

Divine 2151

Chapter 2151: Backbone 2

He had once been the esteemed hall master of the flourishing Undead Race, a time when meeting him would have been considered a rare privilege, let alone collaborating with him. Of course, such a collaboration depended entirely on his prevailing mood.

Standing before him was a woman whose cunning nature was evident. Her intention was clear — she aimed to manipulate him into her service.

Yet, even if he were to take a step back and frame it as a partnership, he knew all too well that it would be apparent that he was merely a means for her future plans of domination.

He would be foolish to agree to such terms.

And thus, his decision was resolute – he would not acquiesce.

Such was the mindset of the Undead Race.

Having recently awoken, he could sense the renewed vigor coursing through his being, his nearly restored power returning. He was no fool, nor was he inclined to be a pawn in the designs of others.

Observing his hesitance, Gu Chaoyan's eyes narrowed.

The Undead Race couldn't help but step back, a Derceptible apprehension of the imminent danger apparent in its actions.

“I’ve already introduced poison into your system. Even without it, you’ve inflicted harm upon numerous disciples of our esteemed Supreme Sect. Surrendering you to the sect guarantees your demise. However, should you choose to accede to my proposal, not only will I spare you, but I shall also provide you with timely elixirs for the next half-month. Moreover, you’re alone at the moment, and with my assistance, your vulnerability will be significantly diminished.”

“There’s one more aspect to consider. My grievances with the Extreme Celestial Sect are substantial, and I’m certain there exists a considerable enmity between the Undead Race and the Grand Unity Sect as well. Our objectives are aligned, which makes collaboration sensible. Once my vengeance is exacted, our alliance shall dissolve. You’ll resume your role as the hall master of the Undead Race, and I shall continue charting my own course. How does this proposition resonate with you?” Gu Chaoyan inquired, her words laden with temptation.

The Undead Race’s gaze remained locked onto the woman before it.

Though harboring resentment toward the Grand Unity Sect, immediate revenge was not its current aim.

She had an uncanny ability to align herself with his perspective, a skill that posed significant danger.

This woman’s guile was nothing short of a perilous weapon.

“Not interested, you say? Then let’s abandon this conversation. I stand to gain substantial advantages by delivering you to the sect,” Gu Chaoyan declared, her expression shifting to one of reluctance to engage further. Thus, she decided to depart alongside the Undead Race.

Taking in the unfolding scene, the Undead Race recognized the dynamics.

A chuckle escaped its lips. “Oh, but of course! A poor maiden like yourself leaves me with little choice but to concede.”

“Excellent. Join me at the Supreme Sect in two weeks’ time, and I shall furnish you with another dose of antidote,” Gu Chaoyan stated matter-of-factly.

“Agreed,” came the reluctant consent from the Undead Race. Subsequently, after a contemplative pause, it elaborated, “The disciples affiliated with your Supreme Sect have no bearing on me or our Undead Race. Lay no blame on us for that.

Gu Chaoyan dismissed his commentary without much ado.

Astute in his craftiness, the Undead Race's statements weren't necessarily factual. Xuhai City, situated within the territory of the Undead Race, ostensibly had no ties with their realm. So, then, who were the city's associations relevant

However, this was not the puzzle Gu Chaoyan aimed to unravel. Her objective was to amass sufficient power to exact vengeance upon a particular woman, and the Undead Race appeared as a potential ally in this endeavor.

Following the discourse with the Undead Race, Gu Chaoyan caught up with the disciples and accompanied them on the journey back to the sect.

During the return, Gu Chaoyan purposefully lagged behind. Rather than keeping pace with the group, she opted to trail them, allowing them to precede her in reaching the sect..

Chapter 2152: Interrogation 1

When Gu Chaoyan finally arrived, she was visibly out of breath, and her expression carried a tinge of sorrow.

She had been confident in her ability to reclaim the Undead Race, but her disheveled appearance now led her to self-reproach. Her Junior Sister had always exhibited composure, whether it was within illusion or in Xuhai City. The effort she must have put into catching up with the Undead Race was undoubtedly immense.

"Junior Sister, are you okay?" inquired the Fist Sect's senior disciple, concern etched in his voice.

"I'm fine. It's just unfortunate that the Undead Race managed to escape," Gu Chaoyan responded, her guilt evident as though she regretted her inability to apprehend the target.

"The Undead Race is cunning, and it's no surprise you weren't able to apprehend them. Remember, back in Xuhai City, your quick thinking saved us from falling into their trap. Your safety is the silver lining in this situation," reassured the Fist Sect's leading disciple.

