

The Quest 531

Chapter 531: Fierce Battle (3)

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master sneered, "Little devil, you're still too green to fight me."

Then he brought his palms together, his voice hoarse and fierce:

"Great Coffin Sealing Skill, activate!"

The bronze giant coffin's lid flung open, revealing nothing but darkness inside. Yet, from that darkness emerged chains of corroded bronze.

The chains extended in all directions, trapping the surrounding Iron Corpses and pulling them towards the coffin.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master said with a cold expression:

"I didn't want to use this move unless absolutely necessary..."

"The Great Coffin Sealing Skill, manifesting the bronze giant coffin, will transform all the Elders back into Iron Corpses. Their Divine Thoughts will be erased, their bodies reshaped, and all methods of control washed away."

"However, once they lose consciousness, they'll no longer be Elders of my Zhang Family but merely Iron Corpses under my command."

"They are Elders of the Zhang Family, my descendants. Refined by the bronze coffin, their consciousness erased, they really are just Iron Corpse puppets..."

"Even though they can still serve my Zhang Family, they will no longer address me as 'Ancestor'..."

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master felt a deep sadness, which soon turned to indignation as he glared at Mo Hua with rage.

"Little devil, this is all thanks to you!" Continue reading at empire

"Once I regain control over the Iron Corpses, I'll make sure they surround and slaughter you, devouring you bit by bit, until nothing is left!"

"To avenge my Zhang Family and quell the hatred in my heart!"

Hate blazed in the eyes of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master.

This little devil had placed him in deep crisis.

If this standoff continued for too long, it would not be to his advantage.

Better to use his trump card, pay the price, and extinguish this little devil once and for all to eliminate future troubles!

Without control over the Iron Corpses, this little devil is no match for him.

By using the Great Coffin Sealing Skill, he could refine eleven Iron Corpses anew.

One Copper Corpse and eleven Iron Corpses are sure to slaughter this little devil.

This is his Sea of Consciousness; there is no escape!

Mo Hua's face showed fear.

Delight filled the heart of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master.

But soon, he sensed something was amiss.

The little devil's gaze was calm and composed, without a hint of worry.

The "fear" on his face seemed to be feigned?

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master realized something was wrong and abruptly looked down to discover Formation Patterns spreading from beneath his feet all the way to the bronze giant coffin.

They were intricate and overlapping.

When the bronze giant coffin was opened, these Formation Patterns, like creeping vines, crawled up through the edges and directly inside the coffin.

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master instantly understood and angrily exclaimed:

"You little wretch, you're plotting against me?!"

He had been deliberately talking nonsense to the little devil while secretly executing the Great Coffin Sealing Skill.

Meanwhile, this little devil took advantage of his inattention during the spellcasting to lay down these Formation Patterns under the cover of the bronze coffin!

Mo Hua snorted, "As the saying goes, one good turn deserves another!"

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's complexion changed drastically, and he immediately attempted to close the coffin.

But Mo Hua was one step ahead, and with a movement of his Divine Thought, he crisply commanded:

"Burst!"

An array of dense Earthfire Compound Formations exploded!

From within the bronze giant coffin, the Formation Patterns lit up one by one, extending layer by layer outward, with waves of surging Spiritual Power spreading out wave after wave.

The bronze coffin turned into a Flame Coffin.

The Spiritual Power manifested by Divine Thought exploded and surged within.

The timely activation of the Zhang Family Ancestral Master's coffin caused the Earth Fire Formation Patterns to extend inside the bronze coffin, thus magnifying its destructive power.

The flames raged and, in a moment, the bronze coffin trembled and fissured, fading into a faint illusion before vanishing completely.

Simultaneously, the Iron Corpses sucked into the coffin were affected by the force of the formation, their forms dimming and rendered immobile.

Within the Sea of Consciousness, spells manifested by Divine Thoughts are the Divine Thoughts themselves.

With the destruction of the bronze coffin, the Zhang Family Ancestral Master also suffered a grave injury. His face pale, he vomited fresh blood, his Divine Thoughts significantly depleted, and his form shrunk by a few inches.

Grinding his teeth in anger, the Zhang Family Ancestral Master said:

"Formation?!"

This little devil, how is he a Formation Master?

And his method of setting up formations, without pen or ink, what served as the medium, and how did he draw the formation?

The Zhang Family Ancestral Master's gaze shook.

Having lived for hundreds of years, he had never seen a Cultivator who could draw Formation Patterns in the Sea of Consciousness.

Even less conceivable was such an unexpected, pen-and-inkless method of manifesting formations directly with Divine Thought, which was beyond belief.

This child must either have a profound inheritance from his family's teachings or else he has had an extraordinary encounter and acquired an astonishing legacy!

Mo Hua's face had also turned rather pale.

In a single effort, he had manifested too many formations, consuming a great deal of his Divine Sense, and he was now somewhat struggling to maintain his Divine Thoughts.

This ancestor from the Zhang Family was even more troublesome than he had imagined.

Copper Corpse, Corpse Poison Technique, White Bone Staff, Great Coffin Sealing Skill.

Had he not taken control of the Iron Corpses, outnumbering the Ancestor in battle, the outcome of a head-on confrontation would have been uncertain.

Thankfully, he played it a bit cowardly...

But at this point, with the Zhang Family Ancestral Master severely injured, there was no way Mo Hua could allow him to escape!

Strike him while he's down!

Of the eleven Iron Corpses affected by the Earth Fire Formation, six were on the brink of death, leaving only five still functional.

Mo Hua then commanded these Iron Corpses to continue the assault.

At the same time, he kept employing the Water Prison Technique to control and Fireball Technique to wear down the enemy.

"This isn't good!"

With the Great Coffin Sealing Skill thwarted, Divine Thoughts backlashing, and strength greatly reduced, the Zhang Family Ancestral Master felt a deep chill in his heart.

This was a great calamity!

Even him, Ancestor Founder of Corpse Path, the Copper Corpse incarnate, who had lived for hundreds of years, had never anticipated capsizing in this "gutter" within Mo Hua's Sea of Consciousness.

He had never imagined that after the Zhang Family inherited the Corpse Path and controlled corpses for centuries, their Elders would end up being controlled as zombies by someone else.

What's even worse, that someone else also controlled them to betray and annihilate their Ancestor!

Chapter 532: Fierce Battle (4)

Yet, with a calculating mind preying upon an unguarded one, all his tactics had been countered.

Completely outsmarted by this brat!

The Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family, unable to contain his fury, with a twisted expression on his face, disregarded the Iron Corpses that were trying to kill him, and moved like the wind, heading straight for Mo Hua.

Now that his own Divine Thought had been greatly damaged, killing this brat and devouring his Divine Sense was the only way he might survive.

Even if it meant dying in the end, he would drag this brat to mutual destruction.

Judging by the techniques the brat was currently using, he excelled in casting spells and was adept in Formation, but not skilled in close combat, which was why he kept his distance, using some treacherous tactics. Your next read is at empire

As long as he got close to him, everything would be easily resolved.

The eyes of the old ancestor of the Zhang Family turned ferocious, filled with bloodshot veins, and his Corpse Qi surged dramatically.

This was his last chance for survival, and he had to go all out!

Mo Hua sensed the intentions of the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family and felt a chill in his heart. While retreating, he continued to use the Water Prison Technique to restrict the Ancestral Master's movements.

But as he had transformed into a Copper Corpse, the Ancestral Master moved quickly and with great force.

Under the surge of rage, the Water Prison Technique could only trap him for a breath or two before he broke free.

After a moment of chase, Mo Hua was caught up by the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family.

The Ancestral Master was overjoyed, a fierce look flashing across his face. His fingertips grew sharp, cutting through the air with a chilling wind, aiming straight for Mo Hua's heart.

