

Necropolis 301

Chapter 301: Don't Make Mouth Shapes At Me

Though the Spectral Eye could perceive life and death and spy on heaven and earth, it was still a combat art at the heart of things. All combat arts had their weaknesses, and Lu Yun had almost fallen for the trap in a moment of carelessness. His luopan was now pointing him to the real tomb.

Under the guidance of the feng shui compass, he and his companions slowly dove down the cliff at the end of the tunnel. Space was in disarray here; the path seemed to come to a dead end, but every further inch led them into a wider clearing. It seemed as though everything they were seeing was an illusion. At the same time, however, the sea waters grew colder, and the chill stabbed bone deep.

"It's freezing!" Qing Han bundled his clothes tightly around himself. The talisman he wore allowed him to move freely through the water, and his cultivation level should've kept him warm. However, he trembled uncontrollably when surrounded by the piercing cold.

"Holy—so many corpses!" the Deaf Prince screamed suddenly, gaping at the waters below.

By now, the unrelenting darkness had faded slightly. Though there was still no visible light source, there was some strange illumination that afforded them a clearer look beneath the water.

Countless corpses floated within the expanse of water below them—humanoid, fish, and other strange creatures. All of the bodies were bloated and leached of color after prolonged submersion in sea water, but they were relatively intact overall. Traces of yin energy circled around them, dyeing the water black.

The bodies were the source of the petrifying cold.

"Why are there so many corpses here?!" Qing Han yelled. "The undead hags we saw earlier must've come from them."

"Thousands of years ago, Levitating Island fell from the sky and smashed into the North Sea. It must've landed on a settlement of living souls. That's why there are so many corpses and undead hags here—wait!" Lu Yun's expression tightened in realization. "Thousands of years ago, Levitating Island fell from the sky!"

"Myriad Formation Summit also fell from the sky!" Qing Han said without missing a beat.

"Does this tomb have something to do with the mountain?" the little fox echoed their shock.

Myriad Formation Summit had been a trap for the divine race. What was essentially a burial pit yawned at the bottom of the summit, and the mountain had prevented those buried there from escaping.

Meanwhile, Levitating Island had fallen from the sky... and brought with it an ancient tomb! There were too many similarities between the two.

"When did Levitating Island land?" Lu Yun transmitted to the Deaf Prince. Immortals from the nine majors and ten lands didn't know the island very well; they knew only that the island had appeared a few thousand years ago, but not an exact date. Lu Yun's envoys didn't have an answer, either.

“Five thousand years ago!” the Deaf Prince answered with great confidence. “Five thousand years ago, something seemed to shatter in the sky, and the shards scattered all over the world of immortals.

“Levitating Island of the North Sea and Myriad Formation Summit of Dusk Province both emerged after that!”

The xianglius were the imperial clan of the East Sea. Since the four seas were connected and were themselves the connective tissues of the nine majors, ten lands, and four immortal seas, the numerous monster spirits residing within the various bodies of water were an extensive intelligence network.

While the other facets might be oblivious to the truth, the overlords of the East, West, South, and North Seas never would be. Lu Yun and Qing Han exchanged a look.

“Myriad Formation’s burial mound dates back to eighty thousand years ago, while this tomb is a bona fide structure from the ancient times!” Lu Yun looked up at where the sky should be. “Is there another world above the world of immortals?”

“There is!” Qing Han said with great certainty. “The central world! The mythical central world is superior to the nine majors and ten lands. Many know of it, but no one’s ever been there and very few have even seen it with their own eyes!

“Eighty thousand years ago, when the divines enslaved all beings in the world of immortals, the central world remained unsullied. Not even the divines could make their way up to that mysterious realm!”

There were twenty-four facets in the world of immortals—nine majors, ten lands, four immortal seas, and the central world. Such were the fragments of the world that’d been left in the wake of the ancient world’s destruction. The central world had always been a place everyone knew of, but none had set foot in.

Although the divine race had appointed a divine king to rule over each of the twenty-four facets, they never ended up locating the central world, so that respective divine king resided within the divine court instead.

It was even rumored that when the ten thousand races in the world of immortals fought back and destroyed their captors, it’d been spearheaded and coordinated by leaders from the central world.

“Did the shards that fell from the sky five thousand years ago come from the central world?” Lu Yun couldn’t help but postulate a connection between the two.

The burial mound had been present eighty thousand years ago, before the fall of the divine race, while the tomb of the poison doctor had been around since the ancient times. There didn’t seem much of a relationship between the two.

However, both Myriad Formation Summit and Levitating Island had plummeted from the sky five thousand years ago.

“I... didn’t see the central world in the Dao Flower,” Qing Han interjected. “When the Dao Flower restored the path of cultivation, it extended to all worlds... except the central world! I can sense its existence, but something there is blocking the Dao Flower!

“There’s only two possibilities in play here,” continued the disguised girl. “First is that there are no cultivators, path of cultivation, or immortal dao there. That’s why the Dao Flower and the path couldn’t enter the central world.”

“Second,” Lu Yun said after a deep breath, “the path of cultivation... and the immortal dao as a whole, are complete in the central world.”

“Right, that must be it! The central world preserved everything from the ancient world of immortals. Their immortal dao is complete, so there are no cultivators there!” the little fox agreed enthusiastically. “Levitating Island used to be part of the sacred land of the monster spirits, and the residence of the ancient monster spirit ancestor. Since it’s fallen into the North Sea, the sacred land must have been in the central world!”

Levitating Island was a piece of the sacred land—and in fact, the heart of the sacred land, since the entire territory had fractured.

The Deaf Prince didn’t know what the two men and the fox were talking about and stared at them in befuddlement. This was a situation very familiar to him. Perhaps... he’d always known that he was different from others, but just hadn’t wanted to admit it.

“We’ll know once we visit the central world!” Lu Yun nodded slowly. “However, I’m still interested in the tombs of yin and yang. Let’s go check out what’s so special about Su Xiaoxiao, the ancient poison doctor!”

With that, he pushed all the unanswered questions aside. No matter where Levitating Island had fallen from, or who’d been involved in the incident, this was a tomb, and all tombs fell under Lu Yun’s expertise.

Hum.

A sudden buzz unfurled underwater, creating an imperceptibly faint ripple. Corpses who’d died prematurely turned around in unison, staring at Lu Yun with their rotten eyes.

“Dang it, we’ve entered the real tomb.” Goosebumps popped up on Lu Yun’s arms as he looked at the bodies around him. “I, er, accidentally broke a rule.”

“What rule?” Qing Han had noticed the reaction of the bodies, but he’d gotten used to such sights after experiencing through the Avici Cell layout in the Dao Flower’s tomb and drifting on the Blood Sea for three months.

“The name of the tomb owner mustn’t be invoked in their resting place, or evil will come knocking,” Lu Yun said slowly. He hadn’t realized that they’d entered the real tomb; all of these bodies were buried for the poison doctor!

Gurgle!

Inky black yin energy sprayed out from the bodies, dying the local vicinity black. The group’s newly restored vision darkened again.

“Hehehe...” Chilling, bleak laughter rang in their ears.

“Daggone it, who blew into my ear?!” the Deaf Prince yelled and jumped. “Was it you, little fox?!”

“Don’t move!” Lu Yun said in a trembling voice. “It’s an immortal ghost!”

Yueshen was an immortal ghost raised with the Ninefilia Specter Fostering Method. Their kind was terrifying.

Lu Yun had managed to tame Yueshen with the help of hell and the Tome of Life and Death, but yin energy ran too densely here. The various grudges, yin energy, and the vicious energy of countless dead had created a standalone ecosystem in this tomb.

And since his cultivation was too low, he couldn’t tap into the full power of the Tome of Life and Death and channel strength from hell itself. Hence, he couldn’t tame this immortal ghost.

Within the Ninefilia Specter Fostering formation of the burial mound, Yueshen could kill ten Qing Quans without difficulty. The Qing dao immortal had seriously injured Yueshen in their previous battle and almost scattered her only because that fight had taken place in the daytime, and the environment had weakened her greatly.

However, Lu Yun couldn’t release Yueshen here in someone else’s tomb. If ghosts born of two different tombs came face to face, they might summon an even worse terror. Unless, of course, there was a man of Li Youcai’s special constitution that could be possessed by Yueshen.

A stark white face came close to the Deaf Prince and whispered unintelligibly in his ear.

“An immortal ghost?” the Deaf Prince asked in confusion. “Why would it blow into my ear?”

He turned and saw the sickly face, which flashed him an unearthly smile. “I... will... eat... you...”

Scalp tingling, Qing Han and the little fox nervously turned to Lu Yun; he didn’t move a muscle.

“What did you say?” The Deaf Prince blinked.

“I... will... eat... you...” its voice grew unsteady as it continued. “Pureblood xiangliu!”

“Are you mocking me?!” The Deaf Prince glared furiously. “Out with it!”

The immortal ghost paused.

A vicious ghost could manifest their true form and hurt people with their innate energy, but an immortal ghost was different. It had to fool their prey’s senses and tap into their greatest fear to influence them.