Gu Chaoyan offered a slight nod, acknowledging his words.

She concurred with the disciple's perspective.

Likewise, the other disciples from the Supreme Sect shared the same sentiment.

Indeed..

In Xuhai City, their Junior Sister's swift reactions were pivotal in their escape. If not for her, they could have been ensnared before the elders arrived to rescue them, suffering the same fate as the fallen disciples.

These disciples...

Reflecting on the companions they had managed to bring back, a sense of sorrow washed over them.

While their lives had been spared, their current circumstances felt even more harrowing than death itself.

A somber silence descended upon the group of disciples.

Gu Chaoyan's gaze swept across them. "What about our fellow disciples?"

"Her spiritual roots were forcibly taken, and her spiritual energy drained. She's akin to a helpless child now," Elder Lin from the Weapon Refining Sect responded to Gu Chaoyan's query, his tone gravely serious. He attempted to mask his emotions, but his dissatisfaction was unmistakable.

Nearly half of the disciples brought back from Xuhai City were affiliated with the Weapon Refining Sect. These disciples had ventured to Xuhai City in pursuit of the rumored thousand-year-old black iron.

Their aim was to obtain this rare material, a thousand-year-old black iron, which could be forged into exceptionally high-quality weapons.

However, fate took an unforeseen turn...

Upon their return, the tragic state they were in was heartbreaking. The absence of the coveted Thousand-Year Darksteel cast a shadow of disappointment, particularly on Elder Lin, who had long coveted its possession.

The actions of these disciples were driven by their desire to please Elder Lin.

Gu Chaoyan offered a subtle nod, her countenance unreadable.

Not that she lacked empathy, but upon encountering the afflicted disciples, Gu Chaoyan could all but anticipate the ordeal they had suffered.

And then there was the matter of the Undead Race...

They disavowed any connection between the disciples of Xuhai City and the

Undead Race.

Gu Chaoyan remained unsure about the veracity of that statement.

However, in the present circumstances...

The forsaken existence these disciples now faced was an unfortunate reality. Fortunately, they were back within the sect's care and protection.

"Yuanjia mentioned that your quick response facilitated the disciples' escape. How did you discern the danger? They're still puzzled," Elder Lin inquired. "I didn't discern anything specific. It was more of a foreboding. Xuhai City seemed deserted when we entered, but all of a sudden, we encountered the disciples of the Supreme Sect. Their behavior was erratic, a departure from their norm.. It seemed deliberate, orchestrated,"

Chapter 2153: Inquiry 2

"Given the deliberate nature of the act, our best course of action is to depart promptly. Moreover, the discovery of the Supreme Sect disciples signifies the fulfillment of our mission. In light of these circumstances, it is prudent to expedite our departure."

“I had not anticipated my premonition becoming a reality. This act was deliberate,” Gu Chaoyan spoke earnestly. “Yet, there is a puzzling aspect. While en route here, we encountered the Moon Sect disciples who entered an illusion, and we once again came across their distinctive attire. Strangely, we encountered no further trace of the Moon Sect disciples. Could they have met their demise? If that’s the case, it’s possible that numerous disciples from various sects suffered a similar fate in Xuhai City.”

So voiced Gu Chaoyan.

The Supreme Sect had already taken this scenario into account.

Apart from the less intelligent demonic beasts, the witches, humans, demonic beast races, and the Undead Race coexisted without causing strife among themselves.

The Grand Unity Sect had previously encountered issues with the Undead Race.

At most, the Undead Race posed sporadic problems for the Grand Unity Sect.

The humans desired no conflict with the Undead Race.

Despite the Supreme Sect having incurred the wrath of the Undead Race, they were still reluctant to engage further.

As for the recent events in Xuhai City, the Supreme Sect intended to monitor closely.

Yet, engaging the Undead Race alone was not the Supreme Sect’s intention.

Hence...

Collaboration among several sects became necessary.

Gu Chaoyan’s remarks concerning the Moon Sect and other sects provided the Supreme Sect with potential avenues to explore.

If the disciples of all the sects are in jeopardy, then it stands to reason that the consideration should extend to all the sects, correct?

“The sect’s leadership is already addressing this matter. A competition among the sects is imminent. Following the competition, discussions will commence regarding the approach to be taken against the Undead Race,” Elder Lin stated candidly.

Gu Chaoyan offered a nod in acknowledgment.

No further words were exchanged.