Mo Hua, composed and unruffled, used the Water Passing Step, as gentle as flowing water, agilely bending his body to dodge the deadly claw.

The Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family paused briefly in shock before continuing his attacks.

His ghastly and ugly left hand, full of spines, smashed down furiously, aiming straight for Mo Hua's head.

Like a drifting leaf, Mo Hua rose and fell inconsistently, seeming to leverage the void, gliding naturally like the ripples on water...

The color drained from the Ancestral Master's face.

What kind of movement technique was this? He could not trace its path at all.

He continued to fight several more rounds, growing more and more alarmed with each exchange.

He couldn't touch him!

Not even a corner of his robe, let alone kill the brat.

What was even more unbelievable to him was that the brat seemed to have anticipated all of his moves.

Every punch and claw, advance and retreat, the brat seemed to have mastered all the nuances of his close combat skills!

In this situation, even getting close was useless!

Why?

Why was the brat so familiar with his techniques?

Could it be that from the very beginning, when he was fighting the Iron Corpses, every move he made was etched into the brat's memory?

For the first time, the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family felt despair.

He attempted to use Corpse Poison Technique, but Mo Hua was prepared.

As soon as he raised his hand, Mo Hua quickly retreated, then maintained distance and suppressed him with the Fireball Technique, aided by Formation to trap and kill...

Despite the prolonged struggle, Mo Hua's Divine Sense was also significantly drained, and both the Fireball Technique and the Formation had weakened.

But the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family was at the end of his strength.

He simply could not withstand being worn down by Mo Hua like this.

Moreover, while Mo Hua was consuming his Divine Sense to form attacks that genuinely hit him, his own various techniques couldn't even touch Mo Hua's shadow.

Meanwhile, the five Iron Corpses watched them eagerly from the side.

Whenever there was an opening, they would trade injury for injury, life for life, entangling the Ancestral Master and never letting him escape...

The Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family was extremely frustrated but powerless to change anything.

Torn by Iron Corpses, bombarded with spells, ripped apart by Formation explosions, covered in wounds, and confined by Water Prison Technique, he wanted to kill Mo Hua but couldn't, wanted to flee but couldn't escape; he could only be worn down like this...

And just like that, after countless rounds, the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family, the Ancestor Founder of Corpse Path, was truly worn to death...

He knelt on the ground, half falling, with not a breath left in him.

Even so, Mo Hua dared not approach.

He first kept his distance, allowing the remaining two Iron Corpses to shield him, then he sat down for meditation to recover his Divine Sense.

After restoring some of his Divine Sense, Mo Hua targeted the corpse of the Ancestral Master with the Fireball Technique.

After blasting, he would go back to meditating to recover his Divine Sense.

Then attack with the Fireball Technique again.

Meditate again, and attack again...

Repeating this process over and over, he blasted the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family beyond recognition, into a dense, black-tinged smoke. Only then did Mo Hua finally feel at ease...

He let out a long sigh of relief, lying on the ground, panting heavily.

The overall process went smoothly, but Mo Hua was not entirely satisfied.

He realized that although the version of himself within the Sea of Consciousness was strong, it was just ordinarily strong.

Weaker enemies could be easily killed with magic and Formation.

But against stronger ones, like the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family, with his current methods, he couldn't decisively end the fight with a single blow.

He could only first find a way to deceive them, uncover their trump cards, and then unravel them one by one.

Then, relying on his movement technique, spells, and Formation, slowly wear them down...

This was very tiring...

And it took a long time.

With time, complications are bound to arise, and with complications come risks.

"It seems I need to think of new ways, learn some more powerful techniques..." Mo Hua thought to himself.

Afterwards, he felt a weight lifted off his shoulders.

No matter what, he had finally dealt with the zombie ancestor of the Zhang Family!

His eyes brightened as he looked at the thick, black-tinged smoke filled with intense Divine Sense. He couldn't help but feel expectant:

"I wonder how much my Divine Sense will increase after 'eating' this ancestor of the Zhang Family..."

Chapter 533: Corpse Soldiers (1)

"The Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family had such a powerful Divine Thought. Devouring it and then refining it away should certainly allow one to cross the bottleneck and reach the Divine Sense of Thirteen Stripes..."

Mo Hua muttered to herself.

Divine Sense with Thirteen Stripes...

For cultivators at the initial stage of Foundation Establishment, the limit of their Divine Sense is that of Thirteen Stripes.

Once one possesses a Divine Sense of Thirteen Stripes, they are only one step away from the requirement of Divine Sense Foundation Establishment mentioned by Master...

Mo Hua felt some anticipation in her heart.

Then she hesitated a bit.

"Should I devour it now?"

The remnants of the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family's Divine Soul were too strong; if swallowed whole, the process would likely be quite filling and take a long time to "digest"...

And currently, Mo Hua was still unclear about the situation outside.

She did send out the news about the Corpse Mine.

However, inside South Yue City, none seemed to be able to contend against the Lu Family.

Now, with Zhang Quan dead and Lu Chengyun in sole control of the Corpse King, running the Ten Thousand Corpses Compound Formation, refining corpses on the one hand and controlling them on the other, his power would continue to grow unchallenged within the borders of the Second-Grade Prefecture...

"This is troublesome..."

After some thought, Mo Hua decided to refine away the Zhang Family Ancestral Master first.

One must eat the meat that's already in their mouth as soon as possible.

Devouring the Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family would also strengthen her own powers, and even if something unexpected happened, she would feel more confident.

Besides, the Ancestral Master's techniques were extraordinary.

Though she blew him into a wisp of blue smoke, there was no guarantee that he didn't have some technique to revive from the dead and restore his Divine Thought.

Such old scoundrels were very sly.

One must act prudently and eliminate all potential threats thoroughly!

Consume completely without leaving any leftovers!

Mo Hua immediately took action, transforming her Divine Thought into a formation, preparing to refine the remaining Divine Thought of the Ancestral Master's Copper Corpse.

To be on the safe side, she first used the Golden Lock Formation to lock up the blue smoke created from the Ancestral Master and then manifested the Melting Fire Formation, slowly roasting it with bright red flames. Stay connected via empire

After roasting for a while, Mo Hua suddenly remembered.

The Zhang Family had not only the Ancestral Master but also those Iron Corpse Elders.

The eleven Iron Corpses initially, now six were near death, leaving only shadowy figures.

The remaining five Iron Corpses were crippled by the Ancestral Master in the final battle of attrition, with only one left, the Chief Elder of the Zhang Family, and even he was left gasping for life...

Mo Hua felt fortunate.

The Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family had a strong Divine Thought and many techniques.

Thankfully, she had been...no, had been careful!

By using these Iron Corpses, she pressured the Ancestral Master into revealing his moves, depleted his strength, and withstood his ruthless attacks...

Then she ambushed the old zombie herself.

And finally, ground him down to death through sheer perseverance.

Otherwise, the outcome of the battle would have been uncertain...

Controlling the Iron Corpses, turning them for her use, with his own spear against his own shield.

"The Spiritual Pivot Formation is really useful!"

Mo Hua praised in her heart.

The Iron Corpses shouldn't be wasted either...

Mo Hua gathered these Iron Corpses as well, tossing them into the Melting Fire Formation alongside the Ancestral Master.

The Zhang Family, from disciples to old ancestors, including generations of forefathers, were all stewed in one pot by Mo Hua...

Not until the blue smoke "stewed" into white smoke did Mo Hua inhale it in one gulp and then slowly started the refining process...

This took quite some time.

From defeating and controlling Zhang Quan and Elders "Song" and "Si," to setting an ambush and hunting other Iron Corpse Elders of the Zhang Family, to finally dominating the Iron Corpses and hunting down the Ancestral Master, and successfully subduing him...

Five to six days had passed.

Mo Hua, hidden inside the sealed white coffin, was unaware of anything.

But outside, a massive battle had already erupted...