When Yueshen had controlled Li Youcai, she’d blocked his five senses and created illusions to make him fight for her. When she wanted to join the battle herself, she had to use the nine bloodcorpses to do so.

However, the Deaf Prince couldn’t hear anything, and the immortal ghost couldn’t transmit messages to him since it didn’t have a spirit.

“Aren’t you afraid of death, pureblood xiangliu?!” the ghost’s tone descended into new depths of chill and terror. Every syllable was formed with biting frost.

“You’re insulting me, immortal ghost!” the Deaf Prince said gravely. “Don’t make mouth shapes at me!”

Incomprehension flashed through the ghost's pale eyes. It helplessly turned to Lu Yun and Qing Han, who pretended not to see it.

"The last person who dared insult me almost got crushed by my crystal. You wanna try as well?!" A wolfish grin split the prince's face as his body suddenly turned gold.

Chapter 302: Maid

Jin Heyi had previously set up a Great Formation of Corpse Refinement and refined a dao immortal into a zombie, yet he still said he couldn't afford to provoke the six princes. It wasn't that he couldn't defeat them, they simply came from much more impressive backgrounds, making it unwise to offend them.

Jiangchen Wushang's skeletal fortress ship was a heaven-defying treasure, half vessel and half zombie, and capable of withstanding even shots from a weapon of war. However, it'd been crushed by the Deaf Prince's crystal mountain on Levitating Island.

The crystal mountain was but one of the treasures the Deaf Prince possessed; the East Sea court wasn't going to let the apple of their eye head out from home without a plethora of powerful treasures to protect himself with. What the court gave him, he could naturally activate. Even Jin Heyi couldn't afford to make the Deaf Prince his enemy, let alone an immortal ghost.

Golden light radiated from the Deaf Prince's body, scattering all of the dark yin energy in the water. The floating corpses disappeared, leaving behind only the immortal ghost clinging to the Deaf Prince.

It shrieked with pain, looking around in terror as it struggled to get off the prince. However, there was something unusual about the golden light. It seemed to be a ghost's natural bane, and this particular ghost was nowhere near as powerful as Yueshen. No matter how the immortal ghost struggled, it couldn't break free, and it gradually faded out of existence.

Yueshen was Yueshen Jixiang, one of the twenty-four divine kings, reborn out of the Ninefilia Specter Fostering method. She was so powerful that if she wanted to hide herself, only Lu Yun would be able to see her. In contrast, this immortal ghost was visible to everyone, including Qing Han, Lu Yun, and the little fox.

"That's for your attitude, you little piece of shit!" sneered the Deaf Prince. The golden light around him thickened as the faint shadow of golden armor manifested on him. Its luminescence caused the immortal ghost to grow fainter, until it was on the verge of dissipating.

"Wait, Your Highness!" Lu Yun transmitted.

"Oh?" The Deaf Prince turned to Lu Yun, the golden light emitted from his armor dimming. "Do you want the little ghost, senior brother Lu?"

"The real tomb is very dangerous. Since the immortal ghost was born here, it's the perfect guide." With a wave of his hand and a black twinkle of hellfire, Lu Yun called the ghost from the Deaf Prince.

The yin energy in the water had been scattered and the independent ecosystem broken. Sensing Lu Yun's terrifying power, the immortal ghost looked at him with pain and resignation.

Here, yin and yang were in disarray, and heaven and earth were reversed. Even Lu Yun couldn't make the right call himself. The immortal ghost, however, proved to him that they'd entered the real tomb. This was a water tomb!

The Deaf Prince's armor had cleared the area within half a kilometer, but outside, it was still pitch black. Strange shadows hinted at unknown terrors. The corpses floating about had formed a natural corpse formation to defend the tomb owner.

"Who were you, and where is the tomb owner?" Lu Yun turned to the immortal ghost and channeled some of hell's energy, his eyes blazing with black flames.

Unlike Yueshen, who'd been made into an immortal ghost and had her memory erased, this woman had become an immortal ghost through natural processes, so her memories were still intact.

"This... this servant is milady's maid!" The ghost grew even more translucent under Lu Yun's flame.

"No shit you're your lady's maid," Lu Yun frowned, "tell me something useful."

The immortal ghost was terrified out of her remaining wits. She'd first been injured by the Deaf Prince's golden light, then the hellfire. Her spirit wobbled so unsteadily that it almost scattered.

"Let me," Yueshen said suddenly. "Send her in."

Lu Yun nodded. Yueshen was an immortal ghost as well, and a powerful one at that.

Once her master sent the ghost to hell, Yueshen waved her fingers to sooth the ghost's fracturing soul. Hellfire hadn't hurt her; it was the Deaf Prince's golden light that had done the damage.

"Her name is Tinglan and she served Doctor Poison Su Xiaoxiao herself. She doesn't know where her mistress was buried. She was only born and drawn here because someone uttered Su Xiaoxiao's name." After a pause, Yueshen continued, "After Su Xiaoxiao's death, Tinglan volunteered to be buried with her mistress and committed suicide within the tomb. That was before the great war of immortals. Su Xiaoxiao's final resting place wasn't on Levitating Island, nor was it in the monster spirits' sacred land. Someone moved her here later."

Lu Yun nodded.

"Be careful, though. There's another immortal ghost here who is several times more terrifying than Tinglan." Yueshen's tone grew serious. "The doctor of poison was a master of both medicine and poison, and her maids had learned a thing or two from her."

"Tinglan knows medicine, while Guanqing, the other maid buried here, acquired her mastery of poison! If Guanqing has turned into an immortal ghost as well, she will be an immortal ghost, enveloped by poisonous gas. That makes her even more dangerous than a vicious ghost."

"Guanqing..." Lu Yun looked down at the luopan in his hand. "Here lie the tombs of yin and yang. If Guanqing has become an immortal ghost, she should be in the fake tomb! I get it now. There's two tombs because of the tomb owner's two maids!" Realization dawned on Lu Yun.

Su Xiaoxiao's maids had volunteered to be her burial goods and committed suicide as their final duty. Their obsessions had turned them into something akin to tomb keepers, guarding their mistress' outer-coffin.

Due to the influence of the two maids, there emerged a layout of two tombs to protect their mistress. The real tomb was guarded by Tinglan, while Guanqing had entered the fake tomb. Once someone violated a taboo, Granqing would turn into an immortal ghost and kill anyone who entered the fake tomb.

The two maids had been peerless immortals before committing suicide, and they were highly determined. That had allowed them to become one with the tomb and facilitate its evolution.

In other words, they'd become immortal ghosts out of loyalty to their mistress. Naturally, they wouldn't remember where Su Xiaoxiao's coffin was; they'd erased that memory themselves.

Chapter 303: First Prince of the North Sea

Tinglan and Guanqing's memories held no location of Su Xiaoxiao's final whereabouts.

Lu Yun couldn't help his disappointment. As this was a water tomb, they were surrounded by sea water with countless floating corpses forming an obstacle course of sorts, and even more terrible things lurked about. Yin and yang were even more chaotic in the real tomb, which interfered with his Spectral Eye. They would have to search carefully to locate Su Xiaoxiao's resting place.

He took point with his luopan, while the Deaf Prince drove away the surrounding miasma of yin energy via the golden radiance beaming brightly from his gleaming armor.

"That is the Celestial Exorcism Armor of the ancient heavenly court's celestial masters, capable of countering all things yin and evil in the world, similar to the Azure Dragon's cleansing thunder," Empress Myrtlestar's voice suddenly rose. "The East Sea has always claimed to be the legitimate successor of the ancient heavenly court, and it seems that they do have something to validate their claim."

"Compared to the ancient lords, how powerful were the ancient court's celestial masters?" asked Lu Yun.

"There were four leading celestial masters serving the ancient heavenly court. Every one of them surpassed dao immortal, and they held higher status than the Sugato Lord."

During Qing Han's stay with the Qing Clan, the empress had acquired a wealth of knowledge and common sense about the current world of immortals. She now referred to her own era as the ancient times, like the contemporaries did.

"There were many lords back then, but only four celestial masters. All four of them were—" She stopped suddenly.

"Were they all ingress realm immortals?" Lu Yun asked without thinking. "Or primordial or principal realm?"

"How do you know that?" Surprise colored Empress Myrtlestar's expression. From what she'd learned from Qing Han, the immortal dao of the current era had been severed. All realms after the dao immortal

realm had been erased, so no one in the world of immortals should know what they were. Yet Lu Yun had blurted out the three realms seemingly without thinking.

“There truly is something unusual about you.... The Sugato Lord was a peak ingress realm immortal and wielded the Sugato Sword, the top man-made treasure of the realms. He was the foremost lord of the heavenly court,” Empress Myrtlestar sighed. “However, while many lords served the ancient court, there were only four celestial masters. They were all primordial realm immortals who served the court as guardians. Despite their lower cultivation, they were no less powerful than principal realm immortals.

“The East Sea court must have inherited the heritage of the Monster Celestial Master, one of the four great celestial masters.”

