

### 451 LI XIANYI'S COUNTERATTACK

Tension was building up over the basin of blood. With his sword in his hand, Li Xianyi would never be passively forced into a defensive position. As a matter of fact, swordsmen were the most resolute Practitioners in the world.

Before the stone coffin was fully open, Li Xianyi's white jade sword was already set in motion. Immediately columns of blood rose from the basin, transforming into a giant, powerful hand that served as an effective obstacle in the path of the sword!

With perfect poise, Li Xianyi hovered in the air. Boundless sword energy gushed out of his body, splitting the boiling pool of blood in halves and aiming straight towards the stone coffin!

Yet again, a wall of blood rose from the basin, blocking off every single beam of sword energy. However, the bombardment of attacks had successfully slowed down the opening of the coffin cover.

Unfettered, Li Xianyi's invincible sword energy mercilessly shot towards the blood pool. The basin was blown apart instantly.

This time, Li Xianyi's unbelievable speed was beyond the expectations of the spirit in the remains. But the latter was not weak either. It was actually able to match Li Xianyi even from within its coffin.

It could gain an edge if it stalled for time. But at the moment, Li Xianyi adopted offensive tactics as a form of defense, sparing no chance for his enemy to recharge. He wanted to give it a good drubbing before it got out of its coffin!

Unwilling to wait any longer, the coffin suddenly exploded. With it, a figure rose into

the air!

A thick layer of blood shielded the creature inside. Slowly, blood sank into the figure's body, transfiguring into a human!

Li Xianyi's brows were even closer now. He certainly did not expect to see a human-shaped creature. Blood cocoons had subsided into its snowy skin. Its shoulder-length hair was wavering in the air with its blood-red cloak.

However, it seemed that it had yet to finish its transformation yet. Spots of blood were still visible on its left chin, providing an eerie addition to its handsome countenance.

Hovering in the air, the creature drew another column of blood from the pool with a raise of its hand, sending it to be absorbed by its body. Then, the creature spoke, in human language, "I have been in a slumber too long. I shall grant your wishes since you seek your death here. After that, I will bury all humans in this underground world. Then, your identity would be of some use to me when I go for a walk in your world. Fancy the idea?"

It could actually extract information needed, such as knowledge of the human world or even language techniques, from blood.

As it spoke, the creature pulled out a mask from its red cloak and placed it nicely on its face. Instantly it had metamorphosed into Li Xianyi!

Li Xianyi frowned. "I'm afraid you cannot survive today."

It was a strange feeling to fight himself. But Li Xianyi knew very well that it was only a strange mask.

Right at that explosive point, Li Xianyi heard a clear and melodious voice from behind. "Old man, have you seen Lu Shu? I'm looking for him!"

Li Xianyi turned to see Lu Xiaoyu standing alone outside the shattered stone door. She was just so adorable. Li Xianyi replied after a short pause, "I saw him inside the palace, but I don't know where he is now."

Lu Xiaoyu nodded. "Okay. I shall keep looking then."

"From blood spirit's distress, +499..."

"Are you done?" the blood spirit asked, its voice icy.

Until then Lu Xiaoyu noticed the blood spirit for the first time. She was dumbstruck for a second. "Old man, it's cosplaying you! Is it your fan?! But shouldn't the main focus be on the clothes? It's my first time to see a cosplayer copying one's face and nothing else..."

"From blood spirit's distress, +666!"

Is it really a cosplay show?! Can you be a little more serious with two Class A's here?

Lu Xiaoyu shot another glance at the blood spirit. "Then, I shall continue looking for Lu Shu!"

The blood spirit fixed her with a frosty stare. "Did I say you could leave?"

Lu Xiaoyu was displeased. "Quickly take him down, grandpa."

At this moment, a golden ball of light suddenly drifted down the blood-red current. Li Xianyi turned to see Lu Shu leisurely surfing with his divine water!

The divine water was his boat, while the blood-stained current pushed him forward. Against the eerie backdrop, he looked outlandishly powerful.

As soon as he caught sight of Lu Xiaoyu, Lu Shu shouted cheerfully, "Xiaoyu!"

Lu Xiaoyu immediately pulled a long face. "I thought you agreed to meet me outside the palace?"

Feeling wronged, Lu Shu shot a glimpse at the hovering blood spirit, then mumbled to Lu Xiaoyu, "I was in the palace, but it sank without any prior warning. I've done whatever I can to get back to the surface for you! The old man knows it!"

Something must be remedied. Just a while ago, rounds of distress points from Lu Xiaoyu had been registered on Lu Shu's side! Actually, Lu Xiaoyu had traveled downstream via the soil once she lured the bugs out. Then, she had been searching for him as she carved on the walls to vent her grudges.

Lu Xiaoyu's eyes were almost beaming with joy after hearing his explanation. "Is that true?"

Li Xianyi replied, "Nope."

Lu Shu was shocked. "???"

"From Lu Xiaoyu's distress, +999!"

The blood spirit's anger was building up. "Are you guys done?!"

"From blood spirit's distress, +999!"

In the next instant, Li Xianyi's white jade sword suddenly whizzed towards the blood spirit, creating a splendid view as transparent waves scattered out due to breaking through the sound barrier!

Beneath the blood spirit, the divine water suddenly emerged from the surface of the blood pool, wrapping the creature up from below. The golden snake was darting around in the water, its tongue shooting in and out!

The divine water was like a giant serpent, its jaws opening wide

to swallow the blood spirit, its delicious prey!

During their short conversation just now, a tacit understanding had been established between Li Xianyi and Lu Shu, despite their lack of any previous cooperation. Perhaps it was due to the long time they had spent with each other, or perhaps it was because they followed the same master.

But both of them had agreed, upon meeting, that this creature needed to die!

In spite of Lu Shu's relatively weak capabilities, their joint cooperation could increase Li Xianyi's chances of winning against another Class A expert!

At that moment, gargoyles awakened from their slumber one after another, throwing themselves down from the dome towards Lu Shu and Lu Xiaoyu in a crazy manner.

Some even bit the hook and crashed into the divine water.

Meanwhile, the blood spirit needed to be fully concentrated in guarding off Li Xianyi's murderous sword!

### **452 LI YIXIAO'S BACKERS**

The sea of chi and snow mountain had always been unique to Li Xianyi's faction. In its essence, one's vitality paved the way towards the sea of chi and snow mountain, in which his sword energy was condensed and sharpened. At present, Li Xianyi had achieved the state whereby Nature itself consisted purely of swords. Upon the release of his full strength, the sound of swords echoed through the entire underground cavern over the blood pool.

The white jade dagger weaved through space, and its location could only be revealed by the disturbance to the blood in its wake.

The blood spirit hovered midair, its eyes cold as ice. Instantly, waves swelled up from the blood pool, emitting tens of thousands of blood arrows!

As Class A's, neither one was willing to succumb to the other!

Honestly speaking, Lu Shu had always been looking forward to watching a fight between Class A's. But now, there was no time to enjoy the show. Gargoyles were falling down from the dome above, pouncing on Lu Xiaoyu and himself. There were close to ten thousand of them!

It was even scarier than Li Yixiao's backers! Even he would take to his heels in this situation!

