

## The Quest 521

Chapter 521: Helpless (1)

Elder Song was certainly afraid.

Zhang Quan didn't understand, but he did.

This kid looked young and still had an air of immaturity on his face, but his Divine Thought was solid, his aura was profound, and he could manifest spells and Manifesting Formations...

This was clearly a legacy of Divine Thought from some Great Clan or Noble Clan.

Moreover, he had lain in ambush beforehand, using Formation for surprise attacks, spells that could both trap and kill opponents.

Obviously seasoned in countless battles, and rich in experience.

Not to mention that they had been ambushed, two had died, one was crippled, and the remainder, including himself and Zhang Quan, were heavily injured and greatly weakened.

Even if they had all been unscathed, with their full strength, facing this young Cultivator, it was more likely they would lose than win.

He didn't know until now what other cards this kid had up his sleeve.

Elder Song was anxious in his heart:

Run!

We must run!

Not running would be a complete "send-off."

As for Zhang Quan, he was a junior. It was only right for him to be the vanguard for his elders, even to the point of sacrificing himself. This was also a manifestation of his "filial piety."

Under Zhang Quan's incredulous gaze, Elder Song's figure hunched and fled in panic, completely lacking the dignity of a prior generation elder.

Just as Elder Song reached the edge of Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness, about to escape...

Mo Hua pointed with her finger, executing the Water Prison Technique.

The blue filaments, like flowing water, formed into a prison, binding Elder Song in place.

Elder Song's eyes widened.

Such a fast spell!

His turbid eyes shifted, his stature shrank, shedding skin and bones like a bamboo shoot peeling off its outer layers, slipping out of the binds of the Water Prison Technique.

Mo Hua showed a slight look of surprise.

Indeed, as a renowned elder of the Zhang Family, he had some skills.

Mo Hua pointed again, and the Water Prison Technique surged to life, entangling Elder Song once more.

Elder Song was trapped yet again and cursed inwardly:

"What the hell is this spell?"

"The spell doesn't focus on killing but on control."

"How could there be a Cultivator in this world who specializes in such disgusting spells?"

Elder Song shed his skin and bones again, becoming even shorter, and escaped once more.

Mo Hua's little hand still pointed unremarkably forward, once again forming the Water Prison Technique, trapping the now smaller Elder Song.

At the same time, beneath Elder Song's feet, golden Formation Patterns began to appear.

In a few moments, they solidified into a Golden Lock Formation, the golden light flared intensely, with chains upon chains of the Golden Lock binding Elder Song tight.

The path to freedom was right before his eyes.

Just a few more steps, and he would have been able to escape.

Then, he could report back to the ancestor, gather the Zhang Family's past elders, storm in together, slaughter this kid, and tear him apart!

But it was these few steps that Elder Song found he couldn't take.

It seemed no matter how hard he struggled, no matter how much force he exerted, he could not escape the control of this child's fingers.

Elder Song was furious to the extreme and stopped trying to flee. His body swelled, his face turned ghastly with fangs, and his white eyes reddened and filled with blood.

"Good! Kid, you've gone too far! Today, it's either you or me!"

Elder Song's aura surged.

Mo Hua also became serious seeing this.

This Elder Song must be someone of high standing in the Zhang Family, with old credentials. Mo Hua wanted to see what kind of moves Elder Song still had up his sleeve...

The battle was about to erupt...

After the time it would take to drink a cup of tea.

Mo Hua looked at Elder Song lying on the ground, his face bruised and swollen, his breath faint, and was speechless...

You didn't have much of a trick up your sleeve, did you?

From beginning to end, she had overwhelmed Elder Song with spells and Formation, hammering him between attacks, and further controlling him with the Water Prison Technique and Golden Lock Formation.

Elder Song took a few steps, got trapped, then Mo Hua targeted him for the attack.

After a few more steps, he was imprisoned again and continued to be bombarded by spells.

He didn't even make it close to Mo Hua before being beaten down to lie on the ground, gasping for breath...

And to think that he had earlier shown such a determined "fight to the death" attitude.

Mo Hua, in disbelief, couldn't help but say to Elder Song lying on the ground:

"I had too high an opinion of you; you're so weak..."

The Elder Song lying on the ground spewed out a mouthful of fresh blood.

He felt extremely frustrated.

It wasn't that he was weak, but that he simply had no opportunity to use his strength.

Controlled the whole way, unable to get close, without even a chance to strike, unable to use even a tenth of his strength—anyone in his place would be decimated.

Five "zombies" from the Zhang Family had come in.

Two had vanished into smoke, one was maimed, and now both Zhang Quan and Elder Song were lying on the ground...

Zhang Quan saw Elder Song, a previous generation elder of the Zhang Family, being tied up and beaten without the power to resist, and his face turned utterly pale.

Only then did he truly grasp the disparity between himself and Mo Hua.

On the outside, Mo Hua was merely cunning and difficult.

But inside the Sea of Consciousness, Mo Hua was downright terrifying!

How had their Zhang Family antagonized this "little ancestor"?

After being bombarded by Earth Fire Formation and Fireball Technique, Elder Song was terribly battered and also felt his Taoist Foundation's energy slipping away, both desperately and angrily he said:

"Taoist Friend, what exactly do you intend to do?"

Mo Hua hummed with a slight smile, "What you intend to do, I intend to do."

Elder Song blanched, then his face changed drastically:

This little devil, does it intend to devour him?!

Elder Song's mind raced, he hastily said:

"Taoist Friend, you cultivate a Righteous Dao Technique, follow the genuine path. We, on the other hand, are evildoers, ghostly thoughts. Listen to this old man's advice, if you 'consume' us, it will taint your Taoist Heart, it will ruin your Taoist Foundation, it could greatly disturb your nature—you mustn't eat us!"

"No, I won't..." Mo Hua laughed.

In that smile, there was innocence laced with a hint of malevolence.

No? Why not?

Zhang Quan thought harder, and a chill ran through him. He exclaimed in horror:

"The missing ancestors of the Zhang Family, were they all...'consumed' by you?!"

Chapter 522: Involuntary (2)

The remnants of the Zhang Family ancestors' souls dwelt within the Ancestral Master Picture, and they would rarely venture out unless they were seeking sustenance.

The Ancestral Master Picture was last in my hands, completely intact.

After it was stolen by Mo Hua and later retrieved, several of the Zhang Family ancestors had already disappeared...

They must have sought sustenance in this kid's Sea of Consciousness and then been "eaten" by him...

Just like what they're doing now...

Zhang Quan's face turned deathly pale.

Elder Song also showed a look of horror.

After all this trouble, this kid isn't the feast.

They are!!

Mo Hua was momentarily startled, then smiled, revealing gleaming white teeth, "You've guessed it..."

Zhang Quan and Elder Song shuddered. Enjoy exclusive chapters from empire

Elder Song said harshly, "Offending our Zhang Family won't do you any good!"

Yet there was a hint of bluster in his tone.

Zhang Quan also spat out hatefully, "The ancestors won't let you off!"

Mo Hua remained unfazed.

Moreover, he even licked his lips, his gaze somewhat intriguing.

Zhang Quan was taken aback, followed by a horrified look in his eyes.

No... It can't be...

This kid... he wouldn't even think of "eating" the Zhang Family's ancestor, would he?!

Elder Song realized it too.

In an instant, a great fear rose in their hearts.

That was their Zhang Family's Ancestral Master!

Somebody actually had the audacity, the sheer gall, to contemplate their Ancestral Master.

What frightened them even more was that.

This young Cultivator, with profound Divine Sense, was unfathomable.

And with deep strategies, his methods were terrifying.

Facing the calculated without being aware, it was truly possible to endanger their Zhang Family's Ancestral Master!

Seeing the expressions on their faces, Mo Hua sighed:

"You know too much..."

Then, under the terrified gazes of Zhang Quan and Elder Song, he flicked his finger, and a fireball burst into existence, Spiritual Power surging, blasting the two of them until only their specters remained, on the brink of dissolution...

The Sea of Consciousness cleared up significantly in an instant.

Mo Hua exhaled in relief, sat down cross-legged, and began to ponder a question:

"Should I 'eat' them or not?"

Having them, his Divine Sense would strengthen, but it likely wouldn't reach Thirteen Stripes.

From twelve to thirteen, a bottleneck exists in Divine Sense, not so easy to break through.

Besides, after "eating" them, it would take time to assimilate.

He didn't have this time now.

In the Ancestral Master Picture, there were still many Zhang Family ancestors, and if they broke in while he was assimilating, it would be bad news.

