

Unfathomable 261

Chapter 261

The people from the Divine Fist Sect were all looking up into the sky. There they saw a massive flying ship made from iron. It dwarfed their own two flying vessels that were stationed next to it.

This ship had appeared out of nowhere after the United Element's Sect had activated the teleportation gate again. A large group of cultivators arrived in a unique looking getup. One older man stuck out like a sore thumb with the strange cap and militaristic coat that he was wearing.

The ship was summoned up into the sky soon after and most of the people that arrived were stationed on it. The rest were just people that were bringing over some resources from the main sect like healing herbs and materials that had the holy or divine element to them.

Some of the cultivators from the Divine Fist Sect had decided to evacuate while most of them made the decision to remain here. They would wait for the word to arrive from their elder Heng. He and some other cultivators were going to investigate the ruins that started it all. It was believed that the monster that attacked them was probably lurking there and biding its time to recover.

It was agreed that Zhang Dong, Huo Qiang, and Zhang Liena would all travel towards that monster-infested location. They would take the ship and some of the core formation elders. With the two ships from the Divine Fist Sect would trek along. They would all remain close together and offer some covering fire if needed.

"Is everything ready?"

Zhang Dong asked while standing on the main deck with his hands crossed over one another. With him were Huo Qiang and his wife, the person he was calling out was the ship's captain.

"Yes Sir, the Argonaut 1 is ready to depart."

"Good, let us go, time is of the essence."

The captain saluted his Patriarch and headed towards the ship's inner part. The three nascent soul elders watched the man depart together.

"What do you think?"

Zhang Dong posed the question to Qiang while the captain vanished behind a door.

"About the beasts? They weren't anything special, the youngsters could probably clear them out themselves."

The muscular red-headed man just shrugged as he didn't seem very alert. It looked like he wasn't taking any of this seriously. The monsters that he faced were all below the nascent soul level so he based their strength on that fact alone.

"Could you use that tiny brain of yours once in a while? Do you think my husband would arrange all of this if this mission wasn't of the utmost importance?"

Zhang Liena scoffed while looking at Huo Qiang, Zhang Dong just stood to the side while trying not to break his poker face.

In reality, he wasn't sure how strong the monster was now. It could very well have regressed in cultivation after getting hit by the Divine Fist Sect's artifact. It would be a bit embarrassing if that was the case. It was better to be prepared though, it would be fine if they came over-prepared than the other way around.

"I sure hope not! I didn't come all the way here to fight a weak demonic beast!"

Qiang lamented the thought of not getting to fight a strong monster. He was at a stage of his life that fighting weak core formation beasts wasn't all that fun. The only joy left in his life was fighting with nascent soul level opponents but with their sect not being in conflict with anyone for a long time proved to be boring.

"I worry about your children, is only fighting in that rice-sized brain of yours?"

"At least all of my brain didn't go to my chest!"

Huo Qiang was quick to fire back while pointing at Liena's overdeveloped chest. It had gotten even larger than before due to the recent birth.

The pink-haired woman moved her emerald battle fans to cover that area while glaring at Qiang. Zhang Dong just wanted to facepalm as he just couldn't get these two into one room for more than a minute.

They just constantly fought with each other, he feared leaving the sect for more than a few days. When Liena was pregnant she didn't bump into Qiang that much so it was fine. But from now on he expected her to be more active, things might get dicey from now on.

He just feared that people from the Qiang faction and Liena's side would start getting pulled into this mess. Yes, those existed even in his sect, each grand elder had their own people. They all had heightened status and would react to their grand elder's mood swings in one way or the other.

"How impudent! You dare?"

Liena moved into a fighting position while Qiang smirked at the challenge. He was already itching for a fight. The problem was the bad timing and the place. Zhang Dong couldn't have the two duke it out on his brand new ship. Luckily he knew how to get his wife to back away and forget all about it.

"W-what are you?"

It was a simple maneuver, he just moved in closer and lifted the woman up into his hands. The tactical princess carry was implemented and it was successful. Liena started squirming around in his arms for a moment or two but soon enough she had calmed herself down. The rage from her face had subsided and it was replaced with a blush.

"There, have you calmed yourself down, my wife?"

Liena just nodded while grumbling a bit, he could hear Qiang giving out a 'Tch' sound from the side. He had lost a sparring match which he was probably saddened by.

“And you Qiang, stop angering Liena, or the next time we spar I’ll be sure to give your pride and joy a good smack.”

Zhang Dong made a fist with his hand and glanced down. Qiang followed this gaze, he noticed that Zhang Dong was staring at his family jewels. This made him shrink back in a quick response while covering the thing between his legs with both his hands.

“You wouldn’t, senior brother... I still need that.”

“You sure? Think you had used it more than enough, maybe you should try living like a monk.”

After throwing a few jabs of his own he started walking away. Liena looked over her husband’s shoulder while being carried away and stuck her tongue out while lowering one of her lower eyelids down. This was the very same gesture she performed when Zhang Dong saw her all these years ago.

“It’s not fair, brother Dong always takes Liena’s side...”

Qiang pouted a bit but Zhang Dong wasn’t there to see it as he was already walking away. He moved towards his personal cabin with Liena in his arms. This caused the woman to fidget even more as a lot of sect members could see this show of affection. This only showed that the sect leader and his wife had a good relationship. The sect members didn’t have much to gossip about as this fact was already known by many.