The ancient heavenly court had been a tremendous entity that’d ruled over the entire world of immortals. Back then, there were no differences between the various races and factions. Everyone served the heavenly court, be they human, monster spirit, demon, divine, dragon, phoenix, qilin, or other. All race patriarchs were officials of the court, and the Monster Celestial Master was a heavyweight of the monster spirits.

“The armor the xiangliu wears was crafted by the Monster Celestial Master,” explained Empress Myrtlestar.

“Do you know Doctor Poison Su Xiaoxiao?” asked Lu Yun.

“I do,” she responded. “She was a master of both medicine and poison. In some areas, she had exceeded even her master, Qi Hai. One time, she refined the Poison Wheel and summoned the Poison Fiend within, killing all beings across eighteen major worlds. That was why Qi Hai crippled her cultivation and disowned her.”

Lu Yun was rendered speechless. Eighteen major worlds in a row.... From what he knew now, each major world would rival a facet in the current world of immortals.

After committing genocide in eighteen worlds, Doctor Poison’s bad karma should’ve coalesced into the worst retribution, and the resulting tribulation should’ve struck her down straight into ashes. However, according to Empress Myrtlestar, Su Xiaoxiao didn’t seem to have been sentenced to such retribution. Something else must’ve happened then.

That was beside the point, though. Lu Yun needed her expertise in poison and medicine to treat Qing Han. Qing Han’s poison was bone deep. Although it was being suppressed by two connate spirit roots, no one knew for sure if the poison would consume them one day.

Rimesnake venom wasn’t that potent, nor was the poison of the Poison Fiend enough to destroy connate spirit roots. All of the destruction that’d been wrought stemmed from the mutated accursed spirit root; the poisons were merely catalysts.

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With the Deaf Prince’s armor, Lu Yun and his companions made their way through the corpse formation without much difficulty. When they looked back, they saw the swarm of bodies staring at them with empty gazes.

“There’s someone there!” Lips thinned, Qing Han turned and settled his gaze on the heart of the body of water. There was a navy-colored bubble there, within which were a good number of people moving about.

“Fucking hell, that’s Beigong Chonglou!” The Deaf Prince flew into a rage, veins popping out of his forehead and cheeks flushing beet red.

“Beigong Chonglou, the first prince of the North Sea Court!” Lu Yun and Qing Han exchanged a look. The Deaf Prince and his friends had come to Levitating Island to exact revenge on Beigong Chonglou.

Jing Dichen, the third princess of the Unsullied Sea, had had a talented and outgoing younger sister. During one of her adventures in the North Sea, she’d acquired a great treasure, then ran into Beigong Chonglou on Levitating Island. She refused to surrender the treasure, which resulted in Beigong Chonglou killing her then and there.

The murder had enraged the dragon king of the Unsullied Sea, but even though the young princess had died at Beigong Chonglou’s hands, there was no evidence proving his crime, especially given the pirate-infested waters of the North Sea.

After several attempts to seek justice for the princess failed due to Beigong Chonglou’s position in the North Sea court, the dragon king had eventually been forced to let it go. Jing Dichen and the others, however, had never given up on revenge.

“Kill, kill, kill! I’m going to kill that bastard!!” The Deaf Prince’s eyes were bloodshot as he manifested the silver box containing his crystal mountain.

“Wait!” Lu Yun grabbed the prince’s wrist before he could do anything. “Their bubble is a standalone minor world. Your crystal may be powerful, but it’s not enough to destroy it!”

The prince slowly calmed down when he heard his idol’s words.

“But how am I going to kill that bastard?!” The Deaf Prince’s chest heaved violently. Everyone in their little alliance cared deeply about the little princess, or they wouldn’t have gone to such lengths to destroy Myriad Returns Market.

“Yin and yang are in chaos here, and heaven and earth are reversed. Everything we see is fake!” Lu Yun spoke quickly through transmission, lest the Deaf Prince lose his head and launch a reckless attack. “This is the real tomb, while the minor world within the bubble lies in the fake tomb. We can see it, but we can’t enter it from here!”

“Then what do we do?” the prince asked dejectedly.

“It’s simple.” Lu Yun bared his teeth in a leer. “We’ll summon Guanqing... and poison them to death!”

Chapter 304: Poison Ghost

Su Xiaoxiao’s tomb was a duality of yin and yang, comprised of both a true tomb and a false one. The false tomb was safer, but it contained some of the doctor’s burial goods. Thus, the stronger Guanqing had been chosen to guard that tomb.

Killing Beigong Chonglou and the others inside the false tomb was as easy as getting her to manifest. Not everyone could be as unaffected by the immortal ghost as the Deaf Prince, after all.

Sometimes, hearing was much scarier than seeing. Many of the horror movies back on Earth were considerably less frightening with their audio turned off. An immortal ghost began with sound to strike fear into people's hearts, its quiet murmurs capable of evoking the most primal kind of dread from the living. Moreover, Tinglan surmised that Guanqing had probably become a poison ghost too, so she could kill with her venom just as easily as her spectral abilities.

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Inside the bubble, all was well and wonderful. Row after row of immortal fruits and herbs lined the garden; among them, Lu Yun saw a number of main ingredients used in the Tribulation Surrogate Pill. The laws of immortal dao remained intact in these herbs; clearly, the microcosm belonged to the ancient world.

This was Su Xiaoxiao's herb garden.

As the first prince of the North Sea, Beigong Chonglou was a peerless immortal. However, his realm seemed a bit unstable—unmistakable evidence that he had forcibly and hastily broken through. He was surrounded by many other immortals, who devoted themselves to carefully packing away the garden's herbs.

"This bubble is like a mirror." Lu Yun noticed the truth as soon as he got closer. "The microcosm isn't here."

The Deaf Prince balled up his fists and grit his teeth. His jaw was so tightly clamped together that his gums bled.

"But, since the bubble is showing us a picture of what's over there, we should be able to send them something from where we are!" Lu Yun turned to his furry friend. "Little fox, conceal this place with your mirage arts. Don't let the things within the yin energy come in here!"

The little fox nodded. Her watery blue eyes glittered with a dreamlike radiance as power rippled outward from her form. As a golden immortal, she'd reached a new realm with her illusions. Even some kinds of the walking dead were susceptible to them now—zombies, for example.

As long as the unknown entities within the yin energy miasma didn't enter here, they wouldn't recognize the images' illusory nature.

Although Lu Yun and the others noticed no difference, where they were now appeared to be stuffed to the brim with corpses. The little fox's illusions fooled sight, sound, scent, and touch. Any observer who didn't surpass her in cultivation would lose themselves in her phantasms.

"The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals, please." Lu Yun said quietly, glancing at his friend.

Qing Han quickly grasped his friend's intentions and unfurled the blank scroll with a wave of his hand. The treasure's power instantly filled the air, drastically changing the surrounding environment within an eighteen meter radius.

Lu Yun wanted to set up a feng shui layout here, rather than a formation. A formation might create unintended layouts that conflicted with the feng shui that was already present inside the tomb. Directly setting up a feng shui layout guaranteed that potential problems wouldn't arise, and the two he wanted were 'Soulcalling' and 'Mirage'. The environment here wasn't conducive to their setup, which meant he had to make a few changes.

That was where the scroll came in.

Under the tutelage of Empress Myrtlestar, Qing Han could easily make use of at least part of its special abilities. The scroll enclosed their surroundings with an energy as pure and unsullied as its surface.

To set up the new terrain, Lu Yun needed only to paint whatever he desired. The young man took out a chunk of immortal crystal and got to work. Rune after rune was painted in thin air, then printed themselves upon the scroll, morphing into great picturesque mountains and rivers as they did so. The special environment they created existed only upon the scroll, but its effects were very much applicable to outside reality.

A Mirage layout!

It could project everything about where they were to a place he designated. Just as the small bubble before them projected the microcosm inside the false tomb, the mirage layout could do the very same in the opposite direction through the bubble.

What Lu Yun wanted to project was only a feng shui layout; more precisely, a Soulcaller layout! Even when projected by a Mirage layout, the Soulcaller layout would still be able to take effect on the other end.

Hum...

The air quivered. Wisps of blue smoke emerged in the water, as though countless vengeful ghosts were making their presences known. They wailed and screamed, recounting the endless grievances and regrets of their lives.

"Project!" Lu Yun flatly ignored these unwanted specters. He activated the Mirage layout, sending the Soulcaller layout into the microcosm.

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"Hahahaha—" Beigong Chonglou roared with unmasked pleasure. "I didn't expect the tomb to hold an ancient ruin like this! These herbs are perfectly preserved!

"Those six idiots came all the way to the North Sea for revenge, eh? All the way to Levitating Island... little do they know that I'm right under their noses this entire time! They'll get theirs for destroying Myriad Returns Market some other time... but they helped me in the process!" The first prince beamed proudly. "My North Sea court studied Levitating Island for five thousand years! We figured out the entrance was right below a long time ago. Now that the idiots have broken the island's natural formation for us, the monster ancestor's tomb is finally open!