Like wasps whose nest had been attacked, those gargoyles could not be any more aggressive. Lu Shu immediately ran off, pulling Lu Xiaoyu alongside him. Once they

caught up, they would be dead!

Besides, Lu Shu insisted that Lu Xiaoyu's ability to control spirits should be kept a secret from Li Xianyi. He thought, given the righteous values upheld by the Golden Foundation, Li Xianyi would probably end up the last in the list who would accept the act of capturing the spirits of the dead. It seemed heretical.

Thus, it was for Lu Xiaoyu's good.

Lu Shu did not accelerate until the gargoyles had almost reached Lu Xiaoyu and himself. Though unable to win, he had to be the bait, as they could not be left here to distract the old man.

Otherwise, the old man would be in danger, if he had to face down close to ten thousand gargoyles and the powerful blood spirit at the same time!

Therefore, his obligation was not to assist the old man in slaying the blood spirit, but to clear any distractions!

As Lu Shu fled with Lu Xiaoyu, he certainly did not forget to roll in a few gargoyles with his divine water...

Lu Xiaoyu rolled her eyes. His greed for money was blatantly obvious anytime, anywhere...

But despite his ability to devour multiple targets now, the sheer number of gargoyles behind them created a serious headache!

As they ran on, Lu Shu suddenly felt Lu Xiaoyu's little hand freeze in his hand.

Confused, he asked, "Why?"

Smiling, Lu Xiaoyu shook her head. "Nothing!"

She saw there was another line beneath hers on the wall.

Suddenly, it reminded her of the pair of snowmen in their yard on a snowy day the year before. They had always been supporting each other like that.

Howard fixed those individual Practitioners, who were in a complete mess, with a frosty stare. "A bunch of losers."

Their frailty and weaknesses were exposed down to the smallest detail through the engagement with the bug flood. Without systematic training and effective teamwork, their power was reduced to close to nothing in actual combat.

Perhaps, strong, talented individuals would eventually emerge from the crowd of individual Practitioners. As a matter of fact, there were a couple of high-caliber lone warriors in the Darkness Kingdom according to Howard's knowledge. But still, with covert support from influential powers of the old order or being tycoons of the old times themselves, they were fundamentally different from those individual Practitioners, who lacked basic cultivation resources.

Strictly speaking, they were not alone.

In reality, very few could rise without a powerful background.

The bugs had almost been cleared. Many individual Practitioners had collapsed to the ground, catching their breath as their faces turned ashen due to exhaustion. This



encounter was the greatest challenge to all of them. It taught them a lesson on just how weak they were!

Actually, many individual Practitioners enjoyed a sense of superiority in their own lives. Their neighbors, past colleagues or classmates admired them, and even lifting a heavy load would earn them applause. However, here, their aura had been eclipsed by big organizations.

The leader of the Pledge, who had even taken off his red uniform, blended into the crowd. Being tricked by Lu Shu earlier had planted within him a seed of hatred.

Caiden found an ordinary place to rest. It had taken him a lot of effort to break out of the siege of bugs after he was left alone.

Casting him a brief glimpse, Howard sneered. "The Pledge is a real piece of crap. Its sole leader was fooled while his men are nowhere to be found. Why? Are you tired of the bugs too?"

Caiden's face froze in hostility. "Howard Miller, are you speaking on behalf of the Phoenix Society? Don't you need to gain the Saint's permission?"

Howard's eyes narrowed. "Don't try to sow discord. You are too weak. I'm only stating the fact."

Indeed, Howard was powerful. Else, he would not have been delegated the responsibilities of foreign matters by a top cultivation organization, the Phoenix Society. But even he was under the Saint. He had to admit that the Saint, the founder of the Phoenix Society, was unparalleled in all of North America.

But Howard was already superior enough among various big organizations and individual Practitioners. His ability to hold back the entire throng of remaining upstream bugs was widely witnessed, displaying the true power of the Phoenix Society. No one could deny his strength!

"Can't even withstand a fight of such low intensity and unable to confront creatures in the remains, how dare you come and explore the remains?" Howard asked with a haughty air.

The question left the individual Practitioners speechless. It was both embarrassing and unbearably painful when one's weaknesses were publicly exposed.

At the moment, Li Yixiao and Zhi Wei had long since left the team to search for Lu Shu downstream after the bug flood was under control. Soon, they saw Lu Shu and Lu Xiaoyu running back.

Li Yixiao found the creepy sound behind them kind of familiar... Then, he saw close to ten thousand gargoyles...

"From Zhi Wei's distress, +666!"

Unease flashed across Zhi Wei's face as he racked his brains for possible countermeasures... Should they flee?! Just when he turned to Li Yixiao for his opinion, the latter's eyes were beaming with admiration. "WOW! AWESOME!"

### **453 THE SECOND MARATHON MATCH IN THE REMAINS**

As someone who had rolled in thousands of gargoyles, even Li Yixiao was in shock. What was it like to have close to ten thousand?!

With such powerful backers, it would not be an issue at all to take down five organizations concurrently! Therefore, Li Yixiao's first reaction was one of

admiration!

But he was confused too about where on Earth brother Lu Shu had found so many gargoyles.

It had already been an extremely arduous task to roll in over a thousand of them earlier. Yet, Lu Shu brought in so many with commendable efficiency. Impressive!

Thus, Li Yixiao had gasped in admiration as he could not achieve the same feat as Lu Shu...

Of course, Li Yixiao did not know what had truly happened... Lu Shu had a great future ahead of him, he thought, the two of them would be able to wreak havoc in any remains if they joined forces. By then, they would become the epitome of invincible!

But there was no time for daydreams just yet. Before Zhi Wei had come to a decision, Li Yixiao had already fled like a horse...

His backers attacked everyone indiscriminately! They had no chance of victory in this circumstance.

Zhi Wei and his Golden Foundation members were stunned by Li Yixiao's reaction. Taking a deep breath, Zhi Wei commanded, "Run!"

On the other side, Howard was attempting to portray the Phoenix Society as the most powerful figure in the cultivation realm through their performance in the battle. His job scope of managing overseas matters was more than that of a good fighter, but more of demanding respect.

Take the Heavenly Network as an example. A few successful battles had deterred foreign Practitioners from breaking through China's national boundaries without permission.

Just when individual Practitioners were watching Howard posturing, a brawny figure came into sight, dashing upstream without a word.

Wasn't that Li Yixiao? Everyone was stunned. Why was he back?!

Unmoved, Howard curled his lips in scorn at Li Yixiao's receding figure. He had earned himself an infamous reputation among the international Practitioners community. Despite all the trouble he caused, did he not fail to secure the relic in the Laos remains? Why did the Heavenly Network send such a joker to the remains?!

Then came a flurry of footsteps from downstream. In the next second, Zhi Wei led the Golden Foundation through the crowd without saying hi.

The scene afterwards was even more shocking, as Lu Shu and Lu Xiaoyu sprinted across the ground with countless gargoyles following behind...

Meanwhile, everyone was in a state of total exhaustion from the battle with bugs and Howard had just mocked them for their cowardliness in the face of dangers...

"From Howard Miller's distress, +666!"

He would not have been chosen to lead if he was just a rash man who knew only about reputation. In any case, the foreign policies of the Phoenix Society were different from those in the Heavenly Network...