“You know that he is annoying you on purpose, you are like a little sister to him.”

Zhang Dong placed Liena down on a couch after walking into his personal cabin. It looked quite cozy in here and the two would be able to relax here for the time being. The door would actually open only for him and no one else. Even if Qiang came or his disciples the doors would be closed until he allowed entrance.

“I know.... but I just can’t stand his face... that condescending face... Can’t we banish him from the main sect? It was so peaceful when he was ordered to patrol the borders.”

Liena asked with sparkles in her eyes. She was giving Zhang Dong the puppy eye treatment but he didn’t really want to abuse his sect leader position for squabbles between his wife and best friend. “You know I can’t do that. Don’t want our children to copy things like that in the future...”

Zhang Dong was afraid to bring up a ‘Young Master type’ in the future. He was now a father; he didn’t want his children to have a stick up their butt. If they saw him abuse his power left and right they would think themselves above other people. Liena still had the old mindset of might made right, she wouldn’t be opposed to using her husband’s position to her favor. He was slowly trying to change that side of her but it was a slow process.

“You are too lenient with him, his father also isn’t showing enough respect...”

Before Liena could go on a tangent about honor and prestige she found Zhang Dong’s finger up against her lip.

“Let’s not argue, we have other things to worry about for now.”

He sat down next to her on that couch but soon moved into one of his favorite positions. It was one that he preferred when he was alone with his wife. That was by placing his head onto her thighs, with this he had a nice view along with a soft spot to rest his head-on.

“Sometimes I forget how much of a child this husband of mine is...”

Liena gave out a sigh while petting Zhang Dong on the head with her hand. She could only smile down at the man that was rubbing his cheek against her thighs. When Zhang Dong did this she always wondered where the powerful sect leader she married had gone to.

“You’re the only one I can show this side, so be grateful to this great leader of yours!”

“Yes, I am very much grateful, my great leader.”

She petted his head one more time before feeling Zhang Dong’s hands wandering to certain places that they shouldn’t. The ship ride would take a day so the two had some time to kill. Zhang Dong was feeling stressed out by the whole demonic being debacle so his wife would have to help him out with that...

While the United Element Sect Matriarch and Patriarch were having a steamy encounter the rest of the cultivators were preparing to take off. The ship was now slowly moving through the protective barrier. The two smaller ships that the Divine Fist Sect had were moving behind it with Fang Heng on one of them.

Soon the argonaut moved to the back as it had to follow these ships towards the ruins. The people left behind in the city would have to wait with anticipation for their return. The gate with the path back to the United Element’s Sect would remain there for the time being. If the monsters from the mist were to breach the improved array everyone would have a way to evacuate.

Some people that were convinced that this sect was already done for had taken Zhang Dong’s sect up on the offer already. Most of the cultivators remained in place though, they believed that staying with their own till the bitter end was the correct thing to do.

“What do you think about this, sect leader?”

Mao Wuying was hovering above the sect grounds with the other two nascent soul survivors. They looked at the ships vanishing into the mist, the grayish fog engulfed the large flying vessels till there was nothing left to see.

“We all faced that monster together... Prepare everything, when the time arrives we must be ready to leave...”

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Zhang Dong opened up his eyes and could see a uniform ceiling made from steel. There were various small gem light orbs embedded in it that shone in a dim yellow light. He rolled over to the side, what he witnessed was the sleeping face of his lovely wife right next to him.

He just remained there, not moving while staring at the mother of his children. She still placed importance on her face, the makeup that she wore only got more intricate with the years. He had tried to tell her that it was fine to go with a more ‘natural’ look. Whenever he mentioned that he could feel the daggers stabbing into him from her menacing stare.

He moved his hand over to her cheek, with the back of his hand he caressed it. He could feel Liena's breath on his skin and she started to wiggle around. Before he could wake her up, he heard someone call out from the side.

"Patriarch, we will be arriving at our destination within an hour's time."

The voice was a bit choppy, it was coming from a console from the side that was connected to the Argonauts control room. He recognized the voice, it was the ship's captain doing his report. This abrupt call out also caused his wife to finally wake up.

"Is that so, I'll be with you in a moment."

Zhang Dong called out to the disembodied voice of the ship's captain while sitting up. He was still in bed, the only thing covering his naked body the silky bed sheets.

"We should get ready and prepare for battle."

Liena rubbed her sleepy eyes for a moment, she could see Zhang Dong standing up and grabbing his robe that was on the side. The two started to redress themselves while looking at the mirror at the side.

Zhang Dong checked if he had all of his spatial rings present along with the weapons that he usually used. While doing this Zhang Liena moved over and straightened up his robe along with his disheveled hair.

"Give me a moment, I need to freshen up."

"You look fine...Uh... nevermind."

She gave him that face again so he decided to just let her redo her makeup. Something like that could take from a couple of minutes to even an hour. After leaving the room he headed to the ship's operating room where all the important people should be gathered.

"Greetings Patriarch!"

"Welcome Master."

His two disciples were here as well but they were missing a certain Huo Qiang.

'He never liked this type of gathering, he is probably on the bridge getting prepared for the coming battle.'

