

The Quest 551

Chapter 551: Rebellion (1)

Two days later, at 6 A.M., as day and night converged, the dawn cracked with morning light.

The light of dawn, piercing through the poison and Corpse Qi, spilled onto the graves but took on a dim, ashy luster, gloomy and deathly still.

The Taoist Court's side, all out on strike, began the final battle of suppression.

Everything was ready.

First, dozens of Second Grade Runes with immense destructive power were activated.

The surging Spiritual Power coalesced into massive killing force, forming blade Formations, gathering into fireballs, or turning into water arrows, sweeping towards the top of the grave mounds.

The Zombies on the grave mounds were directly obliterated by the spiritual might of the Runes.

Batches of Zombies were sliced by blades, scorched by fire, soaked by water, and ultimately annihilated by the power of the Runes.

Then, a large wave of Walking Corpses surged forward.

Yang Jishan waved his hand, and a line of Cultivators stepped out, conjuring various Spiritual Artifacts.

These Spiritual Artifacts transformed into hundreds of flying swords, condensed into thousands of silver needles, or stirred up a sky full of flames, slaying towards the tidal wave of Walking Corpses.

One by one, the Walking Corpses fell, pierced by Spiritual Artifacts, or turned into ash.

Yet more came, like a tide.

After that, the Taoist Court's side again used Runes and Spiritual Artifacts together.

Batch after batch of Walking Corpses were eradicated...

The side of the Taoist Court, mostly from Clans or Sects with long traditions and profound backgrounds, were far from being comparable to Lu Chengyun, who relied on marrying into power and clinging onto others.

Their true cards in play were not something these Zombies could withstand.

Under the cover fire of Spiritual Artifacts and Runes, packs of Walking Corpses could only be wiped out.

Even the few Iron Corpses could not escape being slain.

However, these ultimate reserves were extremely precious and limited in number; they would eventually run out.

An hour later, a portion of Zombies were exterminated, and the enemy's strength was weakened, it was time for a frontal assault.

Yang Jishan glanced at Mo Hua beside him, his look somewhat worried.

Mo Hua nodded at him, indicating there was no need to worry.

Following the mixed crowd and being taken care of by senior brother and sister, being careful wouldn't pose a danger.

Yang Jishan sighed and then looked forward, his expression stern, and said solemnly,

"Kill!"

The Taoist Soldiers behind him also raised their swords and shouted,

"Kill!"

The Formations on the Taoist Soldiers' armor were activated, the Spiritual Power surged, and responded with each other in clusters.

Their voices thundered over mountains and forests, and morale soared to the skies.

Taoist Soldiers charged in Formation, clashing intensely with batches upon batches of Zombies.

Like cold water into boiling oil.

The top of the grave mounds boiled tumultuously for a moment...

Mo Hua, Bai Zisheng, and Bai Zixi, who were following Yang Jishan, focused mainly on self-preservation and did not attack recklessly to avoid being swept into the Corpse Tide and unable to free themselves.

Only at critical moments did they cast some spells to relieve the pressure on the surrounding battles.

This fierce battle lasted an entire day...

Cultivators were constantly wounded or killed, or attacked by Corpse Poison, falling into becoming Walking Corpses.

Similarly, large numbers of Zombies also fell, including a few Iron Corpses and a multitude of Walking Corpses.

But the number of Zombies was still substantial.

And Lu Chengyun was still nowhere to be seen.

Yang Jishan then took the lead, charging into the depths of the grave mounds, where Lu Chengyun hid.

The other Foundation Building Cultivators also followed Yang Jishan into the battle.

The deeper into the grave mounds, the more desolate and eerie it got.

The denser the group of corpses.

There were more Iron Corpses, and the Corpse Poison was heavier.

But with everyone's methods in full force, the hordes of corpses couldn't stand against them.

By evening, forces from all sides broke into the depths of the grave mounds at a chaotic burial ground, where they saw Lu Chengyun and the Corpse King behind him.

Dozens of Iron Corpses were guarding him in the vicinity.

And outside, thousands of Walking Corpses still poured in, seemingly protecting their "king."

Taoist Soldiers raised their shields, forming human walls, resisting the peripheral Walking Corpses.

Yang Jishan and others began to confront Lu Chengyun face-to-face, preparing for the final encirclement and suppression.

Lu Chengyun's face was slightly pale, but his expression remained calm.

He glanced at Yang Jishan with a cold gaze and scanned the crowd, sighing,

"Not bad for soldiers under the Taoist Court, so many Zombies, yet they can't stop you..."

Yang Jishan said in a deep voice,

"Lu Chengyun, you are at the end of your rope. Surrender the Corpse King and surrender now."

Lu Chengyun shook his head, "With the Corpse King, I still have a way out. If I surrender the Corpse King, death is certain for me."

Yang Jishan sneered, "You're determined to fight to the death?"

"If I don't fight to the death, where's my way to live? The Taoist Court won't let me go, neither will you."

Lu Chengyun raised his eyebrows and suddenly said oddly,

"But before the final battle, there's one thing I don't understand."

His gaze cooled as he scrutinized everyone,

"I really want to know, among all those present, who exactly uncovered the secret of the Corpse Mine and saw through the Formation I laid out? Who could push me to this state?"

The Cultivators looked at each other and remained silent.

Yang Jishan's gaze darkened slightly, and he was also somewhat startled inside.

Mo Hua's actions, Lu Chengyun knew nothing about?

Yang Jishan looked around, seeing Bai Zisheng and Bai Zixi by his side, while Mo Hua had disappeared without a trace.

Was he hiding?

"Can this concealment even hide from me?"

Yang Jishan was secretly astonished.

Seeing no one confess, Lu Chengyun scoffed,

"I thought it was a mastermind without fail, but it turns out to be a coward who shows his face and hides his tail!"

Hidden in the crowd, Mo felt disdainful when he heard this.

Such an aggressive method was too childish and couldn't ruffle a feather in his heart.

The things he said to insult people were definitely more infuriating.

Yang Jishan's gaze sharpened, and he said coldly,

"Lu Chengyun, you're no match for us, content to have a moment of verbal satisfaction. That's all you're capable of."

Chapter 552: Mutiny (2)

Lu Chengyun released his Divine Sense, scanning the crowd once again, but still found nothing.

Among the cultivators present, there were those with profound cultivation, those with exceptional Divine Sense, and a few who were clearly masters of Formation.

But not a single cultivator gave off that eerie and pressing feeling.

None resembled the cultivator who had woven the snare and was steadily closing in on him.

Lu Chengyun shook his head.

It's no use, the matter has reached this point, knowing or not knowing doesn't matter anymore.

A true battle of life and death calls for real strength; minor tricks are inconsequential.

Lu Chengyun looked at Yang Jishan, his eyes revealing a chilling light, and said,

"You underestimate this Corpse King..."

"This Corpse King is mine; no one can take it away!"

"Today, all of you will be buried here!"

"Your flesh and blood will become sacrificial offerings for the Corpse King."

"To let this Corpse King complete its true metamorphosis, becoming the true Lord of Evil, the King of Corpses!"

Lu Chengyun appeared invigorated, with a touch of madness in his eyes.

Yang Jishan frowned, feeling a sense of foreboding.

Just then, the Corpse King behind Lu Chengyun suddenly changed its aura, turning bloodthirsty and furious. Its exposed skin shifted from an iron blue to a gradually lightening hue, transforming into a deep bronze color...

Copper Corpse!

Yang Jishan's heart trembled.

Lu Chengyun intended to refine the Corpse King into a Copper Corpse!

Copper Corpse denotes the rank, while Corpse King indicates the status.

Once the Corpse King fully transformed into a Copper Corpse, its power would surge dramatically, and it would be able to command an army of the dead. The people here would have no means of dealing with it.

With a Copper Corpse King at his protection, they would also be unable to kill Lu Chengyun!

Yang Jishan drew out his Sunset Spear and yelled,

"Go all out! Slay all the zombies, including Lu Chengyun!"

The others, recognizing the seriousness of the situation, no longer held back and attacked Lu Chengyun together.

Foundation Establishment cultivators clashed with Iron Corpses. Their Spiritual Power was formidable, and the Corpse Qi intense. Even the mere aftermath was enough to shake the mountains and crack the stone.