A sect disciple possessed no standing to voice opinions on sect affairs.

Despite the mishaps that had befallen these disciples, they had all been safely retrieved. By all accounts, the mission should be deemed accomplished. Gu Chaoyan could return, engage in cultivation, and await the opening of the mystic realm.

Feeling a sense of relief, Gu Chaoyan sighed inwardly and remained silent.

“Chaoyan, your familiarity with the Undead Race makes you an ideal candidate for this competition. Your insights on the Undead Race could prove invaluable, ” Elder Lin pointed out.

A faint spasm coursed through Gu Chaoyan’s features.

Her countenance betrayed a fleeting expression of resignation. “My knowledge about the Undead Race is rather limited.”

“Chaoyan, you have the capability,” Elder Lin affirmed resolutely, “That’s the arrangement.”

Gu Chaoyan managed a somewhat sardonic smile.

Why did such situations always entangle newcomers like her?

What relevance did it hold for her?

Speechless, Gu Chaoyan grappled with her emotions.

Unaware of any karmic debt from a past life, she found herself facing vexations in her current one, often involving Elder Lin.

“I have commitments in the mystic realm, and I fear I won’t be able to contribute significantly to matters concerning the Undead Race,” Gu Chaoyan politely declined.

Speaking of the mystic realm...

Elder Lin’s face changed.

“Come with me, I will speak with you personally.” Elder Lin said and walked into the inner room.

Gu Chaoyan felt a little embarrassed. Did something happen in the mystic realm?

“Elder Lin.”

“I have one thing to tell you in advance..”

Chapter 2154: Information 1

“The Mystic Realm of the Supreme Sect is a naturally occurring phenomenon that manifested after the passing of the Sect’s ancestor. Although it resides within the Supreme Sect’s domain, its control lies beyond the Sect’s grasp. After decades of effort, the Sect’s elders deciphered the intricate pattern governing the realm’s cycles of accessibility. Consequently, when the time is deemed right for disciples to enter, they are admitted in accordance with the established regulations.”

“Common practice involves meticulous preparation for the forthcoming competition. The day the mystic realm unveils marks the initiation of the official contest.

“Presently, the enigmatic Level-Five Mystic Realm remains sealed, its rationale eluding even the wisest elders of the Supreme Sect. All that remains is our patient vigilance. Should the mystic realm’s gates yield, news will assuredly reach the elders; if silence persists, the realm stands resolutely shut.”

“Under normal circumstances, the Supreme Sect would shun any association with the Undead Race.”

“Yet, in light of the Undead Race’s assault upon our disciples, we find ourselves with no recourse but to reciprocate in kind.”

“While your prowess might not match that of your peers, your uniqueness sets you apart. It is inconceivable for us to entertain the thought of losing you in the confrontation against the Undead Race.”

Gu Chaoyan found herself utterly taken aback.

The source of her astonishment was the lingering closure of the mystic realm.

A One Origin Grass?

Such an unforeseen twist of events had left her utterly dumbfounded.

She found herself at a loss, unsure of the appropriate course of action.

Simultaneously, she harbored reservations about involving the Supreme Sect in the conflict with the Undead Race.

There was a longstanding feud between the Undead Race and the Grand Unity Sect.

Moreover, the woman in question held immense significance to the Grand Unity Sect.

While Gu Chaoyan possessed greater skill than this woman, her status remained subordinate, sheltered by numerous disciples loyal to the Grand Unity Sect. Hence, Gu Chaoyan’s aspiration

rested on a collaborative strike against the Grand Unity Sect alongside the undead forces. This was to be a collective vendetta, aligning with her personal desire for retribution.

It appeared to be an impeccably devised plan.

Yet, fate had taken an unexpected twist.

This outcome posed dire consequences for her intentions.

Despite the unfavorable circumstances...

She had arrived at a decision.

Engaging in negotiation seemed the most prudent course of action.

In this, she aimed to acquire comprehensive knowledge of the impending strategy.

With determination, Gu Chaoyan forced a nod. "Agreed."

Elder Lin, finally at ease, motioned for her to take her leave.

Leaving the scene, Gu Chaoyan bypassed her designated dwelling.

Instead, she chose to rendezvous with the Undead Race once again.

Their chosen meeting point was the mountain situated beyond the confines of the Supreme Sect's protective barriers.

One hour later, representatives of the Undead Race arrived.

"What's the purpose of your presence here?" The representative from the Undead Race displayed clear irritation, having been abruptly summoned while attempting to replenish their energy.