He nodded at the people that were greeting him while moving further inside. He remembered everyone in this room all thanks to his almost perfect memory. Being a cultivator at his level brought some perks with them. Knowing their faces was the only thing that he did, what their private lives looked like was something he wasn't interested in. There was a certain barrier that wouldn't be crossed.

He was the Patriarch and they were under him, having a personal relationship with them would be quite hard. The people here treated him like some kind of king, some even close to a divine being. They would perform any task he would give them. What they wanted in return was prestige and a chance for improving their cultivation. Everyone was aiming for the very top here, they all wished to ascend to immortality in one way or another.

“How does it look, Captain? Are there any dangers ahead of us?”

Zhang Dong asked while sitting down, he had a special seat prepared for just his use. All the other people were standing up straight not daring to do anything out of place in front of the sect leader.

“Reporting to the Patriarch! The trip has been smooth, the monsters that lurk in the fog are unable to pierce through our barrier. There were fewer of them left than we expected. We believe that most of the monsters from these lands were slain during the defense of the Divine Fist Sect.”

Zhang Dong rubbed his chin while listening. Apparently, the monster’s numbers weren’t unlimited. There were swarms of them back there, it was possible that the army was now thinned out.

“Mmm, prepare for battle either way. Even though the monsters aren’t appearing now, they could be lurking at the ruins to defend their master.”

It would be a good idea for the beast to pull back its armies to its lair. He wasn’t sure if the monster had a direct connection with its minions. After most of them were killed by him and his elders it would be smart for the demonic being to bunker up. They would probably experience heavy resistance at these ruins when they arrived.

“Is the radar picking them up?”

“This mist is blocking our devices, we can’t pierce through them beyond a kilometer. I’m afraid we will only know if the beasts are waiting for us after we arrive at our destination, my lord.”

He nodded while looking at the screen. There were a few red dots here and there which represented some flying monsters. There weren’t that many around, whenever they flew by the monsters would try to attack them. But they would disintegrate into particles whenever they slammed themselves into the Argonauts shield. There were two large green dots in front of his ship which represented the two ships from the Divine Fist Sect. They had guided them towards this area, even in the mist, their navigators were able to traverse their land without a hitch. They weren’t going that fast but within a day they were not close to the previously found ruins.

Zhang Dong found it a bit strange that these ruins were only found recently. They weren’t that far away from the main sect city. They also weren’t in a particularly dangerous area from what he had heard.

“We will approach slowly, it would be unwise to rush in without any information. Make sure that everyone is ready for combat!”

He gave his orders while observing the indication on the big screen. He spread his senses outside and kept a close eye on everything. There were approaching the supposed lair of the monster, the first thing he noticed was the noise. The closer they got the fewer sounds he could hear.

During their approach just a few minutes ago he could hear the wails of strange monstrosities in the distance. There were even sounds of them slamming into their protective barrier but now, there was nothing. It was as if there was nothing here, the wind had even stopped howling.

‘Something isn’t right....’

“The wind... something is affecting it.”

He looked to the side, Zhang Liena was standing there back in her attire. She was the person most versed in the Dao of the wind so she noticed that something wasn't right. Their eyes met for a moment and he nodded, it was time to go outside.

"Captain, remain vigilant. I and grand elder Liena will depart for the ship deck to examine the situation."

It was time to leave and go outside. The two removed themselves from the room, Liu and Xue moved behind them while Nuana also approached from the side. The kids had joined them on this expedition but they were here more as observers. With the nascent soul masters around the core formation cultivators would only get in the way.

These youths at the core formation level could still aid the Argonaut with their cultivation. They could and would be stationed by the ship's side cannons. There were many of those and they were constructed in a way that a cultivator could boost the cannon's power with their own cultivation base.

"Finally you are out, the fun is about to start!"

Huo Qiang was sitting right at the tip of the ship's deck. He was looking out into the cloudy void that was this mist. The two smaller ships in front of them were giving out light of their own. They were still hard to spot with the naked eye as the ships kept a large distance from each other.

"Fun huh? I hope that fun won't be very deadly."

Zhang Dong replied with a shrug while moving towards Huo Qiang and the tip of the ship. He tried to spread out his senses beyond this fog but it was quite good at blocking his internal sonar. He decided to use his system's map function afterward but as before it was getting jammed.

He didn't like where this was going, whenever his system was affected by anything it didn't bode anything good. He was going to face off against a monster that he believed was brought with him to this world along with his system. By who and why was still unknown to him.

Zhang Dong hopped that he could shed some light on this mystery by taking the beast out. He had yet to encounter any more of those strange cube treasures that he had absorbed on two occasions. The person that appeared that one time was also suspicious. Was that person an ally or an enemy? It could just be a ploy of the being that brought him here.

He was scared that he was now some kind of plaything of a god-like existence. It could be a person at the immortal level of strength or even far beyond that. From what he knew there were no immortals left in this world at least none that were active. One could be hiding somewhere but not like anyone at the nascent soul level would be able to sense a cultivator of that prestige.

The silence continued for a few moments, the only thing that could be heard was the humming sound of the Argonaut's engines. The silence was brought to an abrupt stop as one of the Divine Fist Sect's ships went up in flames.

It was the one that was the furthest away from them. Zhang Dong could faintly see something large and slimy piercing this flying vessel from below. It looked like a giant trunk of a tree with many branches that were strangely moving around.

"Enemy Attack!"

