

Emperor 5031

Chapter 5031: Golden Serpent Emperor

Shadowrider was actually the fastest to react, even disappearing faster than Radiant Monarch. The escaping technique was peerless in the lower continents but unfortunately, the opponent was Li Qiye.

He pulled the sword out and crucified Shadowrider into the fabric of space.

The only person who didn't try to escape was Wild Dragon. He came even closer to summon a treasure: "Golden Serpent Emperor!"

He underwent a transformation and became larger. He was initially a fire dragon; his scales became tough and golden, causing him to look rather regal.

"Raa!" The golden dragon possessed a majestic divinity with an ethereal throne behind him.

The figure sitting on the throne shocked and suppressed everyone, making them feel like insignificant dust specks.

In fact, even the dragon lords couldn't endure the pressure and nearly dropped to the ground.

"Serpent God!" Goldcrest Young Noble shouted while being paralyzed.

Wild Dragon was being possessed by this founder god - the oldest and most mysterious.

It turned out that this was his fortune. When he was younger, he just happened to come across a small snake nearly being pecked by a great eagle.

He had a rare moment of kindness and saved the small snake. It turned out that this snake was a transformation of the founder god. Because of this, he was bestowed freedom and protection.

The dragon lunged downward with its mouth open, ready to devour Li Qiye who still had a smile on his face.

He raised his hands and summoned a crow with sky-blotting wings.

“Screech!” It leaped into the air and caught the golden dragon instantly. It flapped its wings and sent the throne flying.

When the figure on the throne saw that crow, it immediately disappeared from sight and didn’t return.

“Ahhh!” The golden dragon was torn apart by the crow. Blood splashed everywhere as it reverted to its original form - a big-belly earth dragon.

The crow didn’t relent and tore the dragon apart; large pieces of flesh fell to the ground.

Spectators couldn’t believe it - the mighty golden dragon couldn’t stop a single move. Most importantly, Li Qiye’s next focus became Shadowrider. As he walked closer, fog engulfed the region and day turned into night.

One couldn't see their fingers in front of them. Chilling gusts started to form as well; it looked like the coming of ghosts.

"What's going on?" This scared the hell out of cultivators.

"Whoosh!" Thousands of swords suddenly manifested in the fog and attacked Li Qiye. Every single sword was more frightening and powerful than Shadowrider's ambush earlier.

"Hmph." Li Qiye scowled and ignored the swords pinned to his body.

He raised his foot and stomped down, causing an unknown being to scream and run. However, this gave enough time for Shadowrider to run away. Li Qiye decided to pursue this time, leaving the crowd behind.

The fog eventually dispersed in the palace. Nonetheless, the stench of blood still remained.

"W-was that Nightwalker?" Goldcrest whispered. He got the feeling that this was the commanding god of Mist. Why did this being suddenly arrive to help Shadowrider?

Of course, this was a serious matter and he didn't dare to comment on it without sufficient evidence.

The other dragon gods glanced at the messy battlefield, shocked. Jun Cuican, Swordgrasp Venerable, and Wild Dragon have been slain. Only Radiant Monarch was fortunate enough to escape but who knows if he could survive the injuries?

The reversal happened so suddenly. Everyone thought that Li Qiye was finished yet he turned it around in just a few seconds.

Moreover, they saw Shadowrider's sword piercing his head as well. How did he come out unscathed in the end?

Skystomper trembled uncontrollably. That could have been his fate had he joined the battle.

"Still running?" Li Qiye had no problem keeping up with Shadowrider and stomped down, sending him to the ground.

He stopped running and showed his hands above the pit: "I give up, I give up, what as you please."

He then pulled out the sword from his chest and tossed it at Li Qiye, aware that escaping was impossible.

"You wouldn't be alive right now if I want to actually kill you." Li Qiye said.

"My life is yours now, you can do whatever." He had an awkward smile.

"I don't want your dog life, relax." Li Qiye sat down and said.

He then carefully healed his wounds, no longer thinking about running. Having one hundred heads still wouldn't be enough to survive an encounter with Li Qiye.

"What do you want of me then?" He finished bandaging with ointment and asked.

"Talk about that Nightwalker earlier." Li Qiye said.

He chose to be silent since this was a big secret.

"I can force him out and the process will be very painful." Li Qiye smiled.

He knew that this was indeed the truth - Li Qiye was a man of his word.

"We are one, except I'm the dao avatar." He admitted.

Chapter 5032: Shadowrider's Origin

Nightwalker was the revered commanding god of Mist. No one expected this connection between Nightwalker and Shadowrider.

One was a demon while the other was a human from an unknown assassin organization. They were so far apart and most importantly, the commanding gods couldn't leave Demon.

Others would be shocked to hear this. Of course, Shadowrider wasn't lying about this matter.

Li Qiye chuckled and wasn't surprised at all.

"Looks like your lineage is rather capable." Li Qiye smiled and sat there like an old friend.

His attitude only frightened Shadowrider even more, not knowing his intentions. Even his true body couldn't do anything against Li Qiye.

After two exchanges, he had a good idea of Li Qiye's power. This was someone above the level of the lower continents with the exception of Conceal Conqueror.

"Just tell me what you want, I will try my best to fulfill your request." He surrendered.

"Let me ask a question first. I heard the schoolmaster mention something about a particular job in the dark market back then, you should have been the one accepting it." Li Qiye said.

