

# Outside of Time

## Chapter 3: Surviving (3)

It was as though he would open his eyes instantly the moment there was anything strange.

At this moment in the outside world, darkness was like a curtain, enveloping the city, the land, and the sky.

The world under the sky was extremely vast. The Nanhuang Continent, which was situated overseas, was just one of the continents.

Only a few people knew exactly how large this world was. However, the imposing 'fragmented face' above the sky emanated intense intimidation, and everyone could see it by lifting their head.

It was no longer known what was the exact time the fragmented face arrived in this world.

Humans only knew that very long ago, from the descriptions recorded in some texts, this world that was filled with immortal qi was prosperous and flourishing with vitality, but it only lasted until this gigantic fragmented face, which brought with it destruction, was attracted over from the depths of the void.

In the process of its arrival, all lives in this world used all their methods and attempted to stop it, but everyone failed. In the end, only a few ancient kings and sovereigns brought part of the human race to relocate, abandoning the rest of the lifeforms here.

Not long later, the fragmented face arrived. It hung suspended in the sky and from then on, a nightmare descended.

The aura from the face permeated the entire world. Mountains, seas, all objects, and the myriad of life...even cultivators and the spirit energy they used to cultivate were tainted.

Everything withered, and all lives were extinguished. The survival rate was less than 1%.

From then on, the humans who survived with great difficulty from this calamity referred to this fragmented face as...a god.

They also termed this world as 'Endsoil'. As for the places the ancient kings and sovereigns relocated to, they were known as holy lands.

These terms of address had lasted through many eras and were passed down through each generation.

Also, the disasters brought by the gods weren't just these. The fragmented face's imposing intimidation would oppress all sentient beings constantly...

Every few years, a few decades, or even a few centuries, the fragmented face would open its eyes once for several breaths.

Every time it opened its eyes, the area it was staring at would instantly be tainted heavily by its aura.

After that, all lives in that area would perish, and it would become an eternal forbidden zone.

For the past few centuries, the number of forbidden zones in this world was increasing, and the places where the living could stay had become increasingly fewer.

And nine days ago, the god once again opened its eyes, and the location the fragmented face was staring at was none other than the area where the youth was staying.

In this area, all species and over ten human cities—regardless of their locations, including the slums inside or outside the cities—were instantly tainted heavily and became forbidden zones that prevented lives from existing.

Under the terrifying taint, all lives directly dissolved into blood. Some of them mutated and became mutated beasts with no intellect. Meanwhile, the others turned into greenish-black corpses whose souls had thoroughly dispersed.

Only very few humans and beasts managed to survive due to luck.

The youth was one of these lucky survivors.

At this moment, outside the dark cave, a shrill cry drifted from the distance and moved closer and closer to the cave. As a result, the youth who was asleep quickly opened his eyes.

He instinctively lifted his hand that held the iron stick and stared at the blocked entrance gap warily.

Only when the source of the shrill cry circled once in the vicinity and gradually moved further did the youth heave a sigh of relief.

He had lost all desire for sleep. He then touched his leather pouch and removed a bamboo slip from within.

In the darkness, he gingerly touched the words carved on the bamboo slip, and there seemed to be a gleam in his eyes. After that, he sat upright and closed his eyes to adjust his breathing.

This youth's name was Xu Qing. He grew up alone and led an arduous life in the slums outside the city.

Nine days ago, when the calamity suddenly appeared, he hid in this cave behind the gap between the rocks. Different from the frightened and crazed masses, he calmly looked at the fragmented face in the sky that was opening its eyes. From the god's gaze, he could see unique pupils that were in the shape of a cross. After that, he seemed to have lost the emotion of fear.

It lasted until he saw a beam of purple light descending from the sky, landing in the northeastern area of the city.

At the next moment, he slipped into unconsciousness.

When he awoke, he became the only lucky survivor be it inside or outside of the city.

However, he didn't leave immediately.

This was because he knew that when the god opened its eyes, this area would become a forbidden zone. At the start, it would be shrouded by blood rain and a boundary would be formed.

Because of it, the people inside couldn't get out, and the people outside couldn't enter until the forbidden zone was completely formed.

And the sign for completion was when the blood rain stopped.

This calamity was nothing much to Xu Qing who grew up in the slums.

This was because, in the slums, everything—be it a vagrant, wild dogs, sickness, or a cold night—could easily cause one to lose their life. One could only survive with great difficulty.

