

Stranger 361

Chapter 361: Human-faced Peach Blossom Ghost

The rack was made up of countless squares. Each square was only several inches wide, but the space behind them was impossibly vast. Ye Qing saw giant mountains, frozen snowland, sea of fire and more behind those squares, and each square contained a rare ghost-type Stranger.

Ghost Six pointed at a square and introduced, Please check this out, customer. This is the Snow Soul, the ghost of a Show Woman. She is incorporeal and intangible, and she possesses the ability to control wind and snow.

The square was showing a frozen snowland, and within the snowland was a semi-transparent woman. Not only was she completely unperturbed by the frigid temperature, the wind and snow themselves were her bodyguards. They could assume any shape they wanted, and they were currently dancing around the woman and keeping her entertained with their transformation ability.

As soon as Ye Qing looked away and trained his gaze on another square, Ghost Six launched into another introduction, This is the Bone Rakshasa, a vile ghost that was born from slaughter. It lives on bones and is immortal and imperishable.

Bone Rakshasa? Where is it? Ye Qing asked.

The space contained a sea of bones. Wherever he looked, there were only white, perfectly unblemished bones, and at the center of the space of bones was a small hill. However, Ye Qing couldnt see the Bone Rakshasa anywhere.

Ghost Six smiled and gave the square a tap. The square immediately rippled like water, and the space of bones started shaking like an earthquake. The earth split asunder, and the bones wouldnt stop clattering.

It was at this moment the hill of bones slowly grew taller. Scratch that, it was the Bone Rakshasa. As it rose to full height, it let out an earthshaking roar as if angry that someone had disturbed its slumber and damaged its world. It was over hundreds of meters tall, maybe even a thousand.

Although they didnt exist in the same space, Ye Qing still felt chilled to the core.

Ghost Six smiled as he watched Ye Qing. Do you see it now, customer? That is the Bone Rakshasa.

...

What else could Ye Qing say? He could only shoot him an impressed look.

This is the Ghost of Hundred Eyes

This is the Void Prison

This is the Hundred Mouth Woman

This is the Mountain Bearing Ghost

Every time Ye Qing checked out a square, Ghost Six would give him a detailed introduction of the Stranger that resided within. The ghost seemed to possess infinite patience.

While passing by a rack there were multiple Hundred Ghosts Racks on the first floor a certain square drew Ye Qings attention. It was a massive peach blossom forest in full bloom, and a woman was standing in the middle of the forest. She was holding a branch with her back facing toward him.

Sigh

He was just wondering why the woman was hiding her face when he heard a sigh. Then, she slowly turned around to face him.

Ye Qings eyes lost their focus the moment he heard the sigh. As the woman turned around, he unconsciously leaned closer to get a better look.

Beside him, Ghost Sixs smile grew increasingly eerie.

Greenlake didnt seem to notice his abnormal reaction as well.

Ye Qing could almost see her profile now. Not only that, his face was an inch away from the rack. Right before he would make contact with the rack, a cool sensation abruptly spread out from his chest and jolted him back to reality.

Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!

The moment he snapped out of the trance, the comely woman abruptly screamed and wheeled around to face him. One side of the face was as smooth and flawless as jade, while the other was dry and withered like a dead tree. It was a perfect depiction of the contrast between life and death, beautiful and ugly.

Even scarier was the fact that the peach blossom forest had withered the instant she let out a scream. Countless faces appeared on the tree trunks and screamed as well. They all looked just like the woman.

Phew

Caught off guard, Ye Qing staggered away from the rack. A hint of disappointment flickered within Ghost Sixs eyes, but he asked in a concerned voice, Are you alright, customer? There is nothing to be scared of. This is the Peach Blossom Ghost, and it can only confound people with its illusions. It cannot hurt you in any way. In fact, no harm will befall you while youre inside our establishment.

Is that so? Ye Qing sucked in a deep breath and shot Ghost Six a smile. If he was an honest guy, then maybe he wouldve believed him. Unfortunately, he wasnt.

The ghost inside the square was very similar to the Peach Blossom Ghost, but it was really the Human-faced Peach Blossom Ghost. The difference between the two Strangers despite the similarity in their names was like night and day.

The peach blossom is beautiful, and so is the beauty.

But look not when the beauty turns around,

Or the soul shall be forever gone.

The Peach Blossom Ghost was just an ordinary Stranger, whereas the Human-faced Peach Blossom Ghost was both powerful and anomalous. Born from the resentment of someone who was doomed by love, the Human-faced Peach Blossom Ghost was a ghost-type Stranger who turned its back on someone as a hunting strategy. Once its back had caught a preys attention, the Stranger would

slowly turn around so as not to alarm its prey until it was facing them completely. If the victim didn't break out of their trance before it was too late, then they would lose their soul.

Ye Qing was certain that Ghost Six was trying to kill him. Everything he did until now was to lower his guard. He should've known that the Yin Market was a dangerous place no matter the segregation. If he wasn't careful, then he would lose everything.

Am I wrong? Ghost Six countered.

Ye Qing narrowed his eyes. It was too bad he didn't have evidence, not that he dared to try anything even if he did. This was Ghost Six's turf after all. The best thing to do here was to pretend that nothing had ever happened. Just because you found the truth didn't mean you must reveal it for all to know. Some truths carried severe consequences, and in this case the only one who was going to suffer was him.

That was why Ye Qing cracked a grin and nodded. No, you're right.

By the way, I heard that the Ghost Tower also sells all sorts of precious treasures besides ghosts. Is that true?

He was going to tour the place a little longer, but since its employee had bared its fangs, it was in his best interest to finish his business and get the hell out as soon as possible.

That's correct. The Ghost Tower collects all kinds of precious treasures for sale. What do you need, customer? Ghost Six asked.

Do you sell Duckweed Flowers? Ye Qing went straight to the point.

Duckweed Flower? Ghost Six frowned and caused another chunk of flesh to fall off his face. Are you talking about the Duckweed Flower that is found in the River of Forgettance?

That's right. Ye Qing nodded. Do you have it?

Ghost Six's frown deepened. We do, but we cannot sell it to you.

Why's that? Do you think I'm poor? Ye Qing asked casually.

That's not it. Ghost Six explained, The Duckweed Flower is born in the River of Forgettance, and the River of Forgettance is a dangerous place for both man and ghost. Not only that, the Duckweed Flower takes sixty years to grow its leaf, and another sixty years to bloom. Its flower only lasts a single day, but if it is plucked before its time is up, then it will never wither.

The Duckweed Flower can only be plucked by a ferryman, which is why it is beyond valuable. We do have a Duckweed Flower, but it is reserved for the auction. That is why we cannot sell it to you.

The auction? Ye Qing asked curiously, You do auctions as well?

Ghost Six replied smilingly, That is correct. Every year, when the Yin Market overlaps with the yang world, we will auction our collection of treasures and the items our customers had entrusted to us. They are all precious and valuable items.

The auction hasn't started yet, has it? Ye Qing asked worriedly.

Not yet, but it will happen soon, Ghost Six clarified.

Can we participate in the auction? Ye Qing asked another question.

You can. Anyone can participate in the Ghost Towers auction. But Ghost Six hesitated for a moment. You do need to fulfill a small condition.

A small condition, you say? What is it? Ye Qing asked.

Ghost Six replied, You must spend six hundred and sixty six yin gold buying our items before you are allowed to participate.

He only had a total of one thousand plus yin gold including the money he scammed from Fu Hengcong. If he paid the price, did he have enough to bid for the Duckweed Flower with his remaining money? He didn't think he could even afford a single petal!

The worst part was that he could have afforded the price. He just didn't think to prepare for it. He thought that the Duckweed Flower was just an ordinary item, and the main reason he came to the Yin Market was just to broaden his horizons. That was why he didn't bring too many yin gold with him. It was a mistake.

Ahem Why did you make it six hundred and sixty six gold instead of a round number? Ye Qing tried to change the subject.

That's because that number is a lucky number for ghosts. And because it's what our owner wants, Ghost Six replied.

That's surprisingly human of your owner! Ye Qing let out a dry laugh. He was weighing his chances of winning the Duckweed Flower after paying the entrance fee.

Ghost Six said suddenly, I'm not implying anything, but assuming you're lacking in cash, there is another way to enter the auction.

Ghost Six explained, You can sign a contract with us. When you pass away, you will join Fengdu and work for us for sixty years.

Of course, we will not disturb you before you pass away naturally, so you have nothing to worry about. Your life will also be much more convenient with our imprint. For starters, you can enter the Ghost Tower at any time and purchase anything you want. Besides that, we also offer discounts, coupons and more during holidays.

Haha that sounds pretty good! A small smirk crossed Ye Qing's face. Fine!

A wise decision! I'll bring you the contract immediately, customer! Ghost Six exclaimed with delight. Although he failed to kill Ye Qing earlier, the outcome was the same if he could convince the young man into signing the contract.

After all, anyone who owned a Yin Token of Forgetfulness was either a genius, blessed, or both. The Ghost Tower was always in need of such talent.

Chapter 362: Money Makes The World Go Round

"Yes, I will... head home and think about it," Ye Qing replied.

"You—what?" Ghost Six's eyes bulged before falling out of their eye sockets again. It took him a second to realize that Ye Qing was toying with him.

“What’s wrong? You’re not going to force me into a contract, are you? Is this how the Ghost Tower operates?” Ye Qing smirked.

“Of course not. We’re all about consent and fairness,” Ghost Six replied, but his smile was gone. At this point, it was clear that Ye Qing was neither going to buy their products nor sign a contract. In that case, why would he offer him a smile? It wasn’t exactly easy plastering his flesh back to his face, you know!

“Goodbye. You can walk yourself to the exit,” Ghost Six added coldly before turning away.

“He’s looking down on you, husband!” Greenlake chuckled beside Ye Qing. He had no idea when she was there, though it didn’t matter.

Ye Qing shrugged uncaringly. Both his fists and his wallet were smaller than the Ghost Tower’s. It was natural that they would look down on him.

“But don’t worry. I shall retrieve your dignity for you!” Greenlake beamed at him.

“Oh really? How? Are you going to curse him or something?” Ye Qing didn’t know what Greenlake was planning, but he had to admit that he was a little touched. He advised her, “It’s fine. It’s not worth it.”

After all, the price of failure was, of course, death.

“Don’t worry. I know what I’m doing,” Greenlake returned with a playful smirk before pulling Ye Qing to the counter where Ghost Six was standing.

“Back already, customers?” Ghost Six said tauntingly when he saw that they had returned.

Greenlake smiled politely. “We never left in the first place. We just needed some time to discuss what we wanted to buy. After all, your products are pretty good.”

“But of course! Ghost Tower only sells quality goods!” Ghost Six declared proudly before side-eying Ye Qing. “Unfortunately, that also means not everyone can afford it.”

“What should we buy, husband?” Greenlake ignored the subtle jab at her “husband” and voiced her conundrum. “Should we buy it all, or should we just buy half of it?”

“I see, you don’t think that these items are a good fit with your stature. Very well. There is no point in buying items you don’t need,” Greenlake said gently. “That said, it’s not everyday you can visit the Yin Market. We can’t possibly leave empty-handed, can we? We’ll just buy eight or ten items, okay?”

Greenlake pointed toward the racks and said casually, "Let's see, I want the Void Prison, Void Stealer, Bone Rakshasa, Human-faced Peach Blossom Ghost, Yin Fire Ghost Bull, Three-lived Boy, Shadow Dancer, Smoke Veil and Yaksha of Evening. That's enough for now."

Suddenly, an idea occurred to Ghost Six. He put on a bright smile on his face and produced a handful of exquisite-looking boxes seemingly out of thin air. Then, he somehow pulled a square space out of the Hundred Ghosts Racks as if it was a physical object and put it into a wooden box. He would repeat this until every ghost Greenlake had ordered was packed.

After that, he pushed the boxes in front of Greenlake and said, "Here's the stuff you ordered, customer. That would be five thousand yin gold, please."

Ye Qing was going to say that it was just a joke, but Ghost Six interrupted as if he had anticipated his answer, "Just a reminder, but we don't do takebacks. Once the good is removed from the shelf, you're expected to pay for it one way or another."

Ghost Six's smile turned cruel. He looked like a fisherman who saw a big fish entering his net of its own volition.

He didn't believe that Ye Qing or Greenlake could pay five thousand yin gold. The second they admitted that they couldn't produce the money necessary to purchase the ghosts, he would accuse them of making a fool out of their business, kill them, and transform them into the Ghost Tower's slaves. It was buy one get two free!

Ye Qing was already channeling his energies in secret. The second Greenlake showed weakness, he was going to get the hell out of here. If that failed, then he was going to... surrender, of course. What else was he supposed to do?

"Five thousand? That's cheaper than I expected."

To everyone's surprise, Greenlake smiled and produced a huge bag of yin gold. She dropped it on the floor and said, "Here it is. Please check if the numbers are correct."

Ghost Six: "..."

Ye Qing: "..."

You actually have five thousand yin gold? It has to be fake, right?!