The alarm sounded on the ship, the thumping steps of many cultivators were heard in the surroundings as everyone took off running. The side cannons sprung into action as everyone that was in one tried to focus on the enemy.

The two grand elders including the Patriarch from the United Element Sect reacted as well. They all focused their energies on the exploding ship, they weren't attacking the strange 'tree' but trying to pluck the Divine Fist Sect cultivators that were falling down after the explosion.

Elder Heng who was responsible for their safety was also there. With the four powerful cultivators working together most of the ship's crew was safely evacuated to the other two ships. "Finally I was tired of waiting, it's our turn now!"

Huo Qiang shouted out while pointing out with his finger towards the strange tree that was hard to see due to the mist.

The tip of Qiang's finger started glowing in a deep crimson. Particles of red light converged onto the tip before a red beam of plasma shot forward. In a fraction of a second, it connected with the thing that pierced the ship.

"GUOHHH."

A monstrous wail of pain was heard by everyone present after the attack connected. The mist was forcefully parted by Qiang's attack to reveal the enemy's true form. Instead of a large tree what they saw was a mass of flesh. The branches were just smaller squiggly tentacle appendages, on each of them a toothy mouth which was now screeching in pain after a large hole was blown open in the thick tentacle trunk.

"Everyone, Attack!"

The order was given, the large ship composed of spirit metal lit up brightly as its cannons started firing, the battle had finally started.

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A mist covered sky lit up in bright red after a large explosion. The source of this eruption was a large flying ship with sails. It was pierced by a monstrous appendage that was able to take it out in one attack.

This thing looked quite bizarre, dark in coloring, and made out of flesh. From it, a myriad of squiggly tentacles was wiggling around. Each one of them covered in mouths, these mouths weren't uniform in design. They were a mix of beasts and humanoid creatures alike, the teeth on them looked to belong to carnivores as well as to herbivores.

The shrieks of a thousand creatures were heard from those flailing tentacles. Their cries were soon erased by a red beam of molten plasma. It connected with the thick dark tower of flesh and caused it to burn up. The tentacles attached to it went up in flames along with it while screaming in a high pitched wail.

"How's that?"

"Qiang watch out, below you!"

Huo Qiang who was up in the air and also the first one to attack looked down. He was quick to react by dodging to the side as another large spire of flesh tried devouring him from below. This one actually looked more like a giant worm with a toothy mouth but it also had a lot of those slimy tendrils coming out of it.

“The mist is a lot thicker in this part...Captain, activate the formation!”

Zhang Dong called out while also moving down from the Argonaut. It was time to get his hands dirty and to help out his sect brother that was getting swarmed by some strange tentacle monsters. Zhang Liena wasn't far behind as all of the nascent soul masters sprung into action. The other cultivators remained on the ship that was equipped to protect them.

The ship that went down belonged to the Divine Fist Sect. Fang Heng the man responsible for them was on the other ship but he was now hovering above it. There was enough time to evacuate the core formation elders onto the other flying vessel before the skyscraper-sized monster flesh trees got them.

Thanks to The Argonaut what they were facing would soon come to light. The large metallic ships' large array formation started glowing bright gold. Runic symbols started appearing on the bubbly like barrier before it started expanding outwardly.

Within a matter of moments, the whole ship lit up in a bright golden hue. It started pulsating with energy that was shooting outwardly in a burst of bright light. This continued for a time while causing the miasma around the area to get pushed back forcefully.

Finally, everything was appearing before them, the fog was clearing up. The people that were looking at the ship's screen and the ones that were outside to witness everything started gasping. What they saw was truly appalling, a sight that they didn't expect to ever see.

Where everyone expected to see ruins or some sign of a city that was here, they witnessed flesh. Everything was covered in a layer of meat, squiggly living one to be exact.

What used to be the ground or the ruins were covered in a mountain of flesh. Tentacle-like appendages were protruding out of everything, strange mouths, eyes, even ears and noses were attached to that flesh. It was like out of a horror flick where some kind of alien monster had fused with every living being that it came across.

“What is all of this...”

Zhang Dong had to do a double-take over everything. He wasn't sure what he was looking at, was this mass of flesh the Cthulhu monster that he was supposed to be facing? He tried examining everything with his system but it showed corrupt numbers and question marks over everything. Even it had trouble identifying what this thing was and he had a sinking suspicion as to why.

“This thing... it's made up of thousands... no millions of living beings... It has somehow fused with them together...”

He detected vast amounts of demonic qi coming from the creature below. It was on different wavelengths that brought him to his conclusion of it being composed of various living creatures, humans included.

The ship continued to send out waves of divine energy into the distance which helped in keeping the mist at bay. The tentacle mass below wasn't all too happy about this fact and started thrashing its tower sized tendrils at the unwelcome guests. Luckily for Zhang Dong and his people, their ship was quite mobile and this monster below wasn't the speedy kind, evading its attacks was manageable.

The Argonaut wouldn't be taking a passive stance in this battle. The crew inside was ready and waiting. The ship was equipped with large spirit cannons that were powered by the ship's engine. Their power could be further boosted by the person using them. The order to attack was given long ago and the people were quite trigger happy.

A rain of various colorful projectiles descended from the sky. It was as if shooting stars were descending from above. These energy attacks collided with the screeching monster below, tearing into it while it tried to defend itself with its massive body of squiggly flesh. The sight wasn't pretty as the moment the monster's body was pierced dark blood and pungent smell followed.