As Yang Jishan advanced on Lu Chengyun, the half-transformed Copper Corpse King blocked his path.

Its eyes were crimson, with bronze skin and iron bones, elongated fangs, and fingertips oozing with a thick, dark green Corpse Poison.

Each move carried a gust of foul wind.

Yang Jishan, even when fighting with all his might, was still suppressed by the Corpse King.

Several nearby Foundation Establishment cultivators rushed to assist seeing the situation.

Among them was a gaunt old man with a solemn expression and a middle-aged cultivator who appeared reluctant.

It took several Foundation Establishment cultivators working together to just barely match the half-transformed Copper Corpse King in combat.

For a moment, everyone was somewhat taken aback.

If they allowed the Corpse King to complete its transformation into a Copper Corpse, they might all perish here.

After dozens more exchanges, Yang Jishan felt a chill in his heart and knew they couldn't continue this way, so he gritted his teeth and said, "Kill Lu Chengyun first!"

Lu Chengyun sneered upon hearing this.

The Qi Refining Taoist Soldiers had the Walking Corpses to restrain them, Foundation Establishment cultivators had the Iron Corpses, and Yang Jishan's few high-combat Foundation Establishment were suppressed by the Corpse King.

How could they kill him?

Yang Jishan's gaze turned icier as a red glow flashed in his hand. The Sunset Spear erupted in flames, its power astounding.

Lu Chengyun's expression changed slightly.

"Hold it off!" shouted Yang Jishan.

He then retreated a few steps, leaving the attack range of the Corpse King and reaching a safe position. His Qi Sea surged as he stimulated all his Spiritual Power, integrating it into the Sunset Spear.

The Sunset Spear was enveloped in flames, burning fiercely.

And behind Yang Jishan, the flames condensed as if congealing into a miniature sun.

Lu Chengyun was startled and immediately commanded the Iron Corpses to move towards Yang Jishan,

"Stop him!"

The surrounding Iron Corpses, baring their fangs and claws, advanced on Lu Chengyun.

The Corpse King also roared and charged towards Yang Jishan.

The gaunt old man shouted, "Protect Leader Yang!"

He then took out several Copper Coins, wedged them between his fingers with Spiritual Power, and flung them all out, hitting the Corpse King's joints.

The Copper Coins turned into ropes, binding the Corpse King.

The middle-aged cultivator sighed, reluctantly producing a jade-inlaid and gold-trimmed folding fan. He stimulated it with Spiritual Power, waved it a few times, and a wall of wind formed, guarding Yang Jishan's side.

With each wave, one spine of the fan broke off.

The charging Iron Corpses were blocked by the wind wall and couldn't get close.

Meanwhile, the other Foundation Establishment cultivators also made their moves. Some repelled Iron Corpses with Spiritual Artifacts, while others used spells to restrain the Corpse King.

A few moments later, the Sunset Spear trembled.

All the surrounding flames were suddenly pulled in, compressing into the spear.

Yang Jishan's face turned pale, but his eyes shone brightly.

The gaunt old man quickly said,

"Subdue the Corpse King, everyone else back off!"

The cultivators near the Corpse King immediately withdrew.

The other Foundation Establishment cultivators each used Spiritual Artifacts like Golden Locks, Wooden Prisons, and Water Nets to immobilize the Corpse King, while several Spiritual Cultivators suppressed it with spells, preventing it from moving.

Yang Jishan raised his spear horizontally, then, with man and spear united as one, his energy piercing the heavens, he thrust forward with tremendous force towards the Corpse King's chest.

Upon touching the Corpse King, the surging flame of Spiritual Power exploded.

A thunderous roar sounded as the ground was blasted into a deep pit.

Cracks in the rocks spread far and wide.

The shockwave of the burst of power repelled all nearby cultivators and Iron Corpses.

Fire and dust filled the air.

As the smoke cleared, those who looked were shocked.

The Corpse King was still not dead.

At the critical moment, it had used its arm to block the spear.

The Sunset Spear had pierced through its arm, the tip grazing its chest but clearly lacking the force to puncture its chest, not even breaking the skin.

The Corpse King's body was charred, heavily damaged.

Its aura weakened considerably, but in the blink of an eye, the Corpse Qi began to recover...

Chapter 553: Rebellion (3)

Everyone was alarmed.

Such a powerful Corpse King!

Yang Jishan's heart also trembled, and immediately he exclaimed,

"Quick, take this chance to kill Lu Chengyun!"

The Corpse King was injured and temporarily immobile; this was the time to hurry and kill Lu Chengyun!

Otherwise, once the Corpse King recovered, they would be stuck in a deadlock again.

All the cultivators also came back to their senses, throwing caution to the wind, with swords and spells all launching towards Lu Chengyun.

Lu Chengyun was greatly startled.

What kind of spear was this?

Could it really suppress the Corpse King?

As he saw people coming to kill him, Lu Chengyun tried to run, but without the Corpse King, his power greatly diminished, and he hadn't gone far when he was immobilized by the copper coins of a gaunt old man and entangled by several nearby Foundation Establishment cultivators.

Yang Jishan wanted to pull out the Sunset Spear, but its tip was firmly stuck in the Corpse King's arm and couldn't be pulled out right away.

He gritted his teeth, painfully abandoning the Sunset Spear, and took out an ordinary long spear to go after Lu Chengyun.

Lu Chengyun's Opening The Mountain Sword Method, although powerful,

Seemed somewhat inferior in front of so many Taoist Court cultivators.

Even with the help of the Iron Corpse, he could barely hold on.

It was then that Yang Jishan made his move.

Using the Sunset Spear was extremely draining.

Yang Jishan's face was pale, his breath somewhat weaker, but still he clenched his teeth and waved the long spear, seizing Lu Chengyun's lapse and breaking his swordsmanship, kicking him to the ground with one foot.

Then, raising the long spear high, he aimed it at Lu Chengyun's heart and stabbed down fiercely.

Yang Jishan wanted to end Lu Chengyun with a single thrust of his spear!

But that thrust did not land.

Midway, it was deflected by a few copper coins, the spear's direction slightly altered, only grazing Lu Chengyun's ribs and scratching through a layer of skin.

Lu Chengyun took the opportunity to break free and was once again protected by the Iron Corpse.

Yang Jishan was furious, his gaze sharp as a sword, as he turned to question the gaunt old man,

"Old Wen, what do you mean by this?"

Without those copper coins, he would have stabbed Lu Chengyun to death just now!

The gaunt old man, however, looked terrified, "We can't kill him!"

Yang Jishan frowned and asked coldly, "Why not?"

The gaunt old man pointed towards the big pit with the Corpse King, pierced through the arm by the Sunset Spear, unmoving, and said with a trembling voice, "Its blood, it has already turned pale gold..."

Yang Jishan was shocked and looked hurriedly.

Only then did he notice that from the Corpse King's arm pierced by the spear, blood was flowing, seeping along the spear and dropping onto the ground.

The blood was originally a dark green color.

Now, however, it was tinged with a faint and eerie gold.

Yang Jishan felt a sudden chill in his heart.

"A demonic mutation?"

"How can it be so rapid?"

The gaunt old man's voice was filled with terror,

"It has already developed its own consciousness, killing Lu Chengyun would be like removing its shackles, and that would be the most terrifying thing..."

The preceding scene of total annihilation, with the Corpse King's bloodcurdling scream, once again flashed in his mind.

Yang Jishan's face turned ghostly pale, his teeth clenched, a cold sensation repeatedly rising in his heart:

"It's all been calculated!"

"If the affair of the Corpse Mine isn't leaked, Lu Chengyun will continue his corpse refinement, the sins piling up, and after decades, or even a century, the Corpse King will transform into a Taoist Demon..."

"If the affair of the Corpse Mine is leaked, Lu Chengyun will be besieged by the Taoist Court."

"A large-scale battle between cultivators and zombies, cultivators dying, zombies consuming humans, amidst life and death, Blood Qi and Corpse Qi converging, will similarly expedite the Corpse King's transformation..."

"The death of Lu Chengyun is the final key!"

"It's the key to unlocking the shackles, transforming the Corpse King into a Taoist Demon!"

"Once Lu Chengyun is killed, the Corpse King will break free from its shackles, instantly becoming the true 'king' of corpses, commanding thousands of zombies and transforming into a real Taoist Demon!"