A few seconds of stunned silence later, Greenlake side-eyed Ghost Six and urged, "What are you doing? Count it already!"

"R-Right..." Ghost Six crouched on the floor in a daze and began counting the ingots. A long time later, he finally rose back to his feet and answered numbly, "There are... There are eight thousand yin gold, dear customer. You... You overpaid!"

"Is that so? It's fine. You can keep it," Greenlake said uncaringly.

Ghost Six struggled not to burst with delight—possibly literally—while replying perfunctorily, “It’s okay, dear customer. It’s my honor to be able to serve you.”

He was trained to turn down the tip at first and accept it later as a show of courtesy. It was a mistake.

“Is that so? You don’t want the money? Fine,” Greenlake replied and took back the three thousand yin gold.

What?

It took him a second to process her words. Then, his mind exploded like a million galaxies.

What did I just do? What. did. I. JUST. DO?!

He was just trying to be polite! But because of that, three thousand yin gold flew out of his hands!

Words couldn’t describe the turmoil he was feeling when he saw Greenlake putting the three thousand yin gold back into her Nature’s Shell. His breathing stopped, and his ghastly heart had literally stopped beating as a result. If he knew the woman was like this, he would never have bothered with courtesy. If he got a second chance, he would have just dropped to his knees and yelled, “THANK YOU VERY MUCH, BOSS!”

But there was no cure for regret. When the pile of yin gold was gone, a pair of tears slid down his cheeks and hit the dusty floor soundlessly. He looked like he had lost his soul.

Once upon a time

I had a chance to take

Three thousand yin gold

But it flew away

Because I didn’t cherish it

Fuck my life

Written by Ghost Six

While Ghost Six was questioning the meaning of life, Ye Qing was wondering if he was transported into another dimension. Again.

I thought you were faking it! You even made me pay for you repeatedly! How am I supposed to process this?

“There’s nothing left to see on the first floor, husband. Let’s go to the second floor. The second floor is where they sell all kinds of precious treasures. Some might capture your fancy,” Greenlake said before grabbing Ye Qing’s arm and dragging toward the stairs.

What happened next could only be described as a fever dream. For Ye Qing and Ghost Six at least.

“This thousand-year-old Ghost Bracken is pretty cute. I want it.”

“This Ghost-faced Sunflower is pretty cute as well. Pack it up.”

“Huh, the Evergreen Fu Ling Grass? They say it’s literally green all the time, and it gives off a fragrant, refreshing scent. I can use one in the living room.”

“Yellow Spring Rock Milk? I can boil it for tea. Ghost Six!”

“The Resentful Tear and the Hateful Heartstone? Now that’s a pair. I can use it to make a pair of earrings.”

“A ten-thousand-year-old Clear Sky Wood? Yes, it can be made into furniture...”

Ghost Six couldn’t stop picking chunks of his face from the floor as he listened to Greenlake’s comments.

The Ghost-faced Sunflower looks like a ghost in the middle of a scream, and you think it’s cute?

The Evergreen Fu Ling Grass can save a Spirit Purifier ten years of hard training, and you’re going to raise it like a house plant?

A single drop of Yellow Spring Rock Milk can repair soul damage and extend one’s lifespan, and you’re going to use it to boil tea?

The ten-thousand-year-old Clear Sky Wood is a prime material for forging Strange Artifacts, and it is itself a potent Hatred-class Strange Artifact, but you’re going to turn it into furniture?

Just because you have money doesn’t mean you can waste it like that! Do you think money makes the world go round?

Ghost Six was swearing like a sailor on the inside, but on the outside he was acting like Greenlake’s loyal servant. He smiled as brightly as he could and gave his 120 percent to satisfy Greenlake’s needs.

Okay fine, money can make the world go round. Bury me in yin gold, please!

It was at this moment Greenlake shot Ye Qing a look—this whole time, the guy had been standing there with his jaw on the floor, unmoving—and chided him, “Husband, don’t just stand there and do nothing. Pick something you like too! My mouth is getting dry here!”

“Are you... are you rich?” Ye Qing gulped audibly before sending her a sound transmission.

“My family is doing okay, I suppose,” Greenlake replied uncaringly. “We have five gold mines, several hundred stores, and thousands of servants. It’s not really impressive.”

“Is there anything you want, dear customer?” Ghost Six asked Ye Qing carefully.

Just now, he had lost three thousand yin gold because he was a fucking idiot. That was why he was treating Ye Qing with the utmost respect even though it was clear who wore the pants in the household. Each sale netted him a small percentage of profit, and at the rate Greenlake was going through their wares, he was going to be a very rich ghost regardless. If Ye Qing would join in the shopping spree, then even better.

In any case, there was no harm in licking the boots of such wealthy customers. What? He tried to kill them earlier? Bullshit! The thought had never crossed his mind!

Back to the moment, Greenlake called out to Ghost Six again, "Oh, my husband just told me that he's too lazy to choose. Just give me that whole cabinet of wares over there, will you?"

"No problem! Just give me a moment!" Today was eyeball tumbling day, it seemed. Ghost Six didn't mind it though. Not in the slightest.

"Are you happy now, husband?" Greenlake asked gently while beaming at him.

"Is this what you meant when you said you're gonna... retrieve my dignity for me?" Ye Qing blinked. As satisfying as it sounded, he wasn't sure that burying his enemy in a literal pile of money was the way to go.

"But of course! As your wife, it's only natural for me to defend your honor, isn't it?" Greenlake replied sweetly. "If you think it's not enough, I can buy that cabinet over there as well."

"Don't worry, husband. This really is nothing. I'm willing to pay the world if it means making you happy." Greenlake watched him with warm, loving eyes.

"Ahaha... thanks, but seriously, you didn't need to go this far." Ye Qing looked away and coughed. He might have believed she was sincere if it wasn't the fact that they had met each other less than an hour[2] ago.

"As long as you're happy." Greenlake smiled again and said, "The auction's about to start, right Ghost Six? Can you take us there?"

"But of course, dear customer." Ghost Six held out his hand and declared, "This way, please."

Chapter 363: Seventh Young Master

The auction house was located on the third floor of the Ghost Tower. It looked just as wretched as the first and second floor.

There was a shabby old platform at the center surrounded by square tables and round chairs. It was practically the same setup as some theaters except that the walls were cracked and broken, the curtains and other fabrics were stained by blood, and even the floors creaked ominously when someone put their weight on the wrong plank. It was rundown and eerie.

A fair number of people had already gathered on the third floor. To Ye Qing's surprise, not only was their appearance fully masked to his eyes and demonic thought, they were like everchanging blobs of something he couldn't even tell if they were weak or strong. It was as if they existed in a separate spacetime.

Ghost Six spoke up as if he could hear Ye Qing's thoughts, "Don't worry, dear customer. We value customer privacy very much. Your identity is fully protected throughout the bidding process, and once you are done, you may teleport away directly. Rest assured that you are never in danger."

That is a good setup. Ye Qing nodded in approval.

Please take a seat wherever you like. I shall be taking my leave since the auction will begin shortly. Ghost Six bade them goodbye after that.

After he got off the third floor, a ghost moved closer to him and said enviously, Did you run into a benefactor, Ghost Six?

I was lucky, Ghost Six replied humbly, though he couldnt conceal his jubilation no matter what he tried.

How much did you earn this time? Another ghost moved over and asked.

Not much. Just three to four hundred yin gold[1]. Ghost Six waved his hand casually.

Gasp!

Hells

A bunch of gasps broke out from everywhere.

Today might just be the luckiest day of your life.

Assuming they still have enough yin gold to bid on the third floor, your bonus is going to be even bigger. Im so jealous

Hahaha, its not much. It really isnt that much money, people. If its two or three thousand yin gold, then were talking, Ghost Six declared arrogantly. He dearly enjoyed the feeling of being admired.

Heh. If you ask me, luck is all Ghost Six has. How often does anyone run into such idiots? A ghost said sharply and unkindly, Ghost Six almost killed them, but instead of screwing him over, they even gave him a ton of money. If they arent the dumbest fucks in the world, then who is?

An old ghost disagreed, So? If it wasnt for these dumb fucks, none of us would ever become rich. It wouldve taken us forever to be able to earn enough money to buy our way back to the cycle of reincarnation.

He then looked at Ghost Six and asked, By the way, why didnt they give you a tip? Considering how rich and generous they are.

They did, but I didnt accept it. Im a rule-abiding member of the Ghost Tower, you see. I cant possibly accept a customers tip! Ghost Six declared.

Tsk Everyone clicked their tongues at the same time.

One ghost suddenly sighed in frustration. I wonder why the owner allows us to trick our customers through our products, but forbids us from attacking them directly. Thats like a prostitute pretending that its her first time.

Yeah, its like taking off your pants to take a fartcompletely unnecessary, another ghost echoed in agreement.

Silence! Are you crazy? Criticizing the owner is a death sentence! An old ghost rebuked the two ghosts in shock and terror.

Whats there to be scared about? The owner isnt here right now, Someone scoffed.

What are you guys talking about?

Suddenly, an attractive and melodious voice came from somewhere. A voice like this should awe and delight anyone like the coming of spring, but instead the ghosts fell silent and shivered like leaves.

Why did you all fall silent all of a sudden? Am I that scary?

No one knew when the woman appeared. She was very attractive even though she was wearing a white jade mask. The lump on her throat revealed her true gender, however.

Seventh Young Master The group greeted him fearfully.

You. Answer me. Am I scary? Seventh Young Master asked in a sweet voice.

No No? The ghost stuttered.

Oh? So youre saying Im not worthy of your fear? Seventh Young Master chuckled and extended a hand. A mouth suddenly opened on his smooth, white palm.

I misspoke, Seventh Young Master! Mercy, please, mercy! The ghost screamed in shock and horror, but Seventh Young Master was unmoved by his screams. He grabbed the ghosts skull, and

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

The ghost let out a bloodcurdling scream. His facial features were literally shifting out of place due to how much pain he was in. However, he was unable to move a muscle. It was almost as if someone had cast a freezing spell on him.

A series of sickening crunches noises paralyzed everyones limbs as the mouth on Seventh Young Masters palm ate the ghost bit by bit. His screams lasted at least a dozen breaths before he was completely eaten.

After Seventh Young Master was done eating the ghost, he produced a handkerchief and wiped away the stains on the mouth while asking casually, Lets try again. Am I scary?

Yes Yes No one dared to say otherwise after witnessing the bloody execution with their own eyes.

Oh? So youre saying Im a cold, unfeeling ghost who doesnt know how to care for my subordinates? Seventh Young Master smiled at one of the ghosts who spoke.

No! No! I meanAhhhhhhhhhh! When the ghost saw Seventh Young Master reaching out for him, he lost control and transformed into a gust of yin wind, trying to escape.

Hahaha Do you think you can escape me?

The mouth on Seventh Young Masters palm suddenly opened wide, and a long, barbed tongue shot toward the yin wind like lightning. It easily caught the ghost in its deadly embrace.

The next moment, the ghost disappeared into Seventh Young Masters mouth, leaving behind only a reverberating scream.

Burp!

The mouth let out a burp after swallowing another ghost. Seventh Young Master shook his head wistfully. Sigh I wasnt expecting my dogs to disobey my orders. Whatever shall I do?

You mustnt emulate their bad behavior, okay?

Y-Yes. Every ghost bowed their head and trembled.

Alright, lets try again. Am I scary? Seventh Young Master asked gently.

The ghosts shook like leaves when they heard the damned question again. If they said yes, then they would die. If they said no, then they would still die. What should they do?

There was only one answer. They stayed quiet and said nothing at all.

The tension sat on their chests like a mountain. They felt suffocated even though they didnt need to breathe.

Bang!

Some time later, a ghost couldnt withstand the pressure any longer and committed suicide. He destroyed his own yin soul.

As a ghost, to lose ones yin soul was to experience true death. They would never enter the cycle of reincarnation. Even so, it was a far better fate than being devoured by Seventh Young Master.

Seventh Young Master was the seventh adopted son of the owner of the Ghost Tower. He was a Soul Devourer who consumed ghosts and human souls as food. Anyone he devoured would become his eternal puppet with no hope of escape. They couldnt live, nor could they die. That was why the ghost thought it was better to commit suicide.

The ghosts action was like a signal. A couple more ghosts emulated his behavior and killed themselves as well.

Not everyone possessed their courage and determination, however. In fact, most ghosts would rather live like a slave than suffer true death.

An indefinite amount of time later, when everyone thought that today was the day they all died, Seventh Young Master suddenly let out a chuckle and asked, Do you know why they died?

...

Its because they said the wrong thing. Ghost Eight told a lie, so he must die. Ghost Ten told a truth I dislike, so he died as well.

The ghosts trembled, but didnt dare to make even a squeak.

This is nice, isnt it? Just zip your mouths, and nothing bad will happen. Seventh Young Master nodded as if very pleased with their reaction. Here in the Ghost Tower, the dogs should bark if and only if their owner tells them to do so. Not even when the owner isnt around. Otherwise, they will die a horrible death. Understand?