He was alone, while the entire lineage of the Zhang Family was in that picture.

It meant he was facing the collective might of the Zhang Family's ancestral Zombies.

Mo Hua shook his head.

One or two, or even three or four, he was not afraid, but once the numbers increased, it would become harder to manage, with no room for error.

If he showed a weakness and got injured, and was then besieged, the trouble would be immense.

This was happening in the Corpse Mine, not in his master and fellow disciples' cave residence, without his master's watchful eye, nor the help of junior brothers and sisters, having no one to back him up in case of danger.

So he needed to be cautious, ever more cautious.

Especially since, on the other side, there was the old Ancestral Master.

Mo Hua didn't know what trump cards this ancestor Zhang Quan held, nor had he ever fought him.

But it goes without saying, having lived so long and eaten so many Cultivators, this Ancestral Master's Divine Thought was surely strong, his scheming undoubtedly profound, his methods numerous.

Going on like this, not only was he outnumbered, but he was also beset by formidable opponents.

Adding difficulty upon difficulty.

And the danger was substantial...

"What should I do?"

Mo Hua rested his chin on his hand, pondering for a moment, then his eyes suddenly brightened.

Zombies!

Corpse control!

The Zhang Family ancestors across generations were Zombies.

And since they were Zombies, they could be controlled!

In his possession, he had a highly advanced, top-secret corpse control technique—the Soul Pivot Ultimate Formation!

Mo Hua thought to himself:

"Using the Soul Pivot Ultimate Formation, take control of the Zhang Family's Zombie Elders and Zombie Disciples, making them attack the Zhang Family's Ancestral Zombie..."

"I'll sit back and watch the drama, pick up the pieces, and deliver the final blow..."

"It poses little risk and saves effort."

"In this scenario, the outnumbered one would be the Zhang Family's ancestor, the one surrounded by formidable opponents, still him..."

The tables turned, and with that, the dynamics of offense and defense changed!

Mo Hua's eyes gleamed with light, and he nodded in approval.

He then began his preparations.

First, he needed to test whether the Spirit Pivot truly worked within the Sea of Consciousness.

Mo Hua glanced around, seeing three figures.

Elder Song, Elder Si, and Zhang Quan.

They were all Thought Bodies, zombie-like, trapped by Mo Hua's Formation and Spell, their Divine Thought grievously injured, their forms dim, collapsed and unable to arise.

Mo Hua pondered for a moment, picked Zhang Quan and Elder Song, and with his Divine Thought, manifested Formation Patterns, drawing a Spiritual Pivot Formation on the core meridian of each.

The Spiritual Pivot Formation, once completed, flashed a bright blue and submerged into their bodies.

After that, the Formation Patterns turned into filament-like strands, like blood vessels, tendrils, or threads, wandering, stitching, and merging within them, gaining full control.

Mo Hua suddenly realized.

So this is how the Spiritual Pivot Formation takes effect...

He had only used the Spiritual Pivot Formation on a wooden puppet, Little Tiger.

Being an inanimate object with a simple structure, the puppet was simpler to control.

He had also used it on Zombies, one being a lesser Zombie, the other the Corpse King, but neither was complete.

On the lesser Zombie, he had merely tampered with the Sequential Formation Patterns, not fully crafting the Spirit Pivot Formation anew.

On the Corpse King, he had merely overlaid it, covering up Lu Chengyun's Evil Spiritual Pivot Formation, stealing his control, without really constructing it from scratch.

Now, within the Sea of Consciousness, manifesting Formation Patterns with Divine Thought, taking control of an Iron Corpse's evil thoughts, thread by thread, his Divine Thought was vividly displayed.

Only now could Mo Hua thoroughly observe the effects and construction of the Spiritual Pivot Formation and deeply understand the formation principles of the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

#### Chapter 523: Involuntary (3)

Mo Hua finally understood that his previous understanding of the Spiritual Pivot Formation had been somewhat crude and superficial.

Only by applying his knowledge and materializing the Formation Patterns to control the Iron Corpse could he delve deeper and gain a more thorough understanding.

This was a great opportunity to deepen his comprehension of the Spiritual Pivot Formation!

Mo Hua's spirits were greatly lifted, and he focused his attention thereafter, materializing Formation Patterns, observing the movement of Spiritual Threads, contemplating the structure of Spiritual Power, and training in the methods to control the pivot points of Spiritual Power...

His mastery and understanding of the Spiritual Pivot Formation deepened bit by bit...

Meanwhile, the heart vessels of the two zombies, Zhang Quan and Elder Song, were also marked by Mo Hua with the Spiritual Pivot Formation. Spiritual Threads spread throughout their limbs, taking complete control of them.

With a thought from Mo Hua's Divine Sense, he controlled the two to stand up.

As per Mo Hua's intent, the two stood up straight.

However, both kept their eyes closed, bereft of consciousness, like true puppets.

Mo Hua controlled Zhang Quan to raise his hand and slap Elder Song. Then he made Elder Song slap Zhang Quan in return.

He had them repeatedly slap each other.

Neither of them resisted.

Mo Hua then made them spar with each other.

They did as commanded.

Their movements were clumsy and lacked power because they were both seriously injured and under Mo Hua's control.

Mo Hua was somewhat disappointed.

Too weak...

This level posed no threat to the ancient ancestor of the Zhang Family.

"Should I wake them up?"

Mo Hua decided to give it a try.

He refined the Zhang Family's two disciples and the seriously injured Elder Si with the Melting Fire Formation, then fed them to Zhang Quan and Elder Song.

Sure enough, their injuries healed, and their aura slowly increased in strength.

A moment later, both Zhang Quan and Elder Song opened their eyes.

They unexpectedly found that their injuries had healed, and they had recovered seventy to eighty percent of their strength.

Then, to their surprise, they discovered that their "bodies" were no longer their own.

No matter what they wanted to do, their bodies wouldn't move an inch.

On the side, Mo Hua looked at them with a smiling gaze.

Coldness crept into their hearts.

What mischief is this little devil concocting now?

"You are now 'my people,' and you must follow my orders!" Mo Hua instructed.

Zhang Quan felt this was absurd inside.

What is this brat saying?

How could I possibly be your "person," how could I obey your orders?

I'd rather kill you and end this quickly!

Mo Hua commanded, "Zhang Quan, slap Elder Song."

Zhang Quan sneered inwardly, "You expect me to slap him just because you say so? How could I possibly commit such an act of disrespect..."

Before he could finish his thought, he found his hand slapping across Elder Song's face...

Zhang Quan was shocked. [Read new chapters at empire](#)

Elder Song was even more shocked.

Zhang Quan, a junior, actually followed this little devil's command and slapped his elder?

Mo Hua was very pleased and then said to Elder Song:

"Now slap him back."

And Elder Song indeed slapped Zhang Quan.

By then, both Zhang Quan and Elder Song realized something was amiss.

Zhang Quan angrily said, "You brat, what did you do to us?"

Elder Song also exclaimed in fright and fury, "What exactly do you want to do?"

Mo Hua answered speechlessly, "How could I possibly tell you? Do you think I'm stupid?"

He then muttered to himself, "I can't let them speak, or they'll expose my plan..."

Can I make them shut up?

With a thought from Mo Hua, a blue light shone faintly at the heart vessel of the two, revealing Formation Patterns which sprouted Spiritual Threads that climbed upwards and, like threads and needles, sewed the mouths of Zhang Quan and Elder Song shut.

Zhang Quan and Elder Song's eyes widened in horror, but they could not utter a sound.

Mo Hua narrowed his eyes and smiled.

That was correct.

Zombies should look the part, no need for chatter!

Afterward, he concealed himself, sat down cross-legged, and prepared to wait for other zombies from the Zhang Family to come, so that he could test the control effects of the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

After a while, another zombie Elder indeed came with two zombie disciples into Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness.

As soon as the zombie Elder entered the Sea of Consciousness, without even having time to marvel at the depth and purity of Mo Hua's Divine Sense, he noticed Zhang Quan and Elder Song standing stiffly like wooden stakes.

Their appearance was very strange.

Their clothes were ragged, scorched, as if they had gone through a fierce battle.

Yet their aura was steady and even quite balanced and harmonious, not at all reflective of having fought...

"Elder Song?"

That zombie Elder asked with a frown.

Elder Song remained motionless, his eyes wide open but with no response at all.

Muttering to himself, the zombie Elder called out again, "Elder Song?"

"What has happened?"

"Where is Elder Si? And those two disciples?"

"How come you look like this?"

After asking for a long time with no response from Elder Song, the zombie Elder frowned more deeply.