"What a venomous scheme, what profound plotting!"

"The key is, there are no traces of these events, everything is happening naturally..."

And Lu Chengyun, including those present, were all pawns...

This was a checkmate!

The gaunt old man had also realized this, which is why he looked so terrified.

Among the other cultivators, some had also understood, and in their eyes, there was an involuntary flash of despair.

Yang Jishan felt both nervous and afraid, his mind in turmoil.

However, he was the leader of the Taoist Soldiers, battle-hardened, and more importantly, he had to take responsibility for the lives and deaths of his brothers fighting alongside him.

The more dangerous the situation, the calmer one must be.

Yang Jishan forced himself to calm down, and after a moment of contemplation, gritted his teeth and said:

"At this point, we can only capture Lu Chengyun alive."

"Capture Lu Chengyun and use him to control the Corpse King, then we can make long-term plans!"

That was the only way left.

The gaunt old man knew it too.

But killing Lu Chengyun was one thing, capturing him alive was another entirely...

Just then, suddenly, a vicious low growl was heard.

All eyes followed the sound, only to see the Corpse King's aura reviving, as it slowly stood up again.

The air of the tomb hill was filled with Blood Qi, Corpse Qi, Filthy Qi, and the Qi of death.

Its injuries were healing remarkably quickly.

The Corpse King's gaze was ice-cold as it pulled out the Sunset Spear from its arm, tossed it aside, and with a few flashes, stood behind Lu Chengyun once more.

For a moment, the cultivators felt bitter, the look of despair on their faces deepening.

Feeling the devoted Corpse King silently standing behind him again, Lu Chengyun was much relieved.

And having witnessed what had just unfolded, Lu Chengyun had also come to understand.

He looked at Yang Jishan, and with a smug smile he said:

"You don't dare to kill me!"

"That's right, you don't dare to kill me!!"

"If you kill me, the Corpse King will be out of control."

"If the Corpse King is out of control, it means that all the Walking Corpses and Iron Corpses in South Yue City will also lose control."

"The Corpse King will become a Copper Corpse, commanding the Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses, forming a terrifying Corpse Tide that will slaughter the city, kill people, eat people, and turn the dead into zombies!"

"This Corpse Tide will gradually grow stronger, sweeping across the entire Minor Wilderness State Boundary and spreading to the surrounding Second Grade state boundaries..."

"This is a catastrophe!"

"The reason this hasn't happened is because of what?"

Lu Chengyun pointed to his chest, "Because I'm still alive!"

"Because I'm alive, the Corpse King obeys my command, and that's why it hasn't committed so many killings!"

"The cultivators of South Yue City have been able to cling to life!"

"The entire Minor Wilderness State Boundary has been spared from a living hell!"

Lu Chengyun's eyes gleamed with madness, his tone impassioned as he said:

"All of this is because, I am still alive!"

"I am still alive!"

"But once I am dead..."

Lu Chengyun's words came to a sudden halt, and the smile on his face gradually faded as he looked down to see sharp fingertips piercing through his chest.

On the fingertips, there was fresh blood and dark green Corpse Poison.

Yang Jishan, the gaunt old man, and all the other cultivators stared in shock.

They saw a zombie take advantage of Lu Chengyun's carelessness and claw right through his chest.

And the silent assassin, who had just launched the surprise attack from behind, was none other than the "loyal" Corpse King himself!

Had the Corpse King actually "betrayed"?!

Chapter 554: Kneel Down (1)

The Corpse King "betrayed" and stealthily attacked; everyone was shocked.

More shocked than Yang Jishan and the others, was Lu Chengyun himself.

His chest had already been pierced by the zombie's sharp claws, with blood gushing out. Corpse Poison merged with the blood, flowing into his meridians, attacking towards his internal organs and heart.

His hands and limbs were gradually becoming unresponsive.

His consciousness was also somewhat blurred, and a craving for blood was slowly clouding his judgment.

The Copper Corpse's Corpse Poison was fierce and took effect very quickly.

Lu Chengyun endured the intense pain, and with a backhanded palm strike, repelled the Corpse King.

The claws of the Corpse King, pulled from Lu Chengyun's back, left several trails of blood that sprayed out, falling to the ground and gradually turning green.

Lu Chengyun's hands trembled as he took out various bottles and jars from his Storage Bag; those for stopping bleeding, treating Corpse Poison, revitalizing Spiritual Energy... He stuffed any and all pills into his mouth without discrimination.

Those who refine corpses, surrounded by zombies, would often be contaminated with Corpse Poison and must guard against the zombies' transformation, so they always carried many pills with them.

Lu Chengyun was no exception.

After taking the pills, he temporarily suppressed the Corpse Poison, and his pale complexion also improved slightly.

Meanwhile, the Corpse King stayed three zhang away, silent and motionless, still appearing "utterly loyal."

It seemed that it was not the one that had just launched the stealthy attack.

Lu Chengyun tried to control the Corpse King, but found that it was still under his command, with no abnormalities at all.

But having nearly died at the hands of the Corpse King a moment ago, if he still thought there was no problem with it, then he must be out of his mind.

Frightened and enraged, Lu Chengyun looked around and roared,

"Who has taken control of my Corpse King?!"

Yang Jishan and the others all changed their expressions.

Someone else could control the Corpse King?!

This person could control the Corpse King and assault Lu Chengyun in secret?

Who was this person?

Could it be the Black Hand behind the scenes, nurturing the Taoist Demon?

All of the cultivators gripped their weapons tightly, activated their Spiritual Artifacts, formed spells, and looked around with vigilant expressions. Yet, cold sweat couldn't help but seep down their backs.

But the surroundings were desolate.

No one answered.

There were only the suppressed breaths of the cultivators and the low growling of the zombies.

Lu Chengyun's anger intensified, but a deeper chill settled in his heart.

"The Corpse King is mine!"

"Only I, and only I alone, can control it!"

"The only person in this world who can command it, can only be me!"

But why?

Why would the Corpse King act on its own and attack him?

Lu Chengyun's eyes showed fear as he frowned deeply.

Apart from himself, who else could command the Corpse King?

The only person who had tampered with the Corpse King was Zhang Quan.

But Zhang Quan had been killed by him, and his body had been refined into a zombie. In the previous fight, it had fought for him and had been slain by the Taoist Soldiers, leaving no remains.

Apart from Zhang Quan, who else could there be?

And by what means had they taken control of the Corpse King?

Lu Chengyun's thoughts churned, but he couldn't figure out who could, right under his nose and unbeknownst to him and Zhang Quan, override his Spiritual Pivot Evil Formation and Zhang Quan's Corpse control techniques to secretly command the Corpse King?

Spiritual Pivot Evil Formation...

Lu Chengyun felt a jolt in his heart and quickly looked at the Corpse King's chest.

But he saw that around the blood-colored Evil Formation on the Corpse King's chest, there were faint blue patterns emerging.

These patterns were all too familiar to Lu Chengyun, similar to the Evil Patterns yet distinctly different in essence.

Righteous, mysterious, profound...

Lu Chengyun took in a sharp breath.

"Spiritual Pivot Formation?!"

Spiritual power as the pivot, with a clear and pure origin.

This was indeed the true Spiritual Pivot Ultimate Formation, conceived from a deep understanding of Formation mysteries, drawn with spiritual power and utmost sincerity!

Lu Chengyun's eyes widened with panic.

Could there really be someone in this world capable of laying down a true Spiritual Pivot Ultimate Formation?

And moreover, to use such an authentic Spiritual Pivot Ultimate Formation to overwrite his own Spiritual Pivot Evil Formation?!

"No, it's impossible..."

Lu Chengyun looked lost and muttered under his breath.

Suddenly, a shocking speculation rose in his mind:

The Minor Hidden Spirit Sect!

It was the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect!

"I betrayed my master and ancestors, causing my Sect to decline, severed the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect's lineage, and even desecrated the Sect's tomb by stealing the corpses of past Sect Leaders and Elders to refine zombies..."

"It must be them, the ancestors must be aware and demanding I pay my blood debt with blood!"

"Yes, the Spiritual Pivot Formation, the Ultimate Technique of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect, can only be learned by the ancestors of my Sect, it must be so, it has to be so..."