This wasn't the only enemy that was waiting for them. There was a myriad of flying monsters separate from it coming their way. They were quite strong at the pinnacle of core formation and able to move even without the mist surrounding the area around them.

Zhang Dong looked at the monsters but he didn't join the battle yet. The other three nascent soul elders had joined with the flying ships to support them but he was still looking around. There was something off about this whole place. The flesh monster did give off nascent soul fluctuations of energy but it wasn't that strong.

The only thing it had going for it was its size. It didn't look like it would be able to handle all of them, which would make this an easy victory for their side. From his experience when things looked too good to be true, most of the time they were. That is also why he remained vigilant while scanning for other enemies.

"What is that..."

It wasn't long since the mist cleared out but now he noticed something. In the distance there was a strange structure, it was still composed of flesh and part of this monster. It looked like three arches coming together into one spot. At the spot that they connected was some kind of fleshy rope that dangled around.

It connected to a spherical object, due to the explosions it was swinging around. From it, he detected a strange energy signature. He focused more, listening in as he had a suspicion that this thing wasn't anything simple.

"Is that a... heartbeat?"

Zhang Dong was quite far away from those flesh arches but he could tell that they were the size of 100 meter tall towers. The thing that was hanging down from it was close to their size but much wider, the more he looked at it the more it appeared to be some kind of egg covered in a fleshy membrane.

"Fuck... it's in there...Qiang, Liena, help me out!"

Zhang Dong pointed at the egg-like object in the distance while trying to get his ally's attention. He didn't like the way that thing looked and if his suspicion was correct it would be best to get rid of that thing as soon as they could.

The two were having their own battles in the distance but they were quick to react to his summons. Liena and Qiang looked to where Zhang Dong was pointing to. They could see the strange fleshy structure with a strange dangling egg in the middle. Even they could tell that there was something not right with that thing.

"What is that evil aura..."

Liena gasped.

"Could it be?"

Qiang narrowed his eyes while looking into the distance.

Zhang Dong just nodded while pointing out with his hand, his soul beast was summoned behind him and roared out. The other two didn't wait long before summoning their own beasts. The red Ifrit radiated massive plasma energy while the Storm Phoenix brought storm clouds over.

The three moved their hands out while pointing their palms at the egg-shaped mass of flesh. Energy started gathering a few meters away from where they were standing as the three grand elders concentrated for a combined attack.

Green, red and gold energies started mixing with one another. The combined might of the three nascent soul elders caused everything to tremble around them. While the three were charging up, the mass of flesh below reacted.

It seemed like the monster wouldn't just allow the humans to continue with their attack without retaliating. Soon various massive tentacles traveled towards them, on the tips giant mouths with teeth set on devouring the three young grand elders.

The three soul beasts that were hovering around the trio from the United Element's sect wouldn't just remain passive for this to happen. The massive beasts gave out a roar while charging towards the incoming tentacles. Their own mouth opened up wide and each one released a burst of energy that looked like an elemental breath attack.

Those masses of flesh weren't strong enough to resist this burst of energy and started to crumble. This didn't stop new ones to appear for a continuing surge of monster flesh. These tentacles reformed themselves almost as fast as they were burned up, showing off how good at regenerating themselves they were.

Luckily the three soul-beasts were capable enough to overwhelm the regenerative abilities of this being. This gave enough time for the three elders to gather their nascent soul energies in one spot.

It started from a tiny fingertip-sized orb in the center. It gave out a burst of energy while expanding into something the size of a basketball. The three types of energies were combining into one which made it look like a taijitu.

Soon the three were finished with concentrating and a massive torrent of spiritual energy was released. It looked like a massive beam of light that was composed of three dragons. They all shot towards the strange-looking egg while circling around themselves. They converged into one three colored dragon before connecting with their target, the explosion sent shockwaves into the surrounding causing the flying ships to buckle under pressure.

The cultivators that were lighting up the sky with cannon fire stopped with their attacks. They all looked to the distance where the three grand elders sent their attack towards. What remained there was a mushroom cloud and dust, probably anything that was there was incinerated into nothingness. Any parts of that flesh monster that connected to that spot were crumbling into dark dust.

“Was that it?”

Huo Qiang called out while crossing his muscular hands together, his tone indicating his disappointment.

“Let us hope so, I don’t want to remain in this evil place for much longer.”

Liena replied while fanning herself a bit. Zhang Dong didn’t chime in as he just squinted and looked into the distance. Then his eyes jolted open wide while he bolted for his wife. Liena gave out a surprised yelp while getting pulled to the side by Zhang Dong. A fraction of a second later a giant black beam of light shot towards where the three grand elders were standing.

A massive howl could be heard from the spot the three fired their combined attack. That was also the spot from where the dark beam of evil energy shot from. The dust started to slowly settle revealing a huge monster lurking within.

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The monster had a vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of feelers that some would call tentacles. Its body was covered in scales while also having a rubbery looking body texture to it. It had a somewhat humanoid shape, two legs with two arms, its hand and feet had prodigious claws. Behind it was a set of long webbed narrow wings that looked more like a decoration than a functional appendage meant for flight.