Before everyone else could react, Howard had already taken the lead to flee upstream...

Hadn't he just criticized that the act of flight in danger was one for the weaklings? People were stunned. But Howard was shocked by the trouble-making ability of Heavenly Network members.

All of the individual Practitioners instantly took to their heels. Be it tired or wounded, no one would be willing to be left behind as the diet for ten thousand gargoyles.

"Excuse me! Excuse!"

Before they could run far, Lu Shu had already started to overtake them with Lu Xiaoyu...

That was the official commencement of the second marathon in the underground remains. Runner Lu Shu began speeding up from the inner lane, instantly gaining a huge advantage, way ahead of the rest...

But soon, Lu Shu found the right time and returned to the blood pool via the earth with Lu Xiaoyu's help.

If they had done so earlier, all the gargoyles would have immediately been attracted to Li Xianyi. Thus, Lu Shu's plan was to bring them to those big organizations and individual Practitioners.

Of course, their kind help would be reimbursed too, with Lu Shu's sincere wishes...

Zhi Wei's face became grave as individual Practitioners were being caught by the

gargoyles. He turned to his men and said, "Please assist me!"

Then, he skidded to a stop, thunder rolling from inside his body. At that instant, his physical form had merged with his inner powers. His pupils were deep like black holes, and electrical arcs danced crazily on his skin.

A thundering voice roared from inside Zhi Wei's body, "Enter the tunnel. Don't try to explore the remains. I can only buy you three minutes!"

He was commanding individual Practitioners. After three minutes, even his Class B capabilities would not allow him to hold back those gargoyles any further.

Instantly the entire underground cavern was as bright as daylight due to the flashes of lightning, which weaved into a giant web, sealing the pathway of the gargoyle spearhead.

"Go!" and thunder raged.

Upon his command, all members of the Golden Foundation unleashed their powers. In an instant, splendid pulses of mana blew many gargoyles into pieces!

Zhi Wei's thunder state weakened over time. Once three minutes was up, he returned to his human form. A Golden Foundation pro immediately threw him over his shoulder and carried him upstream. They had done their best!

...

Lu Shu led Lu Xiaoyu skimming through the underground. Now, their only concern was to assist Li Xianyi in any way possible!

They would be genuinely sad if anything happened to the old man.

But just when they were about to reach the blood pool, an urgent sense of danger suddenly rose from Lu Shu's heart. Lu Xiaoyu's reaction was quick as well. She immediately formed a thick protective shell around them using soils mixed with deep sea white sand.

At that instant, an immense force came from the surface like a wild beast, not seeming to attenuate at all through the layers of earth. In a split second, the underground structure collapsed and exploded like a sheet of fragile paper.

#### **454 DEVOUR THE BLOOD SOUL**

At that instant, Lu Xiaoyu's fury was triggered upon the sight of Lu Shu's agony. Anthony was almost exploding with energy and Johnson was combat-ready anytime.

But their opponent seemed uninterested in prolonged engagement. After squeezing out a few English syllables from its teeth, "Don't interfere", it hastened towards the blood pool.

Its voice was emotionless, as if its act earlier was as easy as a lift of a finger.

When Lu Xiaoyu was about to attack, Lu Shu stopped her. "Don't. It's a Class A!"

He had sensed ocean-like waves of energy from the individual, like what he had felt only in Chen Baili, Li Xianyi and Nie Ting!

However, strangely, neither did it intend to kill nor handicap them. It seemed that it only wanted Lu Shu and Lu Xiaoyu to stay put.

Besides, who was this Class A?!

There were only three publicly acknowledged Class A's in the world. But now, the fourth had emerged!

"Bring me up," Lu Shu said, his voice feeble. He could sense the departure of the Class A.

Lu Xiaoyu's eyes were teeming with worry and anger. But she was well aware of Lu Shu's reasons for disallowing her attack. In this aspect, she respected Lu Shu's decisions fully.

After they returned to the surface, Lu Shu blurted, disregarding his internal injuries, "He is certainly going for the blood pool. So far, we can't determine whether he is friend or foe, but the old man will be in great danger if the two Class A's joined forces! We have to hurry!"

Yet, Lu Xiaoyu was more cool-headed than Lu Shu at the moment. "We may not be of any useful help to him. But you... I won't allow anything to happen to you..."

Lu Shu pondered for two seconds and smiled. "Even if that's the case, we can't abuse his kindness. The ultimate aim of our practices... Isn't it to do what we want? In this world, not many people are genuinely nice to us. So, we can't lose that old man."

Be it an excuse or the true reason, it did not matter after all. Even if they could not win, Lu Shu would not leave the old man alone in such a perilous predicament.

Maybe... it was just for the bowl of tomato noodles with eggs when they were home.

Lu Xiaoyu smiled too. "I am following you wherever you go."



Lu Shu spat out the blood in his mouth. Then, expressionless, he dashed towards the blood pool with Lu Xiaoyu by his side.

Suddenly, the deafening sound of an explosion was heard from the pool. Lu Shu sensed the rise of a mushroom cloud of mana. "The fight has begun!"

They heard the blood spirit roaring in fury, "Puppet Master, how can you be still alive! And why did you join the humans?!"

A cold voice replied, "Even you can linger on with your last breath here, so why can't I be alive? Now, hurry up and come with me!"

Coupled with the fact that the person was addressed as the Puppet Master, Li Xianyi had the reason to believe that the armored man was a puppet, whose abilities could never be underestimated. Just now a mere punch thrown out by the puppet had almost severed the blood spirit's supply of mana. It would have been paralyzed if it had not been fast enough.

Unwilling to get involved in the unknown situation, Li Xianyi suddenly ceased all his action. Despite the fact that the blood spirit was his enemy, an enemy's enemy still might not be his friend!

Furthermore, according to the blood spirit, the Puppet Master was not a human either!

Earlier, Li Xianyi had already found the mysterious symbols in the remains familiar when he slaughtered the inferno blood devil on the surface. Now, the appearance of the blood spirit and Puppet Master had somehow affirmed his belief, though more pieces were needed to complete the puzzle.

The title of Puppet Master did not sound familiar, probably because they had been silenced for too long.

Which meant Li Xianyi had also waited for too long! For ages, the Golden Foundation had been a loyal follower of their ancestors' last wishes of guarding the world. Yet, even Li Xianyi's team could not be sure whether those strange encounters before the regeneration of Spirit Qi was truly associated with their forefathers' last words.

Over the course of time, there had been ongoing disputes within the Golden Foundation. Did the belief they insisted on really exist?

However, only after Li Xianyi witnessed the blood-red patterns, the altar, the Puppet Master and was made known of its non-human identity, did he finally realize that the Golden Foundation and so many of its members, did not wait for nothing!

Furthermore, as the descendant of the Hall of Swords, it would be too lonely if his enemy did not show up eventually.

In the meantime, the blood spirit was in a hurry to replenish its power by sucking mana from the blood pool. "I am as equally powerful as you now. So why do you think I must go out with you?! I can do it on my own too!"

But the Puppet Master replied scornfully, "I'm afraid you do not remember the glory of our Lord. At the end of the day, the inferior remain inferior. From the day I was awoken, I have to remind you that some things are never meant to be forgotten."