The ghosts hurriedly nodded. By now, everyone figured out that Seventh Young Master was warning them not to backbite their masters. Otherwise, damnation was the only outcome.

Alright. You may leave. Our business must go on. Seventh Young Master waved his hand, and everyone scattered in every direction like mice.

Ghost Six, stay with me.

Ghost Six was about to run off as well when suddenly, Seventh Young Master called out to him. Ghost Six froze for a second before his face turned deathly white, and his body shook like a leaf. His fellow ghosts could only shoot him sympathizing gazes before running off even faster.

Relax. Im already full, and you make a poor meal anyway. Your flesh stinks like trash, and your bones are anything but crunchy. Seventh Young Master smiled. I have some questions for you.

Ghost Six had never been so glad that he was a Rotting Ghost. What do you want to know, Seventh Young Master? Ill answer to the best of my abilities.

Seventh Young Master asked, I heard that two wealthy customers showed up just now. Is that true?

That is correct, Ghost Six answered honestly even though he didnt know why he was asking this.

How rich are we talking about? Seventh Young Master prodded.

Ghost Six answered, Very. They spent over ten thousand yin gold in one sitting, and theyre currently participating in the auction right now.

Ten thousand yin gold, and they still have enough to participate in the auction? That is quite impressive.

Seventh Young Master asked another question, How strong are they?

Ghost Six answered, Er, the guy isnt very strong. The Human-faced Peach Blossom Ghost almost succeeded in stealing his soul. Im not sure about the woman, but considering that theyre married, she cant be too strong[2].

Also, both their auras are incredibly young. I dont think theyre old monsters pretending to be young. Theyre probably prodigals of major clans who knew nothing about the world.

Is that so? That sounds fantastic. Seventh Young Masters voice grew increasingly sweet. I want you to keep an eye on them. When they leave, find out where they go and inform me about it.

What are you planning Seventh Young Master? Ghost Six gulped.

You already know, dont you? Seventh Young Master smiled kindly. There are kids roaming the streets while carrying bags of gold. What do you think Im planning to do?

But Ghost Six hesitated.

Ghost Six, Fengdu is no different from the human world in the sense that the weak are meat, and the strong do eat. The big fish eats the small fish, the small fish eats the shrimps and so on.

Seventh Young Master said slowly, If the small fish and shrimp are smart, they would hide in their holes and never show themselves. But they did, so its their own fault that they risk being eaten.

Its been a long time since I tasted human flesh, especially the flesh of a genius. Do you know that they taste like theyve been fermented in honey? The skin is thin, the flesh is delicious, and the juice is everywhere when you bite into it. Ah, that sweet taste

I cant wait!

Chapter 364: Auction

“Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Ghost Tower, kekeke... I’m the host for today’s auction, Fire Skull...”

On the third floor, a skull that was shrouded in black flames was floating above the platform and making small talk with the audience.

“Don’t worry, I won’t take too much of your time. In fact, we’ll get right to the meat in a couple more sentences!”

Fire Skull wasn’t loud, but his voice was extremely clear. It was also soothing like the cool breeze after a downpour.

“One, your activity will be restricted after the auction begins, and you are not allowed to disturb others during the auction.”

“Two, your mouths are the only organ you are expected to flap during the auction. Fighting is strictly forbidden.”

“Three, yin gold is the currency we’ll be using for all our transactions. Once the money is paid, and the goods are received, then the business is considered to be over and done with. We don’t accept refunds. If you don’t have enough yin gold, you can make up for the deficit by paying a treasure of the appropriate value.”

“Four, at the end of the auction, you have one incense stick to interact with your fellow bidders and trade with them if you want to.”

“And five, no one is allowed to disrupt the auction in any way.”

“That’s all I have to say, folks. Let the auction begin!”

A jade plate with a pair of transparent wings flew out from behind the curtains and stopped in front of Fire Skull. It was carrying something that was covered in a red cloth. “To kick things off, the first item we’re going to auction is...”

Fire Skull dragged out the moment for a second or two before his flames turned into a pair of hands, and he pulled away the cloth covering the item. “The Yin God Bone Changing Fruit!”

Someone whistled from beneath the stage and said, “They’re showing us the good stuff right off the bat?”

“The Yin God Bone Changing Fruit is said to be capable of transforming a person so thoroughly it might as well be a rebirth, and whoever said it wasn’t kidding in the slightest. If a ghost eats the Yin God Bone Changing Fruit, they would grow flesh and blood and become human. If a human eats it, they would be freed from their mortal shell and gain an imperishable soul.”

Loud murmurs began resounding throughout the room. It was clear that many people were interested in the fruit.

Beneath the stage, Ye Qing curled his lips in disdain. "Tsk tsk... As expected of the Ghost Tower. I can smell their nonsense all the way from here!"

"Oh? Did he lie?" Greenlake asked smilingly.

"No, but it did hide some key information," Ye Qing answered. "It is true that the Yin God Bone Changing Fruit could reverse yin and yang, life and death, but it only works for an ordinary human who's never practiced martial arts or a weak ghost. Anyone who's even a little stronger would find their energies clashing against the fruit's energies. Best case scenario, they would experience a deviation and turn into a cripple. Worst case scenario, their mind and soul would crumble, and they would experience true death."

"To put it simply, this item is completely useless to us warriors. If it worked on warriors, the Ghost Tower would've kept it to themselves."

"You are quite knowledgeable, husband. I am very impressed," praised Greenlake while watching him with gentle eyes.

Ye Qing simply smiled and said nothing.

"The starting bid for this treasure is one hundred yin gold. Every bid must be at least fifty yin gold higher than the previous number."

Fire Skull wasted some time after that in order to fan the bidders' impatience. When it thought that the time was right, it finally declared, "Begin!"

"Two hundred yin gold!"

"Three hundred yin gold!"

"You seriously thought you can buy a treasure like this for three hundred yin gold? Five hundred yin gold!"

"Is that it? Eight hundred yin gold!"

For a time, it sounded like the bidding would never end.

At a seat not far away from Ye Qing's, a cute thirteen or fourteen year old boy who was dressed like a student scoffed at the bidders.

"I can't believe they're fighting over a useless fruit. Pitiful. Truly pitiful."

Sitting opposite the young man, a young handsome scholar who was reading a book seriously said, "Sixue, to know but not expand on what you know is the same as not knowing, and to be wealthy but not share what you have with others is the same as being poor. You know the truth, and yet you chose to ridicule the ignorant instead of illuminating them on the truth. That kind of behavior is deplorable."

“You are correct, teacher. I will think on my mistakes.” The student hurriedly rose to his feet and saluted the scholar deeply. “Should I tell them the truth then, teacher?”

Still reading his book, the scholar replied calmly, “No. Rules are rules. We are guests of the Ghost Tower, so we should follow the rules they set.”

“You are right, teacher. I shall remember your teachings,” The student answered primly.

“Enough with the ceremonies. Sit,” the young man said gently.

“Yes, teacher.” The student returned to his seat and stuck out his tongue when he thought the scholar wasn’t looking.

Meanwhile, the bidding had finally ended on two thousand yin gold.

“Congratulations on obtaining the Yin God Bone Changing Fruit, dear customer. Now then, our second item is...”

This time, a gorgeous female ghost wearing a semi-transparent dress stepped onto the stage while carrying a stone bowl.

“Just like the Yin God Bone Changing Fruit, the starting price is one hundred yin gold, and every bid must be at least fifty yin gold higher than the previous number.”

“The bidding starts... now!”

“The Mengpo Soup? Who on earth would need such a thing?” Ye Qing rubbed his nose in confusion. It was completely useless to most people unless it was fed to others, and even then its usefulness was very situational.

As expected, few people bid for the Mengpo Soup. In the end, it went to Greenlake for five hundred yin gold.

“Why on earth did you bid for the Mengpo Soup?” Ye Qing asked curiously.

Greenlake smiled. “I got it for myself. If one day you abandon me and go away, I will need it to cure my sorrows.”

“Hahaha... you do you.” Ye Qing ended the conversation on the spot.

“Now then, our third item is... the Three-Lived Grass!”

Fire Skull pointed at a bright red grass with three flowers and three leaves and began its introduction, “You’ve all heard of the Three Lived Stone, haven’t you? The Three Lived Stone is a godly artifact of my Fengdu, and it can reveal someone’s past, present, and future lives.”

“The Three Lived Grass is born next to the Three Lived Stone, which is why it possessed some of its power.”

“Of course, the Three Lived Grass is no Three Lived Stone. It can only reveal glimpses of one’s past, present, and future lives.”

“Heh... trash and more trash. This Ghost Tower sure isn’t afraid to scam the shit out of their customers!” Ye Qing shook his head. That said, the Three Lived Stone was definitely more valuable than the Mengpo Soup, and it was especially valuable who dabbled in fortune telling and the like. It should sell for a lot of money.

As expected, the audience was quite enamored with the item, and the Three Lived Grass was ultimately sold for five thousand yin gold.

The next few items that were brought on stage were actual treasures, and some of them were quite attractive for Ye Qing. For example, there was the Yin Fire Eternal Sand that could be used to temper one’s spirit, a Cloak of True Invisibility, a cultivation art meant for ghost warriors called the “Myriad Ghosts Sutra”, a bottle of Bone Jade Marrow that could greatly increase the chance of a Strange Artifact growing an artifact spirit and so on.

He had to let them go though. After all, he was poor as dirt.

Greenlake bought a lot of things though. It truly was the privilege of the wealthy.

“The next item we have here is a flower that can grow even without roots. Born in the River of Forgettance, it is the beautiful Duckweed Flower!”

As soon as Fire Skull finished, an imp jumped onto the stage while carrying a vase on top of its head. Inside the vase was a bright, colorful, fragrant, and dreamlike flower.

“So that’s the Duckweed Flower...” Ye Qing immediately devoted his full attention to the stage.

“The Duckweed Flower can only be found in the River of Forgettance. It takes sixty years to grow its leaves, and another sixty years to flower. The flower only blooms for a day, but it may never wither for ten thousand years.”

Fire Skull was doing his best to hype up the item, but most people paid it no heed. It was true that the Duckweed Flower was beautiful and rare, but it could neither be used as medicine nor provide any sort of practical function. A lady might be interested in such things, but even they would be hardpressed to convince themselves to pay money that could be better spent elsewhere.”

“They treat sand like treasure, and actual treasure like sand. Truly pitiful.”

The student couldn’t help but scoff at the bidders again, “The River of Forgettance is a dead river full of taint and yin energy, but where there is yin, there must be yang and vice versa. Born from a place of absolute filth, the Duckweed Flower is the purest and brightest flower of them all.”

“The Duckweed Flower is full of Great Yang Qi. Once you obtain it, you’ll reach the adept level of the Thousand Autumns Art.”

“To travel a thousand kilometers with a single breath of Greatness! How amazing would that be?”

Still not looking up from his book, the scholar said, “Sixue. What did I say earlier?”

“Er, right. I will repent, teacher.” The student stuck out his tongue.

“And yet you are decidedly not. When we get back, you will copy the chapter ‘Regarding The Heart’ of the ‘Analects’ three times.”

“Yes, teacher,” The student responded obediently before adding, “But can we talk about my punishment later? The bidding has already begun. If you don’t bid now, it might just go to another bidder.”

“How many times have I told you that impatience clouds the mind, and a clouded mind can do nothing? You will copy the ‘Heart Sutra’ three times as well.”

“Yes, yes, I’ll do that when we get back. But for now, let me bid for you, okay?”

The student shouted, “Three thousand yin gold.”

“It looks like one bidder is offering three thousand yin gold to buy the Duckweed Flower! Are there any takers? If not, then this priceless treasure will go to them!” Fire Skull yelled.

“Three thousand? Rich people,” Ye Qing cursed under his breath. He thought he would be able to obtain the Duckweed Flower for cheap considering that not many people were interested in it, but suddenly, it cost three times more than he could afford. He strongly suspected that the Ghost Tower had fake bidders upping the price to make sure they wouldn’t make a deficit.

“Do you want the Duckweed Flower, husband?” Greenlake heard his mutter and asked smilingly.

“Yes, but I can’t afford it,” Ye Qing replied honestly. It wasn’t that he could afford the price—he had plenty of Strange Artifacts he could trade to the Ghost Tower to make up for the yin gold he didn’t have—but all that for one Duckweed Flower? It just wasn’t worth it.

“If that is your desire, then I shall grant it!”

“It’s f—”

Greenlake raised her hand before he could finish and called out, “Six thousand yin gold!”

Chapter 365: Confrontation

“W-What? Six thousand?”

The student never thought that anyone would spend this much money. He wasn’t able to say a word for a time.

“Hahaha... we have six thousand yin gold, people! Is there anyone who’s willing to challenge this bid? If not, then this Duckweed Flower will go to our honored customer over there!” Fire Skull declared with clear delight in his voice. He thought for sure that

the Duckweed Flower was going to be undersold, but the situation suddenly took a drastic turn.

After the student recovered his wits, he wrinkled his brows and called out, "Seven thousand yin gold."