Just then, Elder Song suddenly lashed out. His fingers, sharp as talons, were swift as the wind as he targeted the zombie Elder's heart vessel.

The zombie Elder was startled and quickly dodged, but a gash was still torn across his chest, spilling black blood.

Enraged, the zombie Elder bellowed, "Elder Song, what do you mean by this?"

Elder Song's attacks became more frenzied, each move lethal, as if he had no regard for his own life.

While the zombie Elder struggled to cope, he gritted his teeth and said:

"Zhang Song, what are you trying to do?"

"Are you aiming to betray us?"

"To kill your own Elder?"

"How will you explain this to the ancient ancestor?"

"Are you planning a rebellion?!"

Elder Song's expressionless face masked inner turmoil:

I don't want to be involved in fratricide either, I'm not in control of myself...

Don't blame me...

Blame that vicious, hateful, despicable, devious, shameless little devil!

It's him, preventing me from controlling myself!

Chapter 524: (1)

Mo Hua hid on the side, manipulating Elder Song and engaging in combat with this newly-arrived Elder of the Zombies.

Elder Song should have been stronger, but controlled by the Spiritual Pivot Formation cast by Mo Hua, he could not act as he wished and seemed only able to exert seventy to eighty percent of his strength, which is why after dozens of exchanges he gradually began to be overpowered.

If one wasn't enough, then use two.

Mo Hua had no honor in combat, as he took control of Zhang Quan as well, the two launching a pincer attack.

With this, the newly-arrived Elder of the Zombies found himself in a difficult position.

Mo Hua then observed its techniques.

The Elders of Zombies from the Zhang Family passed down their methods through generations, all knowing only how to transform using Divine Thought into a Corpse, engaging in close combat.

If they couldn't win that way, they would transform again with Divine Thought into a Corpse, their stature swelling, their skin turning to bronze and bone to iron, their faces ghoulish with lashing fangs.

During such times, their speed increased, their strength amplified, and their fangs even more lethal.

But this was hardly interesting.

The first time Mo Hua saw it, he found it novel, but after watching it repeatedly, it became tedious.

Apart from Elder Song, who knew how to shrink his skin and bones to escape, the other zombies were all quite similar.

Mo Hua wondered if it was because they were uneducated and incompetent, or if their ancestors had been secretive and hadn't taught them other skills.

This Elder of the Zombies had no new tricks either.

Mo Hua felt somewhat disappointed.

With limited time, he wasted no more, exerting full control over Zhang Quan and Elder Song, the two launching a joint assault that caused the Elder of the Zombies to retreat in defeat.

The Elder of the Zombies became enraged, fighting with all his might, yet unable to prevail.

Even after transforming into a stronger form, he still couldn't win.

Furthermore, his injuries worsened bit by bit; continuing like this, his death was certain.

The Elder of the Zombies' gaze flash darkly as he swallowed a mouthful of blood, his aura surging as he punched, driving Zhang Quan back, then repelled Elder Song, attempting to escape.

But Mo Hua would not let him get away.

With a light tap of Mo Hua's finger, water prison swiftly formed.

The Elder of the Zombies, just as he thought to flee, was instantaneously shackled by spiritual chains, bound where he stood.

The Elder of the Zombies was shocked.

From a corner, Mo Hua's figure also gradually became visible.

Though young, his Divine Thought was focused, his aura robust, and his depths unfathomable.

The Elder of the Zombies glared with wide eyes, filled with terror as he asked:

"Who are you?"

Mo Hua, feeling it beneath him to waste words with such an ordinary elder, directly greeted him with a Fireball Technique.

A Fireball Technique whistled out, smashing onto his face.

The Elder of the Zombies fell at the sound.

Mo Hua, still not reassured, cast several more Fireball Techniques, booming loud, blasting the Elder of the Zombies into a state of near-collapse, lying on the ground, unable to move.

Zhang Quan and Elder Song, looking on, had their eyelids twitching.

Before they could pity each other, an even more startling scene took place.

In front of Zhang Quan and the other man, Mo Hua began to deploy the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

With a discard of concentration, he pointed his finger at the heart meridian of the zombie Elder, whose consciousness was nearing collapse, his body immobilized.

Using the heart meridian as the Formation eye, pale blue Formation Patterns unfolded, blossoming like a rare and beautiful orchid on the chest of the Elder of the Zombies, then spreading outward, rooting and proliferating throughout the flesh, layer upon layer, until there was a perfect integration...

This Elder at the Iron Corpse Realm had thus become a living puppet.

Zhang Quan and Elder Song watched with eyes wide with fright.

What kind of Formation was this?

Could this little devil be controlling the bodies through such a Formation?

Had they too been implanted with such a Formation?

What exactly was this Formation?

This Formation was sophisticated, its technique so close to the Way, and that Way bordered on the sinister.

It was beyond their comprehension, utterly bizarre.

Zhang Quan was suddenly struck by a thought.

This Formation, it somewhat resembled the Corpse Control Formation that Lu Chengyun treasured as though it was a priceless treasure...

Except it wasn't as malevolent, and it appeared more complex, more mystical, and more profound.

But wasn't that Formation said to be extremely difficult by Lu Chengyun? Didn't he say it had a high threshold? Wasn't the Formation principle incredibly intricate?

Zhang Quan still remembered Lu Chengyun's words:

"...Without intense and solitary dedication, decades of study, no understanding of Evil Formation, no merging the sinister intention into consciousness, no using bone as the brush, no using blood as ink, no using corpses as a medium, how could he possibly learn it?"

So when did this youngster learn it?

Zhang Quan wanted to ask, but he couldn't open his mouth at all.

He was already a Divine Thought puppet manipulated by others, without the autonomy of his own body...

After Mo Hua had drawn the Spiritual Pivot Formation on the Elder of the Zombies, he refined the two zombie disciples he had just killed into blue smoke, and then fed it to the Elder to restore some of his strength.

Moments later, the once vague form of the Elder of the Zombies gradually stabilized and he slowly opened his eyes.

His gaze was lost, confused.

What lingered in his memory was the fierce Fireball Technique from Mo Hua.

It soon realized that its body was no longer under its control.

It was manipulated by Mo Hua, standing together with Zhang Quan and Elder Song. Its mouth was also sewn shut with threads of spiritual power, so it could not speak but only exchange a simple glance with Elder Song.

The emotions conveyed in that glance were extremely complex.

It had finally understood Elder Song's dilemma.

Their fate was no longer in their own hands.

Instead, it lay in the hands of the cute-looking yet terrifying young monk beside them...

With three Iron Corpses in hand, Mo Hua continued to lie in wait.

He remembered Elder Song saying that the Zhang Family's ancestral zombie was sustained by the divine thoughts and bloodlines of its descendants and would not consume them directly.

Although Mo Hua was unclear about the specifics of this sustenance, logically, the Zhang Family's ancestor should not enter his Sea of Consciousness.

Unless he captured all the Zhang Family elders in one swoop...

Before long, two more Iron Corpse Elders from the Zhang Family entered Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness.

Mo Hua followed suit.

This time it was three against two, a chaotic melee.

Once they had exhausted their tricks and the fight was nearly over, Mo Hua would make his move. Using the Fireball Technique, Water Prison Technique, and Earth Fire Formation concurrently, he would quickly resolve the two elders.

Then he would repeat the old trick.

Laying out the Spiritual Pivot Formation, he took control over the Zhang Family elders.

As a result, the Zhang Family lost two more elders, while Mo Hua's hands were graced with two more Iron Corpses.

Mo Hua fished as if he were angling.

One by one.

Each time he caught one, his basket held one more fish, and the river one less.

In the Ancestral Master Picture of the Zhang Family, all elders at the Iron Corpse Realm were Mo Hua's fish...

...

Meanwhile, as Mo Hua "fished," there was also an undercurrent flowing through South Yue City.

All kinds of cultivating forces were converging in the city.

The streets were filled with many new faces.

Unaware Qi Refinement cultivators still toiled for their daily bread, exhausting themselves for mere Spirit Stones.

Those cultivators in the thick of things, however, bore a grave expression.

A storm was brewing, and the tension was palpable.

Yet, they only sensed the wind, the exact nature of the impending storm unknown to them.

Situ Family.

They gathered in a room that was modestly decorated, refined yet concealed. Find exclusive stories on empire

Powers from various factions came together.

These included the Taoist Soldiers' leaders mobilized by the Taoist Court, the Foundation Establishment Elders from the nearby Tao cultivating powers under the Court's command, and the clans and Sects associated with Heaven Shu Pavilion that followed Mr. Zhuang, including a gaunt old man, a youth in white, and a middle-aged cultivator.