As it spoke, energy erupted from within. It was actually attacking the blood spirit and Li Xianyi simultaneously by itself!

In an instant, the black cloak and the iron-clad puppet flew towards the blood spirit and Li Xianyi respectively at the same time. It was a wildly ambitious move, or rather, could it be the Puppet Master's strength?

But Li Xianyi suddenly burst into laughter. "I am surprised how I have been trifled with! Stay, both of you! Let me show you how one man can hold back all his enemy forces! Rise, my lofty Hall of Swords!"

In an instant, Li Xianyi's hair and beard fluttered. As the edge of his sleeves flapped in the air, his sea of chi and snow mountain were suddenly unlocked. Following an avalanche on the mountain, every single grain of dust over the blood pool immediately transformed into a sword by his will.

A violent storm swept through the cavern. Instantly millions of fine and close scratches appeared on the stone walls around the pool, each as deep as ten centimeters!

As invisible sword energy raged over the pool, the Puppet Master's brows knitted together. "The Hall of Swords has yet to die out from this world!"

The swords of will were innumerable, sweeping towards the blood spirit and the Puppet Master under Li Xianyi's control. Severely injured, the blood spirit was no match for Li Xianyi now. Only then did it finally realize that Li Xianyi had not even given it all he had earlier!

Instantly numerous swords punctured its body. Yet, for unknown reasons, it was not yet slain. Gasping its last breath, the blood spirit pleaded, "Save me! I can give you my blood soul and follow you for eternity!"

After that, a drop of blood was detached from between its brows and flew towards the Puppet Master. However, at this very moment, a golden glow suddenly sprang up and the blood droplet was swallowed by a golden snake!

Too caught up in the battle, none of the three Class A's had attention to spare. Who would expect they would be taken advantage of by someone else?! It seemed that this golden snake had been hiding in the blood pool for a long while!

The blood soul was the source of life for blood devils. Whoever was in possession of the soul would be entitled total control over the spirit forever. Nonetheless, never had the Puppet Master expected that this soul would be digested by a golden snake right before its face!

The blood spirit wilted at once!

"From blood spirit's distress, +999!"

"From Tiger Zhi's distress, +999!"

### **455 THE RELIC AND THE ENDING OF THE REMAINS**

Usually, ordinary Practitioners would try to stay clear of battles between Class A's so as not to be rolled in as collateral damage. So, no one would have expected the appearance of a golden snake from the blood pool, and its act of swallowing the blood spirit's soul when it surrendered it to the Puppet Master!

In the meantime, the Puppet Master was fully concentrated in its defense against Li Xianyi's swords of will. Its gold-lined black cloak flapped in the air, acting as an excellent layer of protection for itself.

But in that instant, the golden snake returned to the pool, while the blood spirit's

vitality had been sapped due to the loss of its soul.

In shock, the Puppet Master and Li Xianyi turned to look at Lu Shu, but the latter was equally stunned like themselves.

It was perfectly understandable. Was the golden snake not supposed to stay inside the divine water? Yet it turned out that it could actually leave when there was something yummy?!

Speaking of which, why couldn't it? Didn't the snake come out and assist Nogiwa Takenobu during his fight?!

So unreliable!

Earlier Lu Shu trusted the snake to be more dependable than his gourd, but now he understood that they were birds of the same feather! Complaints aside, Lu Shu quickly put his divine water and the golden snake back into his Seal of Lands in case the Puppet Master might vent its anger on them...

As a matter of fact, Lu Shu's original intention was to enslave the blood spirit. But it did not seem to work that way as the spirit looked like it was in the jaws of death...

Actually, the acceptance of the blood soul came with a contract bound by secret spells. That was why engulfing the soul was equivalent to sapping its energy instead of claiming ownership.

In a split second, to everyone's surprise, the divine water had expanded by almost a third! Lu Shu had invested in it more than one thousand broken weapons, magical weapons, gargoyles, a blood devil and countless beetles so as to grow it to its current

size. Yet a single soul of a blood spirit could produce such tremendous effects!

Truly, a Class A's power was beyond imagination!

Suddenly both the Puppet Master and its iron-clad puppet swerved towards Li Xianyi mid air. The puppet hurled out a punch so strong that even spatial dimensions were starting to distort. But Li Xianyi remained calm, manipulating his swords with his will, resulting in a flurry of clashing sounds on the puppet's armor.

Made of unknown materials, the puppet could actually withstand such powerful strikes with sheer endurance!

However, its earth-shattering blow was also reduced to a gentle breeze by the curtain of swords.

At this moment, using the iron puppet as its stronghold, the Puppet Master commanded the blood spirit coldly, "Come! Quick!"

Unable to maintain its human form, the spirit transformed into a blood fog and flew into the Master's black cloak. Li Xianyi laughed scornfully at the sight. He had decided to give up the relic and fight till his last breath!

Actually that was how enemies were made in the remains among big organizations. Once the relic had been found, no one would lay a finger on it at all. Therefore, all of them were trapped inside and they could only kill one another as time wore on. However, those types of incidents had only happened once since the regeneration of Spirit Qi.

At this moment, a snowy white mask fell out from the blood spirit's fading figure. Just

when the mask was about to come into contact with the pool, the Puppet Master seized it between its fingers from a distance away. Then, with slight hesitation, it hurled the mask towards Lu Shu!

As though having sensed something, the mask suddenly transfigured into an ashen face with a gaping mouth. It was totally unexpected and no one knew why the Puppet Master suddenly attacked Lu Shu!

But in the next second, there was a fit of palpitation in Lu Shu's heart. He felt the flame suddenly trembled a little before being extinguished to its usual state.

Meanwhile, the ferocious mask turned obedient and landed on Lu Shu's palm like an ordinary toy.

In that instant, the entire remains collapsed like a broken mirror. All the pieces of the world started gushing into the mask. He had found the relic!

How could it be the relic? Lu Shu was in shock. Why did the remains not shut down when the mask was in the Puppet Master's hand?!

Besides, why was the mask suppressed by the flame in his heart? The mask had chosen to attack himself over the Puppet Master, but was immediately tamed by the appearance of the flame. Ever since the regeneration of Spirit Qi Lu Shu had always been curious about the true identity of the fire.

Just before the remains collapsed, Lu Shu saw the Puppet Master enter its iron puppet like a shadow. He sensed a confused stare from within the cloak, as though the Puppet Master too found the action of the mask inexplicable.

But there was no time for careful analysis. In the blink of an eye, they found themselves back on Koh Chang island. Then, the Puppet Master soared into the sky from its puppet.

Together they fled westward, with Li Xianyi following close behind.

Instantly every single leaf on the island left its branch, turning into numerous leaf daggers beside Li Xianyi. All Practitioners gazed up in awe as the sky was covered by swarms of leaves.

It was a fight between Class A's!

No one foresaw the sudden ending of the remains and all of them were still fleeing for their lives. Now, they were still guessing the identity of the unfamiliar Class A.

Judging from the current situation, it seemed that Li Xianyi was running after the Class A who had secretly secured the relic...

Despite their preparation to compete for the relic outside the remains, everyone decided to let it be since it was a Class A who took it... At the very least, it was better alive than dead.