But as soon as he finished talking, Greenlake called out, "Fourteen thousand yin gold."

"Four... *Fourteen thousand?! Are you ill?*" The student burst out in shock and anger. Most people bid for their item bit by bit, but this woman[1] doubled the existing bid every time. If they weren't crazy, then who was?

"I'm not ill, but I am rich," Greenlake replied matter-of-factly.

"You... very good! I wonder how much money you really have?" The student's cute face flushed red. "Fifteen thousand yin gold!"

"Twenty thousand yin gold," Greenlake replied indifferently.

"Twenty one thousand yin gold..." The student uttered through gritted teeth.

"Thirty thousand yin gold," Greenlake said in the exact same tone.

"You... You're one-upping me on purpose, aren't you?" The student flew into a rage. *This is absolutely bullshit!*

"I don't understand what you mean. I'm rich, and I'm willing to pay any price to obtain what I want. That's all," Greenlake responded. "If you're done, then this Duckweed Flower will be going to my husband."

"You... How dare you! Do you know who my teacher is? You'll give him the Duckweed Flower if you know what's good for you!" The student yelled.

"So sorry, but I don't know who your teacher is," Greenlake replied.

"Yeah! Who is your teacher? Does he have a big face? Or does *she* have a big ass?"

"Yeah! Why don't you bring your teacher out for a walk? I want to know if he or she has three heads and six arms!"

"I can tell you're a kid, kid. You haven't weaned off your momma's tits, have you? This is the Ghost Tower, not your house. If you're gonna throw a tantrum, then go back to your momma. We don't need to hear your whines."

"Hmph! Bid if you have the money, get lost if you don't. Stop wasting my time, brat."

In just an instant, the student had become the subject of everyone's ridicule. His expression ugly, he slapped the table and shot to his feet. "Who the fuck do you people think you are? How dare you insult my teacher!"

The student abruptly turned in Greenlake and Ye Qing's direction and pointed a finger at Greenlake. "It's all your fault! Not only are you taking my teacher's item, you're even shaming him in public! You must die to make up for your sin!"

A storm of sword qi manifested into existence and swept toward the duo, but neither Ye Qing nor Greenlake reacted to the attack. It was because Fire Skull let out an angry roar, "How dare you attack another in the Ghost Tower!"

Pitch black flames transformed into a giant palm and crushed the sword qi threatening the student. Countless ghosts could be seen wailing and roaring within those flames.

"The Soul Devouring Yin Fire!" The student's face turned deathly pale in an instant.

The Soul Devouring Yin Fire was a kind of flame that consumed the soul. If a soul was consumed by it, they would become a part of the flame and suffer the agony of being burned alive for eternity.

"Teacher, save me!"

"The sage says that a person of honor and uprightness shall be impervious to all evils," said a gentle voice at a critical moment. The Soul Devouring Yin Fire flooding toward the student immediately melted like snow and vanished into nothing.

For the first time, the young man looked up from his book and said slowly, "It is true that my rude student has broken a rule of the Ghost Tower, but he is so very young. Can you forgive him on account of his youth, auctioneer?"

"Youth is no excuse," Fire Skull uttered in a dark tone. "I said from the beginning that fighting is strictly forbidden once the auction begins. Did you think it was empty talk? Those who break our rule must be punished."

"Without rules, nothing can be done," The young man said amiably. "So, how would you like to punish my student?"

Fire Skull answered, "I will destroy his body and leave him in the Dark Volcano. He will burn in its Yin Fire for a hundred years before he is released."

The student turned as pale as a sheet. "No! Teacher, I, I don't want to be burned by the Yin Fire! Save me!"

"I told you many times that you must be calm and patient in all circumstances, or you may harm others and yourself, but you just wouldn't listen." The young man looked at his student with a disappointed expression. "Still, I won't let you suffer the Yin Fire. Deserved it may be, I don't think you'll be able to endure it."

The student thought his teacher was going to save him and burst out in delight, "Thank you, teacher! Thank you!"

"However, nothing can be done without rules. The rules must be protected at all costs," The young man declared expressionlessly. "Since you have broken a rule, you must be punished."

As soon as he said this, the student's body began disintegrating like sand. In just the blink of an eye, all that was left of him was his soul.

"Are you satisfied now, auctioneer?" The young man looked at Fire Skull inquiringly.

Fire Skull remained unmoved. "I said I'm going to leave his soul in the Dark Volcano. You may have destroyed his body, but you haven't given me his soul yet. Do that, and I will be satisfied."

As soon as it was done speaking, its flames turned into a massive hand and reached out toward the student's soul.

The young man waved his hand like he was waving off some dust. The next moment, the fiery hand was destroyed in an instant.

"You dare stop me? Will you make an enemy out of the Ghost Tower?" Fire Skull raged. On the inside though, it was shocked by how easy the young man had dispelled his attack. It hadn't even seen how he did it.

It didn't back off though. One, the rules of the Ghost Tower must be obeyed, and two, the student's soul looked as beautiful as refined jade, pure and translucent. Master would be very happy if it gave it to him.

The entire Ghost Tower burst into cold, dark flames as if responding to Fire Skull's fury. The walls began seeping blood, ugly faces began surfacing from the blood, and a terrifying, twisted and evil presence enveloped the entire building.

The young man couldn't seem to feel the presence, however. Calmly, he flicked a finger and erased his student's soul from existence.

"Are you satisfied now, auctioneer?"

What a ruthless man, everyone on the floor thought with a frown. The young man hadn't just killed his own student, he had given him true death. There was no such thing as reincarnation when even the soul was erased from existence.

What confused them was why the young man didn't just give Fire Skull the soul. He already went so far as to kill his student, he might as well surrender his soul to the Ghost Tower and appease their anger. Why did he purposely wipe out his student's soul and antagonize the Ghost Tower?

"You wiped out his soul?" Fire Skull exclaimed in disbelief after a few seconds of stunned silence.

"That's right." The young man said indifferently, "Are you satisfied now, auctioneer?"

"He broke our rule, so he should be ours to punish. What is the meaning of this?!"

Fire Skull was seriously angry this time. Its goal was to capture the student's soul so it could present it to its master. Its claim that it would burn it in the Dark Volcano for a hundred years was just an excuse. However, the young man had ruined its plan and provoked the Ghost Tower at one stroke. How could it not be furious?

Seemingly picking up on Fire Skull's anger, a terrifying silhouette abruptly appeared behind its back. It carried seemingly enough power to turn this whole place into rubble with the snap of a finger.

"That must be the master of the Ghost Tower!" Ye Qing blanched a little. Obviously, the silhouette wasn't the real thing. He was just a wisp of the master's spirit. Even so, he felt that the silhouette was impossible to defeat.

"He is my student and my subordinate first before he transgressed against the Ghost Tower. Even if he broke your rule, I'm the one who gets to punish him first. Only then is it your turn to punish him. Such is the natural order of things."

The young man remained unperturbed despite the silhouette's power, however. "Not only that, I had dealt him a punishment that is objectively worse than what you had planned for him. I've also apologized to you on his behalf. What else are you dissatisfied about?"

"The sage says that those in the right cannot be defied."

The silhouette of a scholar wearing a Confucian's ceremonial robe and carrying a book manifested behind the young man. As soon as it appeared, sounds of recitation resounded throughout the Ghost Tower, and countless essays and poems transformed into the wind and rain. It swept away the evil, twisted presence of the tower in an instant.

"The Dharma of the Wise Sage?! He has the potential to enter the Sage Realm..."

Several people in the Ghost Tower began leaking filthy, black qi as the wind and rain continued. They felt like they were dying just being in the presence of the young man.

"Hmph! Who on earth is this guy? I cannot believe he's grasped the essence of Confucianism and cultivated the Dharma of the Wise Sage. He is most likely going to become a Confucian sage in the future."

A man covered from head to toe in black rubbed the back of his hand and accidentally stripped off an entire chunk of flesh. He muttered, "This man must die, or he will become a major obstacle in the Dark Ways in the future."

Fire Skull was stunned by the silhouette standing behind the young man as well. It was because he could sense a hint of fear and wariness from his master's spirit.

"Are you satisfied now, auctioneer?[2]" The young man asked indifferently. He was completely unperturbed by the commotion and damage he had caused.

Fire Skull was starting to question the young man's background, and it didn't want to blow up the matter and cancel the auction prematurely. In the end, it had no choice but to concede and say, "Fine, but there are no second chances. If this happens again, then we will take action."

"Good," The young man replied as the silhouette slowly returned to his body. Then, he sat down and began reading his book once more.

After the young man sat down, Fire Skull also dispelled his silhouette and returned his attention to the audience. “Apologies for the disruption, everyone. Now that the matter is resolved, let us continue the auction.”

“So, what we’ve shown you just now is just the appetizer. The main dish is coming up right now. The main theme of today’s auction is natural treasures, godly martial arts, and arts that should’ve been extinct. Are you interested?”

“Cut the bullcrap and get on with it already!” Someone said impatiently.

“Hahaha, don’t worry, customer. The auction will resume, now!”

Fire Skull clapped its hands, and a female ghost carrying a wooden box floated up the stage. Fire Skull opened the wooden box to reveal a few paper pages.

“This is a martial art. It is called the Earthfire Mirror,” it declared.

“The Earthfire Mirror? Is it *the* Earthfire Mirror belonging to the Mountain of Mind and Heart?” Someone exclaimed in shock.

“You are quite knowledgeable, customer! That’s right! It is none other than the Earthfire Mirror belonging to the Mountain of Mind and Heart!” Fire Skull confirmed.

“Impossible! The Earthfire Mirror was lost over a century ago! How can it be here?” Another voice exclaimed.

Ye Qing was quite shocked himself. “The Earthfire Mirror? The Mountain of Mind and Heart had two godly martial arts, and they are the Skyfire Mirror and the Earthfire Mirror. Could it really be the genuine article?”

“Perhaps!” Greenlake replied.

The Skyfire could burn the sky, and the Earthfire could boil the land. Together, they form the foundation of one of the greatest sects in the world. Unfortunately, the Mountain of Mind and Heart lost the Earthfire Mirror over a hundred years ago, and they had declined into a second-rate sect as a result.”

Ye Qing recalled the files regarding the Mountain of Mind and Heart he read in the Pacification Bureau and smirked. “If this is the genuine article, the Mountain of Mind and Heart is going to go crazy. I wonder if one of them is sitting in this room right now?”

If they were, this was going to be a very interesting auction.

Chapter 366: The Earthfire Mirror

“Do you know why the Mountain of Mind and Heart lost the Earthfire Mirror, dear customers?”

Fire Skull explained smilingly, “A hundred years ago, the Mountain of Mind and Heart had a disciple called Tian Yizi[1]. He was the disciple of the Lord of the Mountain and the most gifted warrior in the sect. He was supposed to succeed his master and become the next Lord of the

Mountain, but for whatever reason, the Lord of the Mountain chose a nobody to be his successor instead.”

“Furious, Tian Yizi turned traitor and stole the bronze mirror carrying the martial art. Then, he escaped and never returned. Since then, the Mountain of Mind and Heart lost the Earthfire Mirror.”

“What we’re showing you is Tian Yizi’s handwritten notes and insights into the Earthfire Mirror. Sure, it’s not the original, and it can’t hold a candle to the true Earthfire Mirror, but rest assured that the difference isn’t too big.”

As soon as Fire Skull finished speaking, an old voice spoke angrily, “How did you have Tian Yizi’s handwritten notes? Did he give it to you himself, or did you kill him?”

“My apologies, but we cannot tell you,” Fire Skull replied unhurriedly. “It is against the rules to tell anyone about the origins of the auctioned items. If you’re willing to buy it, then please submit a bid. If not, then please remain quiet.”

“Now then, let the bidding begin! The starting bid for the Earthfire Mirror is three thousand yin gold. Every bid must be at least five hundred yin gold higher than the previous number.”

Before anyone could make a bid, the old voice from before spoke up again, “Everyone, the Earthfire Mirror is an important item belonging to the Mountain of Mind and Heart. We must obtain it no matter what. We humbly beseech you to give us face[ref]NEVER do this in real life, btw. This is easily one of the stupidest moments of the story.[/[ref].”

“There really was someone from Mountain of Mind and Heart. This is going to be fun.” Ye Qing smirked.

“The speaker is probably the great elder of Mountain of Mind and Heart, Cang Jun,” Greenlake whispered to him.

Meanwhile, Cang Jun made his bid, “Three thousand and five hundred yin gold.”

“Five thousand yin gold,” A childish voice rang immediately after that.

“It’s you, Six Yins? What is the meaning of this?” Cang Jun must recognize the second bidder because he identified his voice right away.

Logically speaking, even the weakest warrior present was a Spirit Purifier like Ye Qing, so it was child’s play for anyone to alter their voice, not to mention that the Ghost Tower went to great lengths to conceal their identity. However, this “Six Yins” obviously didn’t bother to hide his identity.

“Are you seriously asking that question, Cang Jun? Forget that the Earthfire Mirror is the foundation of your Mountain of Mind and Heart, the Earthfire Mirror on its own is a Grandmaster-stage martial art. Did you actually think you can buy it for three thousand and five hundred yin gold?” Six Yins Superior replied in a mocking tone.