"I see." Shadowrider said: "This was all a trap for me."

Li Qiye shrugged: "The result would have been the same. It would only take me more time to find you."

"Yes." He nodded and admitted: "I accepted the job and not just one, we worked together afterward."

"Who hired you?" Li Qiye inquired.

“Don’t ask me, I have no idea.” He smiled wryly.

“Really now?” Li Qiye’s eyes narrowed while gazing at him: “I will pry all of your memories out of your head and watch them, second by second.”

“I’m telling the truth. I don’t know who this person is.” He said: “I was responsible for either stopping or killing any target who tried to escape. That’s all I know, it was just a job.”

The details didn’t matter to him since he was an assassin, only the payment.

“Several big shots have died because of our work.” He added.

Li Qiye continued to stare at him and he went on: “I personally know of Sword Lord and Void Saint Child.”

Li Qiye still didn’t speak but this was enough to force him to speak: “That’s really the extent of my knowledge. Though we worked together, I was responsible for keeping an eye out for runners.”

“A guard dog.” Li Qiye chuckled.

“That’s one way to put it. I didn’t care about the target or the details.” He didn’t mind the insult.

“And what about Phenomena Conqueror?” Li Qiye asked.

“What do you mean?” He paused for a second.

“Don’t worry about anything else, just answer this first, was Phenomena Conqueror one of the victims?” Li Qiye asked.

He hesitated for a moment before answering: “I only know of Sword Lord and Void Saint Child, I didn’t see Phenomena Conqueror.”

“But you reacted earlier, you know more than this.” Li Qiye smiled.

“I am an assassin who operates in the shadow but I will not defame others.” It took a while before he answered this time.

“It’s just you and me here.” Li Qiye said: “You’re merely expressing an opinion, not accusing anyone of anything.”

“I believe the person who hired me might be a conqueror.” He eventually revealed.

“Now that’s more interesting.” Li Qiye stroked his chin and said: “Go on.”

“I’ve never seen the person, rather mysterious. I just know that I am far weaker.” He said: “Though everything was hidden, my intuition tells me that it is a powerful conqueror.”

“A conqueror hiring an assassin.” Li Qiye commented.

“It’s a bit ridiculous, no one will believe it, but I’m sure of it.” He said.

“It’s the reason why you’re still alive. Even if you want to expose this secret, no one will believe you.” Li Qiye said.

“True.” He said.

Conquerors were supreme beings, whether they be from The Race or The People. They represented the apex of the dao.

They were worthy of respect. Though some were mass murderers, they always did it in an open manner. People would believe the words of a conqueror over that of an assassin.

“Hmm Li Qiye pondered the possibilities.

Shadowrider hesitated for a moment, opened his mouth as if to speak, and then closed it again.

“Which conqueror, in your opinion?” Li Qiye asked.

“... I don’t know, I lack details.” He shook his head.

In reality, there weren't that many choices to pick from in the lower continents.

"Aren't you curious about it?" Li Qiye smirked.

"Being an assassin is just a profession, I don't need to be one so it's not really any of my business." He said.

"Why is that?" Li Qiye stared at him.

He was afraid of Li Qiye's gaze and spilled everything: "I only want to keep this lineage going, that's all, I don't have to be an assassin."

Chapter 5033: A Few Secrets

"It's certainly something I'm interested in knowing." Li Qiye said.

"..." Shadowrider didn't know why Li Qiye was curious about his secretive lineage. No one knew of its existence for millions of years now. He was absolutely the first.

"I have a particular suspicion." He said.

"Go ahead." Li Qiye gave permission.

"You must be from the upper two continents." He said, thinking that's the only explanation behind this.

Radiant Monarch had the same guess as well but for a different reason.

“What makes you say that?” Li Qiye smiled.

“Well He wanted to choose his words carefully because this pertained to both his survival and his lineage.

“It’s because you believe your lineage is from the upper two continents or even the immortal one.” Li Qiye’s eyes became profound.

He took a deep breath and said: “I don’t know the details.”

“Don’t worry, you would be dead right now if I have any malice. Plus, I could have read your memories, you wouldn’t appreciate that though due to the agony entailed.”

Though Li Qiye’s tone was casual, Shadowrider still trembled in fear.

As an assassin, he was familiar with death and didn’t fear it. On the other hand, torturing meant prolonged pain and Li Qiye was a frightening existence. Having his memories pulled out forcefully would be a fate worse than death.

He had experienced pain before but still didn’t think he could endure the experience.

“I’m not sure, I’ve never seen our founder god.” He elaborated: “From the records, our founder god should be an outsider from the upper continents.”

There was no point in resisting Li Qiye. The result would be the same; it was wiser to pick the easier route.

“It’s plausible.” Li Qiye said.

The founder god of Mist was enigmatic, unlike the others who came from Demon. This person cut the tablet and left behind a deity spot.

“That’s why I want to see your lineage.” Li Qiye added.

Shadowrider was visibly unwilling to do this.

“No?” Li Qiye smiled.

“As if I can refuse.” Shadowrider said.

“You can not bring me there.” Li Qiye said: “I’m easy to work with, it’ll just take me a bit more time and effort. It’s just that if I am not careful enough, I might accidentally destroy it too.”

“Fine, I will take you there.” He conceded.

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"That's the smart choice." Li Qiye said: "Not all are as smart as you nowadays, and especially not other assassins."

He didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the compliment due to the tough circumstances. It was obvious what would happen to him if he didn't obey.

"We're connected by fate, don't you know?" Li Qiye said softly: "I'll take it easy on you so you can relax. I won't kill all of Mist so you just need be enjoy our time together."

"Yes, I'm feeling great right now." He said begrudgingly. He had no control over his own life right now, not to mention that this madman might kill all of Mist.

"I hope so because when things are outside of our control, there is no use being all gloomy. Just be smart and flexible regardless of the circumstances." Li Qiye said.

"I'm trying." He smiled wryly.

"I'm sure we will work well together." Li Qiye acted as if he was talking to an old friend: "Now, isn't it time to bring me to your lineage?"

"Yes." He agreed with Li Qiye's logic. There was no point in trying to stop the unstoppable.

"Oh, don't you want to go see that place?" He then asked.

“The killing place?” Li Qiye became serious.

“Yes, that slaughterhouse is actually right here in Demon. However, I cannot enter.” He nodded.

“I am indeed amused by this matter. It is rather interesting.” Li Qiye stroked his chin: “Don’t you want to know what this guy is doing?”

“No, and I don’t really care.” He shrugged: “One thing I’m sure of is that this isn’t about treasure or revenge.”

He wasn’t too afraid of working with this powerful being. After all, he was only a dao avatar and had confidence in his escaping techniques. Li Qiye might be the only one who managed to learn his true secret.

“Cannibalism.” Li Qiye stared at him and said.

“...” He shuddered after hearing this. In reality, he had thought of this before but didn’t dwell on it.

Now that it became the main topic, it was indeed frightening for a conqueror to eat famous cultivators.

“For what reason?” He asked.

“Since you’re a pure assassin, this isn’t part of your domain. It is a lost art, a forbidden art. Alas, it has shown itself again.” Li Qiye said.

Chapter 5034: Regarding Cannibalism

Cannibalism itself wasn’t a rare thing in the cultivation world. It was a world reigned by the strong and the weak were bullied.

However, Li Qiye made it sound rather serious - a conqueror eating other top masters.

“Why did this conqueror stop? In the past, it seemed to be every thousand years but I haven’t been hired for a while now.” Shadowrider asked.

“So you have thought about this.” Li Qiye said.

“Yes, because this was a dangerous deal so I paid more attention than usual. I’m sure that the conqueror has been inactive.” He nodded.

“And that’s what we’re trying to find out.” Li Qiye smiled.

He was sure that something had happened for the conqueror to stop. This did interest him a little.

“Left for the upper continents?” He speculated.

“No, that’s not what I’m interested in. I don’t even care about who this conqueror is.” Li Qiye shook his head.

“Then what?” He asked.

“Cannibalism.” Li Qiye responded, causing the assassin to tremble again.

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The latter felt as if he was a delicious meal waiting to be devoured by Li Qiye.

“Don’t misunderstand, I don’t want to eat you. To be perfectly blunt, eating you is similar to eating a worm. You wouldn’t eat a worm, right?” Li Qiye smiled.

“I see.” He understood the crucial point: “So this is refinement requiring a special merit law or method to truly be effective.”

“Correct, to put it simply, there are two goals.” Li Qiye said.

“What are they?” He became more and more curious since he was one of the participants.

“Either to increase power and energy or to prolong lifespan.” Li Qiye answered.

“Shouldn’t he use alchemy?” He said.

“The consumption of pills and alchemy ingredients are very particular, not every kind can be used at a given period. Moreover, refinement is an extremely profound art. Being a powerful cultivator does not make one an amazing alchemist without the proper mastery.” Li Qiye paused for a moment before continuing: “Of course, cannibalism can be rather profound as well.”

“So the bodies were used to make pills?” Shadowrider took a deep breath and speculated.

Technique mastery was one thing, the materials were crucial as well, whether it be special grass or beast cores, flesh, or dao bones.

No one had a problem with using these materials, but what about human flesh, tendons, and bones?

It was rather frightening to imagine a conqueror extracting certain human parts for the sake of either power or lifespan.

As an assassin, he merely killed people. Refining and eating them seemed more sinister in comparison.

“It doesn’t have to be pills, he could have eaten them alive. For example, when you eat a snake, you have to know where to slice in order to extract the gallbladder.” Li Qiye explained: “This is a high-level art, either self-created or was passed down.”

“Hmm, power or lifespan.” Shadowrider wondered about the possibility.

“Either way, once started, there is no going back. The user will be addicted and fall into the darkness.” Li Qiye said with a profound gaze: “It is forbidden and detested for a reason. Even the greatest hero who had protected this world would not be able to redeem themselves after walking down this path. Only darkness awaits.”

“Why pick this path?” Shadowrider said.

“Cultivators are just far more nutritious compared to a same-grade material. For example, an immortal versus a so-called immortal grass.” Li Qiye said: “Thus, a dragon lord will be more effective to a conqueror than a divine grass. The same applies to conquerors for a supreme overlord.”

“So big fish eating small fish.” Shadowrider’s horizon expanded as he understood a dark truth.

“Indeed, it is the law of the jungle. Nonetheless, it is outwardly forbidden, not allowed in any era or epoch. Once it is unleashed, the world will plunge into darkness and chaos.” Li Qiye said.

Once this particular art became popular, even a highly-skilled assassin like him would turn into delicious meals.