Once outside the remains, Lu Shu immediately put the mask in his Seal of Lands. Then, acting as if nothing had happened, he dragged Lu Xiaoyu and Li Yixiao, who was still shocked and puzzled, into the sea to leave the site through the water as soon as possible!

With so many Practitioners on Koh Chang island, no one could be sure whether any trouble would be caused there. When they were back to the Pattaya coastline, a cruise



ship branded with the Phoenix Society logo came into sight. As a man who was in for a penny and in for a pound, Lu Shu took down all the cruise ships that belonged to big organizations altogether...

As for those of the local tourism industry, he spared them. After all, they still relied on them for their next meal.

### **456 THE WHITE MASK**

Although the majority of Practitioners came to the remains saying that they had no expectations of obtaining the relic themselves, who would not fancy the possibility? It was the same with the lottery, many buyers still hoped to get lucky one day and secure the top prize, though oftentimes they did not show it.

However, on this piece of barren land, broken magical weapons were a common sight. After they had finally made it underground, they were again thrown off their bearings by the complicated labyrinth ahead. Then, they went through the first marathon under the chase of bugs and a second under gargoyles. What kind of hellish experience was that...

In the end, a few days had passed but nothing useful was gained.

Exhausted, everyone laid on the beach, wondering what they had come for...

Besides, there were more than ten thousand Practitioners at the start but now, fewer than eight thousand survived. Although their deaths could not be considered as extremely tragic, the number of casualties was not insignificant.

Some observant individuals began the search for Nogiwa Takenobu once they were back in the real world. They wanted to know the ending to the fight between he and the madman-looking glowing teenager.

If he lived, the young man dispatched by the Heavenly Network was not as scary as expected to be. But soon they realized that Nogiwa was nowhere to be found, meaning the legendary Class B figure of the Collection of Gods would have probably perished in the hands of the Heavenly Network!

"Not 100% certain, though. Nogiwa Takenobu is a hider and maybe he has concealed himself knowing he is no longer as strong as before. After all, there are multiple targets on his back, not just from the Heavenly Network alone," someone speculated.

True. People liked to strike others when they were down. Furthermore, the Collection of Gods had made themselves a few enemies in the cultivation realm due to their obsession with relics. If the Phoenix Society was known for their arrogance, the Collection of Gods had a notorious reputation for madness.

"Pay attention to information on the Collection of Gods after we go back. We will need to be more wary of the Heavenly Network if Nogiwa Takenobu really fails to return."

It was not a joke. At the moment, two Class A's of the Heavenly Network were held back in their country due to the vast size of their territory and the relative shortage on manpower.

However, it remained uncertain how powerful the Heavenly Network truly was and its efficiency in churning out a new generation of future experts.

As a matter of fact, it was a common issue faced by many big organizations. The population of one's members spelled for the prerequisite of a grander arena.

But his subordinate got back to him with distress written all over his face no sooner

than he dialed a satellite call. "Good news and bad news..."

Howard cast him a cold look. "Speak."

"The good news is, the Saint has already ascended to Class A at the North Pole!"  
replied the man.

Those around were shocked, but there was an additional hint of relief on Howard's face. The Saint had always been his role model and now Howard would have to cover a great distance so as to catch up with him. However, with their own Class A, the Phoenix Society would be even stronger!

Howard waited for the bad news.

"And the bad news is, our cruise has just been sunk by a despicable water-type Practitioner... Not only us, all big organizations have encountered the same..."

Howard was stunned for a long moment before he quickly realized that the one from the Heavenly Network was of the water type! Where did he go?!

He... had gone...

"From Howard Miller's distress, +666!"

Howard was certain that this young man was even more of a pain in the ass than Li Yixiao! Bloody hell! He ran around picking fights with beetles and gargoyles before the relic had even shown up! After he came out, he sank other people's ships too!

Lunatic!

...

Lu Shu and the rest had returned to their safe house. Having had his fun in the remains, Li Yixiao did not mind at all not having the relic himself...

Besides, now Lu Shu had finally understood why Li Yixiao was so poor. Despite his vow to get richer, Li Yixiao had embraced freedom to the fullest and threw money to the back of his brain once he entered the remains...

Lu Shu had nothing to say. Moreover, he guessed Li Yixiao had probably forgotten about the relic too. But Lu Shu did not plan to hide from the Heavenly Network, because besides Lu Xiaoyu and himself, Li Xianyi, Puppet Master Tiger Zhi and the blood spirit were all aware of the whereabouts of the relic.

In addition, even if Lu Xiaoyu, Li Xianyi and himself kept the secret, Puppet Master would surely let the cat out of the bag if it wanted to create some drama. There were too many uncertainties.

By then, how would Nie Ting and Li Yixiao think of him?

As of now, the heads of the Heavenly Network had been rather honest with him. Even Nie Ting had purposely left Earl's divine water to him. Besides, he had secured the relic by fair means and there was nothing to conceal.

Lu Shu spoke, "The remains..."

But he was immediately interrupted by Li Yixiao. "When you report back to Nie Ting, don't say we have never even seen the relic, and don't mention what I did inside too.

You just say we have done our best but unfortunately, the luck is not on our side! Hahaha, how about that? I learned it from movies. Besides, think about it, we are not at fault at all. How can we interfere in a fight between two Class A's? So, it is pretty understandable that we didn't get the relic..."

Lu Shu cut in, his face darkened, "I have the relic."

"Burp?" Li Yixiao froze.

Then, Lu Shu took out the pale mask, which rested quietly in his hands. Yet, it opened its scary mouth again and shot towards Li Yixiao at once. Never had he expected that the mask would automatically attack humans! Horrified, Lu Shu immediately stuffed the mask back into his Seal. "Haha, don't take it too hard. But this is the relic. Maybe it is a disguise. That's all I know."

Still shocked, Li Yixiao looked at Lu Shu in disbelief. "You actually got the relic! Then why did the old man run off? I thought he was provoked 'cuz his relic was stolen!"

In any case, Li Yixiao would hunt down whoever stole his relic.

## **457 GOING HOME**

Things that you don't know? Lu Shu thought for a while before replying, "Actually, there IS something I need to tell you."

Li Yixiao's face lit up. See? I'm smart! He's finally telling the truth! "What is it?"

"The first thing that old man will do after he comes back is probably look for you. He has been doing so for two days in the remains..."

"From Li Yixiao's distress, +999!"

At the moment, there was not much time for concern. Li Yixiao started packing up at once. "Hurry up! We are going back in a minute!"

"Sure." Then, Lu Shu pulled Lu Xiaoyu aside and mumbled, "I thought this mask attacked me because the Puppet Master asked it to. But now I realize it is not like that. I'm guessing it attacks all humans automatically except me as it is suppressed by the fire inside my heart."

Lu Xiaoyu shot him a brief glimpse. "Then go figure it out yourself."

Then she went to binge on Naruto. She could not wait any longer to watch her animes after so many days in the remains. Things like competitions and relics were none of her interest and she had entered the remains just for Lu Shu!

Distress crept into Lu Shu's mind. There was no one he could discuss with! Besides, he could not entrust the truth with Li Yixiao either.

When Lu Xiaoyu's eyes were glued to her phone screen, Lu Shu suddenly leaned over. "Why do you think the remains did not close when the Puppet Master got the mask?"