“Six Yins Superior is right. This old man would like to make a bid as well. Six thousand yin gold.”

“In that case, this gentleman can’t stay quiet either. Eight thousand yin gold!”

“You stingy bastards, you’re really going to pay a couple thousand yin gold for a Grandmaster-stage martial art? How shameful! I’ll raise eight thousand and one yin gold!”

The crowd saw an opportunity to ridicule Mountain of Mind and Heart and did not hesitate to pounce on it.

“Ten thousand yin gold,” Cang Jun sucked in a deep breath to calm himself. Furious he might be, he recognized some of the speakers as titans of the Dark Ways; people he couldn’t afford to offend for short. That was why he didn’t dare to say anything against them.

“Eleven thousand,” Six Yins Superior said lazily.

“Twelve thousand,” Cang Jun declared.

“Thirteen thousand,” Six Yins Superior continued to bid up.

Six Yins Superior would continue to bid up exactly one thousand every time Cang Jun made his bid. Everyone knew that Six Yins Superior was doing this on purpose.

Finally, Cang Jun could stand this farce no longer and threatened, “Enough, Six Yins! Are you really going to make an enemy out of the Mountain of Mind and Heart?”

“Enough? Why didn’t you think that when your sect chased me all over the place back then? Now that the tables have finally turned, you suddenly think it’s too much?” Six Yins Superior retorted loudly. Ye Qing could almost imagine the guy’s spittle flying all over the place.

Cang Jun argued, “You were the one who broke the rules back then. You only have yourself to blame for the consequences!”

“Is that so?” Six Yins chuckled coldly. “What I’m going to do next is within the rules, so you best don’t blame me for what’s about to happen. Fifty thousand yin gold!”

“You—!” Cang Jun nearly fainted from sheer fury there and then.

“Hehehe, you dead yet, old man? If you’re not, then you best make your bid. Otherwise, I’m going to use your precious Earthfire Mirror to wipe my ass when I get it!” Six Yins Superior said with a boisterous laugh.

He had wanted to take revenge against these hypocrites for the longest time, and today was the perfect opportunity to do so. The Earthfire Mirror and the Skyfire Mirror were the cornerstones of their whole sect, so they would never give it up no matter what price they had to pay.

“Fifty one thousand yin gold...” An ashen-faced, bloodshot Cang Jun uttered with volcanic fury.

“Sixty thousand!” Six Yins chuckled.

On the stage, Fire Skull was ecstatic at how successful their scheme had been. From the moment they got their hands on the Earthfire Mirror, they had immediately leaked the news to Mountain of Mind and Heart and their enemies. The Mountain of Mind and Heart would never give up on the item, while their enemies would do their utmost to impede them. Naturally, this would maximize their profit. So far, the scheme had been a resounding success.

In the end, Cang Jun won the handwritten notes of the Earthfire Mirror for the tall, tall price of one hundred thousand yin gold. Cang Jun left immediately after obtaining the goods. It was because he was afraid that he would lose control and murder Six Yins Superior and Fire Skull for what they had done to him.

Fire Skull moved onto the next item. “Alright, our next item is even better than the Earthfire Mirror. It is a Strange Artifact who could supposedly command thousands and thousands troops with a single blow, the Call To Arms!”

A horn that was shaped like a rhino’s horn was carried up the stage. It was covered in complex and mysterious runes.

“Is that the Call To Arms belonging to the Call To Arms Sect from three hundred years ago?” Someone asked.

“That is correct! For those who didn’t know, it is a Phenomenon-class Strange Artifact!”

Fire Skull explained, “The Call To Arms is made from the horn of the Black Jade Spirit Rhino. The Black Jade Spirit Rhino possessed the ability to communicate yin and yang, which is why the Call To Arms also possessed the same power. Anyone who blows the horn can borrow tens of thousands of yin soldiers from the underworld and command them as they pleased.”

“The Call To Arms was how the Call To Arms Sect became a major sect during its halcyon days, but unfortunately, they never learned how to live without it. From the day they lost the item, they grew weaker and weaker until they disappeared altogether.”

“Now then, let the show begin, shall we? The starting bid for the Call To Arms is ten thousand yin gold, and every bid must be at least five hundred yin gold higher than the previous number. Begin!”

“Fifteen thousand yin gold!”

“Sixteen thousand.”

“Twenty thousand!”

Who didn't want a Phenomenon-class Strange Artifact? The price quickly shot up to eighty thousand yin gold. In the end, Greenlake bought it for a total of ninety thousand yin gold.

To this, Ye Qing could only say, "Money makes the world go round."

"Congratulations to our dear customer for winning this item! Now then, our next item is... a drop of blood."

After a female ghost carried a porcelain bottle up the stage, Fire Skull uncorked it and released what looked like a puff of pure white air. Such was its power that it instantly covered the entire floor in frost and entombed the female ghost who carried it up the stage in ice.

"A Stranger's aura?"

Ye Qing frowned as he attempted to perceive the strange energy. It was highly potent, evil, and anomalous. The Ghost Tower's presence must have suppressed it to a certain extent, or this puff of air alone could've turned everything within several hundred meters into a frozen wasteland.

Fire Skull's flames were threatening to go out as well, so it quickly corked the bottle and declared, "It looks like some of you have figured out the answer. That's right! This is the blood essence of a Stranger, the Disaster-class Stranger Snow Maitreya to be exact!"

"The blood essence of the Snow Maitreya?!" Countless people exclaimed in surprise. The Snow Maitreya was an extremely powerful Stranger that naturally caused an ice storm just by existing. It was clear that the blood was no ordinary blood essence either. It was the heart's blood of the Snow Maitreya, what they felt just now was a glimpse of its power.

This made the blood essence so much more valuable than what it would've been. To a Stranger, the blood essence could strengthen their bloodline and class. To a warrior, it could be used to greatly enhance their power if they cultivated a martial art of a similar attribute, create medicine, forge Strange Artifacts and more.

As soon as Fire Skull finished, countless people began bidding for the blood essence, and among them were some Strangers. As far as his senses could tell, Ye Qing could sense at least six Strangers participating in the bidding. In the end, a Stranger managed to win the blood essence at the hefty price of one hundred and fifteen thousand yin gold.

Fire Skull wasn't done yet, however. It showed off the incomplete scroll of the "Divine Art of Nine Deaths" next.

"The "Divine Art of Nine Deaths" was a godly martial art a warrior nicknamed the "Old Man of Nine Deaths" created based on the "Nine Metamorphosis of the Heavenly Silkworm" three hundred years ago. Every time the practitioner died, their power would multiply by leaps and bounds. Nine deaths later, they would become a Sage, immortal and imperishable. That was why it was also known as the martial art that could turn anyone into a Sage in nine deaths.

Of course, the deaths mentioned in the martial art wasn't true death or even the death of one's mortal shell. It was referring to a near death experience. The near death experience couldn't be staged either, or it wouldn't count.

Naturally, the "Divine Art of Nine Deaths" was an extremely difficult martial art to practice. It was all too easy for a near death experience to result in true death. It was said that the Old Man of Nine Deaths himself failed to reach the adept level of the martial art before he died.

Moreover, the one being auctioned on the stage wasn't even the full version of the martial art. It was just an incomplete scroll. Otherwise, there was no chance it would be auctioned.

That said, the "Divine Art of Nine Deaths" was still a Sage-stage martial art. In the end, someone bought it for ninety thousand yin gold. It wasn't too high or too low a price.

"Alright, it's time for the climax and final item we'll be auctioning today. I'm sure that many of you are here for this item."

Fire Skull took a moment to build up the hype before revealing, "The last item we're auctioning is... the martial inheritance of the Dark Overlord, Li Hentian!"

"Really?"

"This can't be real! There is no way the Ghost Tower would be willing to put it up for auction if it is real!"

"Are you toying with us, Fire Skull?!"

As soon as Fire Skull finished, the loudest murmurs yet of the auction broke out. Shock, suspicion, impatience, greed... countless emotions swirled within the floor.

Chapter 367: The Dark Overlord's Inheritance

Ye Qing was shocked too, so much so that he nearly fell off his chair. It wasn't because he was easily startled. It was because the name "Dark Overlord" carried that much weight.

The Dark Overlord Li Hentian was the greatest warrior in the entire world eight hundred years ago. Unparalleled and unmatched, he had singlehandedly dominated the four realms and the *jianghu*.

Once upon a time, he slew five kilometers of peach blossoms with his sword and forced Dragon Tiger Mountain to stay out of secular matters for a hundred years.

Once upon a time, he brought a flower and a Go board up Lotus Peak and challenged the sect leader of True Martial Sect to a debate of Dao. When the flowers fell, and the game was over, the sect master achieved enlightenment and passed away there and then.

Once upon a time, he marched up to Lanke Temple, shouted away the Bodhisattva and the Buddha, and sent a thousand-kilometer-long Kingdom of Buddha plummeting from the heavens with his fists. As a result, the Kingdom of Buddha in the heavens fell to humanity.

Once upon a time, he entered the city of Ling Xiao and Fengdu alone and cut a thousand heads with his saber while drunk. Humans, celestials, ghosts and gods. All bowed before his might for fear they were next.

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The long story short was that the Dark Overlord Lin Hentian was *the* protagonist of this world eight hundred years ago. He had singlehandedly dominated every *jianghu* for over a century, and no one—the Orthodoxy, the Dark Ways, the Buddhists, the Confucianists, the clans, the nobles and more—dared to stand in his way. He was the one and only hegemon in the heavens, the human world, *and* the underworld, and the Buddhas, the Sages, the celestials, the gods and the demons were like shadows compared to him.

Once upon a time, the White Jade Capital even made a remark that would be remembered by the *jianghu* for eternity: “The *jianghu* is everlasting, but there may be one and only Li Hentian.”

Unfortunately, the Dark Overlord’s fall was just as meteoric as his rise. One day, Li Hentian suddenly went missing and was never heard of again.

Some people said that Li Hentian was ganged up on by the champions of the Orthodoxy and the Dark Ways and killed,

Some people said that Li Hentian had shattered the barrier between worlds and ventured into the unknown in search for the pinnacle of martial arts,

Some people said that Li Hentian had attained enlightenment and passed away because there was no one and nothing in this world that interested him anymore,

Some people said that Li Hentian was still roaming the *jianghu* with his lovers, albeit under a different name and moniker,

So on and so forth.

The rumors were just rumors, however. No one knew exactly why the Dark Overlord had suddenly disappeared without a trace, and it remained one of the biggest mysteries of the *jianghu* and *wulin*.

Despite this, the legend of Li Hentian remained one of the most popular topics of the *jianghu*. He remained an untouchable, invincible legend even to this day.

That was why Ye Qing was so shocked when Fire Skull mentioned his name. His inheritance? If Fire Skull didn’t look so confident, he would’ve claimed that it was impossible.

It wasn’t just him. Countless others were just as shell-shocked as he was.

Deeply satisfied with the audience’s reactions, Fire Skull said slowly, “Hahaha... some of you have guessed correctly. We don’t have the Dark Overlord’s inheritance in our possession. It should not need to be said, but not anyone could attain the legendary warrior’s inheritance.”

“So, you’re admitting that you’re toying with us?”

A lofty, icy voice spoke up, and the entire Ghost Tower shook all of a sudden. The flame surrounding Fire Skull suddenly extinguished, and cracks began appearing throughout its body.

“Customer, please, be patient! I’m not finished yet!” Fire Skull blurted in a hurry. Such was the voice’s power that he felt like an ant about to be trampled by a god or a demon, helpless and puny.

“Keep talking then. If you cannot give me a satisfactory response, you will die.” The voice spoke again. “Mark my words, not even your owner will be able to save you then.”

“Yes, of course!” Fire Skull could tell that the owner of the voice was telling the truth. After all, the person had suppressed the restrictions of the Ghost Tower and the wisp of spirit its master had bestowed with just words. It had no doubt that the person could crush it like a bug if it wanted to.

Too afraid to build up the hype like it normally did, Fire Skull hurriedly got to the point, “It’s like this. Some time ago, we came upon one of the Dark Overlord’s artwork by accident, and a poem was written on it. My master figured that it most likely had something to do with the Dark Overlord’s inheritance.”

“Artwork? What artwork? Show it to us. It’s the only way we can know if you’re lying to us or not,” Someone demanded.

“Haha, but of course, customer. The Ghost Tower has always been an advocate of fair trade.” Fire Skull declared without a shred of shame.

Tsk. Everyone clicked their tongues mentally, but no one said a word because they didn’t want to delay the appearance of the artwork even a little.

A few breaths later, an ugly-looking ghost carried a covered painting onto the stage. Ye Qing could tell that the ghost was at least a Phenomenon-class Stranger.

