she hoped that she could take the latter’s place.

Shen Yanxiao had already mastered the skill of ignoring any and all the glares thrown at her. Shen Jiayi’s jealousy and the hidden bitterness in her eyes could not even breach Shen Yanxiao’s defense against the stares.

She was only a vile character with no real ability to fight!

Two months zipped by, and it was only two months away from the inter-academy tournament in the Longxuan Empire. It was at that point that Shen Yanxiao had sunk into a deep depression.

She had acquired the Flame Grass and the Moling Plant. The only thing that she needed for the potion was the Skeleton Flower.

She had received a large number of demonic cores, but that amount had not been enough to satisfy a certain someone's appetite. She would have to find another way to locate the Skeleton Flower if she wanted to undo another layer of the seal before the tournament.

Otherwise, she would have to show up at the competition as someone with intermediate-level skills. If that were to happen, she would only be inviting abuse.

Shen Yanxiao had never gained a clear sense of Qi Xia and her other friends' real abilities. Yet, she was sure that they had to be, at least, at an advanced level. They were the top students of their respective divisions and were the representatives of the most elite forces at Saint Laurent Academy. She wondered if participants of the other academies could be as incredible as her friends.

If she wanted to make sure that she could secure a piece of territory at the Forsaken Land, she must try her best to collect information about the Skeleton Flower.

The Cave Wolves Mercenary Group had helped her to look for it, but that had yielded minimal effect.

It was the weekend, and as an inglorious master, Shen Yanxiao had remembered about the Vermilion Bird that she had left behind in Black City. It was a rare occasion where she had thought about the mythical beast, so she changed into Huo Xiao's attire and left for Black City.

The Black City was as lively and as noisy as per usual. The crowded streets were bustling with people, and the sound of noisy hawkers rang through her ears.

Shen Yanxiao made her way through the crowds with agility, and she would pick up information about happenings in the Black City with her ears from here and there.

However, she stopped because of something a random passer-by had said.

"The Cave Wolves Mercenary Group has suffered a tremendous loss. I wonder where they had picked up that assignment that had caused such a huge casualty. They didn't even suffer that many losses during their last mission to Mount Kuluo. Why was their sacrifice so big for this strange assignment?"

Shen Yanxiao frowned as she turned to the man who was talking to his friends.

"I think that the assignment had cost the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group greatly. I suppose they would lose their ranking as the top mercenary group in Black City."

Chapter 469: Loss (2)

The two people talked back and forth. Unaware that their words had fallen into the ears of the person nearby, the two people walked off while still engaged in their conversation.

Shen Xiaoyan was frozen on the spot, and her eyebrows furrowed tightly.

Du Lang had told her that they might be close to finding the item she had asked for. However, it had been half a month since Du Lang sent her that message, and Shen Yanxiao had not received an update since then.

She thought that it was another wild goose chase for Du Lang. However, at that moment, the conversation between those two people had disturbed her mind.

Shen Yanxiao changed her destination and hurried toward the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group's headquarters.

She did not see a single soul in sight when she reached the entrance, even though it was usually in a solemn atmosphere anyway. Even the guards by the gate were missing. The gate was also locked, which was a strange occurrence, indeed.

Shen Yanxiao stepped forward and knocked on the locked gate.

"The Cave Wolves Mercenary Group are not taking any assignments recently. Please kindly return if you are here to entrust us with a mission." She heard Evil Wolf's voice from inside the gate, but the gate remained closed.

Shen Yanxiao was sure that something strange had happened with the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group. She said in haste, "Brother Evil Wolf, it is me, Huo Xiao."

Silence followed her words. A moment later, the thick gate opened, and Evil Wolf presented himself in front of Shen Yanxiao.

The moment she saw Evil Wolf, a glint of surprise flashed in her eyes.

As an Advanced Knight, Evil Wolf had always been as hard as nails. However, as he stood in front of her, she noticed that Evil Wolf's left hand was in a thick layer of bandages, and there were new scars on his handsome face.

"Ah, it's you, Huo Xiao." Evil Wolf looked at Shen Yanxiao with embarrassment.

"Brother Evil Wolf, what happened to you?" Shen Yanxiao stared at him in confusion.

Evil Wolf heaved a sigh. "Come in, and I will tell you about it," Evil Wolf said to Shen Yanxiao.

She followed Evil Wolf into the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group's headquarters. The spacious hall was deserted, as nobody was there. Evil Wolf led her toward the back.

When Shen Yanxiao stepped into the back room, she was completely dumbstruck by what she saw there.

Dozens of Cave Wolves Mercenary Group's members sat in their chairs, each one of them had wounds of varying degrees. Some of them even had severe injuries like broken arms or legs. The faint smell of blood fumed in the air.