“Do you possess any insights into the Supreme Sect’s disciples who have fallen into a state of madness?” Gu Chaoyan directly inquired of Dao Seeking, the Undead Race representative.

“Regrettably, I bear no responsibility for that predicament. What other expectations could you harbor?” The Undead Race retorted with a mixture of scorn and annoyance.

“Preparations are underway within the sect to confront the Undead Race,” Gu Chaoyan divulged.

“That’s a favorable development. With the turmoil in Xuhai City, even I am cautious about venturing there. It serves as a sanctuary for me to recuperate my elemental energies,” the Undead Race proclaimed with a hint of jubilation.

Gu Chaoyan regarded them with a complex expression.

If her memory served her well, the Elder had mentioned the unity of the Undead Race.

Why then did this representative of the Undead Race harbor such a vehement desire for the annihilation of their own kind?

Chapter 2155: Information 2

This Undead Race individual evidently held the position of Hall Master within the Undead Race hierarchy, having already attained this distinguished rank. From a logical standpoint, one would expect him to possess a broader perspective, recognizing that a larger Undead population would inherently serve him more advantageously, enhancing his own capabilities.

But what could possibly motivate him to harbor a desire for the demise of the Undead Race?

Grasping the unfolding situation, Gu Chaoyan resolved to unearth the truth right then and there.

She fixed her gaze upon the representatives of the Undead Race, her curiosity evident.

“Is it accurate to say that the Undead Race is internally divided into distinct factions? Could it be that the Undead Race present in Xuhai City aren’t aligned with your particular faction? Are you therefore seeking to eliminate them in order to secure your own resources?” inquired Gu Chaoyan.

This was the inquiry she posed.

However, Gu Chaoyan found herself at odds with this explanation.

Consider, for instance, the human race.

Even disciples hailing from different sects, striving to advance their cultivation, often commenced their journey by acquiring medicinal pills. And if they did engage in combat, it would typically involve clashes with demon beasts to bolster their own cultivation. The notion of annihilating an entire human city to access their resources was scarcely entertained.

To be clear, her stance wasn't an outright refusal to partake in such actions, but rather an acknowledgment that such actions wouldn't be her first resort.

Remarkably, the attitude of the Undead Race appeared less haughty than previously observed.

Upon processing Gu Chaoyan's discourse...

He mulled over her words momentarily before offering an affirming nod. "In essence, your perspective holds true. That indeed encapsulates my rationale."

"The faction of the Undead Race inhabiting Xuhai City maintains no allegiance to the ancestral Undead Race. Their existence, whether living or extinguished, bears no consequence to me."

"The Undead Race traces its origins back to a former human lineage.

Persecuted and subjected to gruesome practices, they were transformed into the Undead Race, marked by their skinless state. This is the genesis of the Undead Race – an evolution that renders us unable to prevent anyone from joining our ranks. Nevertheless, there exist certain members within the Undead Race whom we might not sanction," proclaimed the Undead Race in a tone brimming with arrogance, unmistakably condescending towards their counterparts in Xuhai City.

Gu Chaoyan's countenance revealed a sense of helplessness.

Evidently, the Undead Race had demarcated itself into distinct echelons of nobility and inferiority.

He seemingly held the Undead Race in Xuhai City in low regard.

Despite the nearly indistinguishable appearances aside from their stature, he found himself unable to discern those of the ancient Undead Race from the rest.

A wave of curiosity washed over Gu Chaoyan.

How was he able to discern such disparities?

The curiosity lingered within Gu Chaoyan's thoughts.

The Undead Race appended, "Grand Unity Sect."

These words instantaneously seized Gu Chaoyan's undivided attention, locking onto the Grand Unity Sect with intense focus.

"The Undead Race is resolute in exacting vengeance upon the Extreme Celestial Sect. However, this falls under the purview of the ancestral Undead Race. I must strengthen myself before seeking out the remaining factions of the ancient Undead Races. Given your enmity with the Grand Unity Sect, it would be prudent for us to collaborate."

At this juncture...

The Undead Race turned towards Gu Chaoyan, his eyes oozing blood, and declared, "I am known as Zuo Hanyin."

Gu Chaoyan found herself momentarily taken aback.

It was only at this moment that she comprehended the Undead Race's acceptance of her, following the futility of both earlier threats and pledges. "As this constitutes a collaboration, mutual trust is imperative," intoned Zuo

Hanyin with a grave demeanor.

“Absolutely,” affirmed Gu Chaoyan.