The ghost removed the cover to reveal a beautiful painting of mountains, rivers, flowers and birds. Although the artist’s skill was clearly sublime, that wasn’t what made it special. It was the fact that it gave off a strange energy as soon as the cover was removed, and the elements of the painting slowly started moving as if they were alive. They could see the mountain spring flowing along a sinuous path. They could hear the wind blowing gently across the air. They could even smell the refreshing scent of trees and flowers. Yellow birds were chirping, and colorful butterflies were flying around and seeking honey.

The artist’s technique had transcended the concept of technique itself. At this level, it was almost a Dao in itself. Their senses hadn’t been warped by some sort of anomalous energy. The contents in the painting were, in a sense, alive. It was as if someone had sealed a corner of the world into a blank canvas.

“This is definitely an artwork by the hands of the Dark Overlord himself. I can sense vestiges of his martial truth in it,” someone said.

A feminine voice spoke up urgently, “Indeed, it is a painting made by the Dark Overlord himself. This painting is named the ‘Window to Flowers, Birds and A Stream’, and it was mentioned in the records of my Li Hentian Palace. This is also the final piece of artwork Lord Li had created before he went missing. Though... the painting was supposed to have disappeared with him.”

There are people from Li Hentian Palace too?! Ye Qing rubbed his nose thoughtfully. The Dark Overlord's name was Li Hentian, and the sect was named Li Hentian Palace. Obviously, they were intricately tied to the Dark Overlord.

Li Hentian Palace was one of the Nine Demonic Ways, and it was rumored to be founded by one of his thirteen concubines, Yan Qingyan.

Despite being invincible across the three worlds, the Dark Overlord Li Hentian hadn't founded a sect. Yan Qingyan had founded it after he went missing using the manpower and resources he left behind to found the Li Hentian Palace. Thanks to centuries of development and the Dark Overlord's reputation, they were able to become a prominent sect of the *jianghu*.

"Clear streams flow in the dark,

Where Death Sea lies an overlord,

Martial arts is necessary to explore Bei Mo,

Inheritance one shall find in their dreams."

At the top of the painting was a... doggerel? Actually, it might not even qualify as a doggerel. No one dared to say it outloud, but even a novice could tell that it was just a bunch of words that were cobbled together to look like a poem.

The Dark Overlord's artwork is beyond the world, but his poem is very... mortal. It's practically on the same level as our "poems", everyone thought. At the same time, there was this sense that the man didn't really fit his legend.

"Ahem, what did the Dark Overlord's messa—er, I mean poem have to do with an inheritance?" Someone asked.

Amusement rippled across the audience. *Heh. I knew I wasn't the only one who thought the same thing. Just admit that it isn't a poem, brother.*

"Take a closer look, customers. The key is within the poem." Fire Skull continued to keep them in suspense.

"Are you referring to the words 'Dark Overlord martial inheritance' in the poem?" Ye Qing asked.

"What? What are you talking about? I don't see it!"

"Yeah, stop keeping us in suspense and tell us already, friend!" [1]

Some people had already figured it out, but some... well, there was a reason the stereotype of a warrior was all muscle and no brains. In any case, Ye Qing saw no reason to keep this a secret and answered, "The last two words of the first two lines are 'dark' and 'overlord', whereas the first two words of the last two lines are 'martial' and 'inheritance'."

"Dark, Overlord, martial, inheritance... Hey, you're right!" Exclamations of realization broke out everywhere.

“Very smart, husband. You solved the riddle immediately,” Greenlake complimented Ye Qing.

“Well, duh. I’m a professional riddle solver.” Ye Qing chuckled.

Someone thought that this was not enough evidence to confirm that the painting was hinting toward an inheritance, however. “Is this all you have to make your claim, Fire Skull? Don’t you think it’s a little too... flimsy?”

“It is not, dear customer. First, the Dark Overlord’s artistic skill and poetry skill are equally famous. Do you really believe that he would create such an awkward poem?”

Fire Skull explained smilingly. “Besides, the two locations mentioned in the poem exist in real life.”

“You’re talking about the Death Sea and Bei Mo?” the champion asked for clarification.

“That is correct,” Fire Skull confirmed. “The Death Sea happens to be located at Bei Mo, and combining that with the hint... isn’t that enough to make a verdict?”

The Dark Overlord’s inheritance lies in Bei Mo? The same thought crossed everyone’s mind.

“Although the Death Sea is a dangerous place that only appears once every sixty years, there are plenty of warriors who have visited it to a certain extent. If the Dark Overlord’s inheritance really lies in the Death Sea, it should’ve been discovered already, isn’t it?”

“That’s a good question!” Fire Skull agreed. “And that, is the crux of our auction.”

“Besides the painting, we also discovered a token with flower and bird patterns and the words ‘Dark Overlord’ on it. It was forged from meteorite, and it contains the Dark Overlord’s aura. That is why my owner reckoned that the reason those who ventured into the Death Sea before didn’t discover the Dark Overlord’s inheritance is because they didn’t have the token.”

“Oh right, my owner also named it the Dark Overlord Token.”

Fire Skull produced a token about the size of a baby’s palm. It was square-shaped and completely black, and the words “Dark Overlord” were engraved to its surface.

The mere sight of the words alone placed a terrible pressure on everyone’s shoulder. It was a hegemonistic, noble aura that couldn’t be mistaken as anything but a hegemon’s aura.

“That’s definitely Lord Li’s aura alright,” the woman from Li Hentian Palace said.

“Where did you get these items?”

“That will be our secret to keep.” Fire Skull smiled. “Of course, I must make a disclaimer that everything you heard so far is just a one-sided theory from my master. You are the ones who must decide whether it’s real or not.”

Disclaimer my ass! Every sign suggests that the painting and the token are real, and the inheritance being the real thing! Everyone rolled their eyes.

Frankly, Fire Skull could have made up a total lie with no real evidence to support the lie, and it would still foretell a bloody storm in the *jianghu*. That was how attractive the Dark Overlord's inheritance was.

"How much is this Dark Sovereign Token? The Li Hentian Palace will be buying it," the woman from Li Hentian Palace said.

"Excuse me? Did you forget that this is an *auction*, Mistress Qu?" Someone retorted immediately.

The Li Hentian Palace was ruled by a Headmistress, and below the Headmistress were six Mistresses. The woman was one of the six Mistresses of Li Hentian Palace.

"Lord Li is the founder of the Li Hentian Palace, and I just want to reclaim our rightful inheritance. What's so wrong about that?" Mistress Qu countered.

Chapter 368: The Ghost Tower's Scheme

A childish voice spoke up, "What a joke! Your Li Hentian Palace didn't exist until the Dark Overlord disappeared, did it? How the hell is the Dark Overlord your founder? If you're going to do this, then why not claim that the Taozu Lu Chunyang or the True Celestial Qi Xuanzhen are your founders as well?"

The speaker was none other than Six Yins Superior.

"Yeah! Also, the actual founder of your Li Hentian Palace is a woman, right? Since when was the Dark Overlord a woman?"

"Li Hentian Palace may be yours, but the Dark Overlord is his own man. More importantly, his inheritance belongs to everyone. Surely you bitches can understand such simple logic?"

Countless ridicule broke out from all over the place. Mistress Qu abruptly shot to her feet and raised her voice, "You dare shame Lord Li and Li Hentian Palace with your words? Are you courting death?"

"Shame the Dark Overlord? Not at all. The only ones we're shaming are your Li Hentian Palace."

An impudent, arrogant voice said unhurriedly, "You're just a bunch of thots who climbed to your current position with your tits and ass. If not for the Dark Overlord's legend and the fact that you're all women, did you seriously think that Li Hentian Palace could've made it as one of the Nine Demonic Ways? Someone would've finished you off a long time ago."

"How dare you!" Mistress Qu's face was flushed from how angry she was, but thankfully, she hadn't completely lost her wits. She knew it would be a bad idea to attack her detractors in the Ghost Tower.

“Come at me, bitch! I swear on my mother’s grave I won’t lift a finger to protect myself. If you couldn’t kill me, then you’re my grands—excuse me, I mean granddaughter—hmm, that’s not right either. Why in the world would I want an expired thot to be my granddaughter? That would shame me more than it shames you!”

The guy muttered under his breath for a bit before yelling, “Oh, screw it! Just come and kill me already!”

“You... You...!” Mistress Qi felt like she was this close from blowing her top, literally. If it wasn’t for the Ghost Tower’s rules, she would’ve ripped the speaker to pieces already.

“Hehehe, I knew you wouldn’t dare to do anything.” The man grew increasingly disdainful when he saw that Mistress Qu didn’t dare to attack him. “You bitches don’t know shit besides fucking men on the bed.”

“Is that so? Dare you tell me your name so I may pay you a visit in the future, or are you all bark and no bite?” Mistress Qu uttered hatefully.

“Hahaha! I am Madman Chu. Feel free to come after me after the auction if you dare. Oh wait, you wouldn’t dare because you’re too *weak* and *cowardly*. Your Headmistress is the only one who might have a chance at laying her finger against me.”

Madman Chu continued to taunt Mistress Qu with zero restraint, “You know what? I give you permission to rally your whole sect *and* your lovers to attack me. If I take even a step backward, then you have full permission to call me your son.”

“Hahaha, well said, Brother Chu!”

“I’ve loathed these bitches for a long time.”

“Heaven knows where these *heretics* find the gall to put themselves out in the open!”

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“What the hell is Ghost Tower thinking?” Ye Qing tilted his head in Greenlake’s direction and asked.

This was the Dark Overlord Li Hentian’s inheritance they were talking about. Forget them, even a Sage or the Buddha himself would be tempted to get their hands on it.

The problem was that the Ghost Tower only had one Dark Overlord Token. It was one thing if they sold it to a single bidder in secret, but instead they chose to tell everyone about it.

It was guaranteed everyone would fight over the Dark Overlord Token to the death, but the matter wasn’t done even after the auction was over. The winner of the token would have a target painted on their backs, and they would have to worry about the participants leaking the fact that they possessed the token to others.

In this scenario, the winner must kill everyone present in order to hide the fact that they possessed the Dark Overlord Token. Otherwise, they would be chased and hunted to the ends of the earth. Not even the Li Hentian Palace, one of the Nine Demonic Ways, could possibly the entire *jianghu* attacking them for the Dark Overlord Token.

Best case scenario, the winner and whatever sect they belonged to would be no more. Worst case scenario, a sea of blood involving the entire *jianghu* would be shed due to the conflicts that resulted from this.

But of course, there was no one present who possessed the power to kill everyone on the floor singlehandedly. Even if there was, there was still the Ghost Tower. Who could claim that the Ghost Tower wouldn't leak the news to others? Humans were untrustworthy enough, much less ghosts, so they would have to wipe out the Ghost Tower as well. Was that doable? Of course not.

The point was, Ye Qing couldn't see how the Ghost Tower might benefit from this. Sure, they might make more money as a result of their machinations, but they could just as easily lose control and offend everyone present. No one who possessed the qualifications to enter the inner market was simple. They were either people with big bosses to back them up or the big bosses themselves, and it was absolutely not worth it to offend them over some extra yin gold.

Of course, there was the possibility that the Ghost Tower was aiming to turn the *jianghu* upside down through them and profit from the fallout, but if he could figure out the scheme, then surely the rest of the audience could figure it out as well. He didn't think he was *that* smart.

Seriously, what the hell is the Ghost Tower thinking?

Greenlake knew what he was thinking and whispered, "I don't think the Ghost Tower would be this stupid. This must be some sort of setup for their real ploy."

Ye Qing neither agreed nor disagreed with her statement. He waited to see how the Ghost Tower was going to handle this.

"Enough, Madman Chu. I don't care how you behave, but do it after this auction is over." The warrior who suppressed the Ghost Tower's restrictions and Fire Skull earlier finally spoke up. "

"Hehehe..." Madman Chu chuckled and shrugged.

Mistress Qu was still furious, but she stopped talking as well. Clearly, she was wary of the warrior.

Besides, she heard that Madman Chu was a Grandmaster. He said whatever he wanted and did as he pleased. To provoke him was to make life difficult for oneself.

"What about the Dark Overlord Token, Sun Sovereign?" Mistress Qu asked.

The warrior, Sun Sovereign replied, "There is no way you can monopolize the Dark Overlord Token, and neither can your Li Hentian Palace."

Mistress Qu thought the Sun Sovereign wished to monopolize the Dark Overlord Token for himself and fell silent for a moment. Then, she said sarcastically, "This junior wouldn't dare to stop you if you wish to take the Dark Overlord Token, senior. Please, have at it."

“No need to be sarcastic with me, girl. I can’t monopolize it either. No one on this floor can.”

Sun Sovereign turned to Fire Skull and ordered, “Speak, Fire Skull. What is your goal here? Please don’t tell me you wish to use the Dark Overlord Token to turn the world upside down. Forget the Ghost Tower, not even the Great Emperor of Fengdu would dare to do such a thing. You haven’t forgotten what befell Fengdu several centuries ago, have you?”

The Sun Sovereign was referring to that time the Nether was breached, and Fengdu was destroyed, of course. Back then, Fengdu had opened the gates of hell and attempted to invade the yang world. As a result, Yan, Chu, Qi and Wei came together to launch a counterattack against Fengdu. As a result, the Great Emperor of Fengdu and the Six Ghosts and Gods were slain.

