

C18 Gu Family's Orthodox Tradition.

Guu Tianyi was nursing a serious headache. When had high-rank ferocious beasts become so commonplace? He was merely strolling along the outskirts of the Great Desolate Mountain when he had the misfortune of running into both a Rank Four and a Rank Five Ferocious Beast.

A Rank Five beast was on par with a High-Rank Martial Ancestor Expert, if not stronger.

The trio of men in black accompanying Guu Tianyi seemed to find growing joy in the situation. Number 36 couldn't contain his glee, "Guu Tianyi, up against a Rank Five Ferocious Beast, your death is certain!"

He didn't get to finish his taunt. The Black Flood Dragon opened its gaping maw and swallowed him whole, crunching down in a gruesome display. Blood sprayed, and the chilling sound of bones being crushed echoed eerily through the quiet night.

Guu Tianyi held Guu Linger close, shielding her from the horrific sight.

Yet, anxiety gnawed at him. The Black Flood Dragon, a formidable Rank Five beast, was a threat, but even the Earth Devil Lion, the Rank Four beast lurking outside the cave, was well beyond his own strength.

"Is today my last?" Guu Tianyi wondered with a heavy sigh.

"No, I can't accept this. Linger is here with me, I've yet to confront Xia Ningjing, and there's still no word from my father. I refuse to meet my end in the Great Desolate Mountain without a fight," he resolved.

As Guu Tianyi mulled over his fate, the Black Flood Dragon withdrew into the cave, dragging Guu Tianyi, Guu Linger, and the remaining two men in black along with it.

The Black Flood Dragon measured over thirty meters just on the outside of the cave, with the rest of its massive body hidden within. It was likely to stretch no less than ninety meters in total.

"Brother Tianyi, it's not going to eat us, is it?" Guu Linger asked, her voice quivering as she eyed the colossal Black Flood Dragon.

The dragon's labored breaths filled their ears as Guu Linger and Guu Tianyi found themselves hovering helplessly before its eyes, which glowed like two giant red lanterns.

The Black Flood Dragon fixed them with a gaze that held a bizarre excitement.

Guu Linger squeezed her eyes shut and buried her face in Guu Tianyi's chest, never having faced such terror in her life.

Since Guu Tianyi's return to the Purple Flame House, the past few days had been more thrilling than all her fifteen

years combined.

"Number 10, the Black Flood Dragon is about to finish off Guu Tianyi. Our long, arduous mission is finally coming to fruition," Number 39 said, his eyes alight with fervor.

But in a flash, he was crushed beneath the dragon's foot, reduced to a pulp.

A roar from the Black Flood Dragon sent a tremor through the cave.

Guu Tianyi and Guu Linger fell to the ground, trapped in a corner of the cave, completely immobilized.

"Brother Tianyi," whispered Guu Linger.

Guu Tianyi quickly gestured for silence, whispering back, "Don't talk. Those two Desperado met their end for speaking too much. Besides, the Black Flood Dragon doesn't seem hungry—at least not yet."

"But it's bound to get hungry eventually," Guu Linger murmured in reply.

They were in dire straits, but suddenly, a familiar electronic tone offered a glimmer of hope to Guu Tianyi.

[Detected damaged Ninth Grade Spirit Treasure. Do you wish to claim it?]

[The Divine Soul Jade Slip, brimming with potent soul vibrations, has been detected. Would you like to claim it?]

Both the shattered Ninth Grade Spirit Treasure and the Divine Soul Jade Slip were treasures beyond compare, impossible to find within the Azure Nether Country!

Without a moment's hesitation, Guu Tianyi declared, "Claim it!"

[Host, you have acquired the fragmented Ninth Grade Spirit Treasure and the Divine Soul Jade Slip!]

Instantly, two new items materialized in the peculiar space linked to the God Level Snatching System.

One was a rusty, three-foot-long stick, and the other, a lustrous, perfectly round jade slip, radiating an emerald hue.

As Guu Tianyi was about to examine them, the cave thundered and trembled abruptly.

Nearby, the Black Flood Dragon opened its massive jaws, revealing a glimmer of light within. Suddenly, a myriad of intricate Heavenly Patterns emerged, converging to form the beginnings of a majestic Spirit Formation.

