

Immortal 1431

Chapter 1431: Guardian

Who was Yun Jianyue? When had anyone ever dared to behave like that in front of her? She was about to act when Yan Xuehen stopped her, saying, "He is only an ordinary person in the end."

"Sure, you're the one with the great personality. Those who don't appreciate kindness ought to be scolded, though," Yun Jianyue said with a sneer.

Yan Xuehen said calmly, "I carry no shame in what I say and do. Why would I need someone else to feel appreciation for what I do?"

Yun Jianyue frowned. However, in the end, she didn't do anything to the ordinary person. Afterward, since they had been given the cold shoulder, Zu An's group could only leave. At first, they looked for another local to ask about the area. For some reason, though, apart from the fisherman they had seen earlier, they didn't meet anyone else.

"Continuing like this won't be a solution," Yun Jianyue said as she looked at the miasma-shrouded marsh. There was no end in sight at all. She suddenly thought of something, adding, "Wasn't that fisherman just an ordinary person? Why wasn't he affected by the miasma?"

"That is quite strange. The monsters from earlier were still understandable, but even an ordinary person such as him was fine?" Yan Xuehen wondered, sounding puzzled.

"Could it be that this so-called miasma isn't poisonous to begin with, and we were fooled by the old mulberry tree?" Zu An suggested.

Yan Xuehen shook her head and replied, "When we first entered this swamp, I already removed the leaf and tested it out. This miasma is indeed poisonous."

Yun Jianyue was a bit surprised, saying, "Wow, stone cold woman, I thought you were just a foolish, naive girl, but you actually had that level of consideration."

"Otherwise, wouldn't I have already been done in by a witch like you a long time ago?" Yan Xuehen replied, expressionless.

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Then, the group began to discuss among each other why the fisherman had such a strong reaction to what they had said. Judging from his tone, he seemed to greatly respect the Xiushe Snake.

However, it was such a savage snake. Why would the fisherman carry such an attitude toward it? They couldn't find an explanation for that even after talking to each other for a long time.

Yu Yanluo seemed to have sensed something and suddenly said, "I hear a voice calling out to me."

"Who's calling you?" the others asked in surprise.

"It seems to be the Xiushe Snake. The feeling is similar to when we encountered it earlier," Yu Yanluo replied.

Zu An asked out of concern, "Does it have good or bad intentions?"

Yu Yanluo shook her head and said, "I can't tell. I'm unable to perceive its mood."

"Be careful. It might be a trap," Yun Jianyue warned her.

After a moment of hesitation, Yu Yanluo still said, "Since it called out to me, it must have something to say to me. As a fellow snake person, I'm willing to give it a try."

Zu An said, "Since we don't have any other solutions, we can only give this method a try. It'll be fine as long as we're careful along the way."

After thinking about it, Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen didn't oppose the suggestion either. The group thus quickly followed Yu Yanluo toward the center of Dongting Lake.

"Where is the Xiushe Snake?" They looked around vigilantly when they arrived, but unfortunately, they didn't find any trace of the Xiushe Snake.

"I can feel the calling growing closer and closer. It seems to be in that direction," Yu Yanluo said. She closed her eyes, then pointed in a certain direction.

The others looked in the direction she indicated and saw that it was the mountain they had seen earlier. Only then did they realize that the mountain was at the center of the swamp. It was a lush green and extended seemingly infinitely into the distance.

"This mountain is a bit strange. It feels a little like a dragon vein, and yet it isn't truly one," Zu An said. He had studied 'One Drop of Heaven's Essence', so he was already quite knowledgeable about feng shui and geomancy. Thus, he had noticed that the mountain actually seemed to give off the aura of a dragon vein, but it wasn't quite the same.

"Say, don't you think this long and narrow winding mountain range looks a bit like a snake?" Yan Xuehen suddenly said.

"Could it be that this mountain is actually that giant snake disguising itself?" Yun Jianyue wondered in fright.

Zu An shook his head and said, "It's just a mountain. It's not alive. Even though it looks verdant and lush on the surface, now that we're up close, there's a strong aura of death surrounding this place. It's unlikely to be that snake pretending to be the mountain."

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue also examined the surroundings with their divine sense. It was indeed just a mountain. They felt much more relieved when they confirmed that.

Just then, Yu Yanluo heard the call again. She said to the others, "The call is coming from the mountain. It seems to want me to ascend."

"Be careful," Zu An reminded her out of concern.

Yu Yanluo said with a smile, "Don't worry. If it really wanted to harm me, it wouldn't have gone through all this trouble. Besides, I can already sense that it bears no malice towards me."

She was still the Snake Race's leader, so the others trusted her judgment. They abandoned their raft and climbed ashore. Soon, they discovered a small winding path.

"It seems as if this road is used quite often," Yun Jianyue muttered to herself. There was no way such a path would form if this were the true wilderness.

"It might have been made through other natives like that fisherman using it," Yan Xuehen quickly deduced.

They wanted to find some people to ask along the way, but they didn't encounter anyone.

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Just like that, Yu Yanluo followed the call up the mountain. The others followed her to the very top, where they found a temple.

"Ba Snake Temple?" they exclaimed when they saw the words on the gate. They all recalled that it was the name the fisherman had mentioned earlier, as opposed to 'Xiushe Snake'.

"It is evident that this place is still in decent shape," Yan Xuehen said as she looked around. Even though she didn't see anyone there, it was bright and clean. Everything was rather orderly. There were even several sticks of incense being lit in a big cauldron in front of the temple, filling the air with their fragrance. It was completely different from Er Fu Temple.

Yu Yanluo entered the temple and saw that there was a giant black snake statue enshrined in the very center. It was a small-scale replica of the Xiushe Snake they had just seen. Even though it was a small statue, however, it still took up close to half of the room. Its coiled figure made all who entered feel a powerful sense of pressure.

They noticed that the statue wasn't as malevolent as they had imagined. On the contrary, it seemed almost a bit... affectionate? How strange... They really couldn't associate the Xiushe Snake with being affectionate.

Yu Yanluo asked the statue, "Was it you who called me?"

The statue's eyes suddenly blinked, and the image of a snake emerged from it. It was a big black snake! However, this one was much smaller than the one that had swallowed up the elephant. It was closer to the giant pythons Zu An had seen on tv.

Zu An shivered inwardly. He quickly stood in front of Yu Yanluo, worrying that she could be hurt. However, Yu Yanluo gently patted his hand, indicating that he didn't have to worry.

"Are you Nuwa's descendant?" the Xiushe Snake asked in human speech.

"I am not," Yu Yanluo said, shaking her head.

"Then why can I sense Nuwa's aura on you?" the Xiushe Snake asked, tilting its head. At that moment, it even looked a bit... cute.

Yu Yanluo hesitated, but she still replied, "It might be because I'm from the Snake Race and since I have the Holy Pearl on me."

“Then you are Nuwa’s descendant,” the Xiushe Snake said, letting out a clear sigh of relief.

Yu Yanluo opened her mouth, but she didn’t explain further. She managed a great clan, so she knew that sometimes, explaining everything explicitly would only bring fewer benefits.

The Xiushe Snake said with a sigh, “When I saw you earlier, I thought that more of those eastern barbarians had arrived. However, I decided not to attack when I sensed your aura.”

Zu An’s group rejoiced inwardly. They were really basking in Yu Yanluo’s limelight this time, or else they would have had to fight another major battle.

“Eastern barbarians?” Yu Yanluo asked in surprise. She recalled how the fisherman had acted when he mentioned eastern barbarians.

“You are not someone from this world?” the Xiushe Snake asked, its eyes narrowing.

Yu Yanluo admitted, “We’re indeed not people from this world. We just accidentally stumbled upon this one.”

“Then it makes sense that you do not know,” the Xiushe Snake said with a sigh. “In the past, the eastern barbarians and the south’s Miao people fought fiercely. The Miao people worshiped me, viewing me as their guardian. They offered sacrifices of incense to me, so I could not just watch them suffer without doing anything. At first, our war went smoothly, but later, the eastern barbarians sent a formidable archer. I was defeated by him, which led to the defeat of my people as well...”

Zu An was startled. He asked, “Is the one you’re talking about named Yi?”

“Yi!” A hint of hatred and fear flickered through the Xiushe Snake’s eyes. “Indeed, that was him. It was him who killed me here!”

Zu An and the others thought, No wonder. However, they were quickly stunned. Then judging from what this snake is saying, it’s already dead? Then what’s the snake in front of us right now?

Chapter 1432: Blessing

The Xiushe Snake said with a sneer, “The eastern barbarians just had to come up with all of those lies, saying I was the one who brought disaster to the people, and that was why Yi came to kill me. It was clearly just a struggle between two powers, and I was the loser. However, they made it seem as if I were deranged and had lost my mind. I am the honorable guardian of the Miao people, a deity created by heaven and earth. Am I really that pitiful?!”

Zu An’s group all had strange expressions. In the end, it seemed that the snake wasn’t even that upset that it had been killed. Rather, it was angrier that it had been treated as just another monster that brought disaster to the world.

Yu Yanluo was surprised and asked, “In the past, there was a rumor that Yi was just bragging about killing you. Did you find a chance to escape?”