Betrayal was anathema to the Undead Race, given their history of enduring deception and manipulation.

In the past, during their transformation into the Undead Race, treachery had orchestrated their descent into this state against their will..

Chapter 2156: Information 3

Gu Chaoyan retrieved a bottle of pills concealed within her robes and handed it to Zuo Hanyin. “This antidote will neutralize the poison within you. Once you’ve taken it, the poison will no longer afflict your body. We’re still allies in this endeavor.”

The Undead Race hesitated momentarily, then extended his hand to accept the antidote.

A fleeting smile graced Gu Chaoyan’s lips, revealing her ability to express joy. However, a hint of guilt also lingered within her emotions.

Her recent actions involved deception towards the Undead Tribe, claiming she intended to poison him as a means of leverage.

Understanding the Undead Race’s aversion to falsehoods, and realizing she couldn’t reveal the true motives, Gu Chaoyan had included an antidote. This concoction was the same elixir that all the disciples of the Wushang Sect possessed. Consuming it would bring an end to the entire predicament.

Observing this, a soft laugh escaped Gu Chaoyan’s lips.

Momentarily, she covered her eyes, producing several bottles of medicinal pills. “These are all of superior- grade quality. Ingesting some will aid in the restoration of your spiritual energy.”

While she spoke...

Gu Chaoyan scrutinized the Undead Race intently.

To be truthful...

His appearance was unsettlingly repulsive, undeniably far from the realm of human aesthetics.

Thus, regardless of his former handsome countenance, he remained conspicuously conspicuous in any setting.

In days of yore, the sect had held a certain level of trepidation towards the Undead Race.

However, the current scenario saw the Undead Race in Xuhai City provoke the ire of numerous sects. These factions sought his elimination while he struggled to regain his former strength. Venturing alone was exceedingly perilous for him.

Consider the possibility...

Imagine if she could discover a means to persuade him to assume a human form, accompanying her without attracting undue complications.

Such an outcome would substantially alleviate the myriad challenges.

However, transforming him into a human proved to be a formidable task.

“Why fixate your gaze upon me? While I might be considered rather dashing in the realm of the Undead Race, our customs dictate that we exclusively wed within our own kind, disregarding other races,” Zuo Hanyin rebuffed the proposition, radiating an air of disdain directed at Gu Chaoyan.

His words caused Gu Chaoyan’s scalp to tingle, struck by a sense of incredulity.

His vanity knew no bounds.

Handsome?

What relevance did he possess?

“The degree of his handsomeness is of little consequence. Can you devise a method for him to appear with a human visage? Otherwise, the ensuing predicaments could prove exceedingly cumbersome,” Gu Chaoyan inquired with forthrightness.

“Absolutely,” Zuo Hanyin responded matter-of-factly.

Subsequently, he extracted a piece of human skin from one of his concealed pouches.

It was an entire person’s skin.

A wave of nausea surged through Gu Chaoyan, her scalp tingling with unease.

What was transpiring?

Originally, she had intended to secure facial transformation pills.

And yet... he presented her with human skin!

Such an offering was beyond her capacity for acceptance.

In front of Gu Chaoyan, he donned the human skin, adopting the appearance of an ordinary individual. However...

However...

“You were a woman prior to joining the ranks of the Undead Race, correct?” Gu Chaoyan’s features bore a perplexed expression. His vocal demeanor, especially while adorned in human skin, lacked feminine nuances.

The Undead Race’s countenance contorted into one of disdain.

“I am male,” he elucidated, his tone carrying a hint of exasperation. “Before my affiliation with the Undead Race, I existed as a man by nature. Do you assume every member of the Undead Race possesses human skin, each being their own original skin? That notion is implausible. Preceding my integration into the Undead Race, my human skin had been forcibly removed by a witch-like woman resembling a venomous scorpion. These skins were obtained through our own efforts, and their availability is exceedingly limited. Merely those of the rank of hall master or higher are privy to them..”

Chapter 2157: Information 4

While distributing the skins, I arrived late and ended up dealing with this woman. Otherwise, you might wonder why I’m not using one. The reason is that it doesn’t align with my gender,” Zuo Han’s frustration was evident as he spoke about the skins. He wasn’t pleased with them, but declining wasn’t an option he was willing to consider.

Upon hearing this, Gu Chaoyan burst into laughter.

Did this imply that he had arrived last and missed out on the better ones?

But was that really the case? His expression suggested otherwise.

Certainly, there seemed to be more to the situation than met the eye.