...

These clan forces arrived in secret, and the Taoist Soldiers were stationed in an abandoned mine outside the city to stay unseen, to deceive the Lu Family.

At the same time, they also circumvented South Yue City's Taoist Court.

The only Supervisor from South Yue City's Taoist Court present was Situ Fang.

But she was there due to her status as a disciple of the Situ Family and her knowledge of many secrets, which allowed her to partake in this meeting.

The leader of this gathering was a Taoist Soldiers' leader with the surname Yang, at the Qi Foundation Middle Stage, a man with a square face, stern brows and eyes, and a steady demeanor.

Leader Yang spoke directly,

"I am Yang Jishan, serving as a Second Grade leader of the Taoist Soldiers," he said.

"By the Taoist Court's decree, our mission is to suppress the Corpse Mine, arrest Lu Chengyun, seal the Corpse King, and destroy the mass of corpses. We must prevent a Corpse Tide, avoid a catastrophe of zombies, and not let South Yue City's inhabitants suffer a dire fate..."

Leader Yang's gaze was severe as he looked around and said sternly,

"In South Yue City, the Lu Family holds great influence, and there are many zombies in the Corpse Mine."

"Therefore, our actions must be cautious, or we'll surely invite disaster!"

"I ask all of you to follow commands. Should there be any lapses leading to misfortune, and the Taoist Court lays blame, none of us can bear the responsibility."

After Leader Yang finished speaking and saw no dissatisfaction, he nodded and continued,

"For this operation, we will divide into two groups:"

"One group will suppress the Lu Family;"

"Seal the Lu Estate, capture the Foundation Building Cultivators of the Lu Family, restrain their cultivation with Second Grade Spiritual Locks; confine and watch over common Qi Refinement disciples until the dust settles on the Corpse Mine affair, at which point their fate will be determined."

"Innocents must not be killed indiscriminately."

"However, should any descendant of the Lu Family resist, show no mercy!"

"The other group, the cultivators will assemble and, in conjunction with the Taoist Soldiers outside the city, launch a surprise attack on the Corpse Mine."

"Move covertly, strive for a swift resolution, suppress the Corpse Mine, capture Lu Chengyun, and nip the zombie menace in the bud..."

"Next are the specific tactical arrangements..."

## Chapter 525: Prep for War (1)

Leader Yang hung up several maps.

Among these maps were terrain diagrams of the mines, the entrance to the Lu Family Corpse Mine, structural drawings of the stone palaces within the mine, as well as simple tunnel route maps.

Many small characters were marked on the maps.

The small characters explained matters that needed attention, including the Iron Corpses on guard, the locations of mechanisms, Corpse Poison traps, secret passages, secret rooms, and hidden doors, and so on.

They even included Formation Diagrams:

Defensive Formation, Early Warning Formation, Expose Shadow Formation, Trap Formation, Killing Formation, and Confinement Formation... and the like, all marked very clearly.

The detailed nature of these maps surprised everyone.

Leader Yang arranged tactics in accordance with the maps.

First was the division of teams, based on Cultivation Techniques and expertise in Taoist Skills, the Foundation Building Cultivators were divided into teams.

Each team of Cultivators had different offensive and defensive capabilities, complementing each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Those skilled in combat, sharp in Taoist Skills, would take the lead in attack; those physically strong and robust in Blood Qi, would take the lead in defense.

There were also some Cultivators with unusual Taoist Skills that produced rare effects, serving as surprise troops to catch the enemy unawares.

After dividing the teams, Leader Yang continued:

"The Taoist Court has allocated a batch of Pills. I will distribute them later..."

"These Pills include Poison Avoidance Pills, Spirit Revitalizing Pills, Blood Replenishing Pills, Serum Pills, and so forth..."

"The rest are commonly used Pills. You may take them as needed without me saying more."

"But these Serum Pills are different; they are specifically to counteract Corpse Poison, hard to come by, and must be used with caution. However, in a critical moment, make sure not to hesitate."

"Once injured, bleeding, tainted by Corpse Poison, especially Second Grade Iron Corpse Poison, it must be taken immediately, else once the Corpse Poison reaches the heart, and live ones transform into Zombies, I can only bring myself to strike you down..."

The expressions of the Cultivators present all grew serious.

Leader Yang's expression turned solemn as he continued:

"Of course, if I am unfortunate enough to transform into a Zombie, becoming the Corpse King's living puppet, you must not hesitate to slay me, to burn my corpse, leaving no remains behind!"

"My members of the Yang Family might die in battle, but we must not become Zombies after death, aiding the tyrant..."

Leader Yang finished speaking and then asked:

"Among us, is there any gentleman who knows Formations?"

The crowd looked at each other, and then a few Cultivators stood up, their hair either graying or white, all of them quite aged.

Leader Yang nodded.

A young man dressed in white hesitated for a moment before standing up as well.

The middle-aged Cultivator beside him tried to pull him back but didn't catch him, muttering discontentedly:

"What's the point of pushing into the limelight unnecessarily..."

A gaunt old man beside them sighed and shook his head.

Yet the young man in white remained resolute.

Leader Yang saw his youth and was slightly surprised as he asked:

"This young friend... are you a Formation Master?"

The young man in white nodded: "I am a Second Rank Formation Master."

A Second Rank Formation Master!

As soon as these words were spoken, the whole room was shocked.

"A Second Rank Formation Master, so young?"

"Impossible, right..."

"Who would lie at a time like this?"

"What's his background?"

"Must be from a Noble Family Descendant..."

"How did a member of a Noble Family end up here?"

"Who knows..."

"He looks only about twenty or thirty years old. Such talent is truly terrifying..."

"I'm over a hundred and eighty and only a First Rank Formation Master, sigh, truly shameful..."

...

The crowd whispered among themselves, abuzz with speculation.

Leader Yang was also quite shocked, then seriously asked:

"What is the gentleman's esteemed surname?"

The young man in white saluted with his hands: "Leader Yang is too courteous, just call me Young Master Yun."

"Yun... the Young Master of the Yun Family?"

Leader Yang was inwardly moved and nodded:

"Good, in this operation, I hope Young Master Yun will lend us a strong hand."

The Young Master Yun in white nodded, "To rid the world of Demons and protect the Taoist way is my unshirkable duty."

The youthful spirit of the young man gave the middle-aged Cultivator beside him a headache.

However, Leader Yang looked on with admiration and then commanded the Deputy Commander beside him:

"After the battle begins, you will follow Young Master Yun and protect him closely, ensuring his safety without fail."

"Yes!"

The Deputy Commander acknowledged the order.

Leader Yang displayed the mine's formation charts, pointing out several Formations that were designed as gate locks at checkpoints.

Leader Yang asked:

"Young Master Yun, please look these over, how should these Formations be broken?"

Young Master Yun shook his head: "I haven't learned how to break them yet, I can only teach you how to destroy them..."

Leader Yang was taken aback.

To break the Formations, isn't there any difference between "breaking" and "solving"?

Usually, when they, the Taoist Soldiers, speak of breaking and solving Formations, they mean the same thing...

Yet he didn't feel it was appropriate to ask in detail, to avoid seeming unprofessional, so he vaguely replied:

"Either is fine."

Young Master Yun examined the Formation Diagram, pondered for a moment, and then began to indicate the weaknesses of the Formations, telling them where the Formation eye was, how the Formation Pivot operated, where the critical Formation Patterns were, and which was the weakest Formation media...

As long as they forcefully destroyed these points with Spiritual Power or physical force, the Formation could be broken.

Leader Yang was delighted, noting everything down and then instructed a few Taoist Soldier leaders:

"Remember what Young Master Yun said; at that time, make sure there is no deviation, and all these Formations must be broken!"

"Yes, Leader!"

Leader Yang then discussed with everyone, looking for omissions and drawing from collective wisdom, refining the plan to suppress the Corpse Mine bit by bit...

Once the discussion was over, someone suddenly asked:

"Leader, this intelligence is so detailed. Where did it come from?"

Upon hearing this, everyone was startled and turned their gaze toward Leader Yang.

Leader Yang couldn't help but look toward Situ Fang.

Situ Fang then rose to speak: "It was two children of Noble Families who told me."

"Noble Family children?"

"Which Noble Family?"

"How did they come by this information? Can we trust it?"

...

Situ Fang frowned and declared in a loud voice: "Our Situ Family can vouch for it."

Someone sneered, "What use is the guarantee of the Situ Family?"