"Brother Evil Wolf, what happened?" Shen Yanxiao found it hard to imagine that the well-trained Cave Wolves Mercenary Group could be in that sorry state. It seemed like what she had heard was not a groundless rumor.

"Where is your leader?" Shen Yanxiao looked around but failed to find Du Lang.

Evil Wolf's expressions suggested that something was wrong. He lowered his head and clenched his right hand into a fist.

"Our leader... has not regained consciousness yet."

“Not regained consciousness yet?” Shen Yanxiao was startled. She immediately knew that something had gone wrong. She pressed Evil Wolf for more details.

However, he was not forthcoming with the details.

“Forget it. I shall take you to see our leader. As for what had happened, perhaps Magic Wolf will tell you.”

Then, Evil Wolf brought Shen Yanxiao to Du Lang’s room.

The seven wolves had all gathered around Du Lang’s bed. Their leader laid unconscious on his bed. His handsome face was ghastly pale, and his lips were colorless and dry. Things did not look that optimistic for him.

When the other five wolves saw Shen Yanxiao, she noticed that there was something unspeakable in their eyes.

None of them was in a better state than Evil Wolf, and there was a hideous wound that stretched from his left cheek to his neck.

“What happened to you? What on earth is going on here?” Shen Yanxiao asked the miserable seven wolves with a frown.

Chapter 470: Loss (3)

Evil Wolf looked at Magic Wolf and asked him to explain their predicament to Shen Yanxiao.

Magic Wolf took a deep breath before he asked, “Huo Xiao, do you remember when you asked our leader to find something for you, about two months ago?”

“Yes, I do,” Shen Yanxiao said.

“Our leader has been searching for that item. About half a month ago, he received a tip that the item was at the Graveyard of the Sun.”

Shen Yanxiao’s heart skipped a beat.

Magic Wolf continued with his explanation.

When he knew about the location of Skeleton Flower, Du Lang immediately started to collect more information about the Graveyard of the Sun. He had spent a week in preparation before he led the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group toward that place.

Everything went smoothly along the way. The Cave Wolves Mercenary Group’s members were not nervous about their mission. They were not on high alert since they knew that their target was a lesser-known plant.

Before they arrived at the Graveyard of the Sun, they reached a small village on their way there. At first, they did not overthink it. They rested for a night at the tavern in the village. However, when all the mercenaries were fast asleep, the nightmare had commenced.

The seemingly ordinary villagers went into a crazed state. They had swarmed into the mercenaries' rooms and launched multiple wild attacks on the mercenaries.

It was in the wee hours of the night, and the attacks had startled Cave Wolves Mercenary Group from their dreams. Then they found themselves under attack by a group of crazy people.

The mercenaries were in a tight siege for quite some time.

It would not be as bad if those villagers were regular people. However, many of them seemed to have been born with immense strength. One punch and they could break an adult's leg.

The massive crowd had many strong and crazy people, and they had managed to cause severe injuries to the members of the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group.

The Cave Wolves Mercenary Group had less than 100 members. However, the surprise raid had more than 1000 attackers. The group's members were also in different rooms in groups of four. About a hundred people had stormed each of their individual rooms.

Two fits would not be enough to defeat four enemy hands. The Cave Wolves Mercenary Group had been caught off guard.

Almost all of the mercenaries were injured in the raid. Three of them would never step out from that insignificant small village again. In the end, Du Lang led the six wolves and broke out from the encirclement so that the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group could evacuate safely.

However, the incident had brought irreparable losses to the Cave Wolves Mercenary Group.

Several strong villagers had attacked Du Lang while they were making their escape, and he had been in a coma since.

Magic Wolf told the story in a quiet tone. Even though he sounded calm, that look in his eyes was a strong indication that he would not accept such a result.

Shen Yanxiao was shocked as well when she heard the story. The incident that happened to the Cave Wolf Mercenary Group was just far too bizarre. As Magic Wolf had said, they noticed nothing out of place when they entered the village in the day. The villagers were quite unsophisticated and hospitable. They did not detect a single hint of danger when they were there.

However, as night fell, the beautiful dreams turned into the prelude of a nightmare.

The villagers who had been smiling and greeting them in the day had suddenly wielded knives against them. Shen Yanxiao understood how stunned and confused the mercenaries must have been.

"Brother Magic Wolf, can you tell me more details about the attack? I have a feeling that something was not right." Shen Yanxiao stroked her chin. Du Lang was a smart person. If the villagers pretended to be kind in the day, it would not have escaped Du Lang's precise judgment.

However, Du Lang had noticed nothing, which was particularly unusual.