The Xiushe Snake’s head turned a bit red as it replied, “Ahem, back then, Yi was indeed formidable, and I was not a match for him. I... did not manage to escape either. I was sliced into several pieces.”

The snake seemed a bit embarrassed in the beginning, but it was calm when it said the second part. At that moment, Zu An almost felt that the snake was a bit proud of what happened. He thought, What the hell? Is being killed by Yi something to feel proud of?

The Xiushe Snake continued, "The native people call the mountain range you are standing on the Ba Tomb. It is actually formed from my corpse."

All of them were truly shocked now. They had seen that the mountains undulated up and down and snaked from side to side, really resembling a snake. However, they had all carefully confirmed that it wasn't alive, so they hadn't thought too much of it. They hadn't expected the mountain to actually really be the Xiushe Snake, albeit made from its corpse. For its corpse to turn into an almost never-ending mountain range... Just how large had it been back then?

"Then right now, you..." Yu Yanluo began, looking worriedly at the snake. What she was implying was obvious. If you're already dead, what kind of state are you in right now?

Just then, Zu An had been examining the snake carefully as well. He had noticed that even though its appearance was sinister, there wasn't any malevolent energy around it. After all, after cultivating the Primordial Origin Sutra and gaining the ability to purify evil spirits, he had become quite sensitive to such things. However, the Xiushe Snake clearly wasn't one of them.

The Xiushe Snake sighed and said, "Back then, I had the duty of protecting my people, but I lost to Yi, which led to the defeat of the Miao people. However, they did not blame me, and only wept bitter tears instead. They even built this Ba Snake Temple to commemorate me, making offerings day and night without end. Then, one day, I was suddenly revived." It looked a bit perplexed as it continued, "In truth, it cannot be called true revival. I do not know what kind of state I am in."

"It's the power of faith..." Zu An said to himself. He hadn't watched so many movies for nothing. The power of faith could amass into a divine being, and the Xiushe Snake was clearly such a creature because the common people really did believe in it. That was why it had 'revived' amid its remains.

The Xiushe Snake's eyes lit up as it said, "As expected of a friend of Nuwa's descendant, your knowledge is admirable. So that was what it was, haha..." It sounded quite excited at first, but that feeling gradually gave way to sorrow. By the end, it felt so moved that there were tears in its eyes.

The snake slithered up to the window and looked at the islands scattered around Dongting Lake, saying with a conflicted expression, "Back then, I merely felt that they were quite respectful to me, and the things they used for the offerings matched my tastes. That was why I stayed here to act as a protector. At the time, I even found them a bit silly and laughable, and thought to myself that I would just leave and move on whenever I got bored. I could never have expected I would even be revived because of those people I previously laughed at."

Yu Yanluo said gently, "Those people loved and respected you, so how could you not love them back? If it really had been as you said and you didn't care at all, why would you have fought against the eastern barbarians, joining the fight personally? You even sacrificed your life in the end."

Zu An and the others nodded. With the Xiushe Snake's cultivation, if not for the sake of the Miao people, it could live however it pleased. It definitely wouldn't have been killed like that.

The Xiushe Snake was a bit alarmed, saying, "I am not as great as you make me out to be..." Its voice trailed off, as if it were lost in its own thoughts.

"Right, just now, we saw a giant snake swallow a giant elephant in the lake. Was that you?" Zu An asked curiously. Since it had been revived through faith energy, it wouldn't need to feed on physical food, right?

The Xiushe Snake was momentarily distracted, but when it heard the question, it couldn't help but laugh. It said, "You probably saw a remnant of the past. This Dongting Lake is a bit special. Furthermore, because you are outsiders, and you even have the Nuwa bloodline with you, a scene from the past appeared."

The group suddenly realized what was going on. It was no surprise that neither Yan Xuehen or Yun Jianyue had been able to hurt the large snake. They had been worried about the snake being some kind of spatial element cultivator, but in the end, it turned out to be because of this!

The Xiushe Snake suddenly remembered something and asked curiously, "Right, why did you all come here?"

The group's expressions became a bit awkward. In the end, Yu Yanluo did her best to tactfully explain the entire story.

"So that was it," the Xiushe Snake said with a chuckle. "That is easy enough, no? Since you are Nuwa's descendant, we can be considered related somehow. I will help guide you out. Back then, in order to protect the people, I cast my power across all of Dongting Lake. It is indeed quite difficult for normal people to cross it."

Zu An's group looked at each other in surprise. They hadn't expected such a difficult problem to be solved just like that.

"Right, just now, you mentioned that the war back then was between your people and the eastern barbarians. Could they be the Yellow Flame Tribe?" Zu An asked after realizing something.

"The Yellow Flame Tribe?" the Xiushe Snake repeated with a frown. It said, "They used to be mortal enemies. When did they become one tribe? The ones who fought with us in the past were indeed the eastern barbarians. Their people worshiped the phoenix and a mysterious bird."

Zu An suddenly remembered that Shun had talked about that before. What the White Emperor worshiped was the phoenix, so it seemed as if the White Emperor's lineage had something to do with the eastern barbarians.

The Celestial Emperor Jun had bestowed a red bow on Yi. Meanwhile, the one who had assigned him the mission of killing the monsters was Emperor Yao. Both Emperor Jun and Emperor Yao were part of the White Emperor's faction...

The Xiushe Snake looked at Yu Yanluo and said, "Since you are Nuwa's descendant, it is fate that we met each other. Your cultivation is not bad, but it is far from displaying your bloodline's power. I will pass on the 'Dragonsnake's Nine Transformations' to you. It can aid you in unearthing your potential. In the future, you will be able to easily use the Holy Pearl's power."

Yu Yanluo was shocked. However, she knew this was a great opportunity. In truth, she had been feeling a lot of pressure with the two grandmasters, Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue, around her all the time. She said, "Then I'll really have to thank senior."

"Nuwa's descendants have shown me great kindness in the past. I am merely settling this segment of karma," the Xiushe Snake said with a chuckle. Then, its eyes glowed and some light slowly drifted toward Yu Yanluo. There were ancient and mysterious dao principles contained within.

Yun Jianyue moved over to Zu An's side and quietly said, "Be careful of any tricks."

Zu An nodded. After all, they had already experienced for themselves that monsters were not only vicious and unreasonable, but also lied a lot. As he secretly warned Yu Yanluo, he remained completely vigilant.

"Don't worry, I can sense that it doesn't bear any malice," Yu Yanluo said, giving him a reassuring look. Then, she closed her eyes to receive the light. The inside of her body suddenly lit up with the radiance of the Holy Pearl.

When he saw that it had obtained the acknowledgment of the Holy Pearl, Zu An sighed in relief. Looks like I was nervous for nothing.

The Xiushe Snake could actually obtain the sincere love and respect of the locals, being reborn through faith. How could it be some evil god?

After passing on the Dragonsnake's Nine Transformations, the Xiushe Snake's body grew much dimmer. It said, "Sigh, my body cannot compare to before. I need to sleep for a bit, so please do as you wish."

Then, its body flickered, returning to the giant snake statue.

Yun Jianyue was stunned, asking, "Didn't it say that it was going to send us out? What do we do now?"

Yu Yanluo said with a smile, "Big sis Yun, it already told me the information we needed. I should be able to bring us all out." She bowed toward the giant snake statue, then led everyone out of the temple.

"Do you feel anything strange?" Zu An asked, still feeling a bit worried.

"I'm fine. That big snake was actually a good person. Uh... I mean, a good snake," Yu Yanluo replied. "It even reminded us to be careful of the Zaochi Giant up ahead in the Flowery Field."

Chapter 1433: Field of Longevity

"Flowery Field, the Yaochi Giant..." Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue mouthed those words silently to each other. Unfortunately, even with all of their knowledge, they had still never heard anything about those two things before.

Yu Yanluo recalled what she had been told and said, looking vexed, "The Flowery Field is also called the Field of Longevity. As for the Zaochi Giant, the Xiushe Snake's tone was a bit strange when it mentioned that beast, but it wasn't willing to explain why either."

"It's fine. We'll know once we're there," Yun Jianyue said. Now that her cultivation had largely recovered, she was full of confidence. She continued, "I'm actually more worried about this Xiushe

Snake. Even though we all seemed to get along, didn't Shun want us to repeat Yi's heroic path? Yi killed it back then, but we're making a detour. Will this cause the trial to fail?" She quickly added, "Little sis Yu, I'm not trying to go against you, so please don't think that way."

Yu Yanluo showed her a smile, but her expression was full of worry. Meanwhile, Yan Xuehen gave Yun Jianyue a surprised look. This witch always did whatever she wanted, and she was extremely reckless. Why had her personality suddenly changed recently? She had even taken some time to explain herself to Yu Yanluo.

Just then, Zu An said, "I don't think it'll hinder anything. This swamp wouldn't let us out if it hadn't received the Xiushe Snake's permission. The fact that we can pass through it is the sign that we've 'cleared the trial', and we don't need to choose to kill the Xiushe Snake. Besides, judging from the reactions of the native people, it's quite kind in disposition and really does cherish the people of this place."

Yan Xuehen also nodded in approval, saying, "This is actually better. We do not have to always fight and kill." Even though she didn't understand every word Zu An said, it wasn't too difficult to figure out what he was saying.