"It's not that we don't trust you, but this matter is of great importance and must be handled with extreme caution..."

Situ Fang's brows furrowed tightly.

After pondering for a moment, Leader Yang said, "How about this, please invite these two disciples over, and we can confirm their identities..."

"This..." Situ Fang hesitated.

Leader Yang asked, "Is there any inconvenience?"

"I can only ask for them, but whether they come or not, I can't guarantee..." Situ Fang said.

"No matter," Leader Yang said, "Situ Supervisor can go and invite them."

"Alright."

Situ Fang nodded, clasped his hands in salute, and then took his leave.

Leader Yang stared at the map, his brow furrowed in deep thought.

It's indeed too comprehensive...

Just like the intelligence leaked by an "insider" within the Corpse Mine...

No, even an "insider" would not necessarily know the details this intimately.

The topographical map and the layout of the Stone Palace are still okay, but this Formation Diagram, it's an absolute secret, not something an ordinary cultivator could get their hands on.

I reckon that in the entire Corpse Mine, only Lu Chengyun would have it...

Is this a conspiracy by Lu Chengyun, luring us into a trap?

Or is it that the cultivator who gathered the intelligence is familiar with the inner formations and is a "trusted aide" of Lu Chengyun?

Leader Yang's brows furrowed in confusion, he turned his head and saw Young Master Yun also staring intently at the Formation Diagram, and couldn't help but ask:

"Young Master Yun, what do you think?"

Young Master Yun was slightly startled, thought seriously for a moment, and then said:

"I'm not clear about other things, but at least this Formation Diagram, with its intricate principles and logical consistency, and matching with the topographical layout, it can't be fake."

Leader Yang nodded, feeling slightly relieved in his heart.

As long as the Formation Diagram is real, that's good.

The Formation Diagram is crucial.

Even if Lu Chengyun intends to lure us into a trap, he wouldn't be so irrational as to expose such confidential information...

As long as the Formation Diagram is accurate, even if there are some inaccuracies in other pieces of intelligence, they can adapt accordingly, and there shouldn't be major problems.

Leader Yang soon became curious again.

Who exactly are the two descendants of Noble Clans that Situ Fang mentioned?

And what is the identity of the cultivator who obtained the intelligence?

An hour later, Situ Fang led two cultivators in.

It was Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi.

As soon as the two entered the hall, everyone present felt as if a light had shone before their eyes.

Bai Zisheng had sword-like eyebrows and starry eyes, an imposing demeanor, and though only in the Qi-refining Realm, his spiritual power was profound, clearly indicating a deeply solid foundation.

Bai Zixi was disguised, with merely a beautiful and delicate appearance, but her aura was crisp and clear, and her eyes were like shining ripples, dazzling like glittering glass, unforgettable to anyone who saw them.

The spiritual power around her was surging, and compared to Bai Zisheng, she was certainly not inferior.

At a glance, one would know they were from prominent families, with extraordinary and sublime Spiritual Roots, but at the same time, their aura was somewhat obscure, making it difficult for others to discern their true abilities.

Some cultivators secretly tried to probe with their Divine Sense.

But as soon as their Divine Sense extended, they felt it being absorbed by something and dragged into an abyss, disappearing without a trace.

The cultivator who attempted to spy turned pale, a chill settling in their hearts.

These two individuals' identities were clearly not to be trifled with by them.

Leader Yang was taken aback for a long while before he finally opened his mouth to ask:

"May I know where the two young friends come from?"

Bai Zisheng said, "Our surname is Bai."

Surname Bai?

Leader Yang's heart gave a shiver, which Bai?

In the Cultivation World of the Nine States, there are several significant clans with the surname Bai...

But looking at their eminent identities, he did not delve further and turned to the main topic:

"I wonder where did you get the news about this Corpse Mine from?"

Bai Zisheng said, "It was gathered by my junior brother."

"Junior brother?"

"Yes," Bai Zisheng said, "My junior brother is an expert in formations, and was used by Lu Chengyun, who captured and trapped him in the Corpse Mine."

"Then this intelligence..."

Bai Zisheng nodded and said, "It's all information he gathered from inside."

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Leader Yang frowned.

An expert in formations? How expert could he be?

This intelligence included a Formation Diagram, could that really be gathered as well...

Leader Yang was half-convinced.

He looked again at Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi, and his hesitations gradually eased as he thought to himself:

"If this junior brother is indeed the disciple of these two young Bai Family cultivators, he must have some exceptional abilities, and it wouldn't be surprising for him to accomplish things that ordinary people couldn't..."

Meanwhile, the silent Bai Zixi secretly tugged at Bai Zisheng's sleeve.

Only then did Bai Zisheng, somewhat reluctantly, say:

"I have one more thing... I would like to ask everyone here, to help rescue my junior brother..."

Bai Zisheng was usually not one to ask for help; if not for Mo Hua, he wouldn't have wanted to ask these people for assistance.

But there were too many zombies in the Corpse Mine, and it wasn't easy for him to break in forcefully, and Mo Hua hadn't returned for a long time...

Leader Yang said, "Of course."

This junior disciple was the younger brother of these two Bai Family members, and also hijacked by Lu Chengyun for his use; he was clearly not an ordinary person in terms of both identity and strength.

Furthermore, he had passed on such critical intelligence, helping them immensely, so they were definitely going to rescue him regardless.

Leader Yang then asked:

"What does this young junior brother of yours look like? What are his features, and what is his name?"

Bai Zisheng replied, "He's thirteen years old, knowledgeable in formations, with a countenance like a painting, his name is Mo Hua."

Thirteen years old?

So young?

All those present were somewhat astonished.

Leader Yang was also taken aback.

Mo Hua?

This name, why does it sound so familiar, as if I've heard it somewhere...

It seemed like someone had mentioned it to him before?

Leader Yang couldn't recall at the moment, so he temporarily set it aside and solemnly said:

"Everyone, when we attack the Corpse Mine, if we encounter this young cultivator named 'Mo Hua', we must assist him and ensure his rescue!"

All the cultivators present nodded their heads.

They all remembered the name "Mo Hua."

However, they had no idea what this name really signified...

Chapter 526: Zhang Family Ancestral Master (1)

All plans being in place, Yang Jishan said in a deep voice,

"Troops will be mobilized tomorrow; cultivators will be gathered. The day after at 6 A.M., we begin the suppression of the Lu Family and the eradication of the Corpse Mine!"

Everyone's expressions were serious.

The day the battle starts is when the torrential rain abruptly arrives.

Inside South Yue City, the wind and rain are unsteady.

What they are about to face is the deeply-rooted Lu Family and the vastness of the Corpse Mountain and Corpse Sea...

As well as that body, with the potential of a Taoist Demon—the Corpse King!

The atmosphere in the room suddenly turned somber...

...

In the Corpse Mine, however, Lu Chengyun suddenly furrowed his brows.

His heart felt a bit uneasy at that moment.

It seemed as if something extremely dangerous had occurred, but he was completely unaware.

What could possibly be so dangerous?

Lu Chengyun calmed his mind and began to ponder slowly.

Zhang Quan was already dead, and with him, the control over the Corpse King had vanished.

In this world, the only person left who could dominate the Corpse King was himself...

He had also used Mo Hua as a sacrificial offering to feed the Contemplation Map.

Once his Divine Sense was consumed, leaving only an empty shell behind, he would refine him into a small zombie to stay by his side and serve him.

After all, he was quite fond of the clever and adorable child.

The only problem was his proficiency in Formations, knowing too much.

The matter of the Corpse Mine was of utmost importance, related to the fate of the Lu Family and his own future path to the Great Dao. He had no choice but to eliminate all potential risks and nip them in the bud.

A child too intelligent could not be left alive.

A Zhang Quan, a Mo Hua.

Both were discarded by him, once they had served their purpose across the river, like breaking up the bridge after crossing it, killing the donkey after grinding the wheat—dealt with.

Besides these two, who else could threaten him? Who else could make him feel so uneasy?

Lu Chengyun's fingers tapped the tabletop woodenly, his expression cold.

A moment later, he opened some incoming reports.

These reports, gathered by the Lu Family cultivators, were about recent occurrences in South Yue City and the Corpse Mine.

Lu Chengyun relied on these reports to observe the movements within South Yue City.

"The number of passing cultivators has increased..."

"Their faces unfamiliar, unable to discern their aura..."

"The South Yue Sect grew distant from our Lu Family, declined the delivery of Spirit Stones..."

"The Taoist Court, on the other hand, did not err in collecting Spirit Stones, and the Brothel is still frequented."