Foundation Building Cultivators clashed with Iron Corpses, crushing mountains and splitting the earth.

The mines were ravaged by spells and physical strength, with rocks shattered and pathways cratered.

Below Foundation Building, there were Taoist Soldiers forming long formations, fighting to the death against the Corpse Tide.

The Taoist Soldiers' formations were meticulous, their orders strict, their killing decisive; Walking Corpses covered the mountainsides, fierce and hideous, fearlessly ferocious.

The two forces fought, a battle both spectacular and tragic.

In the territory of South Yue City, corpses were everywhere, with thousands of Zombies besieging the city.

The city gates of South Yue City were tightly shut; Mining Cultivators gathered at the city wall, fending off the invading Walking Corpses and those Cultivators who had been bitten by Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses, struck by Corpse Poison at heart, turned into mindless flesh puppets.

The clouds above the city were dense and grim, the atmosphere one of cold lethality.

All were anxious and uneasy, uncertain whether tomorrow would bring sunshine or a deluge over the city.

If the Taoist Court emerges victorious in the future, suppressing the Corpse Mine, exterminating the Zombies, everything would be great.

If, however, Taoist Court was defeated, the surging Corpse Tide would instantaneously overwhelm South Yue City.

In that event, every Cultivator within the city would become food for the Zombies.

Some Clan and Sect Cultivators within the city, unwilling to share fate with the city, secretly fled, but most were intercepted by the scattered Walking Corpses along the way.

In the midst of battle, once blood was shed, the scent of blood dispersed.

Soon, large masses of Walking Corpses would swarm towards the smell.

It may even attract Iron Corpses.

Once an Iron Corpse appeared, the fleeing Cultivators had almost no chance of survival.

Even a Foundation Building Cultivator might perish in the vast numbers of First Grade Walking Corpses out in the open fields.

A few days ago, during the chaos, one of the Foundation Cultivation Taoist Soldiers' commanders was struck by an Iron Corpse, broke away from the array of his soldiers, and was submerged by the tide-like rush of Walking Corpses.

No matter how many Walking Corpses he killed, more would pile onto him, like a person drowning in water, overwhelmed by the Corpse Tide; no matter how much he struggled, he could not reach the shore and was ultimately torn apart by the Walking Corpses, alive...

Yang Jishan's heart was tormented as if cut by knives.

These Taoist Soldiers were his brothers, who had shared life and death with him, but he never expected they would die before his eyes, in such a manner.

And he was powerless to help.

The Zombies were too numerous, too powerful.

Yang Jishan never anticipated that, despite all the careful preparations, they would still suffer such losses.

Chapter 534: Corpse Soldiers (2)

Everything was going smoothly...

Three days ago, they took action at 6 A.M., striking the Lu Family with lightning-fast measures.

The Lu Family was suppressed.

Even though some elders and disciples fought desperately, fleeing the city to seek refuge with Lu Chengyun,

Most of the Lu Family's descendants were too afraid of the Taoist Court to resist.

The Lu Family elders had their cultivation sealed, the disciples were put under house arrest, and a Formation was set up at the door barring exit, leaving them to be dealt with later.

Later, when the zombies besieged the city, some Lu Family disciples harbored other intentions, wanting to open the city gates secretly to let the zombies in, so they could defect to Lu Chengyun as well.

But once the zombies entered the city, they did not recognize anyone; the first to be devoured were these very disciples of the Lu Family who opened the gates.

Afterwards, the Taoist Soldiers and the Mining Cultivators, along with the cultivators from the local South Yue Sect, paid a considerable price to resist the Walking Corpses and reseal the gate.

Yang Jishan, in a furious rage, selected a few Lu Family disciples and elders who had caused trouble and, before all the Lu Family cultivators, beheaded them all, thereby deterring everyone else.

After that, the main Lu Family settled down quite a bit.

The problem arose with the Corpse Mine...

The battle at the Corpse Mine was more difficult than they had imagined.

At that time, they split their forces in two, one suppressing the Lu Family, the other set out to eradicate the Corpse Mine.

The intelligence was accurate, and the Formation Diagram posed no issue; knowing the layout of the Formation, breaking through it was convenient.

More than twenty Foundation Building Cultivators, along with the Taoist Soldiers, acted together, shattering the nearby stone walls of the Corpse Mine gate, breaking the Formation Patterns, and causing the natural boulder gate to topple and misalign, revealing a gap.

The two Iron Corpses at the gate, though powerful, were clearly no match for the crowd.

After that, they pushed through all the way to the entrance of the Stone Palace.

Yang Jishan, however, found that the Corpse Cultivators were fully prepared and waiting in strict Formation.

Not only that, in the pitch-black mine, the Corpse Qi was pervasive, and countless red dots flickered on and off.

These were the bloodthirsty eyes of zombies.

This was within Yang Jishan's expectations.

Though it was a surprise attack, direct confrontation was inevitable.

Born in the Yang Family and leader of the Taoist Soldiers, Yang Jishan was a veteran of countless battles and naturally did not shy away from the fight.

The Foundation Building leader charged at the front, the Taoist Soldiers formed up in battle Formation behind him, the other clan and Sect Foundation Building Cultivators flanked from the sides, while the regular Qi Refinement cultivators followed up with the assault.

The Corpse Cultivation Techniques were sinister, but in a direct group battle, under the ferocity of the charge, they were a disorganized rabble, no match for the attackers.

The zombies they summoned mostly fought individually, unable to contend with the Taoist Soldiers, unable to stop their charge.

And once a Corpse Cultivator died, their zombies would lose control, turn frenzied, and attack any cultivator indiscriminately, including other Corpse Cultivators.

The Taoist Soldiers were unstoppable for a time.

That was until Lu Chengyun stepped forward.

Behind him followed a huge zombie, with long fangs and blood-red eyes with a hint of dark gold.

"Corpse King!"

Those who had heard the rumors of Taoist Demons felt a chill at the sight.

They had either calculated it, heard about it, or had been secretly warned by cultivators of their Sect or clan.

This Corpse King was the embryo of a Taoist Demon!

With his heart racing, a flash of cold light shone in Yang Jishan's eyes.

The embryo of a Taoist Demon must be strangled in its cradle!

"Kill!"

With a wave of his hand, Yang Jishan ordered the Taoist Soldiers, clad in armor and armed to the teeth, to charge with shared hatred, their armor's Formation Patterns connecting breaths, resonating with one another, coalescing into the phantom of a fierce tiger.

Lu Chengyun remained composed, spreading his arms wide.

The Corpse King's chest Pattern lit up, it roared towards the sky, the sound reverberating through the mountains.

Nearby, twenty iron coffins trembled, the lids flung open, and Iron Corpses leaped out stiffly.

And from the mine, tens of thousands of Walking Corpses howled in unison, akin to a procession of myriad demons swarming forth, sending shivers down one's spine.

A fierce battle erupted suddenly.

Cultivators versus zombies, Blood Qi against Corpse Qi, spells against Corpse Manipulation, a fight to the death, resistance, and entanglement...

This was the largest scale battle of cultivators in the Minor Wilderness State Boundary in nearly eight hundred years.

After the intense battle, the Taoist Soldiers failed to capture the Corpse Mine, suffering numerous casualties instead.

Lu Chengyun still controlled the Corpse Mine, commanded the Corpse King, and had dozens of Iron Corpses and tens of thousands of Walking Corpses under him; despite the ferocity of the Taoist Soldiers' attacks, they remained unmoved.

After long being unable to take the mine and with his forces increasingly damaged,

Yang Jishan had no choice but to order a retreat.

Lu Chengyun, with mostly zombies under his command, did not fear attrition.

But Yang Jishan could not afford to lose more living people.

Not to mention, those cultivators who died would only strengthen Lu Chengyun's forces.