After thinking about it carefully, Yun Jianyue also approved of Zu An's judgment. Of course, she had another thought. If they realized that this didn't work, they could just come back later to finish off the snake. As the Devil Sect Leader, there was no way she would be the lenient and soft-hearted type.

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Under Yu Yanluo's lead, the group followed several twisting turns through Dongting Lake. They all marveled at the process. The paths through the water went in all sorts of directions like a maze. Many paths looked as if they went nowhere, akin to treacherous reefs; and yet, if they approached directly, the path would open up.

That was clearly the work of the Xiushe Snake. If there hadn't been anyone to guide them, it would be completely impossible for them to leave this place.

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After a while, the surrounding miasma finally grew sparse. The water and sludge slowly gave way to firm, solid land, too. The group finally knew that they had left Dongting Lake. As such, they abandoned the raft and climbed ashore.

"Is this the Flowery Field the Xiushe Snake spoke of?" Yan Xuehen asked, looking at the green and lush valleys and fields around her. Previously, they had gone from encountering a sea monster, to the Weak Water and the swampy Dongting Lake. It had even made her start to develop a slight fear of water. Now that she saw a mountain field rich with life, she felt a mysterious sense of happiness.

"Did the Xiushe Snake mention how to find the Zaochi Giant?" Yun Jianyue asked, looking at Yu Yanluo.

Yu Yanluo shook her head and replied, "It didn't. It only said that the giant would be really easy to find."

"What does that mean?" the others asked in confusion. However, they couldn't figure it out even after thinking for a long time.

“Hey everyone, come and look over here. There’s some smoke coming from up ahead, as if someone lives there. Let’s go and ask them about it,” Zu An said, suddenly noticing that there was smoke rising from a valley in the distance. The smoke didn’t seem as if it came from a wildfire, but rather from a barbecue.

“We need to be more careful. Don’t say we’re here to take down the Zaochi Giant, or else it might be some local guardian again and it might cause conflict,” Yun Jianyue warned them.

The others nodded in agreement when they recalled their encounter in Dongting Lake. They hurried in the direction of the smoke and gradually smelled the fragrance of meat. They suddenly felt a bit hungry. They hadn’t had much time to eat anything after entering the Unknown Region.

At their cultivation rank, abstaining from eating was a common practice. It didn’t matter too much if they didn’t eat for some time. However, they hadn’t ascended to immortality yet. They still had mortal bodies, so the desire to eat was impossible to get rid of.

“We should purchase some meat to eat from the people here later,” Yun Jianyue said as her stomach let out a growl.

Yan Xuehen frowned, wondering, “Why is this meat’s smell so strange, though?”

“It is a bit strange. I’ve never smelled it before,” Yun Jianyue said casually. “This is an Unknown Region with creatures we’ve never seen before, though. Who knows, we might be able to eat something we’ll never be able to eat again in our lifetimes.”

Yan Xuehen figured that made sense, so she became expectant.

Soon afterward, the group saw some figures up ahead. Several beings with shaggy clothing had their backs to the group, surrounding a bonfire. A thigh was being roasted over the fire, sizzling with grease as it was being cooked.

The group had been about to approach them in high spirits, but when they saw the scene before them, their expressions immediately stiffened.

Yu Yanluo’s voice shook a bit as she asked, “Is... Is that a human leg?”

“It is!” Yun Jianyue exclaimed, her expression ashen.

Yu Yanluo and Yan Xuehen couldn’t hold themselves back anymore. They bent over and began to vomit. However, they drew the attention of the beings around the bonfire, who turned around and looked in their direction.

Only then did Zu An notice the beings’ appearances. What humans? They only had the bodies of humans, but their heads were those of wild beasts, their mouths containing two chisel-like tusks. When they saw Zu An’s group, their eyes immediately lit up, as if they were looking at delicious food. They picked up clubs and other weapons, letting out strange cries as they charged at the group.

Zu An’s group naturally wouldn’t show them any courtesy. When they saw that, they didn’t hold back and quickly decided to deal with the creatures.

To some extent, these creatures could be considered intelligent beings and could be worth questioning for information. However, they were only capable of simple utterances. Zu An's group couldn't understand what those utterances meant, so there was nothing else they could do but kill the creatures.

When they arrived by the bonfire and saw a man's remains, Yun Jianyue finally couldn't take it anymore either. She ran off to one side and began to throw up.

Meanwhile, Zu An dug a hole and buried the remains. Sigh, ancient times were really full of monsters. It really wasn't easy for humans back then.

Then, the group began to search around the vast Flowery Field. They discovered that there were actually quite a few of the monsters.

The monsters had even built a village of their own. Some adults were doing strange dances around a bonfire, gritting their teeth and making all types of incomprehensible sounds. Additionally, there were some monster children chasing each other and playing around. There was even a male and female couple sitting shoulder to shoulder under a tree as if they were on a date.

If the group hadn't seen the monsters roast a human leg, they likely would have felt that this was a happy monster village.

"These guys are surprisingly carefree." Yun Jianyue harrumphed. She took out her Empress Lantern and blew gently. The ember inside immediately turned into an engulfing flame that swept toward the monsters.

Yan Xuehen remained expressionless, not opposing Yun Jianyue. However, Yu Yanluo frowned. She had some Snake race blood, so to a certain degree, she was also seen as a monster by other humans. However, when she thought about how these monsters ate humans, she didn't say anything in the end.

The village that had been peaceful mere moments before immediately turned into a sea of flames. The monsters screamed as they ran for their lives. Some of them noticed Zu An's group. They roared and charged at the group with weapons in hand, but how could they even get close? They were soon burned to a crisp by the Empress Lantern's true flames.

Suddenly, a roar emerged from the depths of the village. A massive figure emerged, seemingly running directly through a mountain. As it came into view, the group got a good look at it. It was just like the other monsters, but dozens of times bigger. It was ferocious-looking, and its mouth was full of chisel-like teeth. The two tusks coming from its lower jaw were especially fierce. It had a shield in one hand and a giant club in the other.

When it saw the flames that surrounded the village, it charged with a roar. It held its shield in front of its body and actually ran straight into the Empress Lantern's flames!

Chapter 1434: Zaochi Giant

"The Zaochi Giant!" Zu An's group exclaimed, quickly realizing what the creature was. It was just as the rumors had said.

The giant didn't seem like one of the ordinary monsters; rather, it appeared to be their leader or protector. It had shown up to help when it saw that they had encountered a disaster. If it was just like

the Xiushe Snake, a guardian of the people, perhaps it would have been possible to talk to it. However, the party had given up on that thought after seeing that the monsters ate humans.

Yun Jianyue collected the Empress Lantern's flames, then attacked with her Crescent Ring. When it saw the incoming weapon, the Zaochi Giant raised its shield to block it. The ring left behind a faint mark on the shield, but it didn't manage to break through. However, Yun Jianyue turned her wrist and the Crescent Ring changed course, attacking from a different angle.

Her Crescent Ring inspired fear across the cultivation world precisely because of its strange attack patterns that were extremely difficult to defend against. Cultivators described her Crescent Ring as a strand of moonlight. How could one defend against moonlight? It was everywhere, so there was no way to defend against it. The Crescent Ring was likewise difficult to defend against.

Sure enough, the Zaochi Giant's clumsy body couldn't keep up with the agile Crescent Ring. Wounds quickly appeared all over its body. However, soon after, it knocked away the Crescent Ring with its shield. Owing to its tough body and shocking regenerative abilities, it didn't suffer any particularly serious injuries.

Yan Xuehen's Flying Snow Sword then left its scabbard. It turned into a flowing light, aiming at the giant's weak points.

However, the Zaochi Giant decided it wasn't going to evade anymore. It protected its body with its shield, while its club sent the Crescent Ring or Flying Snow Sword flying over and over. The two grandmasters found that they actually couldn't do much against it even after fighting for a long time. This guy's defenses were just too powerful!

Just then, Yu Yanluo's eyes shone with a yellow light, and a layer of petrification gradually surrounded the Zaochi Giant's entire body. It was so frightened it quickly hid behind its shield, trying to block the Medusa's Eye.

Zu An was extremely worried, saying, "We aren't in that much danger right now. Your body won't be able to take it if you use your skill at that level."

After being around each other for so long, he naturally knew that the Medusa's Eye had three different colors that represented different levels of power: Red, blue, and yellow. Yellow indicated Yu Yanluo was using her Medusa's Eye without holding back at all. When Yan Xuehen had attacked Zu An in the past, that was precisely the level she had used. She had almost lost her life back then. That was the reason Zu An was worried. How could he not be alarmed when he saw her do that?

"Don't worry. The Dragonsnake's Nine Transformations the Xiushe Snake taught me can activate one's potential and bring out the power of the Holy Pearl. That's why it's easier for me to use this power now," Yu Yanluo quietly replied. At the same time, she resisted the urge to look at him so she wouldn't accidentally petrify him. Meanwhile, Zu An felt a bit more at ease when he heard her say that.

The Zaochi Giant's incredible shield couldn't bear the brunt of the Medusa's Eye at full power, and gradually began to petrify.