“Every dao immortal in the North Sea has already headed into imperial waters. They’re too focused on the skydragon tomb to care about this place. Even without those six, I would’ve brought down the island somehow anyway....

“Heheheh... do those fools from the Corpse Refiners really think they’ll get something good from following me?” Beigong Chonglou didn’t know whose tomb this was. Levitating Island had a legend about a ‘monster ancestor’s tomb’, and he didn’t know any better to think otherwise.

“A Sevenleaf Spiritflower... tsk tsk, this is the main ingredient for the Sevenfold Truespirit Pill! Taking that will stabilize my cultivation and remove all of the dratted side effects from eating that dragon whelp!” The prince smirked excitedly, then put away the flower with utmost care.

“You ate a dragon, did you not? Are you not afraid of vengeance from its kin?” A sinister voice suddenly sounded at his ear.

Beigong Chonglou shivered. He recognized that voice all too well! It was the voice of the blue dragon whelp he’d eaten! He reflexively turned his head, only to see the ghastly pallor of a human visage hanging on his shoulder.

“Aaaaaah!” A shrill shriek later, Beigong Chonglou had completed a dozen backward rotations. “Who are you?! I’m sure I’ve already fully refined the dragon I ate, so its soul shouldn’t still exist! If you’re not the dragon... then who?! Who?! Men? Men?! To me! To me!”

Fwoosh.

The bright skies of the small realm suddenly dimmed, and an ominous wind began blowing.

A faint figure stood where Beigong Chonglou had been a moment ago. Long, black strands of hair covered a bleached, sallow face, though a pair of scarlet eyes remained visible between the gaps. Her ashen robes dripped with putrid seawater. She looked exactly like the dragon whelp he’d eaten a few years ago!

Everyone thought he had outright killed and destroyed the Unsullied Sea’s young princess, but he’d actually eaten her alive!

Over time, his crime had become an inner demon. He worried about reprisal from the Unsullied Sea day and night... in fact, it was his greatest fear. The immortal ghost’s appearance drew on that fear to stifle his senses.

“D-don’t come over here... help! Heeeelp!” Beigong Chonglou curled up under a tree, screaming incoherently.

“Your Highness, Your Highness! What’s going on?” The other North Sea monster immortals picking herbs were shocked by their prince’s odd behavior. In their eyes, nothing had changed about the realm at all.

They couldn’t see the abruptly descending ghost.

As an immortal ghost, Guanqing was far stronger than Tinglan. She slowly lifted her head, the corners of her mouth cracking open as she did so, exposing the white bone beneath.

“Ah!” Beigong Chonglou screamed and spat out a mouthful of black blood. The liquid smoked as it touched the ground, corroding a spirit herb there.

“This is bad, His Highness has encountered the tomb’s immortal ghost!” exclaimed an old man in understanding. A golden talisman appeared in his hand and he chanted a few words, then plastered it on Beigong Chonglou’s back. Color slowly began to return to the prince’s cheeks.

Swish!

In the next moment, Beigong Chonglou’s right hand beelined for the old man’s throat.

“An immortal of the Unsullied Sea... are you here for revenge? Die!” the prince roared with bestial hoarseness.

“How dare... an immortal ghost... possess the first prince... get out!” The old man’s eyes bulged. Another golden talisman appeared in his hand, clearly intended for a second round of exorcism. A malevolent grin from Beigong Chonglou interrupted him, and the prince’s fingers suddenly turned black.

Bang!

The old man—a peerless immortal monster spirit—spattered outward in a spray of inky liquid. His body had entirely liquefied. The other monster immortals caught in the splash turned into screaming puddles of purulent blood as well.

“Heeeee... more Unsullied Sea immortals? More? More? Die... die... die...” Beigong Chonglou’s lips were stretched in an insidious smile. He walked out of the microcosm step by step with a white shape firmly attached to his back, blinding and deafening him.

.....

“How terrifying! Even a peerless immortal can’t resist that ghost’s poison.” The Deaf Prince blanched at what he’d witnessed, but what he saw next really raised every hair on his body.

As soon as Beigong Chonglou left the microcosm, the poison ghost on his back turned its head. Its reddish gaze glared evilly at him through the bubble.

Chapter 305: Octopus With a Human Head

Guanqing’s glance backward had struck horrified terror into the Deaf Prince’s heart. He’d thought himself superior to immortal ghosts after defeating Tinglan so easily with his Celestial Exorcism Armor, but when faced with Guanqing’s strange smile, his skin crawled.

Lu Yun shook his head and covered the Deaf Prince’s eyes. The prince abruptly expelled a mouthful of tainted air from his lungs and regained some clarity. The most powerful trick immortal ghosts could use was to hoodwink a person’s senses and identify their weaknesses in order to control them.

She’s powerful enough to affect the Deaf Prince through a minor world, Lu Yun registered with apprehension. Guanqing is not to be underestimated. The Corpse Refiners are in deep trouble. Never enter the fake tomb under any circumstances! Never!

Through the bubble, he'd made an initial determination of the feng shui in the fake tomb and realized it was an independent ecosystem. The entire fake tomb was a formation that nurtured Guanqing's spirit. Lu Yun would have no choice but to resort to brute force if he wanted to fight her.

She'd easily dealt with the immortals from the North Sea court simply by possessing Beigong Chonglou. If she tapped into her terrible poison, who knew what else she'd be capable of?

Lu Yun wasn't the least bit inclined to face a poison ghost like her.

.....

Thick yin energy spun in the pitch black depths of the water tomb. The compass in Lu Yun's hand gyrated wildly, attempting to determine where the tomb's owner was. However, the feng shui in the tomb was chaotic and the indicators of the luopan kept shifting without stop. Oftentimes, the Deaf Prince complained that they were going around in circles.

As they searched for the coffin, Lu Yun saw bubbles containing various treasures pass by. Each was a natural mirage reflecting everything in the fake tomb, attempting to lure immortals from the real tomb to the fake one.

The fake tomb had originally been safe, but was now dangerous after Lu Yun had summoned Guanqing. Under the luopan's guidance, the group traveled further into the tomb and into denser clouds of yin energy.

Previously, the Deaf Prince's armor had been able to clear out an area roughly a kilometer wide. But now, under the pressure from the thick yin energy, the golden barrier was suppressed to a light orb of only a few dozen meters in diameter, and it continued shrinking at a visible pace.

Strange shadows flickered in and out of existence within the looming darkness. Every once in a while, a pale arm would shoot out and attempt to break through the barrier, eliciting screams and shrieks from the little fox.

She was hardly the brave sort.

Despite ascending to the golden realm, she was still easily startled. When the poison ghost had killed the North Sea monster spirits, she'd curled up in a ball and hidden in Qing Han's hair, too scared to even look.

"This water tomb is far less dangerous than the burial mound and you were never afraid there, so why are you this scared here?" Qing Han seized the opportunity to make fun of the little fox. Serves her right for calling him ugly all the time!

"I was in the burial mound for a very long time," grumbled the little fox, "and I knew the place like the back of my hand. What's so scary about that? Here, though... eek! Help!"

The little fox shrieked and slipped into Qing Han's clothes, avoiding a long pale arm that'd shot out from the gloom and somehow bypassed the armor's golden light, targeting the little fox. The owner of the arm must have sensed her fear.

Qing Han sidestepped and growled, then raised his hand and sent a large purple palm strike at the arm.

Bam!

The motion pushed away the seawater around them, creating a vacuum and knocking the white arm back. Qing Han had deployed the same combat art back in the Sword Pavilion to rescue Lu Yun, breaking apart the formation set up by the nine Feng august immortals. The disguised girl was now more than ten times stronger than back then, and the palm strike would be enough to kill an ordinary august immortal. However, it merely knocked the arm away.

“Zombie!” Qing Han transmitted with a frown. “There’s a zombie in the yin energy, and it’s very powerful!”

“Hmph!” The Deaf Prince felt personally affronted. His armor specialized in destroying zombies and ghosts. Even immortal ghosts weren’t its match, yet a zombie had broken through its golden light!

Hum.

Intense golden light flared from his body, driving away the yin energy and revealing a giant head. Roughly thirty meters in diameter, its features had rotten away. Instead of a body, the zombie possessed eight arm-like tentacles, like an octopus. It was a zombie with a human head and an octopus-like body!

“Waugh! Waugh! Waaugh!” No sooner had the head emerged than it opened its large maw, releasing an inky black yin aura to protect its enormous head. Thin, pale arms whipped around in the golden light, grabbing at the little fox again. She was its only target.

“Dammit, what the hell is that?!” The Deaf Prince’s voice broke as he yelled, his eyes opening wider. He’d raided his fair share of tombs before, but never had he seen anything like the monster. An octopus with a human head? It’d released yin energy like an octopus would release its ink, too!

“It’s a mutated zombie!” Lu Yun’s expression shifted drastically. “It’s been here for many years, and is completely adapted to its environment. Be careful, it’s more at home in the deep sea than we are.”