Lu Chengyun looked around in panic, swearing to the heavens,

"Honored predecessors, in consideration of my past status as a disciple of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect, spare me this one life!"

"I didn't do it on purpose, I was compelled..."

"My master, who was so honorable in appearance, always talked about passing on the Formation, but he only taught us the superficial stuff, making us waste our time learning and practicing..."

"He selfishly kept the Spiritual Pivot Formation to himself because of his greed."

"I pleaded with him for a long time, but he wouldn't teach me, so I had no choice but to kill him and find a way to obtain this Formation..."

"My intentions were sincere; I did it for the legacy of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect!"

"This Formation, in the hands of my master, was a pearl cast before swine, a waste of heaven's gifts. Only I could learn it and make the best use of it, for the benefit of the world!"

"Only then could the world appreciate the exquisite art of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect's Formations!"

...

It was only then that Yang Jishan and the others came to know the hidden story, their gaze toward Lu Chengyun filled with contempt.

Betraying one's master and ancestors, stealing inheritance, desecrating the Sect's tomb, showing disrespect to the Ancestral Master—all were major taboos in the Cultivation World.

Lu Chengyun, a man like this, did not deserve anything but death!

The Corpse King remained motionless.

But just at that moment, two Iron Corpses beside Lu Chengyun suddenly launched an attack.

Their claws sharp as swords, one slashing from left to right towards Lu Chengyun's head, the other from right to left aiming straight for Lu Chengyun's heart.

Chapter 555: Kneel Down (2)

The maneuvers were cruel and the timing was precise.

At this moment, Lu Chengyun's entire attention was focused on the Spirit Pivot Formation on the chest of the Corpse King. Guilt-ridden and fearful, he was repenting to the heavens, so he was somewhat caught off guard.

However, the strength of the Iron Corpse was, after all, inferior to that of the Corpse King, which had undergone Half-Bronze Corpse Transformation. Its movements were also a bit slower, giving Lu Chengyun a chance to escape.

Feeling the danger, he immediately moved to the side, dodging a claw aimed at his heart meridian, and then ducked his head to avoid a slice aimed at his neck.

Even so, his hair bun was still sliced off.

Lu Chengyun, with his hair disheveled, was in a pitiful state.

He looked at the two Iron Corpses with a face full of terror, retreating continuously as he pleaded,

"Elders, spare my life!"

These two Iron Corpses were indeed the Elders of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect in their previous lives.

After death, Lu Chengyun had dug up their graves and turned them into zombies.

Thinking that it was the ancestors of the Minor Hidden Spirit Sect coming for his life, Lu Chengyun was scared out of his wits.

But then, a thought struck him, and he realized something was amiss.

Somewhere in the darkness, he could sense a Divine Sense, using the Corpse King as the hub, pulling at the two Iron Corpses!

This Divine Sense was profound, elusive, and carried a hint of familiarity.

"Someone is up to mischief, trying to take the opportunity to kill me!"

Lu Chengyun's eyes turned cold. He traced this Divine Sense and then, with a fierce look, suddenly released a burst of Sword Qi, aimed straight at the open space beside Yang Jishan.

The Sword Qi was about to strike the ground.

Suddenly, a young man in white holding a long spear appeared. He stood with his spear horizontal, his aura surging forth to block the attack and dissipate the Sword Qi.

This young man in white was none other than Bai Zisheng.

Lu Chengyun was inwardly alarmed.

A mere Qi Refinement Cultivator had blocked his sword strike, a strike from a Foundation Building Cultivator!

When Bai Zisheng stepped back, a small figure also became visible behind him.

With features as refined as a painting and eyes as bright as starlight.

It was Mo Hua.

Lu Chengyun was stunned and then his expression changed dramatically,

"You're not dead?!"

Mo Hua narrowed his eyes and smiled, not responding.

Lu Chengyun's eyes flickered, and then his expression shook, as he exclaimed in disbelief,

"Could it be you?"

"You've taken control of my Corpse King?"

Upon hearing this, everyone, including Yang Jishan, was shocked, their eyes filled with disbelief as they looked at Mo Hua.

But Mo Hua shook his head and corrected him, "Not 'your' Corpse King."

Then with a grasp of his hand, the Formation Patterns on the chest of the Corpse King suddenly brightened, extending pale blue Spiritual Threads that gradually spread over the entire body of the Corpse King.

"It is now my Corpse King!"

Lu Chengyun's face turned pale with fear, "No!"

He immediately concentrated all his efforts, desperate to regain control over the Corpse King by activating the Spirit Pivot Evil Formation with all his might.

Bloody Formation Patterns emerged on the chest of the Corpse King.

Red Evil Power, like blood threads, began to spread outwards as well, entangling with the pale blue Spiritual Threads, battling and extinguishing each other continuously.

The Corpse King, caught between the red and blue strands, struggled back and forth, roaring hideously.

On its chest, the two opposing colors of Formation Patterns, good and evil, light and dark, alternated.

In just a moment, the blood threads were suppressed by the Spiritual Threads, crumbling away step by step.

The Evil Formation on the chest of the Corpse King gradually dimmed as well.

Lu Chengyun broke out in cold sweat, feeling his Divine Sense weakening. The Evil Power blood threads born from the activation of the Spirit Pivot Evil Formation also weakened.

Meanwhile, the Spiritual Power threads continued to flow unceasingly, filled with abundant Divine Sense Power!

Lu Chengyun felt it was inconceivable.

He realized a terrifying truth:

Mo Hua, the little devil, was not only proficient in the Spirit Pivot Formation, but his mastery of the Formation far exceeded his own, and even his Divine Sense was overwhelmingly more powerful!

How could this be possible?!

He was just at the eighth level of Qi Refinement!!

Watching his Corpse King gradually slipping from his grasp,

Lu Chengyun felt both heartache and terror, glaring at Mo Hua and asking through clenched teeth,

"When exactly did you learn the Spirit Pivot Formation?"

Mo Hua, while still controlling the Corpse King, replied with a puzzled expression, "Didn't you teach me?"

Lu Chengyun was taken aback.

Mo Hua, looking innocent, said,

"Have you forgotten? The Spirit Pivot Formation Chart was shown to me by you. You even drew it several times in front of me, and I just... learnt it by watching..."

Lu Chengyun roared in disbelief, "Impossible!!"

"Impossible!"

His expression was verging on madness.

"This is the Spirit Pivot Formation, one of the top twelve-pattern Ultimate Formations!"

"I spent nearly a hundred years, day and night, immersed in its study, enduring endless hardship, and I had to use methods of the Evil Dao, drawing with human bones, dipped in human blood, on human skin, to learn this formation..."

"And you learnt it just by looking a few times??"

"That's impossible!"

Lu Chengyun's eyes turned bloodshot, and his mind was in disarray. Even his Taoist Heart showed signs of cracking.

Mo Hua immediately gave Bai Zisheng a look.

Bai Zisheng understood instantly, and with a flicker of movement, his spear shot forward like a gust of wind, aiming straight for Lu Chengyun's chest.

Because the Corpse King was under control, the surrounding Iron Corpses were motionless.

Lu Chengyun's Taoist Heart was disturbed, his emotions out of control; he was completely unaware of Bai Zisheng's ambush and was struck in the chest by the spear.

But Bai Zisheng, after all, was but at the level of Qi Refinement, while Lu Chengyun possessed the level of Foundation Establishment.

The spear strike was swift, yet it only broke the surface of Lu Chengyun's skin and did not penetrate, let alone manage to kill him.

Lu Chengyun spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, stumbling backward but quickly regained his senses.

He must escape!

His once-reliable Corpse King was about to belong to someone else.

If he didn't flee now, he might really die here.

Lu Chengyun used his movement technique, dodging Bai Zisheng's spearmanship while retreating.

Though Bai Zisheng was only at the level of Qi Refinement, his cultivation was profound and his Taoist skill sharp.

With Lu Chengyun seriously injured and surrounded by formidable enemies, and the Corpse King on the verge of "betrayal," he could only be chased by Bai Zisheng, desperately fleeing among the motionless Iron Corpses like a wooden stake.

Chapter 556: Kneel Down (3)

The surrounding cultivators were unclear about the situation and momentarily unsure of what to do.