"The Court Leader indulges himself in pleasures within the brothel and has once again humiliated a female cultivator to death..."

...

Lu Chengyun's gaze slightly sharpened as he contemplated in silence.

"Nothing seems unusual..."

"Am I being overanxious?"

"More passing cultivators are a good thing. Within hundreds of miles, only our Lu Family's Jinhua Street is most luxurious, indulging in pleasure to the extreme. As they toy with the bodies of female cultivators, they are actually providing my Lu Family with Spirit Stones..."

"There's nothing unusual on the Taoist Court's end."

"If there was really something afoot, the local Taoist Court couldn't possibly be in the dark."

"Otherwise, they would have shown at least some restraint, even if they didn't tip us off."

"Is the South Yue Sect putting on an act, desiring more Spirit Stones?"

Lu Chengyun snorted coldly, "It seems this Sect Leader is tired of his position!"

Lu Chengyun reviewed the reports once more; in spite of everything, he still felt something was off, but he couldn't pinpoint where...

"Could it be that the Corpse Mine's conspiracy has been leaked?"

Lu Chengyun considered for a moment, then shook his head, "Impossible..."

The only ones who knew the ins and outs were Zhang Quan and Mo Hua.

Zhang Quan was already dead, and Mo Hua had been fed to the map by him.

Beyond that, what those Corpse cultivators knew was merely superficial; they were clueless about the core aspects like the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses, the Spiritual Pivot Formation, and the Corpse King within the altar.

Even if they betrayed him, it wouldn't matter.

Finding a scapegoat would suffice; the Taoist Court wouldn't make a big fuss...

Lu Chengyun, feeling heavily suspicious, was still somewhat uneasy.

"Should I personally take a look in the city?"

He pondered for a while then shook his head again.

The matter of the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses still required his attention.

This kind of complex Compound Formation, requiring constant operation, wasn't just set and done; it demanded inspection, maintenance, examination, ensuring that the Formation eye was intact, the Formation Pivot smooth, and the Formation Patterns error-free.

Moreover, the Formation eye of the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses was constructed by Mo Hua.

Some ideas were ingenious, the circulation of Spiritual Power unique, not as simple as he had initially thought.

Maintaining it was somewhat difficult for Lu Chengyun. Inspecting, identifying errors, and repairing were all time-consuming tasks.

Not to mention other Formation Masters in the Corpse Mine—who would be fortunate if they could even understand it.

Lu Chengyun sighed, somewhat regretting:

"It was too early to kill this gentleman..."

He had no choice but to manage these tasks himself now, too busy to worry about anything else. Nevertheless, he was still not entirely reassured, so he ordered:

"In these days, strengthen the defense, patrol day and night. If there's any abnormality, report it immediately."

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The Corpse cultivators acknowledged the command and passed along the orders.

For a while, the entire Corpse Mine went into high alert...

The Taoist Court was fully prepared, and the situation within the Corpse Mine extremely tense.

The great battle was on the brink of breaking out...

And within the sea of consciousness inside Mo Hua's white coffin, the ultimate enemy was about to arrive:

The Ancestor Founder of Corpse Path from the Zhang Family!

During this time, Mo Hua had been fishing non-stop.

Until now, he had drawn all of the Zhang Family's ancestors and elders, along with the disciples, into his own sea of consciousness.

Mo Hua waited at his leisure, first commanding the Iron Corpses to gang up on them. As they fought each other fiercely, exhausted their tricks, and suffered severe injuries, he would step in to finish them off.

The elders were retained, controlled by the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

The disciples were refined to restore the elders' power.

Among them, the strongest was the Chief Elder of the Zhang Family.

With much effort and at the cost of losing two Iron Corpse Elders, Mo Hua finally subdued him.

Chapter 527: Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family (2)

The control of Iron Corpse had reached its limit.

Mo Hua then imitated Lu Chengyun, painting on the Chief Elder's body the same Spiritual Pivot Formation as the Corpse King, and endowed it with a high-permission Sequential Formation Pattern. On the other Iron Corpse Elders, he painted subordinate Sequence Formation Patterns.

By controlling the Chief Elder, he thus commanded the ordinary Elders.

Sure enough, he felt much lighter with his Divine Sense, and his control over the Iron Corpses became even more precise.

With this, Mo Hua now had a total of eleven Iron Corpses in his hands!

This was the entire number of living Elders of the Zhang Family.

Originally, they were all Elders of the Zhang Family, obeying the orders of the Zombie Ancestor, but now they had become Divine Consciousness puppets of Mo Hua and were under his control.

The situation had changed from being outnumbered to outnumbering the enemy.

Using the enemies' tactics against them.

Using the Zhang Family's Elders to fight the ancient ancestor of the Zhang Family!

Mo Hua nodded with a smile, expressing satisfaction with his own cunning,

"I am truly remarkable!"

Next, Mo Hua arranged the eleven Iron Corpses of the Zhang Family in a line, ready for battle, waiting for the arrival of the Zhang Family Ancestor.

As for himself, he hid on the side, lying in wait, ready to watch the ancestors of the Zhang Family fight among themselves, reaping the benefits for himself...

Zhang Quan, who saw all this, regretted it to his core.

It was a big mistake; he should never have provoked this little ancestral master!

Actually, had he been angered to death sooner, it would have been better.

If he had been angered to death earlier, he wouldn't have been used to threaten the ancestors of his Zhang Family.

Now, they had also fallen to the point of "assisting a tyrant in his oppression".

Mo Hua was that little tyrant.

Not only did he consume them, but he also turned them into wraiths to further harm the forefathers of his Zhang Family.

Now, the Elders of the Zhang Family had all become the "wraiths" of this "little tyrant" and were about to harm their old ancestor!

The old ancestor was in real danger!

This little devil, Mo Hua, was far more fearsome than Lu Chengyun!

Zhang Quan was both anxious and frightened.

But now he was just a puppet, dominated by Mo Hua, obeying Mo Hua's commands, and completely powerless...

...

After some time, Mo Hua, who had been resting with his eyes closed, suddenly opened them.

He felt the Divine Thought walls shake, as if something powerful was approaching...

Moments later, mist swirled.

An elder with an air of immortality descended on a cloud.

This man, with white hair and beard, looked otherworldly and dignified; it was Zhang Quan's great ancestor, the Zombie Ancestor from the Ancestral Master Picture.

Mo Hua's eyes lit up, and a mischievous smile formed on his lips...

...

The Zhang Family Ancestor had arrived.

He had no choice but to come.

Because no one in the Zhang Family was left.

One by one, they had all disappeared without return.

In just half a day, his disciples and grand-disciples had vanished.

The once full Ancestral Master Picture now had only him left, the sole surviving ancestor.

If he didn't show up, the corpse-path heritage of the Zhang Family would truly be at an end.

There must be someone scheming a trap.

This was about the bloodline and the heritage of the Corpse Path.

He wanted to see who or what dared to plot against his Zhang Family?

When the Ancestors of the Zhang Family arrived, he was first taken aback.

Such a profound Divine Sense!

Like the legendary lands of dense spiritual energy, the Divine Sense here was terrifyingly pure.

Could it be that his disciples were voraciously indulging, so content that they didn't want to return?

The Zhang Family Ancestor frowned, looking around in astonishment.

There were no outsiders, no other evil spirits, or Divine Consciousness Entities.

Only about a dozen of his Zhang Family Elders were lined up, standing like wooden stakes.

The Zhang Family Ancestor with a frown said,

"What is the meaning of this?"

The group of Elders had obscure auras and dull eyes, and remained silent.

The Zhang Family Ancestor sensed something was wrong.

Just as he was about to step forward for a closer look, a sudden chill wind arose.

The Zhang Family Chief Elder took the lead to strike, claws swelling with Corpse Poison, attacking the back of the Zhang Family Ancestor.

"An ambush?"

The face of the Zhang Family Ancestor changed drastically as he grabbed the wrist of the Chief Elder, blocking his assault.

At the same time, the other Elders also made their moves, aiming for vital spots: the heart, the eyes, the crown of the head, the groin, the joints...

Each move was lethal, intending to kill their old ancestor!

The Zhang Family Ancestor was furious.

He could never have imagined that in such a short period of time, his disciples and grand-disciples not only vanished but also betrayed him, and were even plotting patricide, attempting to take the life of their old ancestor!

"A bunch of scourges!"

The Zhang Family Ancestor defended himself, parrying a few moves, but was overwhelmed by the numbers. His Taoist robe was torn, his arms were cut, and several strands of his white beard were pulled out...