“Now, it has appeared in the hand of a conqueror, how strange.” Li Qiye continued.

Shadowrider agreed and wondered about the origin of this method.

“Let’s go to that place, we’ll find out soon enough.” Li Qiye said.

Shadowrider got up but first, they regrouped with Goldcrest and the others.

The youths were frightened to see him next to Li Qiye.

“Shadowrider They would have run if it wasn’t for Li Qiye’s presence.

He only stared at them in silence.

“Did you kill anyone here?” The innocent Ming Shi asked.

“No one paid me to.” He uttered coldly.

He couldn’t stand up straight in front of Li Qiye but he was still a dreadful king of assassins in the youths’ eyes.

Chapter 5035: Entrance

Ming Shi glanced at Goldcrest before winking at the assassin: “If I pay you, will you cut off his rooster head?”

“Miss, please don’t joke around like that.” Goldcrest became startled.

Shadowrider stared at Goldcrest, causing him to shiver with fear. He felt as if the gaze was piercing his heart.

“Okay, okay, stop please.” Goldcrest was actually afraid. Although he was considered a powerful cultivator, he was not a challenge at all.

“Yes, I will give you eight percent off.” Shadowrider responded.

“Hehehe, did you hear that, Rooster? Eight percent off. Keep this in mind the next time I visit Demon, you better be a better host or I will hire him.” Ming Shi said.

“Yes, yes, of course.” Goldcrest nodded his head repeatedly like a chicken eating grain: “It’s no big deal at all as long as it pleases you, Miss. Just don’t joke like this again.”

Ming Shi raised her head arrogantly and spared Goldcrest this time around.

The latter was afraid of Shadowrider and decided to keep a distance, not wanting to accidentally offend the assassin.

“Coward.” On the other hand, Ming Shi thought that everything was fine as long as she was near Li Qiye.

“We’re leaving.” Li Qiye said before glancing at Jian Yunyun: “Just know to keep your expectation low.”

“What do you mean, Young Noble?” She had a sense of foreboding after hearing this.

“If I am not mistaken, we might find the missing cultivators including your ancestor. Unfortunately, if we’re lucky, their corpses will be around.”

Yunyun’s heart trembled after hearing this despite having thought of this possibility before. It was still difficult to listen to the truth.

“I understand.” She took a deep breath.

The atmosphere became solemn. Ming Shi and Goldcrest didn’t know how to console Yunyun because they knew very little about the empress dowager and the situation.

With Shadowrider leading the way, they crossed through the perilous terrains of Demon and arrived at a valley.

It was surrounded by towering trees. One wouldn’t be able to see it while flying over.

There was nothing here except for a rough and weedy rocky cliff, not looking out of place at all.

“It’s here.” Li Qiye gazed at the cliff and felt the rhythm of the grand dao.

He was the only one capable of doing this among the group. Shadowrider didn’t feel anything at all but he already knew this location.

“There was once a great fortune here.” Li Qiye was slightly surprised.

"A great fortune? What kind?" Ming Shi asked.

To which he responded: "Enough to become untouchable for a lifetime."

"Really?" Her eyes turned bright as a result: "Hehehe, then let's take a look, maybe there's something else here too."

"Forget about it, everything worth taking has been taken." Li Qiye shook his head and focused on the cliff again.

"This was where I stood in ambush, I only had to take action twice." Shadowrider said.

"Did you kill Divine Empress Dowager?" Yunyun suddenly asked.

Shadowrider stared at her, causing her to shudder in fear. This was an understandable reaction. Nonetheless, she tried her best and met his gaze.

"I was hired as the guard, not to kill. I had nothing to do with your empress dowager's death." Shadowrider didn't release any killing intent to intimidate her.

"He's not lying." Li Qiye nodded.

Ming Shi touched the cliff and then knocked on it once before commenting: "There's nothing here."

"I'm sure there is more to this." Goldcrest took his time and didn't notice anything either.

"It is a seal." Shadowrider said.

Ming Shi wasn't afraid of him and smiled: "You never got curious enough to enter?"

"Curiosity killed the cat." He coldly uttered, causing her to stick out her tongue due to his scary tone.

"So this hasn't been open since your last transaction, around ten thousand years or so." Li Qiye assessed the situation.

"Right, which is why I believed the person is no longer in the lower continents." Shadowrider said.

"And if that's not true?" Li Qiye said.

Shadowrider furrowed his brows after hearing this. If this mysterious conqueror was still here, why did the hunt stop? There must be a reason behind this but he didn't notice any clues.

"Who are you talking about?" Ming Shi asked.

Li Qiye and Shadowrider didn't answer.

The former placed his hand on the cliff and activated his dao power.

“Buzz.” Numerous runes appeared on the surface.

“So it is a seal.” Goldcrest said.

He and the others didn’t notice anything before, let alone activate these runes.

“This is Li Qiye was astonished again.

Keep in mind that he was the creator of this epoch. No dao laws and merit laws could elude him; everything was derivable.

However, there were transformations not belonging to this epoch yet could still blend in perfectly. Most importantly, he was familiar with them too.

“So it is true.” He murmured.

With his interference, the runes and dao laws on the cliffs intertwined together and broke away from the usual positions. A circle was formed and rotated continuously until the seal was broken.

“Buzz.” A door made out of light manifested into reality.

“It was like this before.” Shadowrider said.