Yang Jishan's expression also darkened slightly.

He too began to feel puzzled.

The person secretly controlling the Corpse King turned out to be Mo Hua??

This young cultivator, the black hand behind the scenes?

The one who arranged the ritual to create the Taoist Demon?

How is that possible?

But if not him, how did he manage to override Lu Chengyun and cause the Corpse King's "betrayal"?

Just what is his identity?

A disciple of a righteous Dao's eminent figure, or... a Demon Path's Saint Heir?

In Yang Jishan's heart, a chill gradually set in, his expression becoming more hesitant.

Meanwhile, Lu Chengyun was still fleeing. His movement technique wasn't bad, and for a short time, Bai Zisheng couldn't do anything to him.

For a moment, the situation became a stalemate.

Just then, an intense Yin energy surged behind Lu Chengyun.

The Corpse King, whose chest had fully transformed into the shape of pale blue Spirit Pivot Formation Patterns, suddenly appeared behind him, its claws like the wind, grasping the back of Lu Chengyun's neck.

Its sharp nails firmly clutched Lu Chengyun.

The look on Lu Chengyun's face was one of panic as he struggled, unable to break free.

The Corpse King had completely lost control.

No, it was he who had lost control over the Corpse King.

The Corpse King was fully under Mo Hua's control!

After Mo Hua commanded the Corpse King to seize Lu Chengyun, he immediately said:

"Senior brother, kill him!"

Just as Bai Zisheng was about to act, Yang Jishan came to his senses, his expression one of shock as he hastily said:

"No!"

The emaciated old man also urgently said, "Don't kill!"

Bai Zisheng hesitated for a moment, looking toward Mo Hua.

Mo Hua's gaze turned icy, and he said in a deep voice:

"Kill!"

Caught between the Taoist Court cultivators and Mo Hua, Bai Zisheng would, of course, listen to his own junior brother.

With Lu Chengyun locked down by the Corpse King and the opportunity rare, he would naturally go all out, piercing through the renegade Lu Chengyun with a spear!

Bai Zisheng charged his spear, his aura ascending.

"Stop him!"

Yang Jishan said, before leading the charge to intercept Bai Zisheng.

The situation wasn't clear yet, and Lu Chengyun couldn't die.

If he died now and the Corpse King lost control, resurrecting the Taoist Demon, everything would be over.

The emaciated old man took out a Copper Coin, but before he could make his move, his expression changed dramatically.

Yang Jishan, who was beside him, also stopped in his tracks, his eyes becoming sluggish.

In front of them, Bai Zisheng's aura continued to escalate, spiritual power howling around him, with hints of dragon roars.

On his long spear, an awe-inspiring and majestic Azure Dragon phantom had also formed!

Dragon!

The emaciated old man said with a trembling voice, "Returning Dragon Spear technique?!"

Everyone heard and their faces changed.

"The technique of the Dragon... from Qian State's... that millennial great clan, the Bai Family?!"

The might of the Azure Dragon phantom and the influence of the Bai Family from Qian State caused those Foundation Building cultivators to feel a creeping dread, becoming utterly disoriented.

Mo Hua, too, opened his mouth in astonishment.

Bai Zisheng, dressed in white, with a gaze sharp as a sword, with the Azure Dragon phantom moving around him, appeared majestic and valiant.

He hadn't expected his junior brother to look so... handsome.

And when the Returning Dragon Spear's force was fully accumulated, Bai Zisheng's spiritual power surged around him.

Then, truly merging man with spear, the spear strike was like a dragon, and with a piercing dragon roar, he turned into a dragon shadow, surging forward.

This spear strike, nearly exhausting all of Bai Zisheng's spiritual power, was terrifyingly powerful.

In Lu Chengyun's eyes, filled with extreme terror, the spear pierced through his chest.

The spiritual power that contained the might of the dragon vibrated his meridians and organs, squeezing out Lu Chengyun's life force, bit by bit, until it was utterly extinguished!

The traitor of Minor Hidden Spirit Sect.

The Family Head of the Lu Family from South Yue City.

The mastermind behind the murders, setting arrays for corpse refinement, and building the Corpse Mine, thus met his end!

The entire graveyard fell quiet.

Dozens of Iron Corpses, thousands of Walking Corpses, their energies dwindled, motionless.

After dozens of breaths and no anomalies, Yang Jishan finally took a breath of relief.

Since Mo Hua appeared, there had been continuous shocking developments.

His heart had been tossed up and down several times in less than two hours.

With Lu Chengyun dead and the zombies motionless.

This was good news...

Having exerted all his strength to activate the Returning Dragon Spear and killed Lu Chengyun, Bai Zisheng also seemed a bit drained, his face pale, but he looked very excited and somewhat proud.

Bai Zixi, a little helpless, shook his head and took out a pill from the Phoenix Pattern Storage Bag, handed it to Bai Zisheng, and instructed him to take it and rest.

Mo Hua, standing by, had a calm expression but suddenly furrowed his brows.

Yang Jishan appeared hesitant and was just about to say something to Mo Hua when his expression suddenly changed as well.

In the silent graveyard, a sound of gnawing suddenly arose.

This noise was strange and sinister.

The group followed the sound and witnessed a chilling sight:

Lu Chengyun, who had been killed by Bai Zisheng, was being devoured by the Corpse King!

Seemingly afraid of being discovered, the Corpse King ate quickly, taking large bites and savoring them. In a short time, it had swallowed Lu Chengyun whole!

Its mouth and chest were covered in dripping blood and flesh.

The red in its eyes became more intense, and within the red, the dark gold became more prominent.

The emaciated old man turned pale and said in a trembling voice:

"The Corpse King... devouring its master, is this the awakening of the Taoist Demon?"

Everyone was startled, a great fear rising in their hearts.

At the same time, the aura of the Corpse King suddenly turned terrifying, and within it was a hint, faint and twisting, of Taoist Meaning.

Yang Jishan shouted sharply:

"Everyone, attack with all your might, kill it before it fully awakens!"

A surge of Foundation Building cultivators' spiritual power rose.

Whether it was spells, spiritual artifacts, or runes, every method was used to the fullest, in a desperate attempt to nip the Corpse Sin in the bud!

Above the graveyard, various colors of Foundation Building spiritual power intertwined, creating a massive atmosphere.

But as these attacks were about to strike the Corpse King, they were all blocked by the Iron Corpses.

Chapter 557: Kneel Down (4)

These Iron Corpses, relentless and unafraid of death, were guarding the Corpse King.

The previously quiet horde of zombies had once again erupted into chaos, their eyes red with rage, they roared and charged towards the cultivators recklessly, as if not allowing anyone to offend their "King".

In an instant, the hill of tombs had descended into a fiercer battle of life and death.

Bai Zisheng, clutching his long spear, was ready to fight again, but was restrained by Bai Zixi.

Bai Zixi brought Bai Zisheng to Mo Hua's side, stood in front of both, and with her delicate fingers formed a sword technique, creating streams of sword light with radiant white flames, protecting the three of them.

Zombies that came into contact with the sword light were burned by the white flames.

Mo Hua watched the Corpse King from afar.

The aura of the Corpse King grew stronger bit by bit, and the twisted Taoist Meaning on its body also deepened gradually.

Mo Hua's gaze sharpened and then proceeded to draw a Thick Earth Formation beneath his feet and began to meditate, communing with something through his Divine Sense.

Batches of Foundation Building Cultivators charged towards the Corpse King.

Yet time and time again, they were blocked by the Iron Corpses.

Yang Jishan's face was pale, his heart burning with anxiety.

The Corpse King was slowly awakening, turning into a Taoist Demon.

If the Corpse King was not slain, everyone would perish!

Even the Minor Wilderness State Boundary would suffer calamity.

Yang Jishan picked up the Sunset Spear, consumed a Spirit Revitalizing Pill, and then took a Big Restoring Pill, exhausting the last of his Spiritual Power to reactivate the Sunset Spear.

This spear thrust was equally awe-inspiring.

The firelight condensed, and the spear blazed like the sun.

Yang Jishan, unable to reach the Corpse King, exerted all his strength and threw the long spear, transforming it into a fiery comet, striking towards the Corpse King.

But this spear was also blocked by the corporeal sacrifice of an Iron Corpse, and although it reached the Corpse King, it was caught in one hand by the King.