“Hahaha... You flatter us, customer. How would we even do such a thing?” Fire Skull let out a bitter chuckle. “The truth is quite simple: there are more than one Dark Overlord Token.”

“After we found the first Dark Overlord Token, we suspected that there were more and began searching everywhere for it. As expected, there were more Dark Overlord Tokens out there. In total, we have thirty Dark Overlord Tokens.”

“So, you’re auctioning not one, but thirty Dark Overlord Tokens?” Madman Chu was the first to protest, “You should’ve said it sooner, you sonuvabitch? Do you think we’re circus monkeys or something?”

Fire Skull complained, “I wouldn’t dare! There was just no room for me to interrupt just now!”

Bull-fucking-shit! You think we didn’t see you snickering away while Mistress Qu and Madman Chu were arguing with each other?

Everyone thought while rolling their eyes. Thankfully, the knowledge that there were thirty Dark Overlord Tokens significantly improved the mood and loosened the tension—for now.

Fire Skull continued, “In fact, my master had prepared for everything. If the number of bidders present at the auction exceeds our expectations, then we would sell the Dark Overlord Tokens covertly. It would be an invitation for disaster otherwise. However, the number of people we have right now is just right. Assuming you can afford it, everyone present can obtain at least one Dark Overlord Token. This will incentivize you not to leak the news and throw the *jianghu* upside down.”

“Hmph! At least you’re aware of the consequences!” The Sun Sovereign grunted. “Speak. How are you planning to auction the Dark Overlord Tokens?”

Fire Skull answered, “First, in order to ensure that everyone present can obtain at least one Dark Overlord Token, we will not be auctioning it right away. Instead, you can pay fifty thousand yin gold right now to obtain one. However, you can only buy one.”

“Once everyone who can afford it had bought a Dark Overlord Token, the rest of you will bid for the remaining tokens with a starting bid of fifty thousand yin gold.”

“Finally, everyone in possession of a Dark Overlord Token including my Ghost Tower must swear an Oath of Burden to not leak the news of the Dark Overlord’s inheritance to others or steal another person’s token in any way.”

“So, do you approve of our arrangements?”

“The Ghost Tower sure knows how to conduct business. Very well!” The Sun Sovereign agreed.

Over half of the audience had already left the auction for one reason or another. Cang Jun, the great elder of the Mountain of Mind and Heart was one such example. Fifty thousand yin gold per token sounded like a hefty price, but it really wasn’t considering what was on the line. Besides that, everyone who stayed behind were basically wealthy people. Even if they weren’t, they would pawn off everything to make up fifty thousand yin gold. No one would or could resist the Dark Overlord’s inheritance.

By doing it this way, the Ghost Tower could make a huge profit and still ensure that no one would leak the news of the inheritance. After all, everyone who possessed a Dark Overlord Token would be in grave danger once the news were spread. No one was stupid enough to pay fifty thousand yin gold just to put themselves in mortal danger. But just in case stupidity or greed overtook common sense, the Oath of Burden guaranteed that the secret would remain a secret.

The rest of the Dark Overlord Tokens were auctioned because the Ghost Tower knew that most of them wouldn’t be satisfied with just one. After all, owning more than one token meant they could bring one or multiple helpers with them on their journey. For obvious reasons, a party of warriors stood a much greater chance of obtaining the Dark Overlord’s inheritance than just one.

At the same time, the Ghost Tower could earn an even bigger profit and kill multiple birds with one stone. So far, the Ghost Tower seemed to have considered everything and made the best out of it.

“The master of the Ghost Tower is a smart man,” Ye Qing commented smilingly.

“They wouldn’t dare to sell the Dark Overlord Tokens otherwise,” Greenlake replied gently.

“Say, do you think that thirty Dark Overlord Tokens is all they have?” An interesting question suddenly occurred to Ye Qing.

“What kind of question is that? You just said that the master of the Ghost Tower is a smart person,” Greenlake countered.

“You’re right,” Ye Qing conceded.

Suddenly, a far more urgent question occurred to Ye Qing. *I don’t have enough money! I only stayed because I wanted to enjoy the show!*

He literally couldn’t not buy the Dark Overlord Token because he was already made aware of the Dark Overlord’s inheritance. If he refused, he didn’t doubt that the people present would silence him in a heartbeat. Plus, he did want the Dark Overlord Token.

What do I do, Google?

“Er, Miss Bai...” In the end, Ye Qing had no choice but to ask Greenlake for help. If she could lend him some money, then all was well. If not, then he would have to pawn off some stuff.

Be it Strange Artifacts or martial arts, he carried a lot of good stuff with him. He had more than enough to gather fifty thousand yin gold. But of course, he didn't want to do that if possible.

“Don't worry, husband. I understand.”

Greenlake smiled as if she knew he was going to ask her for help. “It's just a hundred thousand yin gold. I can afford it.”

“Thank you, Miss Bai. When we're back in the yang world, I promise to pay back what I owe immediately,” Ye Qing solemnly promised.

“What are you saying, husband? You and I are one in mind and body. What's mine is yours, isn't it?” Greenlake beamed.

You're not serious, are you? Ye Qing blinked. I'm not gonna stop you if you insist on screwing yourself over!

Chapter 369: Right and Wrong

The Ghost Tower was anything but perfectly, but in regards to Dark Overlord Tokens, they were able to achieve a perfect conclusion.

Everyone was satisfied with what they got.

Ye Qing was poor, so he was out of the fight as soon as he bought his first and only Dark Overlord Token. But the rest of the bidders? Oh boy.

Everyone on the floor was a reputable person in some way. Normally, they went to great lengths to maintain an air of untouchability. But for the sake of getting an extra Dark Overlord Token or two, they talked favors, brought up their background, feigned weakness to garner sympathy, intimidated others and more. Like a common housewife in the market, they rip and tore through their competitors without a care for their reputation whatsoever.

Every Dark Overlord Token besides the first was sold at a ridiculous price. The highest-priced token was sold at a whopping three hundred thousand yin gold. It was easily one of the most entertaining shows Ye Qing had ever watched in his life.

Since Greenlake was a wealthy woman, she too bought an extra Dark Overlord Token for one hundred and fifty thousand yin gold.

“Let's go.”

After the auction was finally over, Ye Qing and Greenlake got ready to take their leave. However, a young man stopped them before they could do so. It was none other than the scholar who had killed his own student a while ago.

“Leaving already?” The young man said indifferently.

“What? Do you have business with us, brother?” Ye Qing asked.

“Business, no. But I do have something to inform you two.” The young man looked at the duo and said, “You’ve caused the death of my student. You should make up for it.”

“Excuse me?” Ye Qing thought he heard wrongly. “You must be joking. The Ghost Tower is the one who insisted punishment upon your student, and you are the one who killed him with your own hands. What does his death have anything to do with us?”

“The Ghost Tower isn’t wrong for defending their own rules, and I’m not wrong since I haven’t broken any rules myself. But you definitely have a hand in his death. He wouldn’t have died if you hadn’t fought him over the Duckweed Flower,” the scholar declared.

The scholar seemed perfectly calm, but in Ye Qing’s opinion, it was the cruel and heartless kind of calm.

“Hah! So, you’re saying that you’re the only one who can bid for the Duckweed Flower?” Ye Qing sneered.

“You can bid for it, but you don’t need to be so aggressive that my student lost control and broke the Ghost Tower’s rule,” The young man continued calmly. “You’re not completely at fault, but you must bear a certain amount of responsibility.”

“So, you’re saying it’s all our fault?” Ye Qing was so angry he could laugh. What the guy said made a certain amount of sense, but if you really thought about it, he was just making excuses for himself while making their “crime” seem way more serious than it actually was. His dog had tried to bite them, but he failed and got himself killed by his own owner. Instead of blaming himself or his dog, he was blaming the victims who were just defending themselves.

What kind of logic was that?

“Of course, I have to bear some responsibility as well. One, I didn’t bring enough money with me. Two, my student is hot-tempered and impatient because I didn’t teach him well enough. Three, I didn’t stop him in time when he was enraged,” The scholar said indifferently. “I have made mistakes, and I admit all of them.”

“But just the same, you have made some mistakes as well, and mistakes must be punished in order to avoid the same thing from repeating in the future.”

“Oh? And how do you plan on punishing us, pray tell? Will you kill us?” Ye Qing raised an eyebrow. *He’s not insane after all. This is all setup so he can pressure us into giving up the Duckweed Flower or more.*

“You are at fault, but not the biggest wrongdoers of this incident, so I won’t kill you,” The scholar said seriously. “However, that doesn’t mean you don’t need to pay for your crimes.”

The scholar looked at Greenlake. “You will be my student.”

He then turned to Ye Qing and said, “And you will be my servant.”

“You will serve me for three years to atone for your sins.”

“Is that so? What about you then? Your responsibility is much bigger than ours. How will you punish yourself?” Ye Qing asked curiously.

“I will personally visit his family and beg them for their forgiveness. If they believe that killing me is the only way for me to atone for my sins, then so be it. If not, I will do my best to take care of them like they are my own parents until they die.”

The scholar concluded his statement with a question, “Do you understand now?”

“By the heavens, just how sick are you in the head?” Ye Qing couldn’t help but blurt out. How could such a person exist in the world? When people said zero tolerance, they didn’t truly mean zero tolerance. It was because there were always exceptional circumstances. But this guy didn’t care about that. All he cared about was punishing the wrong no matter the circumstances, and not even he himself was excluded from the punishment. It was so insane Ye Qing didn’t even know how to make a counterpoint.

“You shouldn’t be out and about, dude. Go see a doctor and treat your mental illness, alright?”

For the first time, the scholar frowned. “I take it that you’re refusing punishment.” He seemed incredibly displeased that his wishes were being denied.

“What about you? Will you refuse your punishment as well?” The scholar turned to look at Greenlake.

“I will obey my husband,” Greenlake said gently.

“To be aware of your mistakes and make no attempt to correct them is to commit a bigger mistake. If you won’t obey, then I will force you to.”

The scholar narrowed his eyes and pointed a finger at the duo.

As soon as he did this, Ye Qing felt his energies stuttering as if his channels had suddenly become constricted. His mind was flickering like he could black out at any moment as well. Space shattered, and the finger descended from above, overwhelming and forceful. It looked like the finger of an omnipotent god threatening to annihilate humanity in one stroke.

“Not even a warning? Go fuck yourself!” Ye Qing yelled. When the scholar’s finger descended an inch, Ye Qing broke free from the supernatural influence and threw a punch at him. His counterattack was fast but not weak in the slightest.

“Break Through”

Fist met finger, and there was a dull crack that sounded like a thunderclap. Ye Qing swayed back and forth like a blade of grass that was being blown by the wind as he bled from all orifices.

“I think you’re not planning to take revenge for your student at all! You just want to take our Dark Overlord Tokens, don’t you?!”

Two sways later, Ye Qing successfully neutralized the force inside his body and straightened his hand. Then, he swung it diagonally at the scholar.

“Hellfire Red Lotus Saber Art”

Red lotuses descended from the sky, and demonic flames burst out of the scholar’s body. However, he simply frowned and swiped away the hellfire almost like it was nothing more but dust.

Ye Qing’s pupils contracted into pins. For the first time, the hellfire had completely failed to harm its foe.

Ye Qing’s action must have angered the scholar, because he declared, “You stubbornly cling to your mistakes and seek to abscond all responsibilities. What difference is there between you and a heretic?”

Like the rising sun, pure white light shone out of his body. The entire floor was filled with light in an instant.

Ye Qing couldn’t see anything but the light. Even his demonic thought was suppressed by it. Still, he could tell that it contained an enormous amount of power.

“My husband is right. You really are quite sick, Mister Nine. I hope your doctor will be able to treat you.”

Ye Qing was still thinking a way out of this when suddenly, the Ghost Tower shook slightly. The next moment, he felt Greenlake grabbing his elbow, and he abruptly lost track of his surroundings.

When the white light was gone, Ye Qing and Greenlake were nowhere to be seen. There was only the scholar standing where he was with his brows creased in murder. “The Supreme Origin Hidden Star Demonic Implement Sutra? I knew they were heretics.”

It was at this moment Fire Skull spoke up, “What do you think you’re doing, customer?”

The scholar’s expression returned to normal as he turned to look at Fire Skull. “Fighting is forbidden during the auction, but the auction is already over, isn’t it? I haven’t broken your rules.”

The flames on Fire Skull’s body swayed ominously. “That’s not what I’m not talking about.”

“Oh, you thought I was trying to steal their Dark Overlord Token?” The scholar understood Fire Skull’s meaning immediately. “That is not the case. I was just trying to take revenge for my student, that’s all.”

"If I really was plotting to steal their tokens, the Oath of Burden would've held me accountable already, wouldn't it?"

"That's..." Fire Skull couldn't say anything against that.

"My conscience is always clear." The scholar saluted Fire Skull before saying, "Goodbye."

With that, he took one step forward and disappeared from the Ghost Tower.