“We’re going in.” Li Qiye told the group.

“I’ll keep an eye out.” Shadowrider said.

This scared the youths again because he was performing his old job. Were they the targets this time? Even if this wasn’t true, he could also run away.

“Isn’t this bad?” Yunyun whispered to Li Qiye. Goldcrest nodded in agreement as well.

“It’s fine, monks can run but not their temple. He knows what he’s doing.” Li Qiye smiled and glanced at the assassin.

Chapter 5036: A Devoured World

Shadowrider glanced at Li Qiye with a complicated expression. He was an assassin king who lurked in the shadows. Thus, he had no one’s trust but Li Qiye allowed him to be in charge of an important role without supervision.

Of course, this didn’t mean that Li Qiye trusted him after a few conversations. It stemmed from Li Qiye’s invincibility.

Could he ambush Li Qiye’s group one more time and kill them? Or could he seal the entrance? By this point, he didn’t have the courage or the power to go against Li Qiye since that would be suicidal. The only thing he could do was to perform his duty of guarding the entrance and not letting anyone get close.

Li Qiye didn't say anything else and entered the door. The youths had reservations but still followed him inside.

What they saw next astounded them beyond words - a massive world with countless stars. This wasn't that uncommon in independent dimensions but it was entirely dead.

None of the stars had a single trace of life, let alone living beings. Among them was a great sun. Alas, it had countless cracks and its flames have been extinguished.

Similar death occurred to the other stars. One was split in half, another fell to the ground. Something had infiltrated their core and sucked the life out of them.

No grass or vegetation could be seen anywhere. Anything that once possessed life force has been drained entirely.

Li Qiye closed his eyes and scanned the area. Sure enough, the initial impression was correct - death was the only remaining affinity.

"So something like this was still left behind. What a ruthless geezer, sacrificing the entire world yet still couldn't escape this fate." Li Qiye murmured to himself.

As for the youths, this was their first time witnessing death of this magnitude.

"Wh-where is this place?" Ming Shi was anxious.

“An abandoned world.” Li Qiye answered.

“Abandoned? Who abandoned it?” Yunyun asked.

“Its protector.” Li Qiye said.

Yunyun had prior conversations with Li Qiye and had a deeper understanding of this subject. She blurted out: “This protector did this to their own world?”

“That is correct.” Li Qiye smiled.

“It’s insane, how many, how many people were living here?” Ming Shi was overwhelmed.

“How many lives are on the six continents? This might be larger.” Li Qiye responded.

“Impossible!” Goldcrest and Ming Shi blurted out in unison.

“Observe it again.” Li Qiye said.

The two sat down on the ground, unable to comprehend the horror. Their six continents were colossal. How could anything reduce all six down to nothing but death?

“There are many ancient emperors, conquerors, and dao lords here.” Ming Shi quietly said.

“They’re not the strongest beings in this world, only the starting point.” Li Qiye revealed.

“Only the starting point?” This was a new perspective for the two youths.

In their mind, these were the apex beings of the six continents. For example, Conceal Conqueror was the strongest in the lower continents but there are twelve-fruit existences above.

If conquerors and dao lords were only at the starting point, where were they?

“How did this world die?” Yunyun has been focusing on the stars.

“As long as you’re strong enough, you can open your mouth and swallow all lifeforms in one breath.” Li Qiye said.

“Let’s not talk about this anymore.” Ming Shi was afraid of the possibility of these monstrous existences. The Ten Monsters were nothing compared to them if they could swallow stars.

“Why did the protector change their mind?” She calmed down and asked.

“Unable to maintain the original aspiration.” Li Qiye smiled and stared at them: “For example, let’s say you have a pet rabbit that you have been taken great care of. It grows up fat while circumstances make you feel rather hungry.”

“Stop, stop, if you keep going, I won’t be able to eat anything anymore.” Ming Shi felt nauseous.

“So we’re rabbits?” Yunyun shuddered.

“You think too highly of yourself then. For a being of this level, you can’t even be considered an ant. As for a rabbit, the true masters that you know, I suppose, can be at this level.” Li Qiye shook his head.

“Do we have a protector too?” Ming Shi suddenly asked. She felt that there was a great guardian looking down on them.

Li Qiye only smirked in response.

Chapter 5037: Missing People

Being in this macabre region was nerve-wracking. The youths imagined how it was once full of life and shiny stars.

There must have been generations of capable geniuses and countless legends... Most importantly, it had protectors and guardians - supreme existences towering above all else.

Over the years, living beings with knowledge of them had nothing but respect and gratitude, considering them as saviors.

Perhaps they thought that as long as these protectors were around, prosperity would remain for ages to come. There was no need to fear foreign invasion and calamity.

None of them expected to go down due to their revered guardians. These beings could randomly devour their subjects and world, treating everything as delicious meals. This depicted the event that happened in this world - their so-called savior turning the blade toward them.

“World saviors do not exist, remember this.” Li Qiye woke the youths from their stupor.

Ming Shi and the others never heard of something like this before. Today, they actually saw the demise of a world greater than theirs. This made them think about their sects’ ancestors and whether these beings would ever try to devour their descendants.

They immediately stopped thinking about this or it would sow a permanent seed of distrust in their mind.

“There are some corpses here.” Goldcrest looked around and saw a dao platform on a cliff nearby.