The Corpse King twisted, snapping the Sunset Spear, its flesh instantly morphing into a bronze color.

Then, the Corpse King let out a roar towards the sky.

The Corpse Qi soared, obscuring sun and sky.

The horizon faintly glowed blood red.

This roar was akin to a command.

At this moment, not only the entirety of the graveyard, but also the mine, and even the entire boundary of South Yue City, all zombies — as if hearing the order — converged towards the Corpse King, seemingly to worship their "Monarch".

Yang Jishan felt as if he had fallen into an ice cave.

All the cultivators had their scalps tingle with dread.

Many faces showed despair.

The gaunt old man said, "Leader Yang, first think of a way to break through. Save as many as we can!"

Yang Jishan clenched his teeth tightly and said helplessly, "Alright!"

But he also knew, under the Corpse King's command of the Corpse Tide, even if they fled, they couldn't escape.

This was but a slim chance of survival.

But without trying to flee, there was no chance at all.

The cultivators retreated under cover of the Taoist Soldiers, while Mo Hua still remained in place.

Seeing this, Yang Jishan immediately shouted, "Junior Brother!"

He wanted to tell Mo Hua to flee, but in this brief moment, Mo Hua had already been surrounded by Iron Corpses.

Yang Jishan could not save him even if he tried.

Yang Jishan was in a great hurry, but what followed made him stunned.

He noticed that the Iron Corpses had only encircled Mo Hua, but dared not approach him.

Bai Zixi stood in front of Mo Hua and Bai Zisheng, her expression calm, though her eyes still carried some seriousness.

At that moment, Mo Hua opened his eyes and took a step forward, shielding his junior brother and sister behind him.

As Mo Hua stepped forward, the Iron Corpses showed signs of terror and retreated en masse.

In their instincts, there was fear, the fear of being dominated.

The Corpse King was their "Monarch".

And now that Lu Chengyun was dead.

Mo Hua was the only one who could control the Corpse King, their monarch's monarch!

The horde of corpses became somewhat calmer.

The cultivators had a moment to catch their breath.

Yet across the sea of corpses, the Corpse King's regal and ferocious gaze was fixed on Mo Hua.

It hadn't turned into a Taoist Demon yet.

Because it hadn't truly "devoured its master".

Lu Chengyun was the master, but he was never truly the master.

Its true master was this junior cultivator!

A master of a master is not a true master.

A king of a king is not a true king.

By devouring this junior cultivator, it would truly devour its master, break free from its chains, escape the shackles of the Heavenly Dao, and become the unparalleled "Corpse King", the Taoist Demon that would devour heaven and earth!

It would turn this realm into a Blood Flesh Purgatory!

In the Corpse King's eyes, a sudden surge of blood transformed into a crimson beam, shooting directly at Mo Hua.

Everyone was shocked, and Yang Jishan's expression drastically changed, "Not good!"

However, Mo Hua remained calm, her gaze sharp like a sword, as she pointed forward with her small hand.

The Corpse King's lunging form came to an abrupt halt!

Its chest suddenly burst forth with innumerable Spiritual Threads, fine like silk, weaving outward, suppressing the Corpse Qi and tugging at the Corpse King's body.

In the eyes of the Corpse King, there was no longer any dignity, only brutality and unwillingness.

It struggled mightily, its Blood Qi even stronger.

The Corpse Qi grew wilder, the grayish-white filled with streaks of blood, billowing in layers.

At the same time, a twisted, aberrant Taoist Meaning spread.

Feeling this aura, all cultivators felt their hearts tremble, as if a cold Divine Sense was watching them, erasing their intent, making them submit.

This distorted Taoist Meaning also enveloped Mo Hua.

Mo Hua's heart stirred slightly.

This aura was very familiar.

The Big Demon of Tongxian City also had a similar aura.

Only at that time, she had no understanding of Taoist Meaning and couldn't discern the details of this aura.

But now she understood.

This was the aura of a Taoist Demon, the twisted, aberrant Taoist Meaning.

Because it contained the aberrant Taoist Meaning, that is why these calamities were called Taoist Demons.

Mo Hua understood in her heart and then began to utilize the Thick Earth Formation, connecting with the Earth Dao Meaning.

Those who do not rest in soil are the undead.

The aura of the undead originated from the earth, yet was full of bloodiness, hatred, and resentment.

Mo Hua intended to use the Earth Dao Meaning to suppress the aura of the Corpse King.

The Earth character is Kun, known for its great virtue and capacity to carry all things.

Perhaps even the meaning of the earth did not wish to see the birth of a Taoist Demon.

The Earth Dao Meaning Mo Hua communicated with this time was intensely strong. Although it still couldn't compare to when she meditated on the Taoist Stele, it was sufficient to suppress the half-step Taoist Demon Corpse King.

The aura of the Taoist Demon was neutralized.

Mo Hua concentrated with all her being.

Her Divine Sense at the peak of Thirteen Stripes operated to its limit.

Above the Spiritual Pivot Formation, a myriad of Spiritual Threads bloomed, like night-blooming cereuses in full splendor, dense and intricate, completely strangling and suppressing the Corpse Qi, permeating, refining, stitching, and little by little taking control...

The Corpse King resisted fiercely, its gaze cruel, its flesh pulled apart by the Spiritual Threads and yet regenerating...

The standoff continued for who knows how long.

Mo Hua's eyes suddenly changed, her pupils burned with bright light, and her voice, crisp yet filled with authority, commanded:

"Fiendish beast!"

"Kneel!!"

The Corpse King, full of reluctance, roared with all its might.

But its body, nonetheless, was being pulled by the myriad of Spiritual Threads, shakily kneeling down.

With each inch it knelt, the ground cracked further!

The entire burial mountain trembled!

Tens of thousands of zombies, with red eyes reflecting their unwillingness, roared together.

The whole of South Yue City, over every hill and mountain, was filled with the roar of the undead, as if plunged into hell, where a hundred ghosts wail in sorrow.

The mass of undead surged, the Corpse Qi tumultuous.

Mo Hua's gaze remained steadfast, her small figure unyielding.

She continued to control the Corpse King bit by bit with the power of Divine Sense, activating the Spiritual Pivot Formation.

The Corpse King was entangled by countless Spiritual Threads, suppressed by the mighty Earth Dao Meaning.

In the midst of struggle and defiance, the Corpse King's knee finally hit the ground!

The fierce and terrifying clamor between heaven and earth stopped abruptly.

The horde of corpses grew silent.

The trembling crowd looked up.

They saw, atop the burial hill, beneath the sky-covering blood-colored Corpse Qi,

The imposing Corpse King, half-kneeling in front of the tiny Mo Hua.

And with the Corpse King's kneeling,

The violent aura of the horde of corpses also began to recede.

Dozens of Iron Corpses, their bloody gaze fading, revealed a look of awe, slowly kneeling before Mo Hua.

And after that, all the Walking Corpses in South Yue City, across hills and valleys, swept away by the wind, also knelt before Mo Hua one after another.

With the Corpse King's kneeling, the Iron Corpses submitted, and a myriad of zombies bowed in worship!

All cultivators were speechless with horror.

The gaunt old man who was versed in the Heavenly Secret Calculation was even more shaken to the core.

He witnessed a scene he never imagined in his life, nor dare to imagine:

A Taoist Demon calamity was kneeling... before a child...

Chapter 558: Benefiting (1)

In South Yue City.

Mr. Zhuang shook his head with a sense of helplessness and said, "Every time he stirs up such a commotion, this child really doesn't give people peace of mind..."

Old Kui glanced at him, "You seem quite pleased..."

Mr. Zhuang couldn't help but smile a little, "Quite alright."

After all, he is my disciple!

Old Kui was speechless, then frowned and said, "Kneeling down as a Taoist Demon... This involvement in karma is going to be massive..."

Mr. Zhuang shook his head and corrected him, "First, this is not yet a Taoist Demon..."

"My brother set up a scheme to turn the Corpse King into a Taoist Demon under two conditions."

"One is that South Yue City continues to refine zombies for another hundred years, gradually accumulating killing karma, and in the mix of Corpse Qi, Filthy Qi, and the resentment of death Qi, let the Corpse King slowly awaken."