When Zu An saw that opportunity, he raised the Universe Ring and activated the Star Shattering Imprint, bringing it down directly on the shield. Perhaps the petrification had negated much of the shield's capabilities, as it couldn't hold on and exploded into pieces.

The Zaochi Giant was shocked when it saw that the shield it had relied on was actually destroyed. It had no intention of continuing the battle at all, and it turned tail and ran.

Yun Jianyue harrumphed. She took out the Empress Lantern, which caused the Zaochi Giant to slow down considerably. The Crescent Ring then cleaved downward. The Zaochi Giant was horrified and quickly blocked it with its club.

A streak of moonlight flickered through the club, cleaving it in half. Seeing that, the Zaochi Giant frantically dodged. Even though the attack left a bloody scar across its chest, it still avoided getting hit in any vital regions.

Unfortunately, the giant didn't have any time to feel happy about that, because blinding sword radiance immediately filled its sight. A dazzling streak of sword energy pierced directly through its skull. Then, its entire body stiffened before falling heavily to the ground.

"Hateful humans, always invading our home..." it muttered. Despite its great strength, it could only let out those words before taking its last breath. Even though the giant's pronunciation was hard to understand, Zu An and the others still mostly understood the words.

Yun Jianyue called back her Crescent Ring. She looked coldly at Yan Xuehen, remarking, "Stone cold woman, you're really good at stealing kills, huh?"

Yan Xuehen frowned and said, "I did not think about any such thing. I just wanted to deal with the Zaochi Giant as quickly as possible to prevent more issues from arising. As for contributions, we should thank Ah Zu for smashing apart its shield."

Zu An pulled Yu Yanluo over and said, "It was actually because of the Medusa's Eye, which petrified the shield. Otherwise, I might not have been able to break it after just your attacks alone."

Only then did the grandmasters find out that the skill Yu Yanluo had learned from the Xiushe Snake made it easier to use the Medusa's Eye. They all clicked their tongues in wonder.

Yu Yanluo was a bit embarrassed, saying, "To be honest, I'm more curious about what the Zaochi Giant's last words meant. Could it be that back then, Yi actually invaded this place?"

Yun Jianyue said, "These monsters are clearly their own faction. To some extent, they can be considered a civilization of their own. That's why, from their perspective, we're just invaders like Yi.

"However, since they view humans as food, we were always doomed to become enemies. Since we're humans, we have no choice but to fight them when we meet. We would only become their food if they were stronger. That's why there's no need to feel any sympathy. It's just natural selection."

Yan Xuehen was a bit surprised, saying, "Witch, some of your views are surprisingly similar to ours. How about converting and coming over to our White Jade Sect? With your experience, it would be enough to become an elder. It would not only be the White Jade Sect, too; you would have extraordinary status even in the entire daoist faction."

Yun Jianyue roared with laughter, replying, "You want to invite me with just a trifling elder position? Even if I were to join your side, it would be as a sect master too. Then, I'd turn all of those self-important goddesses into seductresses..."

Yan Xuehen became upset, saying, "As expected of a witch, you only know how to say crazy things."

The two women were about to fight again. However, Zu An noticed that Yu Yanluo wasn't in a good mood. He asked out of concern, "What's wrong?"

Yu Yanluo sighed, saying, "I just thought of the fact that I'm not a pure human either. If one day, the fiend races and humans really enter an all-out war, I won't know what to do."

Zu An realized she was a bit shaken up by the final fate of the monster tribes. He held her hand tightly and said, "Don't worry. No matter what happens, I'll always be by your side."

"Ah Zu~" Yu Yanluo exclaimed. She felt warm inside, looking at him lovingly.

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue noticed the other two and both stopped arguing with each other, no longer feeling inclined to continue.

Yun Jianyue said in annoyance, "We've already dealt with the Zaochi Giant. What do we do now?"

"The Vicious Waters' Nine Infants!" Zu An replied with a grave expression.

Chapter 1435: Nine Infants

"I recall that the Nine Infants has nine heads," Yan Xuehen said, remembering what Shun had told them.

"It already sounds annoying," Yun Jianyue said, even though she wasn't actually scared at all.

Both she and Yan Xuehen had recovered most of their strength. They also had Zu An and Yu Yanluo. As long as they didn't encounter an earth immortal like the Fiend Emperor, they would be practically unstoppable.

"What I'm more curious about is why there are so many monsters with snake bodies," Zu An said. He thought about how Yuyu and Er Fu both had human heads and snake bodies. Xiushe was a snake too, and the Nine Infants seemed to have a snake body too.

"Why are you looking at me? How would I know?" Yu Yanluo exclaimed, blushing. She shot him an annoyed look.

The others couldn't help but laugh when they saw her expression.

...

Just like that, the group continued in good spirits. They quickly left the Field of Longevity.

Soon, however, they arrived at a large, surging river. They looked at each other in dismay, wondering, "Why does this place look so familiar?"

It wasn't their fault for feeling that way. After all, the river was really similar to the Weak Water they had seen before. The ferocity of its currents even exceeded that of the Weak Water.

Zu An squatted by the shore and reached into the water. After sensing it for a bit, he stood back up, saying, "The water is normal. It's not like the Weak Water, which can cause you to sink. Still, this river is strange. I checked it out just now, but I couldn't sense its depths at all."

He had inspected it with his Blue Mallard ability. Even if the river wasn't several thousand meters deep, it was at least a thousand meters deep. That was just too ridiculous! After all, even the great Yangtze River in his previous world was only a hundred or so meters deep, and that was because it had three gorges that stored water. However, this river was actually as deep as an ocean!

"Is the Nine Infants hiding inside?" the others wondered, feeling a bit of a headache when they heard about the water's depths. After what they had experienced so far, they really didn't want to touch water again. However, they couldn't think of any good ways to find the Nine Infants.

While they were at their wits' end, they suddenly heard some faint baby cries in the distance.

"How could there be babies here?" Yun Jianyue wondered with a frown. In contrast, Yan Xuehen was calm. She cultivated the Unshakable Daoist Manual. As long as it wasn't about her and Zu An, it was difficult to make her feel any strong emotions.

Yu Yanluo looked around and said, "Let's go and take a look. If any ordinary people have lost their children here, we can help bring them back to their families."

After their past experiences, she had realized that this world actually had its own native inhabitants.

"Be careful of any tricks. Why would there be any babies all the way out here in the wilderness? It doesn't seem normal at all," Yun Jianyue warned them.

Yu Yanluo nodded. She carefully searched the area around her. Soon afterward, she arrived at an expanse of reeds; the cries came from within.

"Could it be an abandoned baby?" Yu Yanluo wondered with a frown. Why would any normal children be left here? She had heard that in the past, some people abandoned young children in places such as the reeds. She moved aside the dense reeds and carefully searched for the child.

Suddenly, a ferocious mouth shot out from the reeds, trying to bite her.

"Be careful!" the others exclaimed while trying to save her.

Fortunately, Yu Yanluo wasn't so naive and innocent. She had long since been prepared. When it was about to reach her, she kicked off the ground and drifted into the distance, avoiding the deadly attack. Zu An and the others' attacks arrived soon afterward. The vicious mouth evaded them, but in doing so stood up, allowing them to finally see what it looked like.

It wasn't just a single ferocious mouth; rather, there were nine of them. The creature had nine heads, and its body was that of a large snake. Even though it was a bit smaller than the Xiushe Snake had been in life, its body paired with its nine writhing heads made it look frightening. The nine-headed monster roared furiously at the people who had attacked it.

The group finally realized where the baby's cries had come from. That was the noise the creature made! No wonder its name was 'Nine Infants'!

Yun Jianyue laughed and said, "I like this style much better than before. There's no complicated backstory, and we just need to fight."

Zu An laughed as well, because he knew that she was talking about the monsters they had faced thus far. All of them had had complicated pasts, making it a bit awkward to face them.

The Nine Infants became somewhat angry. Even after they beheld its dignified body, these insignificant humans actually didn't seem to show any fear at all, instead talking cheerfully to each other.

Absolutely preposterous!

One of its heads suddenly opened its mouth. A water bolt shot out of it, flying toward the group like a blast from a high-pressure water gun. The group quickly evaded it, but the bolt left a deep crater in the space where they had been standing.

Yun Jianyue snorted. She didn't stop, attacking with her Crescent Ring. However, several of the Nine Infants' heads shot water from their mouths, blasting her Crescent Ring away. The water bolts were like densely-packed bullets, leaving behind countless deep pockmarks on the shore.

Soon, however, the monster switched to shooting thin lines of water instead; wherever they passed, they could even silently cut the sturdiest stones in half.

Under the concentrated barrage of attacks, Yun Jianyue was forced to defend with her Crescent Ring. However, that also meant she had no chance to retaliate for the time being.

Zu An was shocked. It was always said that water had unparalleled flexibility, but also held the greatest power. He had seen the power of water blades that could cut through steel like butter in some videos from his previous world. He hadn't expected to see such a thing again today.

The surrounding temperature suddenly dropped, and snowflakes swirled through the air. It was clear that Yan Xuehen had made her move. Her Snowflake Sword just happened to counter water-element attacks.

The water bolts the Nine Infants released were instantly frozen solid, weakening them significantly. The Snowflake Sword's cold energy even followed along the water trails that came out of the Nine Infants' mouths, freezing them all the way up to the monster's snake tongues.