As long as he survived, nothing else mattered.

Naturally, despite the cruelty in the slums, there would occasionally be a trace of warmth.

For example, some scholars who were down on their luck would teach kids how to read for a living. Other than this, there were also the memories of his relatives.

It was just that in Xu Qing's mind, the memories of his relatives faded as time passed. Despite him trying his best to remember, as he was afraid that he might forget, the memories he had of them gradually grew blurry.

However, he knew that he wasn't an orphan and still had relatives somewhere. It was just that they had lost touch long ago.

So, his dream was to continue surviving.

If he could live slightly better, if he had the chance to meet with his kin, that would be for the best.

Hence, he who had luckily survived chose to enter the city.

He wanted to head to the dwellings of those rich men in the upper echelons of the city to find the things rumored in the slums: cultivation arts and methods that could strengthen one's body, as well as the beam of purple light that landed in the city.

The shortcut to growing stronger had been circulating in the slums as rumors, and everyone thirsted for it. They called this practice 'cultivation', and those who grasped the methods of cultivation were known as cultivators.

Hence, becoming a cultivator was Xu Qing's greatest wish other than meeting his relatives.

Cultivators weren't a common sight. During these years at the slum, he had only seen cultivators entering the city once from afar.

Cultivators had a typical characteristic. When ordinary people were observing them, their bodies would instinctively shiver.

In fact, Xu Qing had even heard people saying that the city lord was a cultivator. Some of his guards were cultivators as well.

Hence, after searching in the city for a long time, he finally found this bamboo slip on a corpse inside of the city lord's residence.

However, that place was very dangerous. He suffered a wound on his chest at that time as well.

Fortunately, the information recorded on the bamboo slip was the cultivation method he thirsted for.

All its content had been memorized completely by him. In fact, he had begun attempting to cultivate during these few days.

Xu Qing had never seen other cultivation arts before. This bamboo slip was his only gain. He also had no idea how to practice cultivation correctly.

Luckily, the information on the bamboo slip was recorded in simple and easy-to-understand terms. It emphasized visualization and one's breathing.

So, he proceeded step by step and had a few gains.

This art was named the Mountains and Seas Art.

The method of cultivation was to visualize the totem carved on the bamboo slip and combine that with a special way of breathing.

The picture of the totem was very strange, looking like a mutant. It had a large head and a tiny body with only a single leg. Moreover, its entire body was black and its face was as malevolent as a malicious ghost.

Xu Qing had never seen such a lifeform before. The bamboo slip termed it as a 'xiao\*'.

At this moment, as he cultivated, the picture of the xiao appeared in his mind, and Xu Qing's breathing gradually changed. After that, undercurrents formed in the nearby air.

The spirit energy in the surroundings flowed over and slowly entered his body, coursing through it. He also felt waves of bone-chilling coldness coursing through his body. Everywhere the cold feeling flowed, it felt like that body part was submerged in ice water.

Xu Qing was afraid of the chill. However, he endured it and didn't give up, continuing to persevere.

After a long time, when he finally ended this cultivation session after meeting the requirements on the bamboo slip, his body would be drenched in cold sweat.

And despite having eaten a vulture not long ago, the sensation of hunger appeared once more in his stomach.

Xu Qing wiped the cold sweat away and touched his stomach as determination flashed in his eyes.

Ever since he cultivated this art, his appetite had evidently increased by a lot. His body was also more agile compared to the past.

All of these allowed him to have a higher resistance to the icy chill that appeared during his cultivation.

At this moment, he lifted his head and peered through the gap to look at the outside.

In the outside world, it was pitch black. Only the sounds of terrifying roars that were sometimes weak and sometimes strong echoed in his ears.

He didn't know why he became a lucky survivor. It might be due to luck or it might be due to the fact that...he saw that beam of purple light.

So during these few days when he was searching for cultivation arts, he was also trying his best to find the location where the purple light fell in the northeastern area of the city. Sadly, he hadn't found anything.

As he pondered, Xu Qing listened to the roars outside. His mind then involuntarily recalled the time before sunset when he saw the corpse that was leaning against the wall. His eyes slowly narrowed.

The location of the corpse was in the northeastern area...and that body seemed like someone alive.

"Could it be that it has something to do with that purple light?"

[1] a supernatural being from Chinese folklores