The Zhang Family Ancestor's gaze grew stern.

During the combat, he noticed something unusual about these Elders.

"Were they controlled?"

The Zhang Family Ancestor's thoughts raced.

Controlled by what?

A spell?

An Illusion Technique?

Were they bewitched or brainwashed?

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The Zhang Family Ancestor's mind stirred, and he immediately chanted loudly, subsequently barking:

"The Ancestral Master is here, why haven't you converted yet?"

"Convert to my school, and seek eternal life..."

"Convert to my school..."

"Seek eternal life..."

These words, both loud and distant, resonated in the ears and hearts of those present, possessing the power to enchant and compel conversion.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense also wavered momentarily.

But after a brief moment, his mind cleared like a stream, and he was instantly awake.

On the other hand, the Iron Corpses revealed looks of longing and desire.

But they were controlled by the Spiritual Pivot Formation, their actions governed by Spiritual Threads, mere puppets, so what they thought didn't really matter.

#### Chapter 528

Even if the Zhang Family Ancestral Master had bewitched their minds, their bodies remained honest, only obeying Mo Hua.

Their onslaught continued unabated.

These Iron Corpses had looks of longing, clearly shaken in spirit.

But their attacks were still mercilessly fierce, not holding back in the slightest.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master felt a chill in his heart.

What kind of control technique was this? He had never seen it before.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master called out loudly,

"Who is the expert that set up this situation?"

Being able to simultaneously control eleven Iron Corpses without being affected by his own Taoist sounds, such a skill could only belong to a true master.

But Mo Hua didn't make a sound, nor did he have any intention of revealing himself.

The most ideal outcome was to avoid getting involved personally.

To let these zombies slaughter each other within their clan.

Wait until both sides were weakened, then go out and pick up the pieces.

Depending on the superiority of numbers, to let this Zhang Family Ancestral Master be worn down by his own disciples and grandchildren, best if he didn't even know how he died, making the perfect confused ghost.

This would save a lot of trouble.

And the risk was lower, too.

Even if he had to step in at the end, he wanted to force out all the Ancestral Master's techniques, making him reveal his hand, so that he would have something to guard against and could be more targeted in his approach...

Mo Hua's mind stirred, and he intensified the attack of the Iron Corpses.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master was extremely frustrated.

Being attacked by his own disciples and grandchildren, he didn't even know who the hidden enemy was.

At first, he refrained from being ruthless out of concern for the connection between ancestors and disciples, but as his injuries multiplied, he realized this couldn't continue.

If it did, he would only die here!

The expression of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master darkened, and his aura suddenly changed.

The aura of his transcendent nature disappeared, and in its stead rose a dense Corpse Qi.

His pupils turned vertical, changing from pitch black to a rusted copper color, his gaze cold and indifferent.

His Taoist robe burst from his body, revealing skin of an ancient copper hue, with green veins twisting grotesquely over it, tough beyond compare.

His stature also shot up suddenly, bulking up like copper and iron.

Sharp claws elongated like fine swords, their tips glowing with a copper-red sheen.

He looked terrifying, his aura violent and ferocious.

Mo Hua involuntarily sucked in a breath of cold air:

A Copper Corpse!

Despite some anticipation, he was still shocked.

He hadn't expected that the Divine Thought manifested by the Zhang Family Ancestral Master would truly be a Copper Corpse!

Only a Second Grade zombie could refine a Copper Corpse.

The strength of a Copper Corpse was at least a middle-phase Foundation Establishment; with deeper cultivation, it could reach the late phase.

In the case of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master, Mo Hua estimated that he was just a hair away from the later phase of Foundation Establishment.

But because he was an Ancestral Master, influenced by the family's offerings and the faith of the Zhang Family disciples, his strength was also impacted.

Now that the disciples of the Zhang Family had been either slaughtered or refined by Mo Hua for consumption, and the rest had become Mo Hua's puppets, they were in the midst of "betraying and exterminating their ancestor."

Therefore, the Ancestral Master's strength was greatly diminished, and it seemed likely that he was at an intermediate level of the middle phase of Foundation Establishment.

But even so, he was still very strong.

Mo Hua estimated in his mind and felt that in a head-on clash, he would probably, most likely, not necessarily, be a match for the Zhang Family Ancestral Master.

It was a fifty-fifty proposition.

His chances of winning, he guessed, were probably even slimmer.

A Copper Corpse, ah...

Such a sturdy, thick-skinned creature with fast movements and deep Corpse Qi, how could it be defeated?

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Even if he could win, it would likely be a Pyrrhic victory.

Mo Hua sighed in his heart, then felt a bit relieved, murmuring softly,

"Luckily, I don't have to do the fighting myself..."

Mo Hua controlled the Zhang Family's Iron Corpses as they began a righteous siege...

In his heart, he encouraged them:

"Go!"

"Annihilate your old ancestor!"

"Defeat him, and you'll become the ancestor!"

...

Eleven Iron Corpses clashed head-on with a single Copper Corpse, locked in a desperate brawl.

Fist to flesh, claw drawing blood.

The fight was incredibly intense for a moment.

Chapter 529: Fierce Battle (1)

Transformed into a Copper Corpse, the Zhang Family Ancestral Master fought a fierce battle with the Iron Corpse Elder, who was being controlled by Mo Hua. Corpse Qi churned around them, strength overflowing in every direction.

It looked like a clash of Body Cultivators engaging in physical combat.

But because they were both zombies, when engaging in close combat, they also used claws and teeth, their movements even more savage, and their techniques even more vicious.

Mo Hua's blood boiled with excitement.

It felt like controlling a high-level monster, fighting against a major villain.

Mo Hua had been enjoying the spectacle for a while when he suddenly realized he had pressing matters to attend to.

So he gathered his thoughts, calmed his mind, and started observing the Copper Corpse Ancestral Master's attacking techniques.

Checking whether the Copper Corpse favored punches, claws, or kicks.

Making note of its combat habits.

Such as following a right punch with a sweep kick, after a horizontal claw slash, there would be an upward rip, and after a "Black Tiger Steals Heart" move, it would turn and connect with an elbow strike...

...

Mo Hua silently observed, committing the Ancestral Master's combat habits to memory, one by one.

Just like he used to study the movements of Monster Beasts and Cultivators to refine his Water Passing Step technique.

Know your enemy and know yourself, and you will never be defeated.

Different enemies, different techniques, different combat habits.

Beasts are not like humans, and humans are not like zombies.

Therefore, one must become very familiar, anticipate in advance. In doing so, one can predict moves in a fight, avoiding being caught off guard.

Against an ordinary opponent, it might not matter, but one must be more careful with a formidable foe like the Copper Corpse Ancestral Master.

The more you know about your enemy, the better your chances of winning.

This is a skill of a Monster Hunter.

It was what his father, Mo Shan, taught him back on Big Black Mountain.

The physical body of a Monster Hunter was far inferior to a Monster Beast's, but they still had to fight them in close combat, so they had to be extremely familiar with the beasts' movements and habits.

Now, Mo Hua was doing the same against the Copper Corpse Ancestral Master.

While observing, Mo Hua also simulated the Copper Corpse's combo attacks in his mind, trying to figure out how to counter them.

Indeed, the Copper Corpse was formidable, facing eleven Iron Corpses and still gaining the upper hand.

Each move was ruthlessly efficient, executed with heavy force.

In a head-on confrontation, a single Iron Corpse was no match. Only the combined might of eleven Iron Corpses, coordinated by Mo Hua, attacking in succession and retreating after each hit as in a relay, could exhaust the Copper Corpse and put up a fight.

For a moment, the battle was at a stalemate...

The strength of the Copper Corpse lay in its power.

While the Iron Corpses' strength lay in their fearlessness of death.

Trading blow for blow, ready to perish together, they fought a desperate battle against the Zhang Family Ancestral Master.

Using the Zhang Family's Elders against the Zhang Family's Ancestral Master.

Mo Hua felt no pity.

Even if they all perished, it didn't matter...

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But the Zhang Family Ancestral Master did care!

These were his descendants, the illustrious Elders of his Zhang Family clan, and as the senior Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family, if they all perished together, the Zhang Family would be finished.

"We can't keep dragging this out..."

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's gaze turned icy, his aura surged, and with a sweeping right fist, he pushed back several Iron Corpses and retreated a few steps to start forming hand seals.

As the Iron Corpses closed in again,

A sinister green Corpse Qi suddenly surged around the Zhang Family Ancestral Master.

Iron Corpses enveloped by this Corpse Qi became sluggish in just moments, their footsteps slowed, and their vitality began to weaken.