Zu An watched in admiration. He was used to Yan Xuehen's weaker side. Now that she had recovered eighty percent of her strength, her attacks once again carried the imposing style of a grandmaster.

Two of the heads were about to freeze, but suddenly, the Nine Infants' other heads spat out streams of flame that instantly melted the ice.

"It can use fire and water?" the group exclaimed. The three women were particularly surprised, as they rarely encountered individuals who could use two elements at once. To be honest, the monster was actually a bit similar to Zu An in that regard.

However, the monster didn't give them any chance for a reprieve. The nine heads each found different targets, continuing to attack all of them at once.

Yu Yanluo's eyes began to shine with radiance. This was a nine-headed snake, and she was a Medusa. It was hard to say whose bloodline was at a higher level.

Sure enough, however, the head that was facing her stiffened. The surface of its skin began to petrify, and soon afterward, the entire head turned into a statue. Afterward, the other heads all turned around to attack her. Yu Yanluo had no way of dealing with so many heads at the same time, so she quickly dodged.

Just then, a golden brick flew toward the monster, enlarging at a visible rate. Then, it slammed into the petrified head. It was one of the heaven-grade weapons from the Ocean races' Dragon Palace that Shang Liuyu had given Zu An: The Golden Brick!

This was the first time he had used it. It was as powerful as expected! The petrified stone head was instantly crushed to pieces by the giant brick.

The Nine Infants screamed in pain. Its entire body trembled, and the other eight heads began to rock back and forth crazily.

Zu An's group sighed in relief. They were getting better and better at fighting together. If they did the same thing a few more times, surely this monster's nine heads would be destroyed one by one. However, their smiles quickly froze.

The Nine Infants continued to rock back and forth. Then, new flesh began to form around the spot where its head had been destroyed. After that, a new snake head began growing rapidly. Apart from the color being a bit lighter and the flesh a bit more tender, it was the exact same as the previous head!

Chapter 1436: Zu An Stirring the Water

As the Nine Infants recovered, its expression became even more malicious. It screamed at them angrily in an infant's voice. Even though it sounded somewhat ridiculous, its body gave off extreme pressure, and its nine malevolent snake heads were no laughing matter.

The new snake head fired a wave of flames at Zu An. It clearly remembered who had smashed it to pieces earlier. Meanwhile, the other snake heads also coordinated their attacks. Blazing flames swept forth, cutting off his path of retreat.

This guy even knows how to create a crossfire net? Zu An thought. Since there was nowhere to evade, he decided he wasn't going to. He used his Blue Mallard ability and summoned the fierce waters from the nearby river. A tremendous amount of water quickly rushed forth, forming water dragons that flew toward the wall of flames.

Fire would always be countered by water, let alone when it came from such a ferocious river that contained an endless supply of water. Meanwhile, the Nine Infants' flames had to come from itself, so it wouldn't be able to continue forever. The wall of flames was gradually pushed back by the water, eventually turning into mere strands of smoke.

The Nine Infants became enraged. The other snake heads turned around and sucked in a large amount of water, before spitting them out in a hail of water bolts.

However, the three women rushed over to Zu An's side, helping him block the dense barrage of bolts. Zu An then used Grandgale, instantly arriving next to a few of the Nine Infants' heads. He planned to end it with the Poisonous Prick.

You're good at regenerating, right? Let's see if you can still regenerate after you get cut by the Poisonous Prick.

This thing clearly had a physical body. It wasn't like the Yayu, created from hatred and resentment.

However, as soon as Zu An appeared, the snake heads became especially vigilant. Several of the heads swiftly bit down at him. Its vicious-looking teeth proved that the nine-headed monster wasn't just a glass cannon mage, but actually had first-rate physical prowess too.

Still, what Zu An couldn't stand the most was the horrible breath coming from its mouth. It was like a toilet that had never been flushed before, or perhaps like a rotten egg mixed with ammonia, sulfur, and other unknown smells. Zu An almost fainted from the first whiff alone.

By the time Zu An recovered from his momentary daze, however, the nine snake heads' attacks had already reached his body. Fortunately, his cultivation was high, and with the three women's help, he barely managed to withdraw. He wiped off a handful of cold sweat. He realized that he had been negligent. This enemy was completely different from the others he had fought so far.

If it had been just one or two heads, Zu An might still have had a chance of hurting it with the Poisonous Prick. However, the nine heads were covering for each other's weaknesses and attacking in tandem. Together with the atrocious biological weapon of a smell coming from its mouth, fighting against it in close quarters really wasn't a sensible plan.

Fortunately, he wasn't alone. A brilliant streak of moonlight flew outward, and the Crescent Ring instantly severed one of the monster's heads.

Yan Xuehen didn't want to be outdone either. Her Flying Snow Sword flew forth like a shooting star, piercing directly through another snake's head and causing it to erupt in bloody mist.

However, the two women didn't seem too happy, because they could only watch as one of the severed heads flew back toward the monster's neck. Then, the blood around the cut began to disappear, and the head rejoined the body. Likewise, the head pierced by the Flying Snow Sword quickly healed, the bloody hole in its forehead disappearing. In moments, the two heads had returned to their original state.

"What do we do if this monster can regenerate infinitely?" Yu Yanluo asked worriedly. Another head would grow as soon as they cut off one. Such a battle really did make them feel a bit of despair.

Yun Jianyue said, "It's fine. Have you all noticed that the new heads are a bit lighter than the old ones? Also, I did some calculations earlier. These two heads recovered a bit slower than the first one. Even though the difference is minute, I'm sure it slowed down a bit."

"You are right," Yan Xuehen said with a nod. "Even though this Nine Infants can regenerate, it definitely consumes some kind of energy, or else it would not make sense. As long as we can remove its heads fast enough, it will definitely be unable to recover in time."

Considering their credibility as grandmasters, Zu An and Yu Yanluo didn't doubt their words at all. Just like that, they began fighting the monster in tandem once again. With their previous experience, their coordination became even more seamless.

Soon, another snake head was removed, followed by a second, a third, a fourth...

At first, the Nine Infants could recover quickly, but eventually, it couldn't take it anymore, recovering more and more slowly. One snake head couldn't recover at all, and a constant trickle of blood streamed out of it.

The monster no longer looked as sinister and malicious as before. Rather, it actually showed a bit of fear as it looked at the group. It thought to itself, Where did these crazy humans come from? Are humans all this strong?

It realized that it could actually end up in a bad position if it continued to fight, so it sought out a chance to flee into the ferocious river. Even though Zu An's group tried to cut it off, the river was too large, so they couldn't fully seal it off. As such, they could only watch as it escaped.

"Ahhh, this is so annoying! It'll be hard to bring it out again now that it's fled," Yun Jianyue complained, feeling a huge headache. Not too long before, they had suffered quite a bit when dealing with the Yayu for the same reason. Now, the same thing was happening all over again.

"It's fine. I have a solution," Zu An said, sounding surprisingly calm.

"What kind of plan do you have?" the others asked, looking at him curiously.

Zu An didn't reply. He walked over to Yan Xuehen and said, "Remove your waistband."

Yan Xuehen was a bit stunned. Are you mad? You're actually asking me something like that in front of those two?

Yun Jianyue also looked at him in shock, exclaiming, "Little An, you're quite something! You even dare to go after this stone cold woman?"

Yan Xuehen realized that even though Zu An was bold, he wasn't unreasonable to that degree. There was definitely a reason. As such, she naturally undid her waistband and gave it to him, asking, "What are you going to do?"

When they saw that scene, Yu Yanluo and Yun Jianyue's expressions were a bit strange. Something didn't seem right...

Zu An took the red waistband without a word and walked over to the river. He tossed the other end into the water, then began to stir it around with his wrist. The red waistband grew longer and longer, soon filling a large portion of the ferocious river with bright red. It agitated the river, forming a giant whirlpool.

Zu An thought to himself mockingly, I'm really becoming more and more like Nezha. The story of Nezha from his previous world described how he once washed himself with the Primal Skysilk, but it caused the entire dragon palace to shake as if an earthquake had struck.

He had just remembered the story, so he tried to copy it, and sure enough, it worked. The Primal Skysilk's characteristics were something not even an ocean could withstand, let alone a mere river.

The surging waters were completely displaced. Countless waves rushed into the air, forming giant whirlpools that resembled enormous washing machines.

Finally, a dark figure flew out of the water. It was none other than the Nine Infants! It clearly couldn't stand the turbulence anymore. Its snake heads faced Zu An, almost as if it were about to denounce him for his bad deeds.

However, even as it tried to speak, no sound emerged. Several snake heads couldn't take it anymore and vomited.

It had ended up getting motion sickness!

Chapter 1437: Bluefield Pond

The three women were stunned. They had never expected such a thing to happen. This terrifying monster had actually been tormented so badly by Zu An's Primal Skysilk! Still, they were all strong cultivators, so they didn't hesitate. They all attacked the Nine Infants while it was weak.

The Nine Infants was alarmed and angry. Its nine heads roared furiously, but it was much weaker than before. It couldn't even win against them previously, so now, there was even less of a chance of being their match. It began looking worse for wear as its heads were blown apart one after another. Blood spilled from its wounds as its regeneration finally became unable to keep up.