Quasi-thulhu [Nascent Soul Great Circle]

Zhang Dong looked at this creature, it looked almost exactly like the other two creatures he had faced. The biggest difference was its size, it was well over a 100 meters. It had probably burst from that egg sack that they fired upon. It was very surprising that it had survived, its regenerative abilities were probably further enhanced than before. Then he had to take its cultivation realm into account, with a nascent soul this creature would even live if its physical body perished.

‘This isn’t going to be easy...’

Zhang Dong bit his bottom lip while the monster started at him. There were some superficial wounds from the attack that it took but they were quickly healing in real-time. Before he could think up another strategy a certain overzealous friend of his shouted out from the side.

“So this is this beast? I’ll take care of it!”

Huo Qiang slammed his fists together while they glowed in a crimson hue. Various runic patterns appeared on the armor gauntlets that he was wearing. His soul beast howled out along with its master as both of them charged towards the massive monster.

“That idiot...”

Zhang Dong wasn't fast enough to stop his battle happy ally and had to watch as he charged forward. He could only follow him after also powering up. His body gave out a golden sheen before he burst towards the dark green being, Zhang Liena close behind him with her Storm Phoenix soul-beast with her.

The pair of husband and wife looked at each other while nodding. Instead of following behind their overzealous red-haired friend, they decided to flank the monster from the sides. Dong moved to the right side while Liena took the left one. The plan was to do a pincer attack while the beast was contenting with Huo Qiang.

This Quasi-thulhu didn't seem that perturbed by the previous attack that it received. It wasn't moving at all, its face tentacles squiggled around while its yellow eyes scanned the surroundings. The three nascent soul cultivators that were flying towards it looked like small flies, their soul beasts were slightly larger but they didn't look like they would stand a chance against this massive creature.

Size wasn't everything in this world though, a larger frame brought more power with it but it also reduced mobility. It would probably be easy to hit this monster but would it be enough to bring it down to its knees? Huo Qiang was now charging up an attack to test his mettle.

Huo Qiang moved his fist back while flying forward on a collision course with the Quasi-thulhu's massive squid face. His body was surrounded by red plasma energy, most of it was flowing right into that huge fist of his. the Plasma Ifrit was right behind his master, his body was mirroring this punching motion as both of them flew forward.

Qiang's spiritual energy exploded causing widespread destruction. Storm-like winds were caused by the eruption of speed and power. Anyone that was witnessing this attack gulped hard while stopping in their tracks to stare.

The powered-up fist was finally thrown forward, the Ifrit that looked like it was standing behind its master was somehow absorbed into this fiery attack. Its whole body was sucked into a chaotic mass of spiritual energy that collided with the unmoving monster's face.

A massive discharge of fire-based energies occurred. The flying ships that were in the distance started rocking back and forth as even they were affected by the eruption of plasma.

This wasn't the end of it as Zhang Dong and Liena closed in from the sides as well. Both of them were ready to produce their own version of this attack.

Liena motioned towards the monster's side with her emerald fan. The bird made of lightning and wind energies gave out a screech before turning into a mass of spiritual energy. It descended on its target in the form of a giant thunder filled twister. The tornado slammed into the monster's side while spinning around and burrowing itself deeply into its flesh, trying to tear it to bits.

Zhang Dong was the last one to produce an attack. He held two of his fingers toward the enemy while holding his hand in a sort of gun shape. It didn't take much time for his fingers to glow in a bright golden

color. A bolt of golden energy shot out, arcs of electricity were surrounding it as it traveled at a speed that couldn't be followed by a regular person's eyes.

A thunderous noise filled the whole area as three of those nascent soul level attacks collided with the monster. Each of them hit one after another before causing a massive explosion of spiritual energy.

Zhang Dong and Feng Liena moved back a bit while floating in the air. The discharge of their attacks caused another cloud of smoke to form. Even with their enhanced senses, it was hard to tell what was happening inside. They needed to wait for the chaotic energies to disperse before knowing if the monster was affected by their attacks.

They were sure of one thing though, the beast didn't dodge at all and took the brunt force of their attacks. Those attacks were at a level of a late stage nascent soul cultivator. Someone like Zhan Jie that Zhang Dong faced previously would be dead three times over if he was hit by all three of those attacks. It took more time for the smoke to clear up. Huo Qiang floated back as well while grimacing. He had his hands crossed over one another with his chest puffed out. On his face a slight frown of annoyance.

"Senior brother, why did you interfere? Now the monster is dead!"

Zhang Dong's brows quivered as he heard his junior brother boasting around. He didn't know this creature too well so he wasn't understanding the gravity of the situation. When the smoke was slowly clearing away the truth was revealed.

Quasi-thulhu was just standing there but it was missing part of its head. Part of it had been blown off right through. One of its yellow eyes was missing while black blood oozed out from the wound. Huo Qiang could see right through this hole to the other side, the hit looked like it punched right through the creature's brain.

On the sides where Zhang Dong and Liena attacked there were visible holes as well. The creature was missing its massive arms that had fallen down to the ground. For all intents and purposes, the squid monster looked to be defeated. It wasn't moving much and the only thing coming out of it was black blood.

Before everyone could rejoice, the mass of flesh that was all around this area started getting feisty. It was fighting against the two flying ships with all its might but its huge size proved to be a weakness. It just couldn't land a clean hit on any of those floating vessels now after the moment of surprise was gone.