Ming Shi and Yunyun immediately rushed in that direction. Sure enough, there were corpses of clearly powerful and influential characters.

“This person must have been from Deity.” Goldcrest focused on an old man. Although the skin was dried and withered, his handsome features could still be seen. The robe’s patterns and symbols were from Deity.

“Yes, look at the badge by his waist.” Yunyun had a good understanding of the twelve lineages: “Godvisage King, a top dragon lord.”

Goldcrest went to another corpse and recognized him. He took a deep breath and said: “Nightborn Heavenly Demon, one of the strongest monarchs.”

Goldcrest was sure of this due to a black jewel on the corpse's forehead. It seemed to be there at birth.

Another one shocked Yunyun, causing her to comment: "This is... Void Saint Child's illusory physique."

The corpse still gave an ethereal and intangible impression as if it was incorporeal.

"We've seen this person before!" Ming Shi shouted.

Yunyun and Goldcrest came over. The latter gasped and said: "Sword Lord!"

"Yes, that's right." Yunyun saw that the divine sword nearby no longer had any light left.

"The guardian of our academy Ming Shi murmured.

They had only seen his portrait before. Now, they finally got to meet the prestigious guardian, albeit under the worst circumstance.

Yunyun had a terrible feeling about this and started looking through the corpses. Eventually, she saw one by the corner and immediately fell to the ground, staring at it in a daze.

The other two came over and saw the corpse of an old woman. She must have been gorgeous and full of nobility when she was alive.

“Divine Empress Dowager.” Ming Shi knew who it was right away despite not knowing her appearance prior.

“Right.” Yunyun said softly.

This concluded those on the missing list. They have met their demise here. Now, the question became - why were they here? Who killed them?

Ming Shi regained her wits and boldly speculated: “Don’t tell me, that supreme overlord devoured this world and then conspired to absorb these cultivators too?”

“You have quite an imagination.” Li Qiye shook his head: “These cultivators might be powerful to you but for someone capable of devouring a world, they are no different from insects, not enough to be an appetizer.”

“Oh.” Ming Shi said: “Who killed them then?”

“Why are they all here as well?” Goldcrest hurriedly added.

“I don’t know how to answer the second question but as for the first, someone purposely led them here in order to devour them.” Li Qiye chuckled and said: “This is a copycat that had either inherit or come across a mighty legacy. The method to become stronger is via consumption.”

“Why this method? It’s disgusting.” She said.

“Do you eat alchemy pills? It has a similar effect for this user, either gaining power or lifespan.” Li Qiye said.

“I got it.” She had nothing but disdain for the culprit.

A while ago, though they found the dead world to be horrible, they were still disconnected. They had nothing to do with any living being here.

Now, they saw victims from their own world - legendary and respected figures. They grew up worshipping these cultivators.

Imagining the main characters from the tales being imprisoned and eaten like pills made them feel sick.

Chapter 5038: Missing One

“Wait!” After a while, Yunyun realized something and started going through the corpses again.

“What’s happening?” Goldcrest thought that she was overwhelmed with emotion and became unstable.

“Sis, are you okay?” Ming Shi shuddered.

“She’s fine, she’s just looking for someone.” Li Qiye said.

“Who?” The two of them asked at the same time.

After getting confirmation, Yunyun sat down on the ground, looking a bit confused. She said: “One is missing.”

“Who is it?” Ming Shi didn’t bother analyzing the situation.

Goldcrest remained calm and thought about it before replying: “Yes, I think one is missing.”

“Let me know too!” Ming Shi raised her voice.

Yunyun and Goldcrest exchanged glances while hesitating due to a lack of proof. This was a rather serious matter.

“A conqueror, Phenomena.” Li Qiye answered instead.

“Phenomena Conqueror? He was missing too?” Ming Shi blurted out: “Wait a minute! Don’t tell me, he’s the culprit behind all of this! But no, that can’t be!”

The other two didn’t know what to say. Yunyun was the first to know about this because of Bloodsea Blade.

He talked about the missing conqueror on top of many dragon lords. These dragon lords have been found now but one corpse was still missing.

The other missing cultivators were all connected. One possibility was that he lured them here and devoured them of their power.

This was plausible because he was a four-fruit conqueror on top of possessing peerless talent. He did have the ability to ambush and kill them.

On the other hand, this pertained to the reputation of a great conqueror. They had no solid evidence to accuse him of this horrific crime.

They then recalled how his master came to find Bloodfly God. Did Thousand-faced Sovereign already suspect him? How did Bloodfly God fit into all of this?

“We have no proof.” Yunyun said: “We need to keep our mouth shut or it might be disastrous for our sect.”

“He might still be here in the lower continents.” Ming Shi nervously said.

If they were to spread this information, he might come and kill them.

“The culprit doesn’t matter.” Li Qiye got up and said: “Place them on their stomach.”

“Hmm, should we?” Ming Shi found this disrespectful.

The other two obeyed and lined the corpses up on their stomach. This revealed a faint mark on their back. It resembled a crescent moon - a sign of something missing.

They thought that the culprit had used a seal of sorts to imprint this mark on the victims. However, this seal was incomplete, hence the damaged markings.

'So the geezer had this trick up his sleeve.' Li Qiye thought to himself: 'It's not a legacy, he simply left it behind as a trump card.'

"What is it?" The youths didn't know what the mark was.

"Something extraordinary. I have no idea how he got it or understood its mysteries. How interesting." Li Qiye said.