Gu Chaoyan’s laughter subsided into a chuckle.

“Why are you finding this amusing? If it weren’t for my principles and the traditions of the Undead Race, I would have already secured a more suitable skin for myself!” Zuo Hanyin exclaimed with excitement, as if he truly had the capability to do so.

Speaking of which...

Gu Chaoyan’s laughter tapered off.

It made sense now...

No wonder he had mentioned that the Undead Race in Xuhai City differed from the ancient Undead Race, indicating a division.

The actions of the Undead Race in Xuhai City had caused harm to numerous disciples of the sect.

Hence, his disapproval was justified.

“That’s not a significant concern. We’re simply making do for now, and when the opportunity arises, we can switch if we find something more suitable. After all, there are unsavory individuals within the human race as well. And possessing their appearance shouldn’t violate the principles of the Undead Race, right?” Gu Chaoyan remarked.

“Absolutely,” Zuo Hanyin responded with a gleam in his eyes. A chance for a new appearance? For him? That was certainly appealing!

“What’s my course of action now?” Zuo Han inquired as he contemplated his current identity.

“Just remain here. Once I’m ready to depart, I’ll signal you. Follow my lead, and when the right moment arrives, I’ll take you with me,” Gu Chaoyan explained. “I agree,” stated that man of the Undead Race.

Gu Chaoyan glanced towards the Supreme Sect’s barrier before returning to the sect itself.

Another batch of Green Sun Grass had sprouted within the designated space. Her urgency was driven by the desire to concoct pills swiftly, facilitating her breakthrough to the Paragon Realm.

Furthermore...

An impending contest loomed between the dominant sects.

Before long, Gu Chaoyan comprehended the nature of the impending competition.

A custom established over a century ago, when inter-sect relations were notably more harmonious than the current climate. The passage of time had intensified the tension between these major sects.

Yet, this age-old competition persisted, steadfast even now. It had transformed into a focal point for these sects.

Primarily, it offered a platform for showcasing their disciples. Secondly, the rewards proffered by the sects were exceedingly enticing, luring everyone's aspirations.

Within this competition, a cardinal rule prevailed.

Only disciples boasting Paragon Warrior cultivation were eligible participants.

Individuals with higher cultivation levels refrained from involvement.

And those with lower cultivation levels weren't inclined to undertake such a futile endeavor.

These cultivation criteria were non-negotiable.

As a result, the sect needed to strategize their selections.

From among the disciples holding the status of Paragon Warrior...

To the best of Gu Chaoyan's knowledge, the two representatives from the Supreme Sect included Lv Zhengyang and a disciple hailing from the Fist Sect.

Gu Chaoyan's presence, however, was on behalf of the Undead Race.

The impending competition held no relevance for her. As such, Gu Chaoyan remained unfazed and devoid of stress..

Chapter 2158: Information 5

She was determined to enhance her cultivation swiftly, not solely due to the impending competition, but because she harbored a fervent desire to enter the mystical realm and exact her revenge.

This occasion...

Upon returning to her personal chamber, a sanctuary from external disturbances.

Feihuai and An Ge were exceptionally considerate individuals. They understood her inclination for solitude and tranquility, abstaining from disrupting her unless instructed otherwise.

Yet...

They diligently maintained the courtyard's order. Anticipating her preferences, they stocked her room with steaming tea and delectable snacks, preserving the remaining spaces in immaculate order.

As for the matter of tea...

Ever since an incident befell Huaijin.

Consequently, her tea consumption had waned.

Tea demanded both time and a suitable frame of mind.

Of which she had neither at present.

A sigh escaped her lips as she relinquished the tea.

Retreating into her private space, she embarked on the creation of elixirs.

Lately, her interactions with Huang Fu had dwindled.

Observing his absence, Gu Chaoyan directed her focus towards crafting pills.

Her alchemical endeavors boasted an impressively high success rate—eight out of ten pills were consistently efficacious. Over the span of two days and nights, she accumulated more than 30 pills, each exuding a potent aroma, decidedly ample.

Emerging from her secluded enclave, she ingested the pills directly.

Subsequently, she commenced her cultivation.

Internal and external currents of spiritual energy coursed through her being.

Yet, every attempt to breach the confining barrier resulted in forceful repulsion.

In a final bid, she even ingested ten pills directly.

Nevertheless, when she neared the point of breaking through the barrier, she encountered the same resilient bounce-back.

A grave expression settled upon Gu Chaoyan's features, signaling her impending defeat in this endeavor.