While the three grand elders were looking at the unmoving monster the mountain of flesh started retreating towards them. Zhang Dong was the first one to spot this anomaly which caused him to back away while alerting his wife.

"Something is wrong, get back!"

Huo Qiang was the only one unconvinced, to him the battle was already won so he just looked around while floating. Liena listened to the advice of Zhang Dong and backed away while protecting herself with a shield made of green spiritual energy.

The surrounding area that was mostly composed of the fused being of flesh started getting sucked up. This caused the destroyed ground to be visible as the being made up of flesh started to get smaller. While this was happening the squid-faced monster started moving around.

The giant gaping hole that was made through its brain started mending itself. Tiny tendrils started squiggling around and transforming themselves into new flesh while connecting broken ones.

The destroyed arms turned into fleshy tentacles as well while moving themselves back into place. The whole process didn't take that long and Zhang Dong along with his companions could only watch with surprise as the huge monster mended itself back. It only took about fifteen seconds for the beast to be back at full health. There were no visible outside wounds to the monster and it also didn't seem to have used up much spiritual energy to perform this task.

This wasn't quite the end of the spectacle happening here. The previously formless mass of flesh, mouths, and tentacles started transforming. Two large spires of meat appeared right next to where Quasi-thulhu was standing. They started taking form, with time the two transformed into grotesque monsters of their own with now a visible cultivation level that put them at the nascent soul late stage level of power.

Their forms weren't much better than their friend's. The two were smaller than Quasi-cthulhu but not by much. One was a giant floating eye with many appendages coming out of its bulbous body. Some of them looked like ordinary tentacles, some like human or ape-like arms. Some looked like insectoid appendages with sickle blades like a mantis would have.

The second one had a taur-like look to it. The lower half of its body looked like it belonged to some kind of four-legged beast with large talons on its feet. The top part was a bit more humanoid with a torso and four arms. Its head was mostly just teeth and a giant mouth with no eyes. Its eyes were placed on the shoulder part of the more humanoid section of its body.

Zhang Dong tried identifying these monsters with his system window but what he was getting was corrupt letters and numbers.

&#SDF21# [Late Stage]

&#^#GD^& #!%^SD [Late Stage]

He could at least see their power levels but he could feel that the two monsters were at the very top of that ranking. If he compared them to the Dark Palm Sect Patriarch that he fought they would come up on top without much of a problem.

Quasi-thulhu gave out a massive angry shout that caused the sound waves to push everyone back even the nascent soul fighters weren't safe from it. Everyone protected themselves with their own skills while backing away. Even Huo Qiang's haughty attitude had changed after seeing the other two monsters appear.

"Gather up everyone, This isn't a fight we can continue without a strategy!"

Zhang Dong sent a message to the ship's captain to aim for the floating eyeball of a monster. They would need to split their fighters between these huge demonic beings. The plan of surrounding the boss

of the two had failed. Now they had to contend with other enemies that were almost as strong as the main one.

“Let me aid you!”

Fang Heng finally showed up while the ship with his sect members retreated behind the Argonaut.

“Glad to have you on board...”

Zhang Dong frowned a bit while looking at the large monster in front of him. His body started radiating energy while expanding in size.

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...5...10...25...65...85...100...110... meters, Zhang Dong’s old Avatar form finally saw being used today. He matched the Cthulhu look alike in size but he was still half a head shorter than it was. It didn’t seem like this massive monster would be easily killed with its regenerative capabilities. It also looked to be on the more sluggish side which made this form more useful in this fight.

This new Avatar form technique was a bit different than the old one. For one thing, it utilized Zhang Dong’s soul-beast giving him less energy based qualities. He looked more like a golden statue covered with scales, lightning bolts and electric arcs were shooting off his whole body just as before.

His body refining skill also came into play here. He had already pushed it further than his Qi cultivation at this point. Making heavenly grade items was something that he was already proficient in.

This left him able to absorb them through the years, he was still restricted to the late stage as the resources were limited. Getting to the great circle stage would just bankrupt his entire sect. It was also not feasible due to a bottleneck that didn’t exist with the previous versions of this body refining technique.

Now he actually needed to absorb a higher grade of item each time he moved a small realm up. This posed a big problem as there were no weapons that he could craft that would be of the very height of heaven grade. He lacked both the skills, knowledge, and resources to push through that threshold. Any tiny mistake would cause the weapons he made to degrade. This process needed perfection, this he could only achieve with time and crafting experience.

Zhang Dong’s new and improved Avatar form took three of his aspects and combined them into one. With it, he lost some maneuverability and he couldn’t use most of his weapons. This form’s biggest attribute was its resistance and sheer power. He didn’t take the time to name it properly, he also didn’t have anyone to pass it onto either. This was a technique that he customized for his special constitution. Passing it on to his disciples wasn’t possible as they lacked his metal-like body refining technique.

The Cthulhu look-alike finally became active, after getting hit multiple times without retaliating it was time for it to strike. Black miasma surrounded its body, it looked thick and was even dribbling down to the ground. The moment a droplet of this dark-green liquid fell down it burned a hole right through the hard rock.

The monster opened up its large mouth to gather energy. Particles of dark qi were condensed into a smaller point right in the middle of that tentacled face. Luckily Zhang Dong remembered this type of attack as he had seen it once before when he was fighting this creature in his demon hunter disguise.