Yang Jishan could only give the order to retreat, but after withdrawing, he commanded the Taoist Soldiers to encamp outside the mine, intending to besiege and starve out Lu Chengyun.

In retaliation, Lu Chengyun released thousands of Walking Corpses to attack South Yue City, a tactic akin to besieging Wei to rescue Zhao.

These thousands of Walking Corpses formed a Corpse Tide.

Every living cultivator they came across on their way either became blood nourishment or was converted into a Walking Corpse, becoming a part of the Corpse Tide.

Yang Jishan, left with no better option, had to divide his forces to defend the city.

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He also commanded that all Mining Cultivators, Loose Cultivators, and cultivators from the clans and Sects must stay and defend South Yue City, not allowed to leave.

The matter of exterminating the Corpse Mine would have to be a long-term consideration.

The first to be shaken were the Taoist Soldiers and the various forces of the Taoist Court, who encamped outside the mine, taking Pills to heal and recuperate.

In the cave where matters were discussed, everyone's expressions were grave.

Someone, dissatisfied, cursed aloud:

"That beast, Lu Chengyun!"

"He's refined so many zombies and now allows the Walking Corpses to attack the city."

"For his own selfish gains, he's caused so much slaughter. He truly deserves to die!"

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"It's only normal for the Demon Path to act this way; you all are just not used to it..."

"So because it's the Demon Path, it's normal to do evil deeds? So, they shouldn't be cursed?"

"Why are you getting angry with me..."

"With your temperament, sooner or later you will also fall into the ways of the Demon Path..."

"Don't spout nonsense!"

"All right, all right, stop arguing..."

"Alas, I have lived for so long, yet this is the first time I have witnessed such utterly conscienceless tactics, and also the first time I have seen someone able to refine so many zombies..."

"With the Taoist Court united, in this day and age, it's rare for Demon Cultivators to dare to act like this..."

"That's because Demon Cultivators often operate in secret; you just don't see them."

"How is that possible?"

Someone snickered, "Those who are bright and righteous in appearance, who seem virtuous—is it not possible that they are cultivating the Demon Path behind their backs?"

"Just like the case with Lu Chengyun, if it hadn't been exposed, who would have known?"

"That's accusing someone without proof!"

"Hmph, it's because you can't see clearly..."

...

The vast cave was filled with a cacophony of voices for a time.

Yang Jishan called for everyone to be quiet, speaking gravely:

"We'll discuss other matters later; the urgent task at hand is to pool our wisdom and find a way to take down the Corpse Mine!"

"The longer this drags on, the greater the disaster will be!"

Yang Jishan's gaze was serious.

After all, this Corpse King might be related to the most terrifying Taoist Demons...

The crowd fell somewhat silent; many felt disheartened.

Among those present, a portion were from small clans and sects, unfamiliar and anxious about being involved in such large-scale warfare, hesitant to say anything at the moment.

Another portion did indeed come from great sects and noble clans.

But clearly this was the first time they were facing such a large-scale battle.

They too were at a loss.

Moreover, their opponent was an innumerable horde of zombies.

It was only when they truly crossed swords that they realized in the midst of such a large-scale melee, relying solely on individual cultivation, there was very little they could do.

A cultivator asked, "Leader Yang, there is something I don't understand..."

Yang Jishan nodded to indicate him to continue speaking.

The cultivator said, "Logically speaking, we have no small number of people. With Taoist Soldiers leading the charge in the offensive, even if we can't take down the Corpse Mine, we should at least be able to inflict heavy damage on these Corpse Cultivators..."

"In group battles among cultivators, Taoist Soldiers are generally unbeatable."

"But why is it that we have not only failed to achieve any exploits, but also ended up at a disadvantage?"

The cultivators present also revealed looks of confusion.

In the chaos of battle, with their blood boiling, they followed the fight, using whatever spiritual artifacts, martial arts, or spells came to mind.

They followed Leader Yang's orders and advanced or retreated together.

If they could beat the enemy, they fought; if not, they retreated.

They paid little attention to other matters and didn't think much about them.

Why they had the advantage, and why they couldn't win, were mysteries to them as well.

Yang Jishan sighed and said with a furrowed brow:

"If I'm not mistaken, this Corpse King can control dozens of Iron Corpses and nearly ten thousand Walking Corpses at the same time."

The crowd looked at each other, "So what?"

Wasn't that known from the start...

"It's different," Yang Jishan shook his head, "This is not ordinary corpse control."

He knew the Taoist Court forbade the heritage of the Demon Path and normal cultivators did not engage with Demon Cultivators.

Even those from powerful forces with heritage, their understanding of Demon Cultivators was just superficial.

The deeper aspects, they simply did not comprehend.

Yang Jishan then continued to explain:

"Ordinary corpse control is very crude and can only issue simple commands like 'kill', 'eat', 'attack', or 'defend'."

"Moreover, once they control more zombies, even though these zombies might have the same target, they still fight individually, just like headless flies."

Yang Jishan's expression was solemn, "But the zombies this time are entirely different..."

"Zombies are still zombies, but the method of corpse control is very special, intricately detailed."

"All of the zombies move uniformly, their offense and defense, their advances and retreats, are all coordinated, like they're following a set pattern; this is inconceivable..."

"Even if the zombies are still the same, the individual strength hasn't changed, but once they have a pattern and discipline, and move in unison, their collective strength is incomparable to before."

Yang Jishan sighed, "These creatures are similar to Taoist Soldiers, what we usually call 'Corpse Soldiers' of the Demon Path..."

Corpse Soldiers...

The crowd's expressions changed upon hearing this.

...

On the other side, as Lu Chengyun looked at the Corpse King before him, he nodded slightly.

Zhang Quan was right, with the Corpse King, these zombies can indeed form 'Corpse Soldiers'.

In today's battle, the zombies became soldiers, and when contending with the Taoist Court's Taoist Soldiers, they were not at a disadvantage.

And perhaps even stronger than Taoist Soldiers, since they do not fear pain or death.

Lu Chengyun sneered.

Despite not knowing why the Taoist Court caught wind of his actions and sent Taoist Soldiers to subdue him,

This was within the Second-Grade Prefecture Border, with a Second-Grade Corpse King commanding Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses. For a time, they would have no hopes of overcoming the Corpse Mine.

Even if the Corpse Mine were to be captured eventually, he had plenty of ways to escape.

By then, just finding a scapegoat would do.

He could rid himself of the eyesore that was the identity of Lu Chengyun, start anew, and rise again from the ashes...

As long as he still had the Corpse King in his grasp.

As long as he still controlled the Spiritual Pivot Formation...

After all, formations are the foundation of a Formation Master.

Lu Chengyun gave a mild smile, his eyes revealing a glint of cold light.

Suddenly, a thought crossed his mind, and he remembered Mo Hua...

Mo Hua was used as a sacrifice by him, fed to Zhang Quan's Ancestral Master Picture.

He wondered if after all this time, Mo Hua had been completely consumed...

Lu Chengyun had planned to check earlier, but the Corpse Mine was under siege, and he was delayed, unable to leave for the moment.

Lu Chengyun thought to himself:

"In a while, once he is completely devoured, I'll go take a look. I might as well refine that little cultivator's corpse into a small zombie to be at my service..."

Lu Chengyun's gaze turned somber. Enjoy exclusive content from empire

What he didn't know was that Mo Hua wasn't consumed; instead, he was nearly about to "devour" the entire Zhang Family...

Chapter 536: Thirteen Stripes (1)

Mo Hua felt "stuffed" from gorging.

The Ancestral Master of the Zhang Family, manifesting Copper Corpses, even without descendants to offer tribute, still possessed the divine sense of a Cultivator at the Qi Foundation Middle Stage.

The generations of Elders of the Zhang Family, manifesting Iron Corpses, also possessed the strength of divine sense at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage.