"Hehe, I can see why they say it's better to see something with your eyes! Mister Nine is truly one of a kind!"

"The way he does things is seriously outrageous! He calls us heretics, but I think he's far more heretical than us!"

"Agreed!"

"People like him are terrifying. Perfectly impartial and selfless, one might say that he is born with a Saint's Heart. But what is a saint who isn't a saint yet? A demon!"

.....

"Seventh Young Master! They just left."

Inside a room, Ghost Six was reporting Ye Qing and Greenlake's whereabouts to Seventh Young Master.

"Good. Where are they?" Seventh Young Master asked.

"Northeast about one kilometer away from here," Ghost Six answered.

A teleportation array was installed on the third floor of the Ghost Tower. Anyone who wished to leave after the auction was over could just step inside it and teleport away. The destination of every teleport was random so as to ensure the customers' privacy and safety, but since the Ghost Tower was the one who installed the teleportation array, of course they had a way to check them.

"One kilometer? That's not far away," Seventh Young Master smiled like a flower. "You did well. You will be rewarded for your service."

"Thank you, Seventh Young Master. It is my honor to be able to serve you," Ghost Six said in a hurry.

"I need you to do something for me, however," Seventh Young Master continued.

"Just give me the order, and it will be done, Seventh Young Master." Ghost Six declared and bowed as servilely as he could.

"It gladdens me to hear that." Seventh Young Master stopped wiping his right hand, and the mouth on his palm slowly opened. A tongue emerged from the center and licked around the palm.

“Seventh Young Master, what... are you doing?” A bad premonition suddenly struck Ghost Six.

“I promised you I would give you a reward, didn’t I? Here’s your reward.” Seventh Young Master’s smile grew increasingly beautiful and demonic as he tilted his head. “What, you don’t want it?”

“Mercy, Seventh Young Master! You also said you wouldn’t eat me!” Ghost Six exclaimed in horror and tried to run toward the exit. He never imagined that Seventh Young Master would try to kill him.

Swoosh!

He didn’t stand a chance. The tongue shot out like lightning and wrapped around his body. Then, it dragged him straight into the mouth.

As Seventh Young Master wiped his palm with a handkerchief, he sighed. “I don’t want to kill you either. But what can I do when you’ve learned too much?”

“Ugh... the flesh of a Rotten Ghost truly is disgusting. Oh hells, I’m gonna vomit. Why can’t a Rotten Ghost’s flesh be like stinky tofu, smelly but tasty? Sigh...”

“I need to eat something and wash this foul taste in my mouth as soon as possible. Otherwise, I won’t be able to eat anything for the next three days...”

His voice still reverberated inside the room, but he was already gone.

Chapter 370: We Meet Again

“Phew... that man is terrifying.”

On a street, Ye Qing was wiping away the blood on his face with lingering trepidation.

That man had felt stronger than even Gu Suitang. There was absolutely no way he could defeat him as he was.

“He’s Mister Nine. Of course he’s powerful.” Greenlake produced a handkerchief and gently aided Ye Qing with his efforts.

“Mister Nine? Who’s that? He sounds pretty familiar for some reason,” Ye Qing replied without thought until realization struck him. “Wait... you’re not talking about that Mister Nine, are you?”

“There may be more than one Mister Nine in the world, but as far as I know, the only one who possess such power is him.” Greenlake’s eyes twinkled. “The one who scored first place in both the martial and civil examination of Chu and the disciple of the Chief Libationist of Jixia Academy, ‘Mister Nine’ Chu Wangsun.”

“You gotta be kidding me! It can’t be him!”

Ye Qing waved his hands in denial. He just couldn't believe that the top scorer of Chu and the disciple of the Chief Libationist could be such a person. But when Greenlake continued to watch him in silence, he gradually lost his smile and asked, "He really is Chu Wangsun?"

Greenlake nodded. "In the flesh."

"That guy is the 'Mister Nine' Chu Wangsun? But that's..." Ye Qing was torn and in disbelief. The legend and pride of Chu... was a madman?

"It's unbelievable, isn't it?" Greenlake smiled understandingly.

"To put it mildly, yeah." Ye Qing nodded in agreement before asking, "How did someone like him manage to become the top scorer of both the civil and the martial examination of Chu *and* the disciple of the Chief Libationist?"

Did the emperor and the Chief Libationist of Jixia Academy had a screw loose in their head as well? Or was there some sort of scheme that he wasn't seeing here?

Greenlake explained patiently, "Chu Wangsun may be like this, but he is a true genius, one so extraordinary that it garnered even the envy of the heavens."

"From the moment he was born, Chu Wangsun was already extraordinary. When he was born, Literary Birds descended from the heavens to celebrate it. He was literate at the age of three, capable of singing poems and making couplets at the age of five, grasped the Hundred Schools of Thought at the age of ten, and cultivated a Literary Heart at the age of fifteen."

"He wasn't just a genius in the ways of literature either. He was born with all of his bodily points already unlocked, and he could grasp any martial art in a single glance. He's not even twenty yet, and he's already a Spirit Master—a Half-Step Grandmaster to be exact."

"As you've seen at the Ghost Tower, he has also cultivated the Dharma of the Wise Sage. If he wanted to, he could've become a Grandmaster already. He's probably holding back just to refine his cultivation even further."

Ye Qing: "... *Is this what they mean by, "There is a fine line between genius and madness"? Well, they were right.*

Greenlake continued, "I also heard that Chu Wangsun was born with a Saint's Heart, and as far as I could tell, the rumors are correct. His behavior and actions are the spitting image of the saints of the old. He follows a perfectly straight path that will accept no deviation. If he encounters a mistake, he would strive to correct it, and if someone does something wrong, he would mete out the appropriate punishment. He is perfectly impartial, righteous, and selfless."

"Him? A saint?" Ye Qing sneered.

"Don't you think so?" Greenlake smiled. "Do you really think what he said and did earlier was wrong, husband?"

Ye Qing frowned but didn't say anything.

"If we look at the matter regarding the Duckweed Flower alone, then he would be perfectly right. It is true that we play a small but undeniable role in the student's death. We aren't at fault, but we do bear some measure of responsibility."

Greenlake continued, "To correct a mistake when he sees a mistake, to punish a wrong if he encounters a wrong. Not even he himself is exempt from his own rules. He is perfectly impartial, righteous, and selfless, is he not?"

"Heh. You may be right, but there is no absolute right or wrong in this world, is there?"

Ye Qing let out a cold chuckle. "From his point of view, we are part of the reason his student died, and he would be correct. But from our point of view, we were just obeying the Ghost Tower's rules. Are we wrong to do so? In fact, from the Ghost Tower or anyone else's point of view, we definitely aren't in the wrong."

"Killing is wrong, but is killing one to save many wrong as well?"

"You are correct, husband." Greenlake nodded. "I don't believe we were wrong either. We were wrong only because the student happens to be his student."

"Now that, is a rationale I can accept." Ye Qing shrugged.

Suddenly, Greenlake let out a wistful giggle. "Do you think we're stupid, husband?"

"Whatever do you mean?" Ye Qing shot her a confused look.

"Chu Wangsun is the disciple of the Chief Libationist of Jixia Academy. There are countless people who dreamed of becoming his student and servant. However, we rejected the opportunity even though it was delivered right into our lap. It's quite the stupid decision, isn't it?" Greenlake explained.

"Now that you mentioned it, it kinda is. It's too late for regrets though." Ye Qing shrugged again. They had fought the guy and called him crazy to his face. There was no chance of a reconciliation at this point.

Suddenly, a terrible realization struck Ye Qing. *Wait a second... Chu Wangsun is attending the Hidden Dragon Meet too, isn't he?*

Is it too late to apologize to him and make up for past mistakes?

What am I gonna do?!

Ye Qing was still trying to think of a solution when Greenlake called out to him, "Before I forget, this is yours, husband."

"Hmm?" Ye Qing accepted the Nature's Shell and poked his demonic thought into it. He found the Duckweed Flower, the Dark Overlord Token, and some of the treasures Greenlake had bought on the first and second floor.

“You’re giving all these to me?” Ye Qing asked incredulously.

“Yep.” Greenlake nodded.

“But most of these... aren’t the stuff I ordered.” The Duckweed Flower and Dark Overlord Token were his, sure, but what about the rest of the treasures? Did she seriously think of him as her husband? *Do I have a sugar momma now?*

“True, but it is what you deserve,” Greenlake said smilingly.

“It’s what I deserve?” Ye Qing suddenly had a bad feeling about this. “What do you mean by that?”

“I wouldn’t have bought these items if not to show that shop assistant that you’re not poor. Naturally, you deserve these items, don’t you agree?” Greenlake grinned.

“Haha, I think not.” Ye Qing said with obvious suspicion.

“I’ll take it if he doesn’t want them,” A feminine voice suddenly interrupted their conversation. Then, an incredibly attractive woman stepped out of the darkness.

“I’m taking the items. In fact, I’m taking you two with me.”

“Who are you?” Ye Qing watched the approaching woman warily. She—or he—was none other than Seventh Young Master.

“That’s a tricky question.” Seventh Young Master giggled. “Eight hundred years ago, I was a man. Now? I’m just a ghost.”

“Are you from Ghost Tower?” Ye Qing asked.

“Oh? And how did you figure that out?” Seventh Young Master asked curiously.

“I guessed,” Ye Qing replied, though it wasn’t that difficult a guess. The Ghost Tower’s teleportation array was supposed to teleport them to a completely random location. However, this guy had tracked them down just minutes after they left the Ghost Tower. The only one with the capabilities to do so was the Ghost Tower, though he wouldn’t deny there was a small chance that this was just an unlucky coincidence.

“You guessed? Can you guess what I’m going to do next?” Seventh Young Master giggled.

“Can you guess whether I’m going to make a guess?” Ye Qing smirked and tapped the space in front of him.

“Heavenly Demon Captures The Soul”

There was a soft knock, and Seventh Young Master abruptly froze in place. At the same time, Ye Qing appeared behind him and threw a mighty punch.

Seventh Young Master popped like a bubble and dissolved into a gust of yin qi, but Ye Qing did not relax his stance. In fact, he was wearing a severe expression on his face.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

As expected, a series of slow claps broke out from an alley. Another Seventh Young Master stepped out of the darkness.

“Not bad, not bad at all! Your body looks perfectly balanced and firm, so I bet your flesh must be very chewy. Your vigor is like a flood, so I bet your blood will taste just as sweet...”

He sounded like a food connoisseur making remarks about a delicious-looking dish before he sank his teeth on it. “Now, all that is left is a despairing soul.”

“If a soul is like a cup of wine, then despair is the passage of time. Without despair, a soul just isn’t as tasty as it could be.”

“Now... please struggle to your heart’s content, my delicious souls! Hahahahaha!”

Seventh Young Master slowly removed his mask, but instead of a feminine, exquisite countenance, it was a mouth; a mouth that occupied his whole face.

“A Soul Devourer?” Ye Qing uttered in a dark tone.

A pair of arms appeared out of the mouth as if they were trying to pry it open. Then, more and more arms appeared until the mouth was fully open, and countless ghosts and souls surged out of it. They were all rushing toward Ye Qing and Greenlake.

The world was even darker than normal as yin wind blew, and the ghosts howled.

“I’ll keep these ghosts at bay. You go find his true body!” Ye Qing yelled at Greenlake.

These ghosts were the unfortunate humans and ghosts Seventh Young Master had devoured. They were controlled by him, but they weren’t his true body. So long as his true body wasn’t destroyed, the tide of ghosts would never end.

That was why the only way to kill a Soul Devourer was to destroy their true body.

Ye Qing stepped toward the incoming tide and threw out a punch. Burning Wind roared, and the world turned into a furnace.

“Cloud Vaporization Style”

It was like a mountain was erected in front of Ye Qing. All the ghosts did by slamming into it was to bowl themselves over and dissolve into ash.

Right after that, a golden Buddha appeared behind Ye Qing and release its purifying light.

“Boundless Mara Buddha”

While the Buddha’s light stymied the tidal wave of ghosts, Ye Qing sucked in a deep breath and jumped right into it. He ripped through the ghosts like nothing and crushed all who would stand in his way. It wasn’t long before he was face to face with Seventh Young Master once more.

The duo stared at each other for a moment. Both men were stunned by how easy Ye Qing had defeated the tidal wave of ghosts.

“Hi! We meet again!”

Ye Qing grinned and threw a punch at Seventh Young Master’s face. He didn’t know if the one before him was the real thing, but there was also no reason to leave him alive.

“Heavenly Demon Captures The Soul”

“Hellfire Red Lotus Saber Art”

Realizing that the attack would most likely kill him, Seventh Young Master activated his secret art and escaped—or at least, he tried to. He was in the middle of channeling his energies when all of sudden, they vanished into nothing.

Seemingly sensing something, he looked up and saw a red umbrella floating above his head. He had no idea when or how it got there.

“I see,” Seventh Young Master murmured. He finally understood everything.

Unfortunately, it was too late.

The unholy flames of the Red Lotus hellfire consumed him.