He was quick to throw an uppercut to that squiggly chin. It connected at about the same time that the monster fired off its attack. This caused another explosion to detonate, right inside the monster's toothy mouth. The dark rays of energy shined through to the outside, anything they touched died instantly. Plants wilted, rocks shattered into dust and even the small particles were affected. Zhang Dong's face that was in his avatar form was unmoving but in reality, he was trying not to show the amount of pain that he was in. It was only one punch but his whole fist felt like it had punched through a cactus. It felt like a million tiny needles were inserted into his knuckles at the same time. His only explanation was this black miasma that the creature was covered with. It was similar to acid and caused an excruciating amount of pain.

He couldn't stop now though, he needed to follow this momentum. After the uppercut followed a straight punch to the exact same spot. The monster's face caved in fully and it was pushed back. It looked like Zhang Dong had the advantage, the monster was getting pummeled by his giant form.

The people on the ship were all hidden inside and either manning the cannons or ready to repair anything if they got attacked. Before anyone could cheer the monster finally retaliated. While being forced back by the second punch it swung one of its giant arms toward Zhang Dong's face. He reacted by putting up his guard but he was still pushed back.

The massive claws dug into his forearm that was used for defending. They ripped through his giant golden form causing dark-colored claw marks. The poison that was on the tips of those claws seeped in while Zhang Dong retreated in pain. His forearm that had a deep golden hue started turning black.

He wanted to scream but managed to hold it in. He grasped his injured arm and started injecting golden energy into it. With some time the evil Qi was pushed back and he recovered. The same was true for the monster, its head that was missing was now fully reformed and it looked just fine. It shouted out once more while charging another mouth beam, this time around Zhang Dong wasn't close enough to interrupt this attack.

While Zhang Dong found himself in a pickle he noticed that his wife and Fang Heng was behind him. They were in the middle of their own battle facing off against the monstrous centaur looking deformity. If he dodged to the side there was a possibility of the two being hit. The beam that this monster could shoot off was quite wide and was also very toxic. He was somewhat protected by his holy Dao. His companions on the other hand would not be able to recover as easily as he could if they got hit.

He decided to take it head-on. He covered his face with his arms in a protective position while focusing. Before the monster fired off its dastardly beam he started gathering his holy energies. His body began shining once more and a thin layer of golden lightning energy gathered around his arms that he was using for blocking.

There wasn't quite enough time for him to produce a proper quality shield but it would have to be enough. The torrent of evil energy condensed around that squidly mouth of the Cthulhu analog creature. It shot towards Zhang Dong's upper body which was a stroke of luck for him as that was the spot that he was defending the most.

When the beam impacted a loud thundering sound was heard. His entire body was shrouded in black energy and anyone or anything that was in close proximity was pushed back. Zhang Liena, Huo Qiang, and even the Argonaut weren't able to hold themselves in place. The two monstrosities that they were fighting were affected as well, both of them tumbled back while actually receiving some residual damage from their boss' attack.

"Senior Brother!?"

"Zhang Dong!"

Both Liena and Qiang shouted out as they both saw what transpired. A similar mushroom cloud was produced in the spot that Zhang Dong was standing. Both of them wanted to jump in to aid in his battle but before they could act the two monsters they were fighting resumed their attacks.

Quasi-thulhu howled in a strange way, it was as if it was laughing. After the smoke had cleared the golden form of Zhang Dong could finally be spotted. It was a lot less shiny than before, his forearms that he used for blocking were brownish-green. It looked as if he was being affected by the corrosive properties of this attack. Even he wasn't able to fully resist it.

But he would have to, he didn't think his allies would do much against this monster. If he canceled out his avatar form at this moment, there was a danger of succumbing to this poison. He was many times stronger in this form than without it, even with it fully activated he was receiving damage over time.

'How am I supposed to kill this thing... Should I try the pulsar technique? But that technique takes forever to charge...'

The only techniques that were plausible against this thing took an ample amount of time to perform. He could try doing it like last time with his swordsmanship but this monster was much bigger than before. Cutting it up into tiny cubes before disintegrating it would not be possible. It would probably out regenerate those strikes and he had to be careful of its offensive capabilities as well.

After receiving a simple claw strike and a simple Qi discharge his fighting capabilities had already dropped. He was losing copious amounts of Qi while healing himself as this demonic spiritual energy was draining him of his own healing powers.

The beast wouldn't give him much time to strategize as it lunged forward. Its webbed wings spread wide while it growled. Those tentacles on its face squiggled around as it opened its mouth.

Zhang Dong had one advantage over this monster. He actually knew how to fight, this beast obviously was only good at overpowering its opponents. The attacks it used were easy to read and rudimentary. It was telegraphing all of its strikes, the way it moved its body made it easy for Zhang Dong to read its intentions.

Quasi-thulhu went for quite the tactic as it attempted a bear hug. It was probably aiming to grab its opponent and then deliver a murderous bite. Zhang Dong was quick to react by stepping to the side, when the monster flew past him, he delivered a palm strike to the side of the monster's scaly body.

If this being had human anatomy then the blow would probably be a crippling one. It would at least take the air out of its lungs but instead, it only made it angrier. Quasi-thulhu shouted out while quickly

generating dark energy on its claws. It aimed for Zhang Dong's head but he was already able to read this move. He bobbed his head to the side and managed to slide his hand in right over for a