Its shape was more appropriate here than if it’d been in a human form. Lu Yun turned to the Deaf Prince; although he was the xiangliu divine beast, he wasn’t the zombie’s match here in the deep sea, especially in depths permeated with yin energy.

Swoosh!

Holding his luopan in one hand and taking out the sword pagoda with the other, Lu Yun called upon the treasure to form a tremendous sword made of aura.

“Hoh!” Before Lu Yun could make a move, Qing Han spat out a syllable to summon lightning and cast another palm strike, this time greyish-cyan rather than violet.

Bam!

The giant hand whipped through the water and slammed into the yin energy the octopus monster had excreted. Its eight tentacles suddenly retracted, and it shrieked with terror when it was hurtled back.

“Ha! Cha!” Qing Han spat out two syllables, blasting out with a violet and a cyan palm strike, shattering the thick yin energy around them and revealing hundreds of octopuses with human heads. Their black eyes stared unblinkingly at the intruders.

Chapter 306: Fear

With the yin energy scattered by Qing Han’s cyan and violet palm strikes, hundreds of human-headed octopi of varying sizes came into view. Some were the size of a regular human head, while others spanned three hundred meters, nearly reaching full maturity. Their human features, however, were still somewhat discernible.

The octopi zigzagged and released more yin energy to cover the area anew. They were the reason there was such a dense miasma here!

Qing Han’s two blows had been powerful enough to smack an august immortal to pieces, but the octopi remained unscathed. Even the one that’d been vigorously hurled back turned around vigorously with a neat flip.

“No, no no.... Run!” Lu Yun yelled when he got a good look at the octopi, color draining from his face.

Putting away his compass, he grabbed Qing Han and the Deaf Prince and made a mad dash for safety. The Sugato Sword hovered before him, radiating beams of sword energy. Escape was the only thing on his mind.

Fucking hell, the octopi have formed a Great Formation of Corpse Refinement! How is that possible?! he cursed inwardly. Although the octopi were powerful, they weren’t enough to send Lu Yun fleeing. When Qing Han had scattered their yin energy, though, he’d seen the trajectory of their movement, which matched the Great Formation of Corpse Refinement. How was that even possible?!

Had the octopi been disciples of the Corpse Refiners in life? Or had those from the sect entered and exerted control over them?

No, no, that can’t be! The qi in the realm tomb hasn’t leaked out yet, so it’s clear that no one has been here before. Is this just a crazy coincidence?

The Sugato Sword’s energy parted the sea waters before them as Lu Yun pushed his speed to the limit. Still, he couldn’t escape the shadow of the yin energy the octopi were releasing, and started panicking.

“The Great Formation of Corpse Refinement?” Qing Han was stunned by Lu Yun’s identification. “You mean the octopi have set up a formation?”

“That’s right! I know what I saw. They’re moving along the lines of a Great Formation of Corpse Refinement! Although it hasn’t been completed yet, it’s gradually taking shape. Once it does, we’ll all be turned into zombies!

“Dammit,” Lu Yun snapped, mentally beating himself up. “There’s a corpse formation circling us in addition to the octopi, and the yin, yang, heaven, and earth in this area are in utter chaos. I can’t make any correct calls.”

He’d thought he’d be invincible in ancient tombs with his luopan, but he’d nearly fallen into a trap the moment he stepped into the real tomb, and now had set both feet into another one.

"If the formation hasn't taken shape yet, it must have a flaw," Qing Han said hurriedly in response to Lu Yun's panicked look. "I can help you adjust the terrain with the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals and break the formation!"

"That won't work." Lu Yun shook his head. "I've studied this formation many times and it can't be broken from the inside, not even if it hasn't fully taken shape yet! The only way you can do so from the inside is if you apply brute force that exceeds the formation's maximum capacity!"

"This particular formation, though, has become one with the body of water, and there's a formation of corpses outside. Unless we can destroy the real tomb, we..." his voice trailed off as a sliver of hope occurred to him.

Though the formation had taken its basic shape, it wasn't complete yet. If he could lead the octopi on a merry chase and prevent them from finishing it, that might result in a weakness he could exploit.

He didn't dare stop at all, though.

The Great Formation of Corpse Refinement had almost reached maturity. If he stopped for even a moment and allowed the octopi to gather and complete the last rune, the formation would activate and refine them into zombies before Qing Han could deploy his scroll.

Although Lu Yun, Qing Han, and the Deaf Prince were no run-of-the-mill cultivators, they were still just cultivators. They couldn't counter the great formation with their current level of strength.

"I'll do it!" growled the Deaf Prince. Lu Yun and Qing Han had been conversing through transmission, keeping the prince in the loop.

He manifested his silver box, which was what made it possible for him to carry the unusually heavy crystal mountain. Originally, it'd been entrusted to Hongxiu, but the prince had taken it with him since they were exploring an ancient tomb.

"Don't!" Lu Yun stilled. "Your crystal will bring the entire water tomb down. That'll just kill us even faster!"

The Deaf Prince scowled. "What can we do, then?"

"I'll deal with it!" Lu Yun had pushed his sword manipulation technique to its limit. The Sugato Sword almost disintegrated and circled about the three men and a fox in wisps of light. Violetgrave transformed into a haze of purple radiance as well, lurking in the shadows and waiting for the perfect moment to strike.

Within hell, Feinie prepared the Formation Orb. Its light shone on the Great Formation of Corpse Refinement through the Gates of the Abyss, but even she couldn't identify the flaw in the formation. The heavenly forces were in utter chaos here, and there was that mass of corpses they'd come through earlier. Given that the octopi hadn't finished forming up yet, the Formation Orb could only reveal the flaws in the corpse formation.

"Wait." Qing Han stopped suddenly. "One of the octopus tried to attack the little fox!"

Lu Yun's eyes brightened as Qing Han continued, "That octopus must be the flaw! It wanted to eat her because she was scared."

Lu Yun hadn't been scared, and the prince's fear of the poison ghost was crushed by Lu Yun as soon as it'd arisen. Qing Han naturally wouldn't fear anything here. The little fox was the only one who was afraid, and her fear drew the octopus, creating a flaw that prevented the almost finished formation from reaching completion.

"Fear...." Lu Yun inhaled deeply. "Ah, so they're ghost zombies! Creatures transformed from zombies that were killed!"

If a zombie was killed with its body intact, it would become another zombie again after tens of millions of years—a ghost zombie.

Ghost zombies fed on fear, and living souls who were afraid were irresistible to them. That was why the tentacles had targeted the light barrier of the Celestial Exorcism Armor to get to the little fox, and why the formation remained unfinished.

"If that's the case...." Lu Yun grabbed the little fox.

"What—what are you doing?!" the little fox screamed as Lu Yun dug her out from Qing Han's shirt, where she'd been trembling in fear.

"I'm using you to break the formation!" Cackling, Lu Yun flung the little fox away.

"Eek! Save me, big sister Mo Yi! Help, ugly thing!!" the golden immortal burst out in loud sobs as she sailed away, her heart filled with abject terror.

Chapter 307: A Corpse Coffin, Another Corpse Coffin

Fear was a curious thing. There were strange beings in the world that could consume it, and ghost zombies were a perfect example.

Zombies were born out of accumulated grievances and yin energy, abandoned by heaven and earth, wandering outside the three realms and cycle of five elements, and caught between life and death. If a zombie's body remained intact after death, it would gather resentment and refine yin energy until, finally, it became a zombie again—a ghost zombie.

Unlike grudge corpses, the resentment of which had plateaued and given rise to a grudge spirit that turned it into something between a zombie and a ghost, ghost zombies were still fully zombies. Only, they could consume fear and feed on other zombies. They were to zombies what zombies were to humans.

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The little fox's whining rang through the body of water, her tone so pained and voice so pitiful that one couldn't help feeling sympathetic and have their nose twinge in response. Although the Deaf Prince couldn't hear the little fox, her expression made him greatly pity her. Subconsciously, he reached out to rescue her.

However, the human-headed octopi were even faster.

Shocked and terrified the moment Lu Yun threw her, the little fox radiated a small explosion of fear, horror, and other negativity. The octopi following the trajectory of the Great Formation of Corpse

Refinement suddenly dissolved into chaos and rushed the little fox, waving their tentacles and scattering the almost finished formation.

“Wahhh! Wahhhhhh... help me!!” Tremendous fear paralyzed the little fox, wiping away knowledge of even how to move.

Clang!

Silver starlight flickered, followed by the powerful tolling of a bell. An enormous golden bell appeared out of nowhere and protectively clamped down over the little fox, its ringing undulations causing immense, dense ripples in the water that spread out in all directions.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Three consecutive booms of sound blew the incoming octopi back and shattered the formation of corpses on the outskirts as well.

“Let’s go!” roared Lu Yun. Energy from Violetgrave and the Sugato Sword became one, wrapping around them all and bringing them to safety.

Bam!

The body of water shuddered and powerful hidden currents were whipped up. With the power of starstones, the Tiger Prince and the Dragon Prince manipulated the Arcane Golden Bell from within the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals and collected the little fox.