Despite going through a great battle, with the Zhang Family infighting under Mo Hua's control, descendants and the old ancestor slaughtering each other, both sides being injured, a lot of divine sense was depleted.

But the remaining divine sense was still too much...

Mo Hua "stewed" everything in one pot, gulping it down, feeling stuffed...

The Sea of Consciousness was brimming with the miscellaneous divine sense.

These divine senses were initially refined after feasting on the nefarious thoughts of the Copper and Iron Corpses.

Originating from different Divine Souls, tainted with an evil aura, be it chilly, fierce, demonic, or sly...

Mo Hua felt somewhat helpless.

Gorging oneself recklessly, feasting on these "nasty things," was going to ruin one's mind...

The wicked thoughts surged like tidal waves.

Mo Hua's Taoist Heart was like a small boat ferrying through the waves, wobbling and drifting uncertainly.

As if in the next instant, it would be submerged by the wicked thoughts.

Once the Taoist Heart is extinguished, becoming tainted, the entire person would also undergo a drastic change in nature and degenerate into a monster with a corpse's heart in human flesh.

Fortunately, Mo Hua had "eaten" plenty of demons, and gradually became accustomed to these wicked thoughts.

He calmed his mind in meditation, restraining and guarding his heart.

Preserving that initial sincere thought.

Letting the evil thoughts churn, the demons confuse, and the wicked desires grow, his heart remained clear as a mirror, unstained by any dust.

And so he waited, kept waiting until 1 p.m., until suddenly, within the Sea of Consciousness, an ancient and obscure yet majestic and profound aura began to rise.

Mo Hua opened his eyes and saw the ethereal Taoist Stele floating within the Sea of Consciousness, his eyes lighting up.

With a touch of his fingers, using Divine Thought Manifestation, he began Drawing Formation on the Taoist Stele.

This Formation was the First Grade Spirit Pivot Formation with twelve stripes!

This Ultimate Formation demanded extremely high divine sense.

Mo Hua would also practice regularly, but the speed of practice was slow because of the limited divine sense, often needing to rest after drawing one or two formations.

But now his Sea of Consciousness was filled with an abundance of luxurious divine sense.

With no concerns, Mo Hua's fingers moved swiftly, divine thoughts poured forth, creating Formation Patterns one after another, assembling the Spiritual Pivot Formation...

Meanwhile, the aura of the Taoist Stele grew even more profound.

The residual souls and wicked thoughts that Mo Hua had hastily consumed were settled through meditation, cleansed by the Taoist Stele, refined through the Formation, gradually becoming purified, and ultimately were thoroughly refined by Mo Hua and slowly absorbed...

Draw the Formation a hundred times, and its meaning will reveal itself.

Mo Hua focused single-mindedly on practicing the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

With each iteration, his understanding of the Spiritual Pivot Formation deepened little by little.

Meanwhile, his originally profound divine sense was also gradually growing...

...

At this very moment, outside the Corpse Mine, the battle was still unceasing.

The various powers of the Taoist Court had organized several attacks, but all were repelled by the Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses formed into "Corpse soldiers" by Lu Chengyun, preventing the capture of the Corpse Mine.

Seeing that direct assault was ineffective, Yang Jishan ordered squads of elite Cultivators, complemented by Taoist Soldiers, to carry out surprise attacks and harassment, exerting pressure on Lu Chengyun.

After many days of skirmishes, Yang Jishan had also come to understand Lu Chengyun's method of Corpse control:

"It's a Formation!"

"The Corpse soldiers maintain unity through the Formation, their offense and defense as one, their advances and retreats in unison."

But what kind of Formation it was, Yang Jishan did not know.

He could only recognize some basic, commonly used Formations employed by Taoist Soldiers in battle, but he was completely clueless about the Corpse controlling Formations.

So Yang Jiyong went to find Young Master Yun.

Young Master Yun, being a Second Rank Formation Master and born into a Formation Method Aristocrat family, should know some details.

Young Master Yun frowned in thought for a moment before asking:

"Leader Yang, is it possible to capture a few Zombies for examination?"

"Iron Corpse?" Explore more at empire

"Iron Corpse would be best, but Walking Corpse will do."

Leader Yang nodded, "Okay."

Half an hour later, Leader Yang ordered the Taoist Soldiers to capture several Zombies, among which was an Iron Corpse with an arm severed, along with several others that were mere Walking Corpses.

These Zombies were chained, struggling and emitting unintelligible low growls.

Zombies are both bloody and hideous.

Young Master Yun found the sight somewhat unsettling, but still bit the bullet and examined every part of the Zombies, their skin and limbs.

However, he found nothing unusual.

Young Master Yun's brows furrowed slightly, muttering, "That's not right..."

Yang Jishan asked, "What's wrong?"

Young Master Yun explained, "These Zombies should have Formations on them, but I haven't found anything..."

Yang Jishan's gaze sharpened, "Could it be within their bodies? Since it's Corpse Refinement, the methods must be more concealed and not easily noticed."

Young Master Yun nodded, "Possible."

After a moment's contemplation, Yang Jishan recalled the Zombies he had seen in battle over the past few days, and suddenly said:

"There were Zombies whose chests were smashed during the battle, and it seemed as though there were some blood-colored Patterns blending with the flesh..."

Young Master Yun also said, "Indeed, the heart vessels can serve as Formation media for Evil Formations."

Yang Jishan drew a blade and began cutting open the surface of the heart vessels of several Walking Corpses, finding that indeed, a few of them had blood-colored patterns resembling Formation Patterns.

These Formation Patterns, with their malevolent aura blending with the flesh, were not easy to detect.

Yang Jishan could not help but sigh:

"This Lu Chengyun, truly has some skill!"

Young Master Yun had never seen the use of Evil Formations like this before, his expression became rather solemn.

Yang Jishan, looking at the bloodied chests of the Walking Corpses, studied for a while but could not discern any particulars, and couldn't help asking:

"Young Master Yun, what kind of Formation is this?"

Young Master Yun shook his head, "The Formation Patterns are not clear, I can't make it out yet."

"What about on the Iron Corpse's body?"

"Yes."

Yang Jishan then went on to open the chest of the Iron Corpse.

With skin as tough as iron, the process was quite difficult, and it took half an hour of effort before Yang Jishan managed to slice open the surface with a Second Grade dagger, revealing the Formation beneath the skin.

Chapter 537: Thirteen Stripes (2)

The Walking Corpse's flesh rotted and fell apart, the Formation Patterns not clear.

The Iron Corpse's flesh was hard, making the Formation much clearer.

Comparing the two, Young Master Yun preliminarily restored a portion of the Formation.

This Formation was incomplete, with many Formation Patterns incorrect, and the Formation Pivot layout also had errors; it only had a rough outline.

Even so, Young Master Yun's eyes shimmered as he murmured,

"Ultimate Formation..."

Yang Jishan frowned, "Ultimate Formation?"

Young Master Yun explained, "It's a Formation that requires divine sense beyond one's grade, quantity of Formation Patterns beyond one's rank, and understanding of the Formation beyond the norm. Although it's a First Grade, it's not just a First Grade, it's an Ultimate Technique of Formation."

Yang Jishan was still baffled.

Young Master Yun tried to simplify further,

"It's the most difficult type of Formation within the First-grade Formations..."

With that explanation, Yang Jishan understood.

But he had another question, "How difficult can it be?"

Young Master Yun then said, "This completely exceptional Formation isn't part of the assessment for a First Rank Formation Master and moreover, many Second Rank Formation Masters cannot learn it..."

Yang Jishan exclaimed in surprise, "Young Master Yun, you can't learn it either?"

Young Master Yun hesitated.

Out in the world, he didn't want to lose face for the Yun Family, but he hadn't studied it and truly didn't know whether he could learn it.