When he saw that it was about to fall over, Zu An instantly moved next to it. He held the Poisonous Prick in hand and prepared to deliver the killing blow.

However, the moment he was about to thrust with the blade, a warning from 'The Book' suddenly appeared in his mind. Having already experienced it once with the warning he had received when the Fiend Emperor ambushed him, he didn't hesitate at all. He quickly changed his plans and instantly moved a few meters away.

At the same time, an ugly head suddenly appeared from the Nine Infants' belly. It was much smaller than the other nine heads, but it was much more sinister and ugly than the others. It shot out suddenly with lightning speed. It was incredibly sinister and almost impossible to avoid.

However, the Nine Infants had never expected Zu An to be able to dodge its attack as if he could see the future!

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue both broke out into cold sweat. They hadn't expected the Nine Infants to be so treacherous and cunning! It had been hiding its strength and drawing them in to attack! Even with their cultivation, they might have suffered severe damage from such an attack. The situation might even have turned against them!

Sure enough, when the Nine Infants saw that its plan failed, its nine heads grew out again. With the sinister head in its belly revealed, it displayed a show of strength, as if telling them all to back off.

"It looks as though the head in its belly is its real head," Yu Yanluo quickly said. They were both snakes, so she had some natural sensitivity for such things.

The group immediately realized that as well. No wonder even though the nine heads had all been crushed at least once, they still hadn't been able to deliver a fatal blow. It turned out the real head was hiding in its stomach!

This could be a secret no one knew about. By the time anyone did find out, they would have already been caught in the ambush. It was thanks to Zu An reacting quickly that the Nine Infants' true head was exposed. With a new target in mind, the others began to attack that head.

The Nine Infants used the nine heads to frantically protect its belly. Unfortunately, the people it faced were too formidable. Zu An's party was getting better and better at working together, too. Soon afterward, Zu An found a chance to use his flame-covered pike, thrusting it toward the snake's weakness!

The ugly head was nailed to the monster's abdomen, then exploded under the pressure. The nine heads that had been flailing wildly soon slumped down, and the huge snake's body also came crashing to the ground.

"The monster should be dead now, right?" Yu Yanluo wondered worriedly. After all, it had already tried to fool them once.

"It's already dead. There are no more signs of life coming from its body," Yun Jianyue said conclusively. There was naturally no mistake, since the answer was coming from someone of her cultivation.

The party finally sighed in relief. They were just about to say something when they noticed that the Nine Infants' corpse started to move.

Yun Jianyue jumped in fright. Am I really going to be slapped in the face right after I said that it was dead? This respected Devil Sect Master won't have anywhere to hide...

They quickly moved some distance away so the monster wouldn't be able to pull anything else on them. However, the Nine Infants didn't revive. Instead, its body began to dissolve. Its huge body gradually shrank until it became a chunk of flesh the size of a fist. The chunk began to wriggle as if it were alive.

Yan Xuehen said, "The reason why the Nine Infants could regenerate so quickly might have been because of this chunk of flesh."

Zu An picked it up. It wasn't alive, and yet it couldn't be called completely dead either. It did seem to contain some life force. He remarked, "In that case, let's each take a bite out of it. Even if we can't gain eternal life, it should help us recover a bit. Would you guys prefer it steamed or broiled? Or maybe barbecued?"

Yu Yanluo gave him a disgusted look, exclaiming, "You're so gross! I don't want any."

Yan Xuehen also said coldly, "I do not want any either."

"Like hell I want to become a monster like the Nine Infants," Yun Jianyue said, furrowing her brows. "Little An, don't blame me for not warning you ahead of time. If you end up becoming a demon after eating this, don't blame us for ignoring you."

Zu An chuckled in embarrassment, saying, "Don't worry. My regeneration is pretty strong to begin with, so I don't need to eat this thing anyway."

Still, he couldn't bear to just throw it away. He just felt that it had some unique medicinal property, or it could be something a valkyrie would need in the future or something. As such, he tossed it into the Brilliant Glass Bead.

...

After the Nine Infants was subdued, the ferocious, raging river also calmed down considerably. The party quickly crossed the water.

Yu Yanluo asked curiously, "Who are we up against next?"

"Grandgale!" Zu An replied, his expression a bit strange.

The reason for that was because the first ability he had learned from the Phoenix Nirvana Sura was none other than Grandgale. That instantaneous movement skill had bailed him out of countless situations. That was why, out of all of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra skills, Grandgale was the most important to him.

And yet now, the one he had to face was also Grandgale! Even though he didn't know whether this Grandgale he had to fight had anything to do with the one attached to the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, he still felt a huge weight on his mind.

Yun Jiangyue glanced toward Yan Xuehen, asking, "Stone cold woman, do you still remember what Shun said about Grandgale earlier?"

Yan Xuehen was already used to the nickname, so she didn't even bother arguing about it. She said, "It has the body of a dog with the face of a man; it snickers at humans who pass by and moves like the wind. When Grandgale appeared and wreaked havoc across the lands, Yi executed it over Bluefield Pond."

Zu An suddenly realized something. This Grandgale's appearance didn't seem to match that of his own Grandgale at all.

However, Yun Jianyue's attention was on something else. She exclaimed, "Hm? Bluefield Pond? Does it have anything to do with Tushan Yu and those other women?"

Zu An trembled. He inadvertently recalled that lovely night with Tushan Yu. Right, I even wrapped her in the Primal Skysilk then... His gaze couldn't help but dart toward Yan Xuehen's waist.

Yan Xuehen's heart skipped a beat. This guy is getting more and more out of hand! What are we supposed to do if the others actually pick up on something?

Yu Yanluo didn't notice that the two of them were actually so shaken up. She thought out loud, "Bluefield... Could it be that it really does have something to do with little sister Tushan's Bluefield Country? Maybe it's the country of the Fox race from ancient times?"

Their suspicions were quickly confirmed. When they continued, they saw all sorts of foxes in the wild. Those foxes didn't fear humans at all, and even stopped to size them up. It was extremely similar to their experience when they first entered Tushan Yu's Bluefield Country.

As she looked at the foxes that stopped to look at her, Yun Jianyue remarked in puzzlement, "The body of a dog with the face of a man, and it snickers at humans... Isn't that just describing these foxes?"

Chapter 1438: Grandgale

The group was briefly stunned. That description really did seem to really match the foxes nearby! Could it be that the legendary Grandgale was a Bluefield fox?’

Zu An was a bit alarmed too. If it really was like that, what was going on with the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra’s Grandgale?

Suddenly, the foxes that were looking at them seemed to have been startled. They scampered off in all directions.

The group suddenly felt as if the sky had darkened a bit. Yu Yanluo wondered, “Is it going to rain? Why are there so many dark clouds?”

Zu An became vigilant, exclaiming, “Be careful!” He arrived at the three women’s side, picking them up by the waist and quickly dodging to one side.

Yu Yanluo and Zu An were lovers, so it was fine. Meanwhile, Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen didn’t get angry either. After being around each other for so long, they had already reached a tacit understanding and knew he wouldn’t do such things for no reason. As such, they all prepared seriously against the unknown danger.

Sure enough, a dark figure passed by where they had just been, moving at incredible speed. If they hadn’t been watching intently, they wouldn’t have even noticed its presence.

Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen were incredibly shocked. What was that? Why was it so fast? If not for Zu An’s warning, they might have already suffered under that thing’s hands. They felt that it was a bit strange, though Zu An’s cultivation is clearly lower than ours, and his soul is also inferior to ours, so why is he more sensitive to danger than us?

Meanwhile, Zu An secretly thanked ‘The Book’ as he looked ahead of him.

They had managed to avoid the figure, but the foxes weren’t so lucky. They had already ascended... literally, being launched into the air. Their spines had been torn apart by sharp claws, their bodies falling limply. There were no traces of life left in them.

Meanwhile, the owner of those sharp claws was a strange bird. Its entire body was covered in white feathers, turning red toward the tail tip. Its head was quite bizarre, resembling a laughing face.

It was Grandgale!

The group immediately recognized it. It was exactly the same as the legend had said!

Zu An cursed inwardly, Did this guy eat too many foxes? It’s even started to look a bit like a fox.

The strange bird opened its mouth, and a wild wind began to stir. The foxes that had still been running were sucked into its mouth, along with the ones in its claws. A satisfied look appeared on its face.

“If Tushan Yu were here, she might have already fainted,” Yun Jianyue said with a sigh.

“Could it be that in ancient times, this Grandgale was the Bluefield Fox race’s mortal enemy?” Yan Xuehen wondered, her thoughts running along different lines.

Yu Yanluo frowned and looked at the strange bird. Birds of prey were the Snake race's natural predators, so she naturally disliked it.

Grandgale suddenly snapped out of a daze and stared at Zu An's group.

Zu An noticed its expression, feeling a bit of alarm. He said, "This is bad. It's about to attack." Grandgale disappeared as soon as he finished speaking.

However, after the previous display, Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen had long since prepared. When they saw that, they both activated their own domains. Finally, they saw the bird clearly. It wasn't that it had disappeared, but rather that it was just too fast, to the point that human eyes couldn't keep up at all. However, after being affected by two grandmasters' domains, it slowed down visibly. They quickly spotted it, and sent the Flying Snow Sword and Crescent Ring after it.