"The second is that once the matter is exposed, forcing the Corpse King to devour its master, it can then immediately transform into a Taoist Demon."

"But evil cannot prevail over good, the Soul Pivot Evil Formation cannot overpower the Soul Pivot Ultimate Formation."

"Therefore, Lu Chengyun was never fully the master of the Corpse King from beginning to end. The true master of the Corpse King has always been Mo Hua, this child."

"If it can't devour Mo Hua, it can't devour its master."

"So, this Corpse King can only be considered a half-step Taoist Demon or, rather, a Taoist Demon's troubled fetus, which hasn't transformed into a Taoist Demon's body."

Mr. Zhuang then looked at Old Kui again and continued, "Secondly, even if it were a Taoist Demon, it wouldn't matter much."

"Mo Hua, this child, made it kneel down by his own ability."

"Since it has knelt, it means submission. This mark will be engraved within the karma and Taoist Meaning, unchangeable."

"For Mo Hua, this is actually an opportunity..."

"As for how to use such defy-the-heavens karma, he'll have to learn that later."

After finishing his words, Mr. Zhuang also felt somewhat emotional,

"However, although it's a bit of fortuity and coincidence, the ability to make a Taoist Demon kneel down is still... a bit too preposterous..."

Old Kui said quietly, "You didn't figure it out?"

Mr. Zhuang spoke with displeasure, "I'm not one of those religious con men who can figure out anything and everything..."

Old Kui silently looked at him, contemplating something.

A moment later, Old Kui's gaze sharpened as he said solemnly, "This child's Divine Sense has already reached the peak with Thirteen Stripes."

Mr. Zhuang nodded in agreement, both gratified and somewhat surprised,

"Yes, it's a lot faster than I expected..."

"What do you plan to do next?"

Mr. Zhuang was taken aback, then raised his head, his gaze crossing mountains and rivers, looking into the distance, and calmly said,

"Go to the place where I should go..."

Old Kui's brow furrowed deeply, "Really going?"

Mr. Zhuang nodded, "Past grudges and kindness must be settled."

Afterward, he looked again at the courtyard.

In the courtyard, the grass and trees were lush, the pond water clear.

The large tree blocking the wind and rain swayed with the breeze, with leaves fluttering down.

Under the big tree, Mo Hua and his Junior Brothers and Sisters would often gather together to cultivate, meditate, learn Formations, or simply chat and play about. These scenes emerged one by one...

Mr. Zhuang's expression carried a touch of reluctance and melancholy.

"This journey, too, has come to an end..."

...

Atop the burial mound.

Mo Hua stood with his hands behind his back, beginning to direct the zombies to temporarily return to the mines and sleep deep within them.

The Corpse King bowed its head, following behind Mo Hua.

The Iron Corpse, like a guard, protected in front of Mo Hua.

And the tens of thousands of Walking Corpses orderly marched and made their way deep into the mine...

As if miners busy all day were returning home at sunset.

Amidst the bloodshed and brutality, there lay a semblance of tranquility and peace.

Zombies returned to their mountain, and the order was maintained throughout the entire night.

Until dawn broke and the morning sun rose, with the rosy clouds sprawling across the sky, casting a radiant glow upon the peaks surrounding South Yue City.

The cultivators all seemed to snap out of a trance.

It was as if they had all had a nightmare.

In the dream were a terrifying Corpse King, a ferocious Corpse Tide, and struggles and bitter fights between life and death.

Now that they had awoken from the dream, the sun rose as usual, and everything had vanished.

But they knew, it was not a dream.

They still vividly remembered the blood-soaked night, the sky shrouded with Corpse Qi, the Corpse King's horrifying roar, and the twisted, terrifying presence of the Taoist Demon.

They also remembered...

Such a terrifying Corpse King was eventually subdued, forced to kneel halfway, submitting to a junior cultivator.

Mo Hua is the master of the Corpse King.

At the same time, he is like a mysterious and unfathomable little Demon Head.

The Corpse King kneeling, the group of corpses paying their respects.

This incredible scene was shockingly vivid, imprinted in their Sea of Consciousness, unforgettable even if they wished to forget.

They looked at Mo Hua, still unnerved,

Grateful for Mo Hua's life-saving grace, but also wary of the horror of Mo Hua commanding a horde of corpses.

Now, the fate of all zombies in South Yue City depends on his Divine Thought.

Life, death, fortune, and disaster all rest upon his will.

Everyone tensed up their minds.

But to Mo Hua, it was as if nothing had happened.

All his aura was withdrawn, making him appear just like an ordinary, adorable junior cultivator.

As if everything that had occurred had nothing to do with him, even to the point where he still asked Yang Jishan:

"Uncle Yang, do you have any food? I'm hungry..."

His control of the zombies returning to their nests had greatly exhausted his Divine Thought, and now that he had calmed down, he realized he was hungry.

He had some jerky in his Storage Bag.

But that was made by his mother, and he typically could not bear to eat it, always saving it.

Yang Jishan was caught off guard upon hearing this.

The crowd at that moment didn't know what kind of expression to make...

...

It took a whole night.

Under Mo Hua's control, all zombies, including the Corpse King and Iron Corpse, had temporarily returned to the mines and settled deep within the shafts.

Chapter 559: Benefit (2)

Mo Hua quickly set up a Formation.

Yang Jishan also issued a strict order that, without permission, no Cultivator was allowed to enter the mine.

This mine was a veritable Corpse Mountain.

Moreover, in the mountain, the Corpse King still lay dormant.

After placing the horde of zombies, some Taoist Soldiers were left to guard, and the other Cultivators returned to the city to rest for a while.

Mo Hua returned to the cave dwelling with his fellow senior brothers and sisters.

Having controlled the undead for an entire evening, the strain on his Divine Thought was considerable, and he was quite exhausted. Now that the issue had been resolved, he slept soundly.

It was only upon awakening that Mo Hua realized Uncle Yang had been waiting for him outside for a long time.

Unlike Mo Hua, Uncle Yang hadn't dared to sleep at all.

Every time he lay down, he would recall the terrifying Taoist Demons, the powerful Corpse King, the ferocious horde of zombies, the broken Sunset Spear, and the Taoist Soldiers and Cultivators who had met their end in the zombies' jaws.

He thought of the Black Hand nurturing the Taoist Demon.

He thought of the seemingly innocent, yet utterly inscrutable Mo Hua.

He remembered the shocking moment on the grave-mound, when the Corpse King knelt down.

He thought again of the thousands of zombies now controlled by Mo Hua...

His head throbbed intensely.

His mind was in complete chaos.

Yang Jishan's complexion was pale, his breathing weak, and there were dark circles under his eyes.

In contrast, Mo Hua had just the opposite appearance: after sleeping, he looked energetic, his eyes shone brightly, and even his cheeks were full and round.

"Uncle Yang, is there something wrong?" Mo Hua asked curiously upon seeing Yang Jishan.

How could there not be something wrong!

Yang Jishan felt a bitterness inside, but for a moment he didn't know how to start.

"Is it about those zombies?" Mo Hua asked again.

Yang Jishan nodded, and finally, with some nervousness, he asked, "What do you plan to do with them?"

Mo Hua thought for a moment but said nothing.

Yang Jishan tried to appear calm, but his heart was in his throat.

A Corpse King, dozens of Iron Corpses, tens of thousands of Walking Corpses.

To form Corpse soldiers, what a formidable force that would be!

He was afraid that Mo Hua would make some excessive demands.

Or perhaps he would simply, with his "corpses," gain independence, take the wrong path, and become a thorough little Demon Head.

Yang Jishan was fraught with uneasy thoughts.

It was at this time that Mo Hua asked, "Uncle Yang, how does the Taoist Court normally handle such a Corpse Tide?"

Yang Jishan was startled, pondering for a moment before slowly answering:

"When dealing with a Corpse Tide, the Taoist Court usually hunts down the primary culprits."

"Corpse Cultivators who practice Corpse refinement and create zombies are the first to be apprehended and questioned. If they resist, they are executed without discussion."

"If captured alive, they are all thrown into the Taoist Prison, and their sentences are determined by the severity of their crimes. The lightest sentence is exile to the Southern Wilderness, to be used as cannon fodder in wars, while most are sentenced to death. The only difference is the method of their execution."