After a moment of hesitation, Young Master Yun honestly said,

"The Ultimate Formation involves profound insights into Formation principles. I haven't studied it and don't know if I can learn it..."

Yang Jishan nodded.

If even a Second Rank Formation Master couldn't learn it, then the Formation must indeed be extraordinary.

"Then do you know what kind of Formation this is?"

Yang Jishan asked again.

Young Master Yun gazed at the restored Formation again and regretfully said,

"The patterns are missing; it's indistinguishable..."

"Only by restoring the Formation Patterns, then through the Patterns, infer the complete Formation Diagram, can we discern what kind of Formation it is..."

Yang Jishan said, "Then why not infer it?"

Young Master Yun wryly smiled, "Inferring Formation Diagrams involves Formation Calculation, which is an extremely sophisticated part of Formation knowledge. In our Yun Family, only the old ancestor knows it..."

The old ancestor knows it?

Yang Jishan's head began to ache with the information.

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Formations were really troublesome.

There was the Ultimate Formation, surpassing grades, inferring and calculating...

He decided to cut to the chase and asked,

"Is there a way to break this Corpse Control Formation?"

Young Master Yun pondered long and slowly said,

"To break it directly... not knowing the Patterns, one cannot grasp the Formation, so it probably can't be broken..."

"Only indirect methods can be used to interfere with the connections within the Formation, thereby influencing its control over the zombies..."

"As for how exactly to do it, I need to study it a bit..."

Yang Jishan was anxious, but he also knew that haste wouldn't help, so he cupped his hands and said,

"Then I'll have to trouble Young Master Yun..."

After not too long, Young Master Yun found Yang Jishan:

"I've figured it out..."

"Zombies are driven by Corpse Qi."

"This Ultimate Formation, drawn within the meridians, is used to control Corpse Qi, precisely directing the Corpse Qi's flow to manipulate Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses, to kill or to consume..."

"Currently, only Lu Chengyun knows this Formation and he alone has control over it; there's no solution for the moment, we can only try to destroy it."

"After destroying the Formation, zombies will lose control due to the dispersal of Corpse Qi, and then we can decapitate them or sever their limbs; once their Corpse Qi dissipates, they will cease movement..."

Yang Jishan nodded, "So, we must first target their meridians, destroy their Formation, then sever their limbs and heads, and release their Corpse Qi..."

"Yes," Young Master Yun added,

"The Corpse Qi of the zombies is controlled by the Ultimate Formation, so we must destroy the Formation before severing the limbs."

"Severing the limbs first is useless since the Corpse Qi would still be influenced by the Ultimate Formation, festering instead of dispersing..."

Yang Jishan thought about it from a practical viewpoint and mused,

"That being the case, the Walking Corpses are easy to handle, but what about the Iron Corpses?"

"The Iron Corpses have skin and bones like refined iron, their meridians are not easy to destroy, their heads not easy to chop, limbs not easy to sever..."

Young Master Yun also found it problematic, "I... I'll go think on it some more..."

After half a day pondering, Young Master Yun came back to Yang Jishan and said,

"I've thought it over and consulted a few senior Formation Masters, and I have devised a method..."

"Using the Chaos Spirit Formation, interfere with the fluctuations of Spiritual Power, thus affecting the Ultimate Formation's control over the zombies."

"Chaos Spirit Formation..."

Yang Jishan contemplated, "Interfering with the fluctuations of Spiritual Power... but don't zombies move due to an Evil Power like Corpse Qi? Will that work?"

"It will work," Young Master Yun nodded, "The effect will be weaker, but it will work. Whether it's Spiritual Power or Evil Power, they are both forms of the energy of the heavens and the earth, as well as the power of Tao Cultivation, similar in essence despite their differences."

Yang Jishan nodded, somewhat understanding.

The Yang Family was a clan of Taoist Soldiers, only concerned with battle.

In terms of Cultivation, they each practiced whatever made them strong, whatever Taoist Skill was powerful.

They didn't bother to delve into such nuanced knowledge.

Young Master Yun continued, "Draw the Chaos Spirit Formation on a sharp Spirit Sword, and then stab it into the Iron Corpse's meridian. Even if it doesn't destroy the Formation, it will interfere with the flow of Evil Power, affecting the zombie's control."

"However, this Chaos Spirit Formation must be Second Grade..."

"If I draw it alone, it will take longer..."

Yang Jishan asked, "Will First Grade not suffice?"

"It won't do," Young Master Yun shook his head, "A First-grade Ultimate Formation, surpassing First-grade Formations, is comparable to a Second-grade Formation. A First-grade Chaos Spirit Formation will have a minimal impact on such an Ultimate Formation."

"Only a Second-grade Chaos Spirit Formation can affect a First-grade Ultimate Formation."

Chapter 538: Thirteen Stripes (3)

Yang Jishan heaved a sigh.

Given the current situation, the Corpse Mine couldn't be taken down in a short period of time.

"It can't be helped then, slow it down a bit..."

Afterward, without changing his expression, Yang Jishan continued to apply pressure on Lu Chengyun as always.

The two sides had many encounters, each sustaining injuries, maintaining a delicate balance.

It wasn't until Yang Jishan had crafted dozens of Spirit Swords, inscribed with Chaos Spirit Formation Patterns.

And other Taoist Soldiers followed his instructions when engaging with the Walking Corpses.

First, shatter their heart meridians, destroy their Formations, then sever their limbs and heads, dissipate the Corpse Qi, and they could be successfully subdued.

When dealing with Iron Corpses, use the Spirit Sword to pierce their heart meridians.

The effect of the Chaos Spirit Formation could only disrupt the flow of Evil Power and not completely isolate it, so Lu Chengyun was still able to control the Iron Corpses, but with a delay.

Often when he ordered the Iron Corpses to kill,

His thought would transmit, and after a few breaths' delay caused by the Chaos Spirit Formation, the Iron Corpses would then react.

Albeit only for those few breaths.

But on a battlefield where every split second counts, that was enough to be fatal.

If the deployment of Corpse Soldiers was delayed by these few breaths, the attack of the Taoist Soldiers would become faster by that much. As a result of this give-and-take, vulnerabilities could be exploited.

With the Corpse Formation destroyed and the control over the Iron Corpses obstructed,

The situation quickly turned grim.

In short order, the Corpse Soldiers suffered heavy casualties.

Lu Chengyun urgently gave the order to retreat, pulling back to fortify the Corpse Mine.

The outcome of the battle was clear; however, Yang Jishan refrained from mounting a strong attack, so as not to give Lu Chengyun an opportunity. Instead, he stationed his forces nearby, contemplating another method of assault.

But the next day, new Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses emerged among the Corpse Soldiers.

Yang Jishan furrowed his brow, saying:

"How can there be more?"

An experienced old Formation Master, eyeing the Stone Palace with a solemn look, slowly said, "It's...the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses has begun its operation..."

"The Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses?"

The old Formation Master said, "The young friend from before reported this Formation in the information he sent."

"Though it's just a Compound Formation, it already shows the rudiments of a Large Formation."

"Powered by Evil Power, using the Corpse Refining Coffin as the Formation media, it's a demonic Formation that integrates corpse raising, corpse refinement, and corpse control."

"Once the Formation is activated, it has a significant cost."

"But once it starts, zombies can be refined rapidly, on a large scale, in a production-like manner."

"If this continues, our men will keep dying, while they'll keep refining more corpses..."

Unable to help himself, Yang Jishan cursed aloud:

"Formations again! Where on earth does he get all these troublesome Formations from?"

The old Formation Master was momentarily taken aback, then a sharp light appeared in his murky eyes as he said coldly:

"The Great Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses... is not an ordinary inheritance."

"It's likely that someone intentionally gave it to him, with the purpose of him raising a... 'Taoist Demon'..."

The words "Taoist Demon" were spoken lightly by the old Formation Master.