Mo Hua's gaze sharpened.

Corpse Poison?

No, it looked more like some kind of spell.

Corpse Poison Technique!

By bursting out with Corpse Qi, one affected by this poison would become slow moving and continuously suffer from the toxic damage.

The Corpse Poison of the Copper Corpse was indeed tricky...

Mo Hua noted this internally and thought about being extra cautious.

With the Zhang Family Ancestral Master using the Corpse Poison Technique, the situation changed.

Affected by the Corpse Poison, the Iron Corpses slowed down dramatically. Their attacks lagged, their movements constrained, they couldn't get anywhere near the Ancestral Master, losing the ability to restrain him...

"It seems I have to make a move myself..."

Mo Hua's eyes sparkled slightly as he nodded.

Hiding in the shadows, he waited for the perfect moment and pointed his finger, casting the Water Prison Technique.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master, who had been dodging Iron Corpses' attacks, suddenly felt his surrounding energy shift. A pale blue Spiritual Thread appeared, turning into chains that bound him in place.

At the same time, an attack he should have dodged did not miss its mark.

An Iron Corpse's claw stabbed directly into the left chest of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master, not piercing deeply due to the copper-like skin of the corpse, but still inflicting a noticeable wound.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master punched the Iron Corpse away and then, with a cold gaze, scanned his surroundings, shouting loudly:

"Who is it?"

"Who dares to ambush me?"

Playing the part of the hidden master, Mo Hua said nothing.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's face darkened.

His suspicions were indeed correct.

Someone had set an ambush, betraying a group of Zhang Family Elders by brainwashing them, manipulating them to target him.

And the mastermind behind the scenes was now hiding nearby, waiting to strike, wishing to take his life!

Their intentions were extremely malicious!

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's expression turned frosty, "I want to see which despicable vermin is skulking in the shadows with evil intentions!"

He grasped with his right hand, his Divine Thought condensing.

In just a short time, he manifested a glowing white White Bone Staff.

Mo Hua's eyelids twitched again.

Manifest Spirit Artifact!

This Zhang Family Ancestral Master was far more skilled at manifesting artifacts than he was.

He could only manifest the Thousand Jun Stick.

But that Thousand Jun Stick would still show some phantoms and was not as solid, nowhere near as lifelike as this White Bone Staff.

However, it probably shouldn't be called manifesting a Spiritual Artifact.

Rather, it was probably manifesting an Evil Artifact!

This White Bone Staff was clearly an artifact refined through some demonic means with a white bone as the medium and an evil Artifact Furnace.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master chanted, and the skull at the tip of the White Bone Staff suddenly emitted a red glow.

#### Chapter 530: Fierce Battle (2)

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's presence suddenly turned ominous.

The Corpse Poison condensed, transforming into myriad serpentine dragons, hissing with flickering tongues, and slithering in all directions.

Mo Hua's scalp tingled slightly.

This ancestor of the Zhang Family, his devious methods were far too numerous.

Practicing both Corpse Body and Spell Casting.

Was he a Body Cultivator, or a Spiritual Cultivator?

Or could it be that the Evil Demon's methods were unique, transcending both Blood Qi and Spiritual Power?

As Mo Hua pondered, the serpentine dragons had already reached his feet, prompting Mo Hua to immediately perform the Water Passing Step, retreating swiftly.

This slight movement sent a ripple through his Divine Thought, and though it was minute, it was still detected by the ever-vigilant Zhang Family Ancestral Master.

The bronze vertical pupils of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master narrowed, and he pointed his White Bone Staff at Mo Hua.

The surrounding serpentine dragons swarmed together like a tidal wave, carrying a chilling poisonous aura as they swept towards Mo Hua.

With no other choice, Mo Hua revealed his form, retreating with light steps while quickly tapping his fingers together.

One after another, the Fireball Technique materialized from his fingertips, whistling through the air.

The bright red fireballs collided with the Corpse Poison serpents, exploding on impact.

The flames of the Fire-series Spiritual Power detonated, the fire's Spiritual Threads shredding through them. Experience new tales on empire

Hordes of the poison snakes were obliterated by the fireballs, reduced to ash, the Corpse Poison incinerated, and within the crimson flames, even a hint of ghastly green could be seen.

In less than the time it takes to finish a cup of tea, Mo Hua had burnt all of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master's Corpse Poison serpents to death using the Fireball Technique.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master appeared nonchalant.

The Corpse Poison Technique was broken, but he had flushed out the "hidden observer."

Only, this "hidden observer" made him feel both surprised and suspicious.

It was just a kid...

Had the mastermind been an exceptionally talented young Cultivator, a scheming middle-aged Cultivator, or even a grave and solemn old Cultivator, he would not have been surprised.

But this kid with an innocent face, an unblemished demeanor, and yet profound eyes, gave him a shiver.

Something abnormal must be a demon at work.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master frowned.

This kid, with Divine Sense both pure and profound, was capable of manifesting his form as well as spells.

An appearance of naivety, but methods full of cunning.

Lurking unseen, watching in secret.

Manipulating the Zhang Family's Elders like puppets.

Even had it not been for his manifestation of the White Bone Staff and the strengthening of his Corpse Poison Technique, he would have been unable to coerce the kid out.

The mastery he had over his own Divine Thoughts had taken hundreds of years to achieve, through the consumption of human divine senses, painstaking exploration, and integrating Corpse Path inheritance from his past life into his cultivation.

This kid, with his childlike air, having hardly eaten enough rice for a few years, where did he acquire such deep cunning and such bizarre methods?

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's gaze grew heavy as he asked:

"Kid, what exactly is your background?"

Mo Hua replied with a beaming smile, "You guess."

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master did not show anger and asked again:

"How exactly did you take control of my Zhang Family's Elders?"

Telling blatant lies, Mo Hua replied:

"I didn't control them, they did it all by themselves. After committing countless wrongs, they even thought of coming into my Sea of Consciousness to devour my Divine Sense. I kindly gave them some advice, and with sudden enlightenment, they cleaned up their act..."

"Oh, right," Mo Hua continued, "they also said they wanted to atone for their sins by getting rid of you, the old ancestor."

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's eyes grew cold.

This kid was full of nonsense, and it was unclear which words were true...

Certainly not any sort of good nature.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's thoughts flickered, and he came up with a plan, saying:

"We have no grudges or resentments, can we call it quits here?"

Mo Hua breathed a sigh of relief and nodded, "Sure, I don't want to fight with you. I can't beat you."

Once finished speaking, Mo Hua waved his hand at the Zhang Family Ancestral Master, "You're free to go, I won't keep you around..."

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master was momentarily stunned, then his expression shifted ambiguously, as he said faintly:

"Then, about these Elders of my Zhang Family... "

Mo Hua waved his hand again, "I told you, they've had a change of heart, they've mended their ways. They're not following you anymore, they're mine now, obeying my commands..."

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master sneered, "We agreed to stop this, young man, it doesn't seem like you're being very sincere?"

"Sincere about what?"

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master said:

"You release the controls on them, I'll take them away. After that, we keep to our own paths, and my Zhang Family will no longer disrespect you. I also ask you to show some courtesy to my Zhang Family. What do you say?"

Mo Hua pretended to be contemplative, frowning slightly:

"But... I can't beat you anyway, and if I allow these Iron Corpses to turn against me, what if you don't keep your word? Wouldn't I be in a very dangerous situation?"

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master cursed inwardly.

Such a suspicious kid!

"What do you propose?"

Mo Hua's eyes spun craftily, "How about this? I'll remove the control over these Iron Corpses, and you cripple your Divine Sense. You don't need to destroy too much, just about seventy or eighty percent will do. That way, without the Iron Corpses, and with you having less Divine Sense, we'll be even."

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's gaze turned icy, "Kid, are you making fun of me?"

Mo Hua was about to continue bantering when suddenly his expression drastically changed, revealing shock.

He discovered that behind the Zhang Family Ancestral Master, a massive bronze coffin had emerged at some unknown time.

This immense coffin, apparently also manifested, exuded an aura of olden times, covered in verdigris, its presence deep and profound, nearly identical to the one used for refining a Corpse King.

The bronze coffin was huge, clearly out of the ordinary.

Such a manifestation also must have cost a significant amount of time.

The words of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master just moments ago, about "calling it quits" and "keeping to our own paths," were all lies.

He was merely biding time.

So that he could finish manifesting this massive bronze coffin!

Mo Hua exclaimed angrily, "You old bastard, how devious, tricking me into chatting while secretly casting a spell!"