"So it really is Phenomena Conqueror?" She asked.

"Ming Shi, remember to not speak of this, especially when we're outside. Not to mention the conqueror, Lunar will come to your lineage and demand an answer."

"I got it." Ming Shi stuck her tongue out, aware that this might start a war between two lineages. Lunar would never allow anyone to besmirch its conqueror's reputation.

"Should we go find Phenomena Conqueror?" Goldcrest asked.

“Where do we start? Plus, the culprit might not be him, we don’t have any absolute proof outside of him being missing.” Yunyun smiled wryly.

“True, maybe he went to the upper continents and didn’t do this. On the other hand, we don’t know where to look for him either.” Ming Shi thought that they were being too hasty with this conclusion.

“The actual culprit might be gone as well, it has been a while since someone has gone missing as far as we know.” Yunyun mused.

Lunar was a possible location to find the conqueror. However, his master came to Demon for more information so this couldn’t be right.

Most importantly, the three of them were helpless against such a powerful being. Thus, Ming Shi stared at Li Qiye.

“What are you looking at me for?” Li Qiye smiled.

“Are you really ignoring this despicable villain that is preying on the land?” She asked.

“Why should I interfere?” He shrugged.

“Because you are unbeatable. The greater the power, the greater the responsibility.” She responded.

“Silly girl, I am not a saint or a savior, this is not any of my business. Let me ask you a question, do you eat pills?”

“Of course.” She answered right away.

“Your precious pills were refined from precious grass or even the inner cores of ancient beasts. Should I interfere and stop this practice when so many cultivators are doing it?” Li Qiye asked.

“Please stop, I don’t want to eat alchemy pills anymore.” She strongly responded.

“Besides, even if I care enough, this is simply a trivial matter.” Li Qiye continued: “Dragon lords kill each other constantly in each generation, the same for conquerors and dao lords. Missing a few is inconsequential in the grand scheme of things, it’s not like the world is being destroyed.”

Ming Shi couldn’t retort this time because Li Qiye had killed several dragon lords not long ago. This culprit had a different process but the outcome was essentially the same.

“Remember, if someone claims to be a savior or acts as such, you need to be careful because one day, they might eat you like a pet rabbit.” Li Qiye stared at her and finished the lesson.

Chapter 5039: Calling The Soul

The world was once so beautiful to Ming Shi. Now, she found it to be far darker.

“This is all your fault, I can’t eat anything from now on.” She complained.

“This is just the norm, you haven’t been exposed to them before. Now you have.” He chuckled and said.

“I don’t need this crap.” She snorted.

Meanwhile, Yunyun was sitting down and staring at her empress dowager’s corpse. She spent all of this time and effort searching for her, wanting her to take charge of Primal. Alas, this was all in vain.

No one could fix the issues in Primal now. That thing might be lost forever as well. This left her lost because she no longer had a goal in mind.

The thing keeping her from crumbling down due to the pressure was the hope of finding the empress dowager. That was the way to reunite Primal again. Now, the only path has been blocked. Despite her exceptional talents, a single tree was not a forest.

“It’s not over.” Li Qiye sat down next to her.

Her eyes turned bright as she immediately asked: “How so?”

Li Qiye glanced at the corpse and said: “The culprit might have consumed her but the technique was yet to be perfected.”

“Are you saying... that the empress dowager can still be saved?” Yunyun suddenly thought that there was still hope because he was Li Qiye.

Li Qiye shook his head in response: “No, there is no reviving the dead. Doing so is declaring war against the heavenly dao, resulting in a tribulation like no other. A minor punishment is death to the offender, a heavy one means dragging the epoch down with it.”

“Then there is another method?” She asked.

“The divinity is still there inside her corpse due to the incomplete consumption.” Li Qiye said: “This strand of divinity is extremely weak, you have little time.”

“It sounds like you’re trying to summon her soul, Young Noble.” Ming Shi became curious.

Li Qiye chuckled and said: “Not quite. A dragon lord’s divinity contains many things, such as power and divine intent. The problem is the difficulty with awakening them. Moreover, it requires precision since time is limited in order to grasp vital information.”

He then glanced at Yunyun and continued: “You must grasp the opportunity. Otherwise, everything will really be in vain then.”

“What should I do to communicate with this divinity in time?” She had never done something like this before.

Goldcrest joined the conversation: “And how can she make it so that the divinity would recognize and accept her, given the time limit?”

“Good questions.” Li Qiye nodded: “In this case, it is dependent on whether the empress dowager has a strong impression of you in her memories. Her divinity might still acknowledge you.”

“I don’t think so.” Yunyun said because it was Black-dress Lady who took care of her, not the empress dowager.

“Then you must somehow make it recognize you in the shortest possible time.” Li Qiye said.

“What are my next steps?” She took a deep breath.

“First, gain the divinity’s recognition and acceptance. Next are the questions, and this is crucial. If you ask the right thing, it will give you the desired answer.” Li Qiye said: “But if you can’t fulfill these requirements, the divinity will disperse.”

“The right questions and acceptance.” Yunyun pondered.

“This is your only opportunity and it will only last the blink of an eye. Let me know when you are prepared.” Li Qiye said.

Ming Shi and Goldcrest exchanged glances after hearing this. If they had to perform this task, what would they do to gain the divinity’s recognition? What were the right questions?