"It's actually constructing a Spirit Formation!"

Some high-ranking Ferocious Beasts naturally possess profound cultivation. Among them, a few have an innate gift for grasping complex Heavenly Patterns.

"Though I'm unsure of its intentions, one thing is clear — it's targeting both me and Linger," Guu Tianyi realized

with alarm. He vividly remembered the excitement in the Black Flood Dragon's eyes upon sighting him and Guu Linger.

In that moment, his consciousness was cast into the enigmatic space, but before it could even approach the Divine Soul Jade Slip, it was drawn inside.

Suddenly, Guu Tianyi found himself amidst a boundless expanse of stars.

Seated on a fragmented star ahead was a young man in a white robe, exuding an extraordinary air. Were it not for the man's Adam's apple, Guu Tianyi might have mistaken him for a beautiful woman.

The man's eyes snapped open, his piercing gaze akin to a sharp blade, seemingly ready to cut through Guu Tianyi.

"The Purple Polar Heavenly Flame Dragon? After a millennium of waiting, I never expected a descendant of Guu Zhantian to be the one I meet," he said.

Despite his youthful appearance, the man's voice carried an undeniable authority. With a flick of his sleeve, he rose to his feet.

Even from a distance, he resembled an unsheathed sword, his presence sharp and resolute.

"May I have the honor of knowing your name, Senior?" Guu Tianyi asked respectfully, bowing with his fists clasped.

The man had effortlessly discerned Guu Tianyi's Martial Soul at a glance. From his earlier remarks, Guu Tianyi surmised that he must be a formidable figure from a millennium past, and it seemed he bore some animosity towards Guu Zhantian, the reputed First Ancestor of the Guu family.

"I am the Azure Nether Sword Immortal, Guu Qingming," the man declared with an air of pride.

Guu Tianyi was perplexed, "He actually refers to himself as the Azure Nether Sword Immortal."

Not even Guu Zhantian, the First Ancestor renowned for his unmatched prowess a thousand years ago, would dare to challenge the Azure Nether Country Royal Family in such a manner.

And yet, this man also bore the Guu surname!

The man cast a brief, displeased glance at Guu Tianyi and inquired, "Do you wish to say something?"

"Senior, could you possibly be a descendant of the Guu family's First Ancestor, Guu Zhantian?" Guu Tianyi ventured.

The Guu family's legacy was that of the fire attribute Beast Martial Soul, known for its fierce and overwhelming presence. Yet, the man before him was the epitome of tranquility, efficiency, and a cool detachment —hardly the traits of a Guu family member.

"You're spouting utter nonsense!" the man retorted, his

face contorting with rage. "Guu Zhantian is a nobody! Moreover, with his meager strength, how could he ever live up to the title of the Guu family's First Ancestor?"

Guu Tianyi was at a loss for words, thinking to himself, "How on earth would I know what happened a millennium ago?"

Yet now, his and Guu Linger's very survival hinged on the goodwill of this venerable elder.

As Guu Tianyi pondered how to curry favor with the elder, the man cleared his throat and began, "Are you aware of the Guu family's most formidable legacy?"

"The Purple Polar Heavenly Flame Dragon Martial Soul?" ventured Guu Tianyi.

"You're mistaken!"

"For the Guu family, a Beast Martial Soul is not deemed powerful. The truly formidable legacy is the Sword Martial Soul!"

This revelation left Guu Tianyi momentarily dumbfounded.

In his nearly eighteen years of life, he had never witnessed anyone from the Guu family wield the Sword Martial Soul.

"But I'm not fond of swords," Guu Tianyi remarked offhandedly.

At that, the man's previously serene demeanor flickered with a flash of irritation.

"Forgive me, senior. I meant no disrespect," Guu Tianyi quickly apologized.

"It matters little to me what you say. You claim to dislike swords? Then it is a sword you shall master!"

With a dramatic sweep of his sleeve, the man touched his fingertips to his own forehead and then directed them towards Guu Tianyi's.

A jolt ran through Guu Tianyi's body, and as the man's fingers met his brow, a flood of memories surged into his consciousness.