Could the obstruction truly be linked to her spiritual roots?

Just as she contemplated departing, an abrupt surge of heat enveloped her entire body, akin to an inferno's embrace. Puzzlement washed over her—what was transpiring?

Could it be the Phoenix fire?

Within the repository of knowledge in her spatial sanctuary, she had come across accounts of this ability.

However...

Mastery of such abilities typically eluded those with exceedingly elevated cultivation levels or remarkably rare spiritual roots.

But how had she managed it?

In this perplexing juncture, she unlocked the secrets of the Phoenix fire.

Testing it once more, Gu Chaoyan confirmed the newfound skill's authenticity.

Although she hadn't yet ascended to the Paragon tier, acquiring the Phoenix fire skill proved to be a serendipitous gain.

During this interval, a stroke of fortune graced her existence.

Basking in this felicitous mood, Gu Chaoyan unsealed her eyes.

Upon doing so, an awareness prickled at her senses—an assembly of individuals congregated outside her chamber.

Bafflement gripped her: What could be the cause of this commotion?

Gu Chaoyan poised herself to grasp the white jade sword..

Abruptly, Elder Lin materialized along with a few other Elders. "It is us!" Under these circumstances, Gu Chaoyan's capacity to discern individuals was remarkable. These figures were all Paragon-level cultivators, indicating their keen vigilance—surpassing that of numerous disciples even at the Paragon level.

However...

A pang of regret enveloped them for this disciple.

With a more auspicious Spiritual Root, her potential would undoubtedly have soared. Yet, the True Spiritual Root...

Upon their recent arrival, they perceived her on the cusp of a breakthrough. Elder Lin had yearned to witness this pivotal moment firsthand. Yet, as she stood on the precipice of the breakthrough, the radiance dissipated, and the attempt floundered.

As if ordained by fate.

Elder Lin's heart ached at this missed opportunity.

The fervent wish lingered that this disciple could one day attain Paragon status.

It was such a waste for her to be stuck at Martial God's level for the rest of her life!

Chapter 2159: Almost Breakthrough 1

"We came across you at a crucial juncture in your breakthrough. Concerned that your concentration might be disrupted, we decided to provide protection," Elder Lin explained their presence. He expressed his concern, adding, "You're still quite young, and there's no rush to force a breakthrough. Many disciples of the Supreme Sect have attempted countless times to unravel the secrets of this process. Moreover, your cultivation level surpasses that of many disciples, so patience is key."

Having shared these words, Elder Lin began to feel somewhat reassured.

In reality, he also grappled with a tinge of guilt.

Leaving aside everything else, no member of the Supreme Sect had managed to attain the Paragon Realm with a True Spiritual Root before.

While the elders were present, they monitored the progress, intertwining their discussions with Guardians.

As anticipated, the outcome aligned with their expectations.

Although Elder Lin often appeared irritating, he held genuine fondness for his disciple. Whenever possible, he wished for her to attempt the breakthrough. This motivation drove him to persistently

encourage her, aiming to shield her from discouragement and the challenges associated with such a transformation.

Yet, his support was bound by limitations.

Gu Chaoyan acknowledged with a nod. "I appreciate your guidance, Elder. I comprehend."

She discerned Elder Lin's benevolence.

Her anxiety over not achieving Paragon status remained latent.

However, that didn't pose a significant concern.

In addition to deciphering the phoenix fire technique on this day—an accomplishment most individuals wouldn't manage throughout their entire lifetime—she recognized its substantial value. Such progress warranted celebration.

Furthermore, if her inability to attain Paragon status stemmed from her spiritual roots, she found solace in this prospect. Her spiritual roots had consistently nurtured her, and she firmly believed that with the passage of time, they would refine and become increasingly pristine.

In due course, she anticipated achieving the breakthrough she sought.

Even though she yearned for swift progress, Gu Chaoyan maintained a clear understanding of her circumstances.

Thus, her confidence remained unshaken, irrespective of whether she heeded the advice or not.

Observing her resilient disposition, Elder Lin's assurance grew. "We depart for Wuyuan Island tomorrow. Make the necessary preparations to journey with us."

"Understood," Gu Chaoyan replied respectfully. Elder Lin's genuine concern seemed to have heightened her regard for him.

Subsequently, Elder Lin and his companions vacated Gu Chaoyan's quarters.

The elders couldn't help but feel a twinge of regret.

Gu Chaoyan emanated remarkable composure.