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue weren't the type to let others run roughshod over them. Even though the two of them often bickered, that was that. When they worked together, they made quite a deadly combo. They almost instantly sealed off Grandgale's escape.

Grandgale was left in a terrible situation and seemed about to receive severe damage, but it suddenly disappeared again. Zu An understood what was going on better than anyone because he often used the same instantaneous movement skill.

Sure enough, Grandgale reappeared in the air above them a second later. As if realizing that the humans weren't to be provoked, it didn't risk attacking further. Instead, it quickly grew larger, eventually blotting out the entire sun. A single one of its wings was like a huge expanse of clouds. At the same time, its power also became more and more terrifying.

Yun Jianyue frowned. This guy had actually been holding back earlier! How were they going to face it now?

Just then, Grandgale swung its huge wings. A terrifying, visible hurricane swept toward the group. Countless trees, mountains, and stones were crushed into nothing by the winds. It was easy to see that if one were caught up in it, they would be diced up into tiny pieces.

The group instinctively tried to run away, but they quickly felt a powerful suction force that pulled them toward the hurricane. At the very least, Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen's cultivations were high enough that they didn't have to worry. They had their own ways of protecting themselves.

However, Zu An quickly moved to Yu Yanluo's side and grabbed her waist. He used his own Grandgale to move a few hundred meters away, temporarily avoiding the terrifying hurricane.

"Huh?" The strange bird suddenly exclaimed in human speech. Then, with a flap of its wings, the terrifying hurricane suddenly disappeared, only the devastating aftermath telling of what had just happened.

"Why do you have my race's inheritance?" Grandgale asked, lowering its head to look at Zu An. Its previously sinister expression had become much gentler.

Zu An's party wasn't surprised that it could speak. Monsters at that level all basically had human-level intelligence. Seeing that it had given up on attacking, Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue also ceased their offense for the time being. They waited to see how things would develop.

"I was fortunate to obtain the Grandgale inheritance through an opportunity..." Zu An said while bringing out his Grandgale. He wasn't sure whether the bird could see the diagram otherwise.

As a result, Grandgale's entire body trembled. It said in disbelief, "It's actually the ancestor's aura!"

"Ancestor?" Zu An repeated. He thought, Could it be that this Grandgale imprint actually came from its ancestor?

Just then, Grandgale moved its wings. Its body quickly shrank as it returned to its previous appearance. It descended and said, "Since you have the ancestor's inheritance, we aren't enemies. There's no need to continue fighting."

Yan Xuehen sighed in relief. This was better. The strange bird definitely wasn't weak. In contrast, Yun Jianyue actually felt as if she hadn't gotten her fill of fighting yet. She wanted to have a proper battle.

Yu Yanluo looked at Zu An strangely. Do you actually have the inheritance of the Snake race's natural predator? No wonder I'm always being subdued by you...

"Thank you, distinguished sir!" Zu An said. He thought that being able to get through the trial peacefully was naturally best. The Xiushe Snake had proven that that was the simplest way to pass a trial.

"What are you all doing? Up ahead is the Golden Crow's territory. They're definitely not so agreeable," Grandgale said, giving the women a look. It thought to itself that the long-haired one and the ice-cold woman were both pretty strong, almost turning the tables on it.

"We're undergoing a trial..." Zu An tactfully explained the situation. He couldn't just say that he was there to punish disasters like it, right?

"So that was it. Still, I fear you won't be able to get to the Scalding Valley the Golden Crow is in," Grandgale suddenly said.

Chapter 1439: Ten Suns Above

"Scalding Valley?" Zu An asked, stunned. That name sounded a bit familiar.

Grandgale explained, "In the East Sea, there's a Scalding Valley. In it grows a giant Fusang Tree. The ten Golden Crow brothers perch on that very Fusang Tree. They take turns coming out, passing over Mount Qua, the Ever Spring, the Mulberry Field, Yuzhong, Mount Kunwu, Mount Niaoci, the Valley of Sorrow, Nuji, Yuanyu, Mount Lianshi, the Spring of Grief, and then finally arriving at the Yu Abyss, which is where the sun sets."

"Wait, the Golden Crows are still coming out one after another right now?" Zu An asked in surprise.

"Of course. If they didn't come out in order, wouldn't the world burn down to nothing?" Grandgale replied, seemingly unable to understand why he would ask such an obvious question.

Zu An exchanged a look with the others. Their mission was to repeat Yi's heroic path, and Yi's most famous feat was shooting down nine of the ten suns. It was clear that after clearing all of the other trials, the nine suns were the last thing they had to take down.

However, if the Golden Crows were still coming out one by one as they were supposed to, didn't that mean they weren't breaking the rules? How was Zu An's group supposed to complete their mission then?

They finally recalled that even though they had already spent some time in the Unknown Region, they had never seen ten suns come out at the same time. They hadn't thought much of it before, but they finally realized that was the strangest part.

Grandgale didn't notice the shock they felt. It continued, "The Scalding Valley is within the vast East Sea. There are countless terrifying monsters and demons in the East Sea. I fear that with your current strength, you won't be able to reach that place safely."

"Then what should we do?" the group asked, not doubting its words.

Even though Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue had recovered most of their strength, they knew that if they ran into the octopus from before again, their chances of victory wouldn't be high. The East Sea was its home, after all. On top of that, it wasn't the only monster there. Who knew how many terrifying creatures like that there were?

Zu An looked at Grandgale and said, "I must ask distinguished sir to show us the right path." His words seemed to carry some implied meaning.

Sure enough, Grandgale stuck out its chest. There was a proud look on its face, as if it were waiting for them to beg it.

Yu Yanluo was good at reading intentions, and quickly helped Zu An to ask it gently for help.

Even though Yun Jianyue was normally fiery-tempered, the Devil Sect prioritized practicality. She knew that if they couldn't complete the heroic path, they could die here. As such, she also played along and offered flattery. Even so, she was used to being in a high position, so her words were stiff. Her flattery was far from sounding as smooth and pleasant as Yu Yanluo's.

As for Yan Xuehen, with her nature, she really couldn't bring herself to do such things. She opened her mouth, but she still didn't say anything in the end.

Grandgale nodded toward Yu Yanluo in satisfaction. Then, pulling Zu An to one side with a wing, it said, "Kid, it's that Snake race woman who really knows how to speak. That long-haired human woman says one thing but means something different, so I feel embarrassed for her. Also, that woman in the white clothes and red waistband is a bit too cold, almost as if she's looking down on me."

Zu An said awkwardly, "You've misunderstood. That's not what she means at all."

Grandgale said, "Since you have the ancestor's inheritance, we're of a kind, so I'll share some personal advice. You can make that Snake race woman your primary wife, the long-haired woman a concubine, and that white-clothed woman a servant at best to cut down her arrogance."

Zu An was sweating buckets. If you knew about my other sweethearts, how would you rank them then? He hadn't expected this guy to be so gossipy. He could only draw the conversation back to the main point, asking, "Senior, do you have a way of getting to the Scalding Valley?"

"If it were anyone else asking me, I wouldn't even pay them any attention. But since you're one of us, then..." Grandgale fell silent for a moment, then removed a feather. "Bring this feather with you. This is how to use it... It should be able to help you cross the sea and arrive at the Scalding Valley."

Zu An was overjoyed. When he received the feather, he immediately felt the aura of the wind around it, as well as an unparalleled sense of profundity. He replied, "Thank you, senior!"

"Forget it, don't call me senior. You have the ancestor's inheritance, so your position might even be a bit higher than mine. Just call me Little... Ahem." Grandgale had almost asked him to call it Littlegale, but that felt as if it would be undervaluing itself too much. It could only change the topic, saying, "Right. By the way, I still have to warn you that in the end, it's fine to look around the Scalding Valley to experience the world, but you absolutely can't provoke the ten Golden Crows. Otherwise, there won't even be ashes left of you."

"Thank you for the reminder," Zu An said, showing him an awkward smile. If Grandgale knew he was going to kill the Golden Crows, what would its reaction be?

He was going to ask it about the Golden Crows, but that would make his intentions too obvious. If they ended up being related to Grandgale, it could decide to take back the feather. Meanwhile, the Fiend Emperor was a Golden Crow, so they were probably related to him. Because of his misgivings, Zu An eventually decided not to say anything.

The three women were curious, asking him what he had talked to Grandgale about. Zu An took out the feather, causing smiles to spread across the women's faces.

However, Yan Xuehen quickly realized that something was off. She said, "It seemed to be saying something about me. The way it looked at me seemed to carry... disdain?"

Yun Jianyue also frowned slightly, saying, "You're right. It seemed to be looking at me with pity."

"Uh... You guys are mistaken," Zu An said, at a loss for how to explain himself. Suddenly, though, he voiced his surprise. "Huh? Do you guys feel as if it's suddenly become hot?"

"You are right. It has become hotter," Yan Xuehen said. She was fair-skinned and naturally preferred the cold. She was the most sensitive to heat and subconsciously raised her head. She was stunned by what she saw.