Lu Xiaoyu rolled her eyes without even looking up. "Do you think Naruto will become the Hokage in the end?"

Lu Shu pondered for a minute. "Probably will."

Wait a moment, Lu Xiaoyu had diverged from the topic!

Now he understood that Lu Xiaoyu shared no interest in the conversation. Having returned to his room alone, Lu Shu took out the white mask for a closer inspection. In fact, instead of the obvious questions, he was more curious about why his inner flame could subdue the mask.

Who else would have a flame blazing in his heart? Lu Shu had been burying the confusion deep in his heart in an attempt to get over it. Be it the sapling on his palm or the fire, it made him feel different from everyone else.

As though... they were implying that he was not human at all.

There was one possibility. Maybe the Puppet Masters, like blood spirits, could enter the remains freely with the white mask serving as the key. Even blood spirits could preserve their last breath in the remains and grow into a Class A today.

However, the key could not let them out due to their non-human identity. Therefore, the Puppet Master wanted to use Lu Shu himself as a medium whose contact with the mask could end the remains.

Perhaps the Puppet Master had even intended to kill Lu Shu in one go, but never had he expected what happened next. The low-level human, unharmed, actually made the mask his own possession.

Holding the white mask on his palms, Lu Shu studied it carefully. Made of unknown materials, the hard-looking item actually felt like cotton in his hands.

After a long hesitation, Lu Shu finally placed the mask on his face. Yet, it did not go as smoothly as it did for the blood spirit. To his surprise, the mask struggled to leave

his face and refused to cooperate. But when Lu Shu infused it with his celestial powers, he was astonished to realize that the mask was immediately tamed with even a tad familiarity with him.

Was his celestial map really so domineering that it could suppress everything?

In the past, it worked on Spirit Qi and the Yinyang Kinship of the Three. Now, it could even control this piece of creepy relic?!

Lu Shu could feel that the mask was perfectly compatible with his skin. In a flash of thought, his face in the mirror, changed into... a thinner version of Li Yixiao!

Lu Shu stared at himself for a long while, speechless. How would he have expected that the mask could not change the shape of his face?

Then what's the use! What the hell!

So if a fat man wanted to turn into a thin one, he would become a wider version?!

Were there ANY reliable and useful magical weapons in the world?!

As a matter of fact, there had been some misunderstanding on Lu Shu's side. The white mask was a sacred artifact that belonged to the clan of blood devils, who, consisted purely of blood, could transfigure into any form possible in accordance with the mask. Thus, its inventor had never given much consideration to whether the mask was capable of changing the body structure of the wearer...

As a result, it inconvenienced Lu Shu...



Taking a deep breath, Lu Shu took off the mask. At the moment it seemed that the greatest use of the mask was to disguise his true face.

Back in the remains, Li Yixiao had called him by his name in front of Meng Jingchan and Evan's team. Thus, Lu Shu would not be surprised at all if his name appeared on the search list of various big organizations across the world the next day.

Hence, a disguise would be very necessary. Otherwise, he might be pursued by a few experts interested in him. What a miserable life it would be!

Lu Shu started calculating his gains from the remains this time. First of all, it certainly had to be his divine water, which had increased in size by... more than ten times. It had expanded to as big as a swimming pool after devouring the blood spirit.

Moreover, with its own weapon spirit, its lethality towards individual targets had even reached the level of the black dragon spear.

Speaking of which, this was a much more productive way of nurturing the divine water as compared to Earl's painstaking efforts.

Following the same vein, one had to stop being too picky with their food if they wanted to gain weight.

The second greatest gain was the large income of distress points. At the moment, points from big organizations including the Phoenix Society were gushing in like snow storms. At the current rate, the fifth star in the third nebula had already been ignited with even some excess...

The success had to be attributed to Lu Shu's creative use of the Sun mirror and his

carvings on the stone walls. Now, he had become an expert at gaining distress points! What an achievement!

Lastly, Lu Shu suddenly felt that there was one more accomplishment that was worth mentioning, that it was his first time to have admirers.

Li Yixiao's voice interrupted his thoughts. "Come on! Let's leave before it is too late!"

Lu Shu rose and held Lu Xiaoyu's hand in his. Putting her phone back in her pocket, Lu Xiaoyu looked up and smiled at Lu Shu. Pattaya's sky was still blue as usual, as though undisturbed by the Practitioners' revelry.

Gazing in the direction of Koh Chang island, Lu Shu smiled. "Goodbye."

Suspicious, Lu Xiaoyu cast him a glance. "Who are you bidding farewell to?"

"Humph, no one."

"Lu Shu, you've changed!"

The pair walked into the distance, until their figures blended in with the landscape and the sky above.

### **458 BACK TO SCHOOL PART 1**

Half a month after the end of the Pattaya remains.

Luo Cheng Foreign Language School.

The afternoon sun of autumn caressed people's cheeks, gentle and cozy. Trees were gradually turning yellow. Withered leaves danced in circles on the floor as gushes of wind blew through the streets.

Luo Cheng used to be heavily industrialized until the start of this century. However, on the brighter side, the air quality had slowly improved ever since.

A group of students were playing basketball on the rubber-floored court, which was located in between the main gate and the classroom building. Thus, as boys were playing ball, they could also look at the pretty girls walking past the court. How convenient.

Outside the three-point line, a handsome boy leaped into the air, leaned back and attempted a jump shot. Yet, due to his insufficient strength, he failed, and the ball flew off its path.

The ball spun out of the court, about to hit the head of a young man who was passing by.

However, in the next instant, having sensed the imminent danger, the young man grabbed the ball back-handedly. The scene caught the attention of students on the court and also those rushing to their classrooms.

His reaction was so fast and smooth that it almost seemed like a natural reflex.

Then, under people's astonished stares, the ball came to an abrupt stop in his grip.

No one had seen something so unbelievable outside of videos.

The basketball players were stunned for a long moment before shouting over, "Hey! Pass the ball back!"

The young man hesitated, before pressing the ball inwards with both of his hands, grinning back. "Shouldn't you apologize first?"

Then, everyone could only stare as the ball slowly turned oval, before finally exploding into a layer of plastic skin. The young man threw it aside and continued walking to the classroom block...

"From Zhao Shuai's distress, +666..."

"From Li Yueyang's distress, +666..."

"From..."

Bloody hell! What kind of person was that? So what if he was a Metahuman?! Yes, we should have apologized first but you did not have to be so arrogant either!

In fact, many athletes were Metahumans too. Besides those who were fond of violence, many Metahumans were also passionate about sports such as basketball, soccer and baseball. Just a while ago, two strength-type Metahumans appeared on NBA Summer Season Talent Show. Their jumping ability and speed were unmatched for other human rookies.

In addition, as basketball fans, they were even equipped with commendable playing skills!

The Union had once tried to ban Metahumans' involvement in basketball games. However, they were caught off guard when another NBA superstar awoke to his power and the Union was still in a heated discussion of how to deal with the matter even till today.

Sometimes, when the cultivation world overlapped with the commoners', the effect would not only be interesting, but also hilarious.

At the moment, those students felt rather grumpy about the incident. Who knew there was such a boorish person from some Daoyuan Class... Wait a minute, there was one indeed. But he had disappeared for a long time!