Yet when they fell on everyone's ears, they weighed heavy as lead.

A chill crept up within Yang Jishan's heart.

He glanced again at the dark Corpse Mine and the eerie Stone Palace within.

In the Stone Palace, there was the Corpse King, a host of zombies, the Ultimate Formation, and the embryonic form of the Demon Path Great Formation—the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses...

All of these might just be the pieces and game arranged by someone manipulating from behind the scenes.

That person wants to use the state boundary as a chessboard, using Formations as pathways, human corpses as pawns, to raise a dragon named "Taoist Demon"!

And within this state boundary, the people who are pawns, from their life to death, might know nothing at all.

Even Lu Chengyun himself may not be clear on it.

Yang Jishan's expression turned solemn, his heart clouded with brooding thoughts.

How this game would end, whether in victory or defeat, whether in life or death, and what, in the end, would be raised, no one knew...

...

In the Stone Palace, atop the Ten Thousand Corpses Sacrificial Altar.

Lu Chengyun's gaze was faintly icy as he surveyed his surroundings.

The Corpse King stood behind him, guarded by Iron Corpses on his left and right.

And beneath Lu Chengyun's feet, the Ten Thousand Corpses Compound Formation was running at full capacity.

Tremendous Spiritual Power surged from the Formation eye, corrupted by Blood Qi and Yin Qi to form Evil Power, which circulated through the Formation Pivot and flowed onto the Formation Patterns.

The Patterns glowed an eerie red, feeding Evil Power into the coffins and nourishing the innumerable zombies inside.

"Truly worthy of the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses!"

Lu Chengyun was full of ambition.

He still remembered the words spoken by the person who had given him the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses:

"Killing is a sin; refining people into corpses.

Through sin one attains the Path; from corpses one crowns a king."

He didn't dwell on the temporary defeat. Discover stories at empire

As long as he had the Corpse King, the loss of some Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses mattered little.

And with the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses at his disposal, he could keep refining corpses and raising more indefinitely, securing an invincible position!

The more corpses he refined, the stronger the Corpse King would become.

And as he controlled the Corpse King, commanding the submission of ten thousand corpses, he would naturally become stronger as well.

Lu Chengyun's laughter gradually sounded out, his voice shedding its gentle disguise to become cold and eerie, like a night owl in the deep mountains, chilling to the bone...

At this very moment, in a secret chamber within the Stone Palace, there was another altar.

Atop the altar was placed an "empty" Contemplation Map.

Below the altar, a small white coffin was set.

Inside the coffin lay a young Cultivator.

This young Cultivator slowly opened his eyes.

For a moment, his pupils were alight with brilliant starlight, awe-inspiring and dazzling. Moments later, this radiance gradually receded and hid deep within his eyes.

His pupils became even darker, deeper.

Amid the depth, there was a restrained brilliance.

This was an indication of an extremely profound Divine Sense.

Mo Hua had now completely assimilated the massive Evil Thoughts from the Zhang Family's zombies.

His Divine Sense had successfully broken through its bottleneck, advancing further, reaching the peak of a Cultivator at the Initial Stage of Foundation Establishment:

Thirteen Stripes at their pinnacle!

Chapter 539: Escape (1)

Thirteen Stripes, pinnacle of Divine Sense!

Enough to utterly crush most cultivators at the initial stage of Foundation Establishment.

On the level of Divine Thought, he could be considered on par with the very top cultivators among those at Foundation Establishment Initial Stage.

Compared to before, Mo Hua's Divine Sense was more profound, and the control over it, more sensitive.

Mo Hua's gaze was profound as he released his Divine Sense, and the virtual-white field of vision of his Divine Sense kept expanding...

The range of his perception became wider, and the number of things he could perceive increased.

Every tree and stone, every flower and bush, the living cultivators, and the dead walking corpses, Iron Corpses, through their exterior material shell, the essence could be glimpsed.

The world's myriad things, the intrinsic Spiritual Energy, Corpse Qi, and various other natural energies, their trajectories also became clearer by a margin.

What the naked eye sees is the surface.

Only within the field of vision of the Divine Sense can the intrinsic nature of all things be discerned.

With every increase in strength of the Divine Sense, the essence perceived went deeper...

Furthermore, Mo Hua's understanding of the Spiritual Pivot Formation had also become more thorough.

In the Sea of Consciousness, borrowing the Divine Thought of the Zhang Family's zombies, Mo Hua practised the Spiritual Pivot Formation on the Taoist Stele hundreds upon thousands of times in one go...

The originally complex Formation Patterns had long been committed to memory.

Closing his eyes, all he could see was the image of the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

Mastering the Spiritual Pivot Formation, dividing Spiritual Power, forming Spiritual Threads, and controlling mediums became effortless.

In addition, his other techniques also improved by leaps and bounds.

Mo Hua's abilities, whether it be Formations or Spells, were all closely related to his Divine Sense.

Now that Divine Sense had been enhanced, his mastery over Formations naturally advanced as well.

All sorts of Spells, whether it be the Water Passing Step, Fireball Technique, Water Prison Technique, or Concealment Technique, their effects would be superior by a margin.

It was just that he was trapped in a coffin and momentarily unable to leave, so there was no opportunity to try them out.

Mo Hua was extremely joyful and couldn't help but squint his eyes and smile.

As he smiled, his smile suddenly faded.

He'd realized something quite awkward.

His Divine Sense was very strong, exceedingly strong, comparable to the pinnacle of the initial stage of Foundation Establishment.

But his physical body was still weak, and his Cultivation hadn't increased.

At the eighth layer of Qi Refinement, his physique was frail.

There was no way to get out of this small coffin...

This small coffin, made of neither stone nor iron, had a tough texture and had been nailed shut from the outside, hence the impossibility of escape...

To forcibly break free with a Spell would also harm himself.

Mo Hua sighed, somewhat helpless.

This issue needed to be taken seriously.

Although he was inherently weak and couldn't practice Body Refinement, he still had to figure out some way to make up for some Body Refinement techniques...

However, this was a problem to be considered later.

The urgent task at hand was to figure out a way to escape.

Mo Hua released his Divine Sense again, observing the movements outside, and suddenly felt something strange.

Inside the Corpse Mine, it seemed to be under martial law, yet there was some chaos.

And in the distance, the dense, disorderly breaths of energy, jumbled together, tangled, clashed, flickering on and off.

It was as if many cultivators were in a melee...

"What exactly is happening outside?" Mo Hua wondered.

Someone had attacked into the Corpse Mine.

But who could it be?

There shouldn't be any power within South Yue City capable of contending with the many Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses inside the Corpse Mine...

Mo Hua frowned.

If a melee erupted, the Stone Palace would become rather dangerous.

He needed to think of a way out sooner...

And there was Lu Chengyun, who still hadn't come over; he wondered if he'd been delayed by the battle and had forgotten for the moment.

If he happened to remember and came to check, it would be quite unfortunate.

Hiding in the coffin, he might be able to deceive Lu Chengyun, but given Lu Chengyun's cautious temperament, the likelihood was not great, better not to take this risk.

So Mo Hua began to ponder how he could escape.

But after a long time, he couldn't come up with any good method.

The Little Zombie was in the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses, too far away to control it to come and open the coffin for him.

And Little Tiger hadn't been left outside either.

Mo Hua sighed again. Experience exclusive tales on empire

The preparations had not been sufficient, and there were oversights.

It seemed he could only wait patiently and see if there was an opportunity.

Over the next few days, Mo Hua would often release his Divine Sense to sense the activity outside, looking for a chance to escape.

The melee outside the Stone Palace was still ongoing, with no clear opportunity presenting itself...

Until three days later, Mo Hua suddenly sensed two familiar auras, discretely hovering around.

It seemed they were concealing themselves, avoiding others in the chaos, and quietly searching for something inside the Stone Palace...