This was a difficult task due to the time limit.

Given her indignant death, her divinity would definitely answer any question regarding the culprit. However, did it really matter just knowing the culprit for Yunyun?

Did she have enough power to avenge the empress dowager? Unfortunately, this answer was clear.

“Young Noble, I am ready now.” After thinking it through, she took a deep breath and solemnly said.

“Good, let us begin then.” Li Qiye nodded.

Yunyun then kneeled before the corpse while raising the Primal Key with both hands. This was their heirloom - a symbol of status and identity. Any ancestor or regular disciple from Primal understood its significance.

“Buzz.” Li Qiye released an exuberant ray from his fingertip. It seemed to be alive.

He chanted and created a mudra in front of his chest. The others felt a yin wind flowing by afterward.

He released a majestic life force - the opposite of yin. The rays emanating from the mudra chased away the nether winds.

This holy force resembled the birth of a blessed infant - snow would melt and spring would return. All withering entities would be revived in preparation for an incoming golden age.

The corpses on the ground started glowing; their remnant divinity was being awakened. This process only lasted for a second.

Ming Shi and Goldcrest compared the glowing corpses to the stars above. The latter had nothing left and didn't react.

This was a sign of imperfection. Whoever killed them didn't devour them thoroughly like the world destroyer.

Chapter 5040: Returning Souls

Li Qiye roared and focused the rays into his hand again, pressing them with lightning speed against the empress dowager's forehead.

"Buzz." Her corpse lit up more than the others.

Strands of divinity emanated from her and life returned to the corpse. Alas, the strands were feeble and could fade to a single gust of wind.

The youths watched with bated breath, not daring to move because that might disturb the divine strands.

The strands came together and formed a bright expanse. It eventually became an ethereal figure that slowly rise from the corpse.

It was identical to the empress dowager, resembling something of a spirit. Ming Shi immediately covered her mouth, not wanting to gasp loudly and scare it away.

The figure only stared at the key in Yunyun's hand, nothing else. The atmosphere became rather tense as they awaited Yunyun's first words.

However, she didn't say anything and only stared intensely at the figure, communicating earnestly with her eyes and seemingly asking for permission.

The figure stopped looking at the ruler and released a bright particle, looking like a drop of dew on a blade of grass during the early morning. The shimmering drop landed on Yunyun's forehead and caused a ripple.

It entered her mind and turned into a tiny rune. With that, the figure dispersed and the light on the corpse dissipated as well. The final strand of divinity was now gone.

After a while, Yunyun opened her eyes and kowtowed before the corpse.

"What did the empress dowager say?" Ming Shi asked after Yunyun was finished with the ceremony.

Yunyun smiled wryly and shook her head: "Nothing, just a rune that I can't understand right away."

"We're leaving, there's nothing else to see here." Li Qiye got up.

"Young Noble, don't we want to try and communicate with the other corpses, perhaps we can find the culprit that way?" Ming Shi couldn't help but ask.

"It's not that simple. This method shouldn't be performed repeatedly or there will be consequences." Li Qiye shook his head.

Yunyun bowed deeply toward him, aware of the risk he had just taken to immensely help her out.

Next, the youths decided to bury the corpses and erect memorial gravestones. Future descendants could pay respect later on.

Once they exited through the gate, they saw Shadowrider still standing there. They thought that the young noble was right - he didn't take this opportunity to flee.

However, there was another person who was laying on the ground. The youths were surprised because they recognized him - Qing Songke from the academy.

"What did you do?" Ming Shi thought that Shadowrider had killed him.

"Should I kill him?" Shadowrider ignored her and asked Li Qiye.

So it turned out that Qing Songke came near and was knocked out instantly by Shadowrider.

"You can't just kill randomly, no one hired you." Ming Shi said.

"Let him go." Li Qiye simply didn't care about the youth.

Ming Shi heaved a sigh of relief after hearing this.

Shadowrider then woke the youth up. The latter opened his eyes and was horrified to see Shadowrider. He immediately got up and leaped backward, pale.

"Don't worry, you wouldn't be alive right now if he wants to kill you." Li Qiye said.

Qing Songke saw the group and speculated on the situation. It seemed that Li Qiye had saved him again for the second time.

“Let’s go.” Li Qiye ignored him and started walking away.

As they were leaving, Yunyun asked: “Dao Brother, why are you here?”

“I am following the traces of my ancestor but unfortunately, I’m a little lost.” He revealed the truth.

“Be careful of this dangerous place, I think you should leave as soon as possible.” Goldcrest said, aware of the dangers looming in his home.

Qing Songke didn’t say anything. Once the group was gone, he looked around and didn’t notice anything, only that this palace appeared a little familiar.

“Where are we going now?” Ming Shi asked.

Li Qiye smiled and glanced at Shadowrider who hesitated for a moment before answering: “Mist.”

This surprised all the youths. Goldcrest, in particular, had a light flashing in his mind. This made him stare at Shadowrider in disbelief.

Unfortunately, their journey was interrupted by two mighty cultivators - Thousand-faced Sovereign and Truth Conqueror.

The emotional youths immediately bowed after seeing them. The sovereign had a holy aura that commanded respect. As for the low-profile conqueror, they still couldn't help but revere her.

A conqueror was a supreme being. Dragon lords were innately inferior. In order to make up for the disparity between the two cultivation schools, the former needed to be way farther down the road.