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After an indiscernible amount of time, Lu Yun slowly came to a halt on top of a black reef, panting heavily. Humans shouldn’t be able to breathe underwater, but he could, since he’d inherited the talents of a water qilin, a mermaid, and a dragon.

The seawater here was clear and free of any yin energy. He’d brought everyone out of the corpse formation’s area of effect after his desperate escape.

The little fox clung to Qing Han’s hair, sobbing and sniffing up a storm. Even she herself didn’t know why she was so scared. What she didn’t realize was that she’d been knocked out by her fear after her resurrection, then had time to walk around in Myriad Formation Summit in a dream. Otherwise, she might’ve been scared dead again not long after she’d been resurrected.

“A golden immortal... crying from fear?” The Deaf Prince couldn’t hear her wailing, but he could see her pitiful expression. “The legendary Monster God who conquered the outskirts of Levitating Island in a year, scared to tears!”

The little fox looked at him with teary eyes. “I’m scared!”

Qing Han gently caressed the soft fur on the fox’s head with a wry smile. He didn’t know how to comfort her.

“The little fox is missing one part of her ethereal soul and one part of her corporeal soul,” Empress Myrtlestar said suddenly. “That makes her soul unstable and gives rise to her easily frightened nature.”

"I see!" Lu Yun realized. The layout of resurrection in the burial mound had been set up for the little fox, but someone had interrupted the ritual and prevented her soul from fully reassembling. Out of her three celestial parts and seven corporeal parts, she was missing one of each.

"If you scare her again, even those remaining parts of her soul will be scattered." Empress Myrtlestar shook her head.

Lu Yun shrugged awkwardly, he hadn't had any other choices left to him at the time. Besides, Qing Han had been ready to activate the Arcane Golden Bell. Miao had been bait that wouldn't actually be hurt.

Lu Yun turned to the slowly calming little fox. "I'll take you out of the tomb."

"No!" The little fox shook her head with great determination. "This place may have something to do with the tomb of the monster spirit ancestor. I have to get to the bottom of it!"

Lu Yun glared at her. "What if you get scared to death?"

"I..." she burrowed deeper into Qing Han's arms, "I'll stay with this ugly thing and cover my eyes and ears. Then I won't be scared!"

Lu Yun shot her an envious look. ...envious? Why would I envy her?

"What's that?" The Deaf Prince goggled at where they had come from and said in a trembling voice, "Why is there such a large corpse here?"

Lu Yun and Qing Han whirled around and gaped. A gargantuan female body stood at an angle in the water. She was dressed in a tattered dress and had white bones poking out of her rotten flesh. The head facing them alone was a kilometer wide, and her body was at least fifty kilometers tall.

They'd just come barreling out of the body's open mouth.

"Is that... a corpse coffin?" Lu Yun asked with some uncertainty. "Was Su Xiaoxiao buried in a corpse coffin as well?"

He took out his luopan. They'd left the water tomb and entered the inner sea of Levitating Island. Clearly, the land covered in yin energy was Su Xiaoxiao's real tomb, a corpse coffin.

"It's the poison ghost!" the Deaf Prince yelled. The ghost had left a deep impression on him after the single glance she'd thrown his way. Although the corpse had become bloated in the seawater, he could still recognize her. She was Guanqing, the maid who'd learned the skills of poison from Su Xiaoxiao.

"It really does seem to be Guangqing..." Qing Han's eyes shot wide open as well.

"What's going on?" Lu Yun mentally turned to hell and contacted Yueshen, who swiveled to the immortal ghost next to her. Tinglan looked positively lost, unsure of what to say. She retained her memories before death, but she didn't know how to explain this. She didn't remember seeing Guanqing refined into a corpse coffin.

"There's another body above her!" the Deaf Prince yelled at the top of his lungs, pointing at the space above Guangqing's body. There was another corpse of about the same size floating in the water.

Another corpse coffin. There was some distance between the two, but Lu Yun could sense a connection between them.

The tombs of yin and yang?

Two corpse coffins?

Can it be... Lu Yun and the others quickly made their way to the corpse coffin overhead and saw Tinglan's true form.

Chapter 308: Corpse Mutation

Although the corpse coffin overhead was bloated and decaying after having been immersed in seawater for so long, one could still make out Tinglan's appearance. Her body was a corpse coffin that spanned fifty kilometers.

"The tombs of yin and yang consist of one real and one fake tomb, and both are real and fake!" murmured Lu Yun as various emotions flickered rapidly over his face. "The poison ghost isn't Guanqing...."

"Not Guanqing?" Qing Han blurted. "Then who is it?"

"Su Xiaoxiao!" Lu Yun snapped out. "Both tombs are real. One corpse coffin contains Su Xiaoxiao's body, while the other contains her soul! What an utterly vicious woman. She seized Guanqing's soul, thus manifesting as an immortal ghost!"

Lu Yun had originally set up a layout to summon Guanqing's soul, but it was Su Xiaoxiao's soul in the corpse coffin that had answered the call. She'd taken possession of Guanqing and turned into an immortal ghost, utterly scattering the maid. Tinglan and Guanqing had voluntarily committed suicide to turn into loyal spirit guards, yet Su Xiaoxiao had been so heartless as to take possession of one of them and destroy all traces of her!

Lu Yun had harbored some suspicions at first. Even though Guanqing had turned into a poison immortal ghost, she was so much stronger than Tinglan. They were in completely different leagues! After getting a good look at the tombs' layout, he realized that he must have summoned Su Xiaoxiao herself.

"No matter what, I need Su Xiaoxiao as my envoy!" Lu Yun tightened his jaw. Regardless of what kind of a person she'd been in life, she'd be his to command after becoming his envoy.

"That's strange. I met Doctor Poison Su Xiaoxiao a few times when I reached the perfect heights of my dao, but I never heard about her having any maids." Cangyin approached Tinglan and remarked hesitantly, "From my memories, she was an impish character with a flare for dashing heroism. She saved countless lives in her day, and other than an admirer of hers, there was no one else who followed her."

As a heavyweight in the ancient times, Cangyin had occasionally crossed paths with Su Xiaoxiao. When Su Xiaoxiao had first risen to fame, Cangyin had been only a princess of the water qilins, rather than a powerhouse in her own right.

"I'd be the first to say that she wouldn't slaughter all lives across eighteen major worlds." Cangyin shook her head. "When she died, I mourned her for a long time." She levelled Tinglan with an unsmiling gaze. "Are you really her maid? Did you really commit suicide to guard her tomb as a loyal spirit?"

As she spoke, two balls of ghostly fire flared in her eyes and shone brightly at Tinglan.

"I am." Tinglan said through clenched teeth, her face turning increasingly translucent.

"If you say so." Cangyin nodded slightly. Without Lu Yun's prompting, she told him everything she knew about Su Xiaoxiao through the Tome of Life and Death.

Lu Yun nodded without registering a change in emotion, casting a meaningful look at Tinglan through the Gates of the Abyss. This body of water was a special space outside the ancient tomb. Only the two giant corpse coffins remained of Su Xiaoxiao's tomb; coffins and tomb had become one without any division.

"Let's go back!" he declared with fatalistic determination.

"Go back?!" Terror flashed through the little fox's blue eyes.

"I can send you back to the Kunpeng Palace with a transportation formation disk." Lu Yun raked a withering look over the little fox in Qing Han's arms. For some reason, he really wanted to drag the animal out of Qing Han's arms.

"No!" The little fox popped her head out of Qing Han's shirt and shook it hurriedly. "Ugly thing will protect me. I'm very safe!"

Qing Han smiled wryly.

"Alright. Let's go." The Deaf Prince nodded solemnly. He was now wearing a full, glittering set of Celestial Exorcism Armor and wielded a coin longsword that warded off evil with greater strength than that of the armor.

Under the protection of the golden light, the Deaf Prince and the others reentered the corpse coffin through Guanqing's inky mouth. Yin energy still flooded it as human-headed octopi wandered around aimlessly, expelling energy every once in a while and dyeing the seawater black.

Suddenly, they all jerked in the same direction. They'd sensed the fear radiating from the little fox, which attracted the monsters like it had before.

"Scram!"

The octopi whipped toward them and readied themselves to form a Great Formation of Corpse Refinement, but Lu Yun wouldn't allow it.

Blinding light radiated from the Sugato Sword as he made eighteen slashes in a row. He almost cut the immediate watery region in half, forcing back countless octopi. They hadn't had the chance to gather yin energy, and without that, they couldn't threaten Lu Yun.

Qing Han and the Deaf Prince made their moves as well, throwing more octopi back.

"A dragon sleeps in mountains coiled, those deathly cliffs with mysteries roiled."

"Danger shies if mountains hide, yin and yang in layout bide."

Grasping the overall layout of the tombs, Lu Yun activated the Dragonsearch Invocation. The indicators of the luopan rotated swiftly, instantly pointing to the extreme yin of the corpse coffin. Most extreme yin returned to yang and created a thriving land of pure yang, which was perfect for burial. The luopan concluded that was where Su Xiaoxiao's body was.