...

Class 2, Grade 12. There was still half an hour till afternoon lessons. Now, many students were engaged in a discussion on the Koh Chang remains.

In fact, the number of remains that had opened thus far had already exceeded double digits and each and every one of them would result in vehement conversations. For example, they talked about who got the relic, what kind of skirmishes broke out inside and which organization had the strongest fighters.

Gradually, websites had been set up specially dedicated to the collection of information in this aspect. However, the knowledge available was too little and such news was for entertainment only.

But maybe one day there would be an official ranking of powers for the cultivation realm. Perhaps the Golden Foundation and the Darkness Kingdom already had enough information.

"The news said that two men from our Heavenly Network entered the Koh Chang remains this time. One of them is our principal Li Yixiao..."

"Yea... Didn't you see how many complaints were launched against him on the Golden Foundation forum by individual Practitioners? Allegedly he rolled in over a thousand gargoyles and ran around causing trouble. I think it's probably true. Based on his awful personality, I'm sure he's capable of doing that."

"Wah have you read the article on the man named Zhi Wei? He's from the Golden Foundation, a Class B thunder-type Metahuman. He actually held back the gargoyles for three minutes on his own! When he got out of the remains, he had yet to recover to his usual state!" a girl shouted, "He's so handsome based on his photos!"

Jealous, a boy replied, "You girls are so naive. You like whoever you see!"

Suddenly, their conversation was interjected, "Eh, look. This post says that the identity of the other Heavenly Network member that went to the remains is still unclear. So far they haven't found any useful information. But there have been some clues and the search is still ongoing."

Another person was puzzled. "So Principal Li was not accompanied by a Heavenly King?"

In their impression, it would only be sensible if both of them were Heavenly Kings, who were believed to be the strongest in the country disregarding other factors.

"An unfamiliar Class A has just emerged! And he stole the relic from the Golden Foundation on his first appearance! Wow!"

Suddenly another person asked, "Speaking of which, all Class A aptitude geniuses went to the Capital together for progress report. Now, Cao Qingci has successfully ascended to Class C and she is already back at school. But why isn't Lu Shu back

yet?"

Everyone froze. Right, Lu Shu had never come back after the summer holidays and his only appearance was during the rank presentation. Then, he had gone missing again after he received his Major badge...

It felt very strange that a mugger who went to lessons on time everyday suddenly disappeared from class. They also heard that their form teacher, Shi Qingyan, was very worried about his End of Year Bonus Points recently because Lu Shu's absence had dealt a severe impact on the average performance of his class.

"Haha, do you think he's the one who followed Principal Li to the Koh Chang remains?" someone said half-jokingly. But then he realized the everyone was stunned in place. Right, there was indeed a possibility!

The rapport between Li Yixiao and Lu Shu was widely known. Besides, as a Class C, Lu Shu was perfectly powerful enough to compete in the overseas remains.

### **459 BACK TO SCHOOL PART 2**

Actually, they simply refused to believe that Lu Shu could follow Li Yixiao to overseas remains.

Their perception on overseas remains was about the same as that of individual Practitioners, that they were equivalent to an upper-class party, accessible only by the elites. In other words, people would fall in love there and might even climb up the social ladder rapidly with the good items obtained inside.

In addition, they could also expand their network...

It was an overly simplistic and optimistic view because their network might stab them in the back too. For instance, bloodshed between Practitioners was not rare in the Koh

Chang remains, and individual Practitioners were mercilessly enslaved by big organizations to serve as canaries in the mine. It taught everyone a lesson, that the cultivation world followed the rules of the jungle.

Thus, despite Lu Shu's good luck to be promoted to Class C, it still seemed unrealistic that he could leap into the international limelight in one shot.

Many people attributed other people's capacity in making money and promotion as luck, but to Nie Ting, true strength played an equal role in one's ability of constant awakening.

"Why did our Principal Li not do anything good inside? I have seen countless complaints against him on the forum but not a single post speaks favorably of him. Besides... it seems that he didn't plan to look for the relic at all..."

"Principal Li is a strange man..."

"Wah, have you seen these photos? Coral, the pearl of Northern Europe. How can one be so pretty without makeup?!" a girl said, her eyes beaming with admiration. Then, she showed the photos to other boys, who stole a few more looks without uttering a word...

Undeniably, she was gorgeous. In the photos, Coral appeared to be looking for someone in the crowd on the beach, but she failed. Thus, in the last few photos, disappointment emerged on her face.

Maybe every male across the world who had seen the photo was starting to wonder who Coral was looking for.



At this moment, they heard a voice from the door of the classroom. "Hey everyone! Long time no see!"

Startled, everyone turned back to see Lu Shu grinning at them from the door.

In the past, this low-key boy had rarely smiled so broadly, but he could not win everyone over with that...

"From Liu Li's distress, +666..."

"From Ye Lingling's distress, +282..."

"From Li Yuqing's distress, +211..."

"From..."

Lu Shu's face lit up at the influx of points. What a warm welcome party! Now, he was feeling guilty for not giving them any souvenirs from the remains in return for their enthusiasm.

However, given the infertile land of the Koh Chang remains, the only possible souvenirs that Lu Shu could think of were skulls under the altar of inferno blood devil... How auspicious.

Instantly an awkward silence fell over the class and their heated conversation was cut short abruptly.

Lu Shu glanced over at Liu Li. "Eh, chairman, you've got your hair back."

"From Liu Li's distress, +666..."

Liu Li's pathetic hairstyle had become luxuriant again. After Lu Shu returned to his own seat, Jiang Shuyi whispered, smiling, "Recently, many good-quality magic-rich lands have emerged in the city due to the regeneration of Spirit Qi. Perhaps Liu Li has also figured out the reason for his hair loss and thus his family has spent a fortune to get him a new magic-rich land. Coming back, how's your trip to the remains?"

When everyone was still guessing the identity of Li Yixiao's company, Jiang Shuyi had already learned the truth from his family.

Moreover, it had been some time since the end of the Koh Chang remains. Jiang Shuyi even knew that Lu Shu had the relic.

By right, anything obtained from the remains was supposed to be surrendered, including Li Yixiao's black dragon spear. It was only returned to him after the standard procedures, which were of high importance inside the system.

But Lu Shu had encountered something different. Except for the fact that Nie Ting had personally phoned him to prepare materials for a report, he mentioned nothing about the relic.

Unsure about whether it was due to the peculiarities of overseas remains, judging from now at least, the superiors of the Heavenly Network had silently agreed to let Lu Shu claim possession over the mask.

Just like the Seal of Lands, the mask too had a door that could not be pushed, pulled or dragged open.

Now, recalling his experience in the remains, Lu Shu replied, "Pretty good. But I believe I can do better if given a second chance..."

Jiang Shuyi's expression changed. Why was he giving a summary?

In the meantime, Lu Shu became the center of private discussion. People were interested in where he went and his sudden return. Even his act of exploding the basketball at noon had gained admiration from younger girls in the school.

Now, in spite of negative comments about Lu Shu's upstart-style cultivation journey, no one could deny his Class C capabilities. In the entire Luo Cheng Daoyuan Class, only two people had attained Class C and his military rank was even higher than most officers.