The others also raised their heads. They saw that there seemed to be more than a single sun in the air. There were two, three... In the end, all ten appeared in the sky. The temperature of the surface immediately shot up. The trees, flowers, and grass quickly withered, and the river water started to evaporate. Wildfires began burning everywhere.

There were ten suns in the sky!

"Have those Golden Crows gone mad?!" Grandgale exclaimed, watching all the events unfold in a stupor. It had just said that the ten Golden Crows properly took turns, and yet those words had come

back to bite it so quickly. It said, "Oh my gosh, no way, I can't stay out here. My feathers are about to start burning! I have to go into hiding. Kid, I'm heading out first."

It disappeared into the distance as soon as it spoke. Smoke visibly poured from its entire body. If it had left a bit slower, its feathers could even catch fire.

Zu An and the others were sweating like crazy. Zu An even decided to just take off his top, wondering, "Why was it still fine earlier, but now, all ten suns have suddenly appeared in the sky?"

"Something special must have happened," Yan Xuehen replied.

Other than Yan Xuehen, whose ice element skills left her a bit better off, Yu Yanluo and Yun Jianyue were sweating so much that they undid their collars and continued to fan themselves with their hands. Their exposed skin immediately made Zu An feel even hotter.

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Meanwhile, in a distant valley, the Fiend Emperor's expression was ashen. If Zu An saw his current appearance, he would probably jump in fright.

The usually dignified Fiend Emperor had never been in such a difficult situation. Furthermore, his left arm was actually missing! Golden blood continuously dripped onto the ground.

Chapter 1440: Miniskirt

Golden flames raged across the Fiend Emperor's body. The broken limb regenerated at a visible rate, eventually returning to its original state.

In the distance, the chubby Wu Liang was stupefied. The Fiend Emperor really was the Fiend Emperor after all! He had thought that losing an arm would weaken the Fiend Emperor greatly, but he had actually recovered so quickly.

The Golden Crow Crown Prince quickly moved over to the Fiend Emperor's side, asking, "Father emperor, are you alright?" He was in a sorry state, clearly having just fought a huge battle.

"I am alright," the Fiend Emperor replied gravely. "I did not expect the Taotie to be so formidable. I was careless just now and let it swallow up an arm."

Wu Liang curled his lips. What do you mean, careless? You clearly couldn't avoid it. It was always rumored that there was nothing the Taotie couldn't swallow. It seems that was the case after all.

The Golden Crow Crown Prince said, "That Taotie is one of the four ancient perils, and yet it was actually killed by father emperor. Father emperor really is amazing and incredible! You're without equal in this world!"

The Fiend Emperor shook his head slightly, saying, "There is no use in praising me. That Taotie was indeed extremely strong, or else it would not have been able to swallow up my arm. If just one of the Four Perils is already so formidable, remember that there are still two more. I am worried that we might have made some miscalculations."

The Golden Crow Crown Prince was conflicted. On one hand, he hoped his father wouldn't obtain the secret of immortality, as that would forever leave him a pitiful crown prince. However, he was also worried that something would happen to his father. The dungeon was just too scary, and they had already encountered too many powerful creatures along the way. Even though he wasn't weak, he was nothing before such ancient disasters. Without his father's protection, he wouldn't necessarily be able to return alive.

Suddenly, the world began to change. One after another, several suns began to appear, until there were ten overhead.

Wu Liang began sweating buckets. Fat people feared the heat to begin with, let alone when there were ten suns in the sky. He quickly removed his clothes and pulled out a fan from who knew where. He looked at the suns in the sky and murmured in indescribable shock, "This aura seems to be..."

The Fiend Emperor also looked up. His expression began to burn with desire as he said, "This is the Fiend Emperor's aura... No, it seems to be a bit different." Then, his expression changed greatly. No one knew what he was thinking.

The Golden Crow Crown Prince also noticed the suns' aura. He wondered, "They... They are also Golden Crows?"

The Fiend Emperor nodded. The Golden Crow Crown Prince asked, "Should we go and have a talk with them?"

The Fiend Emperor was a bit moved, but he still shook his head, saying, "There is no need. Even if we are of the same species, we might not feel any closeness to each other. Taking the risk to meet them would only be risky. Having ten Golden Crows as our enemies would be too dangerous. We will move according to plan and undo the seals of the other perils first."

The Golden Crow Crown Prince was left in admiration. Father is father after all. I was actually still so naive. Just because they're Golden Crows doesn't mean they'll definitely be friendly toward us.

Wu Liang said weakly, "Your highness, we have just undone two of the Four Perils' seals, which triggered the appearance of these ten suns. If we undo all four seals, will the entire world collapse?"

He had to voice his doubts because just the existence of the dungeon alone represented a battlefield on an entirely different order of magnitude. Even someone as powerful as the Fiend Emperor had lost an arm. If he followed along and was unlucky, he could be caught up in the destruction. In that situation, there wouldn't even be any burnt remains left of him.

"Worry not. I am not the hot-headed sort. We will undo three of the seals first," the Fiend Emperor replied. Along the way, Wu Liang had already proven his value, especially in the unsealing of the Taotie sealing formation. As such, since the Fiend Emperor still had more uses for him, he was no longer as harsh on him.

Wu Liang sighed in relief. At the same time, his eyes began to dart around. He considered whether there were better prospects in following the Fiend Emperor, or if it would be better to keep looking for a chance to slip away.

Meanwhile, Zu An's group moved through Bluefield Pond. As the temperature rose higher and higher, their clothes became lighter and lighter as well.

However, the imagination of this world's people really was too poor. No matter how hot the three women were, they only took off their jackets, loosened their collars, and rolled up their sleeves at most.

Zu An chuckled and asked, "Aren't you guys hot?"

Yun Jianyue shot him an annoyed look, saying, "We are women, after all. There's no way for us to just expose our upper bodies like you."

At the same time, she thought, This kid's figure really isn't bad. No wonder those women were so captivated.

"It's not hard at all. I'll help you," Zu An said, walking over toward her.

"What are you doing?!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed, instinctively taking a step back. She felt a bit of pressure emanating from his strong and muscular figure.

"I'm helping you modify your clothes a bit," Zu An said while raising her arms. Then he tugged on the cloth around her shoulders, tearing off her sleeves and exposing her bright and clean arms.

"Damn brat, you should be grateful we from the Holy Sect don't bother with trifles. If you did that to other women, others would all call you a scoundrel!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed. However, she only said that because she didn't want others to see that she was lacking in confidence, so she had to insist she didn't care.

"That's why I tested it out on you and didn't go to big sis Yan. I was scared that she'd get angry," Zu An said with a smile.

Yan Xuehen was a bit annoyed. Then why weren't you scared at all when you stripped me naked back then?!

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +110 +110 +110...

"That's true, that stone cold woman is more sensitive. She loves to do all that... Ah, what are you doing?!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed.

Rip!

Just like that, Zu An tore off most of the lower half of Yun Jianyue's dress, revealing her perfectly shaped thighs. Yun Jianyue was ashamed and angry! She moved to kick him, but she realized that in her current situation, that wouldn't look too appropriate, so she lowered her foot again. Then, she glared at Zu An, her eyes filled with killing intent. If it were anyone else, they would have already died countless times. However, even if it was Zu An, she still needed an explanation from him.

"This'll make it cooler for you. Don't worry, this kind of outfit is really stylish in my hometown. We call it a miniskirt," Zu An explained, trying to reason with her using the pretext of 'technology'.

When she heard his explanation, all sorts of expressions appeared on Yun Jianyue's face. She was knowledgeable herself, and occasionally saw people from other places dress similarly. However, such a

style really was a bit too daring. Most women wouldn't dare to dress like that, and she was no exception.

However, when she saw Yan Xuehen's shocked yet amused expression, she immediately said, "Of course I know about that! do I need you to teach me? Hurry up and alter that stone cold woman's clothes too."

Yan Xuehen's smile immediately froze. She had been having a great time seeing Yun Jianyue's embarrassment, and yet she ended up getting caught up herself. When she saw Zu An walking over with a smile, seemingly really about to do it, she panicked. This guy has always been ridiculously bold, but he won't really do it, right?

As such, she quickly exclaimed, "You don't have to! I can just do it myself."

Then, she tore the bottom of her dress. She didn't dare to be as brazen as Zu An, only removing half of her dress up to the knees. Her slender and long calves under the dress made her look even more graceful and womanly.

Yun Jianyue and Yu Yanluo were stunned. They hadn't expected her to do that so easily! With her nature, she shouldn't have been willing to do any of that, and would only accept it after a lot of effort to convince her.

However, the heat didn't allow them to think so many carefree thoughts. With Zu An lending a helping hand, Yu Yanluo's clothes were also quickly modified into a short vest and skirt.

With so much skin exposed, the three women were all embarrassed, but the extreme heat quickly weakened their shame.

Even so, that only made it harder for Zu An. The skimpier clothing didn't hide much of their amazing figures. He had no choice but to continuously use the Snowflake Sword's heart method to cool the boiling blood running through his veins a bit.

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After some time passed, the sparsely dressed group arrived at the shore. When they saw the endless ocean surface and the visible steam coming out of it, they were troubled.

Zu An thought of something. He took out Grandgale's feather and tossed it forward. A small tornado quickly swept them up toward the great sea.