Throwing reservation out of the window, Lu Yun unleashed dark hellfire through the water, scaring away the octopi that'd been gathering for another charge, along with other nebulous figures in the dark.

Screech!!

Terrible screams rang out the moment they approached the land of extreme yin, piercing through the waters and forming a churning wall of sound waves.

"What the hell?!" Lu Yun's expression tightened.

"Open!" It was Qing Han's turn to make his move. What was terrifying wasn't the sound itself, but the shockwaves it elicited. The disguised girl manifested a sword and cleaved through the powerful shockwaves, the counterforce shattering his supreme rank sword.

"Someone's fighting in there!" Wariness colored Qing Han's expression. The corpse coffin was completely saturated after being buried in seawater for five thousand years. Still, some parts of the coffin, such as the hole before them, remained untouched. That was where the point of extreme yin was.

"No, not someone, but something!" Lu Yun's face blanched, his eyes fixed on the luopan in his hand. "Something entered the tomb and triggered a mutation of Su Xiaoxiao's body. Whatever's in there is fighting her."

Chapter 309: Su Xiaoxiao

A mutation referred not to the zombification of the body, like it did back on Earth, but an even more terrifying transformation. The corpse would turn into something that even Lu Yun couldn't comprehend, and mutations that took place in ancient tombs were worse.

Su Xiaoxiao's soul was now an immortal ghost wreaking havoc in the corpse coffin overhead, while her mutated body was fighting something unknown.

Terrifying shrieks and howls rang out from the dark pit of extreme yin before them, each of them accompanied by bursts of crimson light. Together, they propelled the water around the premises into violent water jets.

Lu Yun and Qing Han jointly shattered the water jets that rippled their way. They were both top cultivators who could rival august immortals, but the Deaf Prince behind them hadn't reached their level. He would be dusted to ashes if he were hit.

The prince poured all of his power into operating his Celestial Exorcism Armor and coin longsword, keeping an unending swarm of water monsters from approaching. However, that left him with no energy to spare for other defensive treasures.

"It's Diexi!" Qing Han perked up. "Diexi's here!"

He'd already refined two connate spirit roots—the Embittered Bamboo and Fusang Purewood. Despite being handicapped by the poison, his strength had been improving continuously, and his senses were now keener than Lu Yun's. Through the bursts of crimson light, the disguised girl could sense the traces left by Diexi's passage.

It was indeed the zombie king!

With Lu Yun's help, Diexi was gradually transforming into a regular human, both in behavior and thought. When she'd been stationed at the seaside stronghold, Nephrite court immortals had forced her into the North Sea, whereupon she'd gone missing. What a great surprise to encounter her here!

"No wonder Su Xiaoxiao's body mutated. It's because of Diexi!" Realization dawned on Lu Yun.

Diexi was a zombie king born out of a tomb for the living, and the presence from that tomb hadn't yet dissipated fully. Now that she'd entered someone else's tomb, the presence clashed with that of the tomb owner and triggered a mutation of the owner's body.

"Take this and protect the Deaf Prince." Lu Yun broke a water ripple with a singular downward motion and quickly handed Qing Han his luopan. "I'll go take a look!"

"Be careful!" Qing Han let him go. He knew what Lu Yun had come here for: to resurrect Su Xiaoxiao, Doctor Poison herself!

Lu Yun had let on that he could resurrect the dead. His secret would be safe, if the disguised girl was the only one on this excursion, but the little fox and the Deaf Prince were here as well. Lu Yun would have to leave the two of them behind and have Qing Han watch over them.

"Hm? He went in just like that? Shouldn't we follow him?" The Deaf Prince resembled those golden armored warriors Lu Yun could summon. Clad in armor gleaming with golden radiance, he looked utterly magnificent.

Instead of answering, Qing Han quietly manifested another sword and blew another incoming water pulse to pieces. The prince hunched in on himself.

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The moment he entered the cavern of the extreme yin, Lu Yun vanished, becoming a dust particle with the Size Manipulation death art. This was no regular transformation technique, because he could turn himself into a particle so fine that average immortals wouldn't be able to sense him in the surrounding environment.

Upon entry, he felt a burden lifted from his shoulders. Gone was the endless sea water, and left in its place was a current of warm air. This was a serene grotto bursting with vitality, where birds chirped and butterflies fluttered. There was even a swing tied to a large tree.

His speculations had been borne out, and the extremity of yin had turned into pure yang. Still, the extent to which the layout of pure yang had evolved caught him by surprise.

Diexi looked the same as ever. A worn, gray robe accentuated her curves, and her features were delicately outlined in her face. Her hair and nails were carefully groomed. If not for the endless crimson light blazing from her eyes, no one would've guessed she was a zombie king, rather than an ordinary girl.

She'd made enormous improvement in her cultivation and reached peerless immortal realm by now. Her presence as a zombie king was evolving quickly, and she was one step away from becoming a real person.

However, Lu Yun could clearly see a strange talisman in her body that was preventing her from fully evolving. In fact, it continuously consumed her vitality in an attempt to turn her back into a zombie.

Next to Diexi was a softly beautiful girl. She looked no older than twenty and wore a clean, white dress that left her dainty, jade-like feet uncovered. Long, jet-black hair flowed down her back, and a pristine crown of flowers rested on her head.

Her eyes were screwed tightly shut, and there was a serenity to her even as she attacked. She looked so lifelike that she didn't look like a mutated corpse at all.

"That's Su Xiaoxiao?" Lu Yun paused. The presence radiating from the girl in white was the same as the one suffusing an ancient tomb. She was clearly the master of this place. However, she wasn't fighting Diexi, but fighting another being with Diexi!

Their opponent was a tall, strongly-built zombie with pus oozing out of lesions all over its rotten body. However, the clothes it wore were intact, rather than worn and tattered rags like those of regular zombies. It had two heads, which were emitting the awful screams he'd heard before entering!

"What the hell is that?!" Lu Yun jumped and reverted back to his regular size. "Diexi, what's going on here?!"

"Lu Yun!" Crimson light reeled back into her eyes when she noticed Lu Yun, her expression brightening. "What a surprise to run into you in the skydragon tomb!"

"Huh? Skydragon tomb?!" Lu Yun looked at her in incomprehension. This was the skydragon tomb? Wasn't that in the capital of the North Sea?

"Lu Yun, help, help extract the talisman from my body! If this keeps on, I'll turn into a zombie again!" she said urgently and quickly as her hands moved like butterflies, sending out rays of crimson light to block the two-headed zombie.

"Scaled-Dragon King, Yuchi Tianhuang!" commanded Lu Yun. The Gates of the Abyss swung open and released two figures that rushed at the two-headed zombie.

Bam! Bam!

The zombie that Diexi and Su Xiaoxiao had fought for an unknown period of time staggered back.

Yuchi Tianhuang was Lu Yun's most powerful Infernum! While Beigong Yu and the Scaled-Dragon King were the top two powerhouses in the North Sea, even the two of them combined couldn't rival Yuchi Tianhuang. He was a true divine king, one of the White Tiger bloodline.

Lu Yun had also invested more resources in him, channeling his Mastery of the Five Elements and summoning elemental gold power to help the divine cultivate.

The scaled-dragon and White Tiger's descendent took over, giving Diexi some reprieve. She hurried to Lu Yun with a relieved sigh, while Su Xiaoxiao remained where she was, at a bit of a loss as to what to do.

Her corpse had mutated, but what had triggered her mutation was the double-headed zombie, not Diexi.

“What’s going on?” Lu Yun asked as he considered the talisman radiating corpse energy in Diexi’s body. “Did you say this is the skydragon tomb? But how’s that possible?”

“Isn’t this the skydragon tomb?” Confusion flashed through Diexi’s ruby-like eyes and she turned to Su Xiaoxiao.

Chapter 310: A Living Corpse

Eyes squeezed shut, Su Xiaoxiao remained dumbly in place. Uneasiness flashed across her face, then was replaced by a general sense of not knowing what to do with herself. Regardless, this wasn’t what a dead person, what a corpse was supposed to look like.

“Xiaoxiao, are we not in the skydragon tomb anymore?” Diexi asked again when the poison doctor didn’t respond.

Su Xiaoxiao still radiated discomfort, and her tender hands twisted and turned the hem of her dress.

“She can speak?” Lu Yun’s eyes widened and he paused in the midst of condensing a talisman in his hand.

“She can... oof!” Diexi grunted with pain as a gray talisman stinking of putrid decay made its way out of her body, attracted by the one in Lu Yun’s hand. “Is it out?”

Joy crossed her face; this Zombification Talisman had bedeviled her for quite some time. In fact, she’d been on the cusp of completing her evolution to a living being, but the talisman had negated all of her efforts.

Lu Yun nodded slightly and ignited a flicker of hellfire, reducing the talisman to ashes.

As its name implied, a Zombification Talisman could zombify a living thing, similar to the effects of the Great Formation of Corpse Refinement and Bag of Corpse Refinement. The Corpse Refiners sure have a lot of tricks up their sleeves, huh.