In addition, Cao Qingci was only awarded Captain after her ascension to Class C, which made it clear that Major rankings were not automatically granted to all Class C's. Usually, they would only become Captains without significant military contributions.

Thus, strictly speaking, every member of the Heavenly Network and Daoyuan Class in school had to salute to Lu Shu first, except for Li Yixiao...

Before his return, they could take it as Lu Shu had gone elsewhere but not the remains. But now, the pure coincidence between the ending of the remains and his reappearance, plus Li Yixiao's return to Luo Cheng just a day before, left little room for doubts.

### **460 STRANGE INCIDENTS IN LUO CITY**

In just half a year's time, most Practitioners colleges were in a rapid process of construction. Take the one on Beimang remains for example, they were almost done with its external structure. Admittedly, nothing was impossible with enough money

and effort.

It was said that it took colleges fewer than three days to finish building their foundations. With sufficient allowances, the internal Class C earth-type Metahumans from the Heavenly Network were able to meet construction deadlines in an extremely efficient manner.

Additionally, many Metahumans from other types were also directly employed in the manufacturing industry. The Heavenly Network had certainly exploited their entrepreneurship to the fullest in the construction of the seven colleges.

Besides, Practitioners in the Heavenly Network were relatively more down-to-earth. Many self-proclaimed geniuses from other countries had demanded a holistic improvement in their living standards. Similarly, as depicted in some Chinese kung fu novels, masters liked to be carried around on sedan chairs by eight beauties so that they did not have to walk themselves. Was it because they looked good that way? Not really. They were just posturing.

Despite knowing about the fast construction process, Lu Shu did not expect the admission phase to arrive so early too. Only the day before, Zhong Yutang had called him in the afternoon and said, "The exams will begin after Chinese New Year next year. I suggest Major Lu return to school for studies as soon as possible so that you won't disgrace yourself by being allocated to basic security forces."

Maybe he was referring to autonomous admission, Lu Shu thought, as the timing coincided with that of various universities before the regeneration of Spirit Qi.

The newly built Practitioners college was chosen as their exam venue. Of course, its name was not "the University of Beimang" as Lu Shu had expected, but Luo Shen

Cultivation College. Lu Shu felt sorry as he could not pretend to be a Peking U student anymore.

Actually, he would still be looked upon as a graduate from Luo Shen Cultivation College. Although Tsinghua and Peking University represented the pinnacle of academia in China, those from cultivation colleges were definitely no commoners either.

After a long hesitation, Lu Shu asked Zhong Yutang on the phone, "Do I still have to sit for the exam? Since I have shed my blood for our dear country..."

"From Zhong Yutang's distress, +666!"

Back in the Beimang remains, Zhong Yutang had been annoyed several times by Lu Shu, though he had been pretty satisfied with this young man ever since. Now, sharing the same standard of capabilities and considering the fact that Lu Shu had helped him beat up Hao Zhichao, Zhong Yutang decided to explain with as much patience as he could muster. "The attendance at the exam is compulsory for everybody..."

"From Zhong Yutang's distress, +666!"

"You still have to sit for the bloody exam even if you have shed your brains!" Zhong Yutang was shivering in fury. "Okay, listen to me and go to school! If your grades are not high enough, be prepared to report to the security formation!"

Lu Shu clicked his tongue. "Wait, honestly speaking, don't you think... I'm pretty suitable to be a professor at a cultivation college? I can teach them how to stick to their initial aim even under verbal attacks!"

Ka, the phone call ended.

"From Zhong Yutang's distress, +999!"

Therefore, it seemed that he had to attend the exam no matter what. Fortunately, Lu Shu was never afraid of exams. Yet, one thing was for sure based on his conversation with Zhong Yutang, that they would become security guards against Metahuman trouble-makers if they failed to pass the assessment. So, Jiang Shuyi was correct.

Truth be told, Lu Shu fancied the career prospects of security guards. At the very least, they could be sent to black markets for security orders, and black markets were a good place...

Then, another call from Zhong Yutang interrupted his thoughts. "I will send you a document, not for your actions, but your information as a member of the Luo Cheng Branch of the Heavenly Network. You will need to cooperate if any assistance is required of you. In addition, you need to get your attitude right."

Lu Shu was displeased. "My attitude is flawless! I've shed my blood for our country!"

"From Zhong Yutang's distress, +999!"

Then, he opened the document to see a "Report on Strange Incidents in Luo Cheng". The first story had already compelled him to draw a startled breath.

Recently, Luo Cheng was seriously plagued with rats. Repeated reports had been filed against groups of rats robbing convenience shops, snack stalls in particular. Moreover, according to information given by Heavenly Network members, the rats, well organized, preferred to commit crimes right after midnight. Their operation was swift

with no hesitation.

As shown by videos filmed by surveillance cameras, the culprits had a different appearance from ordinary gray rats. They could be easily recognized with a pinch of black fur on their head. Moreover, they entered the stalls after breaking the anti-theft windows with their teeth. Then, they would carry packs of snacks away in their mouth instead of consuming them on the spot.

A few suspects had been arrested by the Heavenly Network, and they had ample reason to believe that those rats had gained preliminary intelligence. Despite the general growth in intelligence of animals across the country, which was associated with the increased Spirit Qi concentration, the issue in Luo Cheng was particularly jarring...

In the second document, all residents of a large residential estate in Luo Cheng had the same dream together on several nights. Every time after they fell asleep, they would encounter the same group of people asking them whether they wanted digital coins...

Others claimed that they were asked about Chinese chives or going to Heaven... But all of them shared similar contents.

Lu Shu suddenly felt enlightened. No wonder Little Fury was unusually obliging when he came home a few days ago. It seemed that it was feeling guilty for what it had done!

Thus, Little Fury was still copying scriptures as punishment before Lu Shu went to school.

In class, Jiang Shuyi shot Lu Shu a glance. "Be prepared. I think the superiors of the Heavenly Network is probably going to entrust you with important missions."

All big families in the country had acute instincts. Eyeing the vacancy on the position in charge of foreign matters, they knew Li Yixiao had been sent overseas mainly to give other people headaches, not for the true interests of the organization.

Currently, the main agenda of the Heavenly Network was placed on reinforcement of internal powers and the establishment of a world-recognized image. Thus, it made perfect sense to send Li Yixiao for such errands. But there was no way for the Heavenly Network to give up all overseas relics in the future!

Therefore, they were bound to have a new person manning the position. In fact, Nie Ting's decision to dispatch Lu Shu overseas this time was hardly understood by many. Given his young age, they did not deem Lu Shu as a suitable candidate to shoulder such heavy responsibilities, despite his sensory skills.

As a matter of fact, he was the only candidate available.

Yet, everything changed when they found out that Lu Shu was more than just a neighbor to Li Xianyi, and that the young man had obtained the relic himself. Even the Heavenly Kings had chosen to remain silent on this matter.

Everything was negotiable for the good of the country.

Lu Shu was stunned by Jiang Shuyi's comment. "Important missions? What kind of missions? Will I get higher salaries?"

Jiang Shuyi paused for a long while, thinking about a possible reply. "Probably, I



suppose..."

"From Jiang Shuyi's distress, +199!"