Mo Hua's eyes lit up.

It was Junior Brother and Junior Sister!

Were they looking for him?

Mo Hua exerted his Divine Sense to its limits, perceiving these two figures, and at the same time, faintly overheard them speaking in hushed voices:

"...been searching for so many days... no trace of him..."

"Do you think... where could Junior Brother be?"

The voices were intermittent, along with Bai Zisheng's sighs.

"Let's search a little longer..."

The voice was clear and pleasant—Junior Sister's.

Bai Zisheng looked dejected, "Zixi, do you think our Junior Brother... he hasn't had an accident, has he..."

Bai Zixi remained silent.

Mo Hua's heart warmed.

It seemed that while he had been locked in this coffin, Junior Brother and Junior Sister had been anxiously searching for him.

Mo Hua released his Divine Sense openly, spying on the two.

Bai Zisheng and his companion sensed it and both felt a chill in their hearts.

Had they been discovered?

Then they both felt a surge of joy.

This aura, it was Junior Brother!

Bai Zisheng's face showed joy for a moment, then he frowned and said:

"That's not right, Junior Brother's Divine Sense isn't this profound..."

"The aura seems correct."

"Indeed, this aura, it shouldn't be fake..."

"Has he 'eaten' something again..."

"That can't be, how could he 'eat' every day? Isn't he afraid of 'eating' his little brain to pieces?"

Chapter 540: Escape (2)

"...His little head was always a bit naughty..."

"Let's have a look..."

"Yeah."

Mo Hua's Divine Sense was unceasing.

Bai Zisheng and another were perceptive of Mo Hua's Divine Sense. Cloaked with a concealing cape and with their figures hidden, they found the secret chamber amidst the chaos of the Stone Palace.

The secret chamber was cramped but exquisitely crafted, with a sinister sacrificial altar situated above.

Atop the altar lay bones, burning white candles dripped with corpse oil, casting a ghostly light.

Below the altar was a white coffin.

The Divine Sense of Mo Hua emanated from within the coffin.

When Bai Zisheng saw the white coffin, his expression was one of astonishment. Then, with a pained look, he cried out:

"Little junior brother, he's dead!"

Bai Zixi shot him a glance, "How could his Divine Sense emit from him were he dead?"

Bai Zisheng paused, his pained expression faded as he scratched his head and begrudgingly said:

"Oh, right..."

In a clear voice, Bai Zixi said:

"Open the coffin."

Bai Zisheng nodded. After inspecting the coffin for a moment and understanding its structure, he pulled out the nails from the four corners with brute strength. Then he broke the fastenings of the lid and slowly lifted it.

Inside the coffin lay a familiar figure.

It was indeed their junior brother, Mo Hua!

Mo Hua's complexion was somewhat pale, his eyes deeper than before, and there seemed to be a lustrous light within them, both familiar and somewhat strange.

Bai Zisheng's face first showed joy, then became stern:

"How can you prove you're my junior brother?"

Mo Hua gave him a look, "Idiot!"

Bai Zisheng heaved a sigh of relief and calmed down.

That demeanor and the familiar tone were indeed those of his little junior brother...

In a soft voice, Bai Zixi said, "Are you alright...?"

Her expression was calm, but her eyes shone like a brook under the autumn sun, warm and radiant.

Mo Hua was momentarily lost in thought, then replied with a bright smile:

"I'm fine."

Bai Zixi blinked and nodded her head.

Curious, Bai Zisheng asked, "How did you end up locked in there?"

"Lu Chengyun wanted to dispose of me once I've served my purpose," Mo Hua said.

Bai Zisheng became furious, "That's outrageous! Bullying my junior brother is bullying me, trying to kill my junior brother is akin to trying to kill me!"

He pounded his chest and assured Mo Hua:

"Don't worry, I'll slaughter him for you!"

"He's at Foundation Establishment..."

"Foundation Establishment, still slaughter!"

"Alright then..."

Mo Hua wasn't sure if he was bluffing, but he still felt grateful at heart.

"But what does 'dispose of me once I've served my purpose' entail?" Bai Zisheng asked, curious again.

"It means using me as a sacrifice, feeding his Contemplation Map with my Divine Sense," Mo Hua explained succinctly.

"Where is that map?"

"I 'ate' it..."

"How did you 'eat' again..."

Bai Zisheng uttered with a mix of frustration and resignation, then muttered, "I can't decide if you're the offering, or if the map is your offering..."

"So has your Divine Sense grown stronger again?" Bai Zisheng asked.

"Yeah." Mo Hua nodded modestly:

"Got a bit stronger, thirteen stripes..."

Even Bai Zixi was taken aback by this revelation.

Bai Zisheng opened his mouth wide in astonishment and said helplessly:

"If this keeps up, you'll truly become a little monster..."

Qi Refinement at the eighth level, Foundation Establishment with thirteen stripes Divine Sense...

Even among the Bai Family's ancestors, he had never come across such a record.

Bai Zixi's eyes flickered as she cautioned, "Don't tell anyone..."

Bai Zisheng also came to his senses, nodding as he said:

"Right, you mustn't tell anyone. Otherwise, there are those who'd want to crack open your head to see what's inside... People can be very malevolent."

Mo Hua was shocked and nodded repeatedly, "Yeah, yeah!"

Bai Zisheng had more to say, but Bai Zixi spoke up, "Let's leave this place first."

The Corpse Mine was no place to linger in.

She and her brother had come here to find Mo Hua, and now that they had found him, naturally, they wanted to leave as soon as possible.

"Alright!"

Within the Corpse Mine, cultivators and zombies battled fiercely.

Swords were blind, spells were aplenty, the ground was rife with Corpse Poison... There were even Foundation Establishment cultivators fighting hand-to-hand with Iron Corpses.

Getting caught in the crossfire was still very dangerous.

The three of them cloaked themselves with invisibility and left the secret chamber.

Before leaving, Mo Hua thought for a moment and set up an Earth Fire Formation around the secret chamber, blowing it up, destroying the entire altar and the coffin with it.

Although he hadn't died, he still needed to destroy the "corpse" and erase the traces.

Or rather, because he hadn't died and wanted to be cautious, it was necessary to "destroy the corpse and erase the traces."

At the same time, he also took the blank Contemplation Map with him.

All the ancestors of the Zhang Family that had been within the Contemplation Map were 'eaten' clean by Mo Hua.

The map was now blank. Stay updated via empire

But Mo Hua felt that the map was very peculiar, capable of containing the spirits of the Zhang Family's deceased, who, after death, became evil spirits manifesting in bodily form and living within the map.

Clearly, this was not a feat that ordinary Tao Cultivation items could achieve.

Mo Hua kept the blank Contemplation Map with him.

He would study it himself later or ask his master for advice.

...

The Taoist Court was still attacking the Stone Palace, with the Taoist Soldiers leading the charge and the other cultivators providing cover.

With a way to restrain the Corpse Soldiers, the threat was reduced.

Lu Chengyun then used the Formation of Ten Thousand Corpses for Corpse Raising and Corpse Refinement, constantly replenishing his forces, engaging in a war of attrition against the Taoist Soldiers.

Both sides were in a stalemate, with the situation inside the Stone Palace chaotic.

Foundation Building Cultivators, Qi Refining Taoist Soldiers, Iron Corpses, and Walking Corpses fought to the death...

Such a situation was momentarily beyond the resolution of the three Qi Refinement cultivators.

The immediate priority was to escape the Corpse Mine, and plan for the long term thereafter.

The three of them, invisible, circled around the edge of the battlefield and retreated towards the outside of the Corpse Mine.

Despite their caution, the Corpse Mine was too chaotic. There were many cultivators, even more zombies, and in a moment of inattention, they inadvertently revealed themselves and were discovered by a Corpse cultivator.