Rumble.

An incredible burst of power exploded from the two-headed zombie, throwing the slightly weaker scaled-dragon backward and slamming him on a small mountain not too far off in the distance, instantly flattening it.

The Scaled-Dragon King roared furiously and ricocheted right back like a cannonball, hurtling into his enemy. He released the image of a dragon and crocodile from his body at the same time, the two intertwining to create a terrible killing force that bore down on the zombie.

“Awaughhhh!!” screeched the zombie, sending Yuchi Tianhuang flying with a flip of the hand, then brought its hands together to thrust them outward at the dragon-crocodile image.

Pffft!

The Scaled-Dragon King trembled but once, blood misting out of all his pores. Destruction crawled up every inch of his bones and meridians, shattering them to pieces. In the next moment, the second strongest monster spirit king of the North Sea flopped to the ground as a sack of quivering, twitching flesh.

“Awau awau awaughhh!!” Two decaying mouths split open, shrieking with a cacophony that could rouse the deaf and return sight to the blind. The sound waves rushed out of the place of extreme yin and pushed the waters, creating horrifying ripples that sped in all directions. Meanwhile, the two-headed zombie opened its arms wide and sprang at the prone Scaled-Dragon King.

Wham.

Yuchi Tianhuang rushed in just at this time, the innate power of metal flickering all over his body in aureate radiance. The light cut viciously at the zombie, as if the edges of keen blades.

Diexi remained staunchly at Lu Yun’s side in a protective stance, blocking all of the aftershocks caused by the clash between peerless immortals.

“Lü Biao!” called out Lu Yun.

A bright verdant figure flashed in front of him as a green-haired man charged out of the Gates of the Abyss, making directly for the two-headed zombie. Monster Spirit King Lü Biao of Mist Land had died under a single swipe of Lu Yun’s blade while protecting Lü Guhong, and was the first peerless immortal Infernum that’d come under the overlord of hell’s command.

Wham.

Caught off guard in a moment of distraction, it was the zombie’s turn to careen backward. This created an opening for a tongue of hellfire to envelope the Scaled-Dragon King and repair the ghostly soldier’s injuries.

A peerless immortal Infernum wasn’t an asset that Lu Yun could afford to just throw away. Though there were many soldiers in his ghostly army, there were only a couple of peerless immortals, and it would be a painful loss if any were destroyed here.

This two-headed zombie is really strong... even Yuchi Tianhuang and the Scaled-Dragon King aren’t its match. Diexi and Su Xiaoxiao were patently stronger than those two, and it took the addition of Lü Biao to barely hold off this terrifying zombie.

“Just where does it come from?” Lu Yun’s heart clenched in fear.

Yuchi Tianhuang was a divine king, one of the White Tigers! The Scaled-Dragon King was the second seat of the North Sea, and when aided by Lü Biao of the Mist Land, they formed a trio of unparalleled peerless immortals who could shake the entire world with a stamp of their feet!

Su Xiaoxiao’s expression of discomfort deepened further, but she stubbornly stuck to the act of an unknowing, unfeeling zombie and pretended not to understand Lu Yun, but her small hands had turned the hem of her white dress into a wrinkled mess.

“The skydragon tomb, the zombie’s from the skydragon tomb!” Diexi answered. “After the Corpse Refiners planted the talisman in me, I escaped to the imperial waters of the North Sea and accidentally barged into the skydragon tomb.... I met that perverse existence there!”

As the king of zombies, Diexi could control all zombies beneath the heavens, even if she was only a peerless immortal. Who would’ve ever thought she’d be hunted by one instead?

“And her?” Lu Yun pointed at Su Xiaoxiao.

Though the poison doctor’s eyes were still squeezed shut, she seemed to sense that Lu Yun was pointing at her. Keeping up the act, she staggered and lurched like a low-level zombie, stumbling her way behind Diexi.

“Xiaoxiao saved me!” The zombie king wouldn’t hide anything from Lu Yun. Since her birth, she’d been bereft of friends and family in the world of immortals. Lu Yun was the only person who hadn’t treated her like some unnatural monster, so naturally she was very close to him.

“Doctor Poison Su Xiaoxiao, you’re coming with....” Lu Yun grabbed the zombie girl’s hand, causing her to shudder and freeze.

“You’re... so cold....” He felt like he’d grabbed an icy piece of frost jade, one that was about to freeze him solid. “Don’t resist!” he ordered before the Gates of the Abyss opened and swallowed both of their bodies.

Su Xiaoxiao instinctively wanted to resist, but the human’s words made her start and dismiss the immortal energy she’d been gathering.

Within hell, Lu Yun and Su Xiaoxiao appeared at the same time.

“Where are we?” Her voice was clear and moving, but she still kept her eyes shut.

“A living corpse... the person is dead and their soul was scattered, but the body lives on...” Finally on his home turf, Lu Yun could immediately identify Su Xiaoxiao’s current state of existence.

She was a living corpse!

That was why she didn’t dare open her eyes. The moment she did, she would truly die and turn into a dead body. Everything that’d happened to her in life would all drift away on the wind.

Su Xiaoxiao trembled again and shuffled a few steps backwards.

“Take your place, seventh Envoy of Samsara!” Lu Yun pointed at the center of the girl’s forehead.

Whoosh!

Hellfire gushed into existence on her body as a black rune slowly formed on her forehead. However, a piercing shriek sounded at the same time.

“Ahhh!!” It came from Tinglan; three beams of faint light shot out of her body and sank into Su Xiaoxiao. It was the three ethereal parts of her soul, and they were quickly joined by seven beams of light cutting through the air.

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“What happened?” Deep in the throes of battle, Beigong Chonglou suddenly shuddered and halted his exchanges with Jin Heyi. With the disappearance of the immortal ghost behind him, his senses returned to normal.

“Who are you, and why do you attack this prince?!” Fear tinged his tone, along with sheer bafflement as to what was going on.

“Eh? The immortal ghost disappeared?” Jin Heyi blinked, then defeated Beigong Chonglou with a wave.

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“You can open your eyes now,” said Lu Yun as he digested Su Xiaoxiao’s memories and experiences.

“No!” came the quick reply, shot through with sweetness. It was an uncommonly nice voice to listen to. “I’m not wearing anything!”

Lu Yun held his forehead and subconsciously glanced at Su Xiaoxiao. Um... she’s on the skinny side, but she’s still got the goods. She’s got curves where she should have them, and valleys where there should be dips. The hellfire earlier had burned her white dress to cinders.

“You know, you’re a peerless immortal, you can conjure a set of clothes for yourself.” He rubbed his nose.

Su Xiaoxiao was quite different from his other envoys. Upon assuming their new position, they showed the utmost deference and respect to Lu Yun. Some even tried to seduce him and win his favor that way.

As for his latest addition, though she’d died, her body had lived on and been tempered by the passage of countless eons. It’d reached peerless immortal realm, so that was the level of her cultivation upon revival.

Her new master’s words reminded her of what to do and she quickly bent down, huddling until the white dress from earlier appeared again. She then stood up again, beet red and looking at Lu Yun with some embarrassment.

In his eyes, her refusal to open her eyes because she wasn’t wearing any clothes denoted a cowardly mindset. It seemed like her reaction to danger was to curl up in her blankets and pretend there was no danger at all.

“Seventh Envoy of Samsara, Su Xiaoxiao, greets the master!” the girl offered weakly.

Lu Yun looked at Su Xiaoxiao and shook his head; she was very different from Cangyin. The time manipulation art had sent Cangyin back to her origins, thus, she’d died in the form of an egg so he hadn’t been able to glean any memories from her. Su Xiaoxiao’s, however, were at his fingertips.

Of course, he needed some time to digest them all, but that was the last thing he lacked in hell.

Discomfort still marked Su Xiaoxiao’s face. After all, she’d been known as a demon in the ancient world of immortals, one who’d committed genocide of all beings in eighteen major worlds. Everyone had been

out for her head, and not even her master, Qi Hai, foremost of all pill masters, could save her. He'd been forced to cripple her cultivation and throw her out.

As for how she'd died... she didn't have a clue.

All she knew was that she'd gone to bed one day, then awoken in this tomb. The ethereal and corporeal parts of her soul had mysteriously been swallowed by two corpse coffins, which had then transformed into two immortal ghosts. Those ghosts had inherited her skills in medicine and poison because they'd devoured her soul.

Meanwhile, her body had remained alive as a living corpse.

As for Guanqing and Tinglan, she had indeed saved these two orphans back in the day, but they weren't her maids. Now that she'd come back to life and her soul was returned to her, the two ghosts naturally drifted away on the wind.

"You were right to do what you did." Lu Yun suddenly looked at Su Xiaoxiao very seriously. "If I'd been in your shoes, I would also destroy everything in those eighteen major worlds. If they hadn't died, the entire world of immortals—and all other worlds besides—would've fallen to a great disaster!"

Su Xiaoxiao trembled, then looked at Lu Yun with a hint of gratitude. Her master had used 'everything', and not 'everyone'.