Recalling her recent adeptness in employing the phoenix fire technique within her consciousness, she now aimed to ascertain its mastery in practice.

Concentrating intently, Gu Chaoyan extended her hands, summoning a sphere of phoenix flames.

"A triumph!" Gu Chaoyan exhaled joyfully.

"You..." The Dragonman that had been dozing in her arms for the past few days suddenly leapt to attention. Witnessing her manipulation of phoenix fire, astonishment enveloped him. "You..."

It had perpetually held the perception that the individual who bestowed it upon its father was excessively feeble, and that its father had displayed undue nonchalance.

However, at this moment..

A realization appeared to dawn upon it—that its father was indeed the source of this boon.

For a brief interlude, the Dragonman's countenance bore an enigmatic expression, only to revert back to the vexing demeanor he had frequently donned before. "I'm flabbergasted by your competence.. You look like a dumb person!"

Chapter 2160: Almost Breakthrough 2

The Dragonman gazed down at Gu Chaoyan, his expression treating her as if she were a child much younger than himself.

In the next instant...

The Dragonman received a powerful blow to the head.

“Quiet down.” Gu Chaoyan’s hand met his head with a sharp pat, her voice commanding.

“How dare you strike me? I’m distancing myself from you and you’d better return my father’s jewelry!” The Dragonman retorted, hands on hips, as though he were threatening to leave home.

Gu Chaoyan paid no heed to his words.

She had already deciphered the Dragonman’s disposition.

Beneath its loud exterior, it was actually a rather introverted being.

Despite its ferocious appearance, it clung to her for support. If it truly desired to depart, it wouldn’t have acted this way the last time.

And that was the crux of the matter.

In Gu Chaoyan’s estimation, this behavior likely stemmed from its father.

It had entered the world shortly before its father’s passing.

From a young age, it communicated solely through the residual divine power left by its father. However, many individuals lusted after its power and the dragon vein it possessed.

This was the cause of its fierce facade.

Had it not displayed ferocity, it might have been forcibly taken.

Gu Chaoyan turned her attention away, focusing on arranging the contents within the interspatial ring.

Within it lay numerous Spirit Stones and medicinal pills.

Although the Dragonman didn't consume pills, it had a penchant for Spirit Stones.

As she assembled a stack of Spirit Stones for herself, she made sure to set aside another pile for the little dragon. "Would you like some?"

The Dragonman's fierce demeanor softened, and it eagerly approached to consume the offered Spirit Stones.

Indeed..

It was indulging in the Spirit Stones.

While the little dragon relished the stones, Gu Chaoyan absorbed her own portion without much surprise. The novelty had worn off by now.

The Dragonman savored the nourishment, comprehending that the Spirit Stones were rightfully hers, not an inheritance from its father.

She exhibited true kindness.

Although what her father had bequeathed to her was already hers, she had refrained from tapping into it.

This realization stirred deep emotions within the Dragonman.

However, expressing these sentiments proved perplexing.

The Dragonman exchanged a glance with her.

"Just eat them, or I'll snatch them away," Gu Chaoyan stated bluntly.

In response, the Dragonman rolled its eyes and resolved to maintain silence. This woman was perpetually exasperating.

The competition unfolded upon Wuyuan Island.

Wuyuan Island lacked affiliation with any sect, existing as an unclaimed territory.

However...

Wuyuan Island wasn't just any uninhabited location; it held an air of significance and could not be casually or recklessly approached.

A spring graced Wuyuan Island, possessing copious amounts of spiritual energy. Immersing oneself in its waters could triple the speed of cultivation compared to ordinary disciples.

In the context of the sect competition, the victorious sects were granted a unique privilege: access to Wuyuan Island.

The triumphant sects had the privilege of assigning two disciples to partake in six months of intensive cultivation on the island.

Curiosity piqued within Gu Chaoyan regarding the spring.

Outside her own spiritual spring, she'd never encountered or learned about spring waters elsewhere. A desire to discern the differences between the two springs stirred within her.

"Junior Sister," Yuan Jia's exuberant voice reached out to Gu Chaoyan.

Having journeyed to Xuhai City during the previous instance, Yuan Jia, the leading disciple of the Fist Sect, once more found himself designated to compete on Wuyuan Island.

"Senior Brother," Gu Chaoyan greeted him with politeness.

Yuan Jia held a genuine fondness for his Junior Sister.

Her quick wit and intelligence never failed to impress him.

Beyond the fact that she had once rescued him, there was also something else he wished for...