"The heavier the crime, the slower and more painful the death."

"Besides Corpse Cultivators, all zombies will be burned to ash."

"Because zombies do not die and carry Corpse Poison, once they come into contact with blood, the Corpse Qi changes and they will rise again to kill and devour humans, and the spread of Corpse Poison is also a great harm..."

"Moreover, all Evil Artifacts and Evil Formations used for Corpse Refinement must be utterly destroyed."

"Those who shelter Corpse Cultivators, condone Corpse refinement, or assist in the practice are considered accomplices and share the same guilt..."

...

Yang Jishan told Mo Hua all this in great detail.

After listening, Mo Hua pondered and said, "So, these zombies, they all need to be burned, right?"

Yang Jishan, somewhat anxiously, nodded faintly:

"Yes..."

"I understand," Mo Hua nodded, "then let's do it that way."

Yang Jishan was taken aback, "Burn them?"

"Yes."

Yang Jishan found it hard to believe. "The Iron Corpses and the Corpse King too?"

Mo Hua was somewhat puzzled, "Otherwise?"

With shock in his heart, Yang Jishan still could not help but ask in a low voice:

"Don't you want to keep them?"

Mo Hua shook his head, "They are harmful things, what use do I have for them? Besides, keeping them poses a great risk. The Corpse King is especially prone to losing control. Naturally, it's better to burn them, to completely eradicate evil, to bring this to a close..."

Yang Jishan's mouth opened slightly, his heart so touched he nearly cried.

What a deeply principled child!

He had previously thought Mo Hua might have ulterior motives. Hence, he was uneasy. It turned out he had thought too small.

"However..." Mo Hua then said.

Yang Jishan's heart skipped a beat.

Usually, after "however", there's rarely good news...

His anxiety returned.

"I have some tasks for these zombies," Mo Hua said.

Yang Jishan's heart sank slightly, but he still asked solemnly:

"What tasks?"

Mo Hua answered, "I want to command these zombies to build a mine."

"A mine?" Yang Jishan furrowed his brow.

"Yes," Mo Hua nodded, "to build a mine..."

"The ones who suffered the most from this Corpse Tide are actually the Mining Cultivators of South Yue City."

"They already have a hard life, the Spirit Stones are scarce, and living day-to-day is tough. After death, they are refined into zombies and forced to do evil, dying with their eyes wide open."

"In life, they are exploited by others; in death, they are still enslaved..."

"After this Corpse Tide, the mine has largely collapsed, the mines inside are damaged, the Formation is broken, the Corpse Qi is dense, and evil and filth abound. It can no longer be used."

"Without the ability to mine, the Loose Cultivators of South Yue City lose their livelihood."

"If we were to leave things as they are, they wouldn't be able to survive."

"So I thought, what if we constructed a bigger mine, connecting several mountains, established a more comprehensive Formation, reinforced the mountain body, cleared the Corpse Qi, purified the evil, and found ways to increase the mine's output..."

"To give the Loose Cultivators of South Yue City a safe place to make a living, so they don't have to risk their lives and live in constant fear, and won't be buried in a mine by accident, leaving orphans and widows alone and helpless..."

Chapter 560: Benefiting (3)

"However, this would require a great deal of material and manpower."

"I have a way with materials, but manpower is somewhat limited."

"Building new mines and connecting the mountains inevitably leads to encounters with the monster beasts of the deep mountains, or inhaling the pollution and filthy qi from the depths of the mines, which is very dangerous."

"These tasks are impossible for Cultivators in the Qi Refinement Realm to accomplish without risking their lives."

"But zombies can."

"Most of these zombies were mining cultivators from South Yue City in life..."

"In the city, they may still have parents, relatives, or friends they knew well."

"I want them to do one last good deed for their living relatives and friends, for their descendants, before their true death..."

Yang Jishan was deeply shaken.

He couldn't help but look at Mo Hua, seeing his gaze as clear and sparkling as water.
The golden sunlight filtered through the trees, spilling over his body.

Yang Jishan took a deep breath, slowly stood up, and bowed solemnly to Mo Hua.

...

The following developments proceeded according to Mo Hua's plans.

The zombies were to be destroyed.

The Corpse King, being a calamitous spawn of a Taoist Demon with three masters and a history of turning on them, Moore, was not planning on keeping it, despite the fact that he was ultimately the last master."

Otherwise, it would have been a disaster sooner or later."

The other Iron Corpses and Walking Corpses naturally had to be destroyed as well."

To destroy zombies, a Corpse Burning Formation was needed."

This Formation, it is said, was crafted by a great Formation master of the Taoist Court, specifically designed to eradicate the threat posed by zombies."

It could incinerate both the corpses and the corpse poison, leaving no trace."

Mo Hua studied the Formation, which truly was ingeniously constructed, using both fire and earth Pattern elements of the Five Elements Formation to conceal with earth and purge with fire, and it was indeed very practical."

Mo Hua took a second look and secretly learned it..."

However, the number of zombies in South Yue City was too high."

This was a large-scale zombie disaster, and correspondingly, the scale and number of Corpse Burning Formations needed were considerable."

But all this was the responsibility of the Taoist Court.

Mo Hua didn't need to worry about it."

His only task was to figure out how to construct large mines."

This measure had also been agreed upon by Yang Jishan and supported by the presence of numerous Cultivators from the Taoist Court."

Among them, some genuinely sympathized with the plight of the Loose Cultivators of South Yue City and wished to do something good."

Others were simply looking to curry favor with Mo Hua.

There were also those who were reluctant in their hearts, but could not forget the scene where Mo Hua made the Corpse King kneel and feared him, daring not to oppose him."

The last group, seeing that everyone else had agreed, did not want to stand out and thus went along with the agreement..."

Despite the variety of motives and the complex situation, they eventually came to a consensus."

Yang Jishan had connections with the Taoist Soldiers Court, and the other Cultivators were descendants of Cultivators from Sects and Noble Clans from the states of Taoist, Qian, and Kun."

With their endorsement, the implementation of this task became much easier."

Constructing large mines required manpower and materials.

The manpower had been resolved."

The zombies were their "manpower."

This might be the most meaningful thing they had done since becoming zombies."

Besides that, there was the issue of materials."

The resources for building the mines partly came from the Taoist Court in South Yue City."

The Taoist Court of South Yue City, from the top down, was extremely corrupt."

Especially the Court Leader of South Yue City had taken who knows how many bribes from the Lu Family."

Confiscating it all back, it was estimated to be a large sum of Spirit Stones."

Of course, the Court Leader of South Yue City had already been dismissed from his post and thrown into prison; after the measure of his crimes, he was certain not to survive."

It was just a question of how he would die."

Beyond that, there was the Lu Family."

The Lu Family had been raided."

The confiscated wealth was all utilized for building the mines."

These Spirit Stones and assets were originally extracted layer by layer from the mining cultivators, and now they were simply returning to their rightful owners, to be reinvested in the miners."

Take from the people, use for the people."

Mo Hua had considered all these matters before, but the actual raiding and confiscation still depended on Yang Jishan and the soldiers under his command."

Yang Jishan was not polite."

The Taoist Soldiers were well-versed in raiding."

The collected Spirit Stones were incredibly numerous, amounting to several million, which even shocked Yang Jishan of the great Clan background, who couldn't help but exclaim:

"This Lu Chengyun, no, this Lu Family, is actually this wealthy?"

"And this Court Leader actually embezzled nearly a million..."

However, Yang Jishan was also clear in his mind."

In this world, wealth does not come without a cause."

The wool surely comes off the sheep's back."

The poorer the Loose Cultivators of South Yue City became, the richer they grew."

The richer they became, the poorer the Loose Cultivators grew."

Their immense wealth indicated just how impoverished the Loose Cultivators of South Yue City had been over the years..."

This amount of Spirit Stones was too large to be kept."

The Taoist Court would find a way to confiscate it, then layers of officials would skim off the top, enriching each handler."

But this matter was too massive."

It involved Taoist demons and implicated many powerful families; no one dared to siphon off wealth under such intense scrutiny."

So, to quell the disaster and with Yang Jishan's approval,

This batch of Spirit Stones ultimately stayed in South Yue City."

Now with both manpower and materials ready, Mo Hua began the formal construction of new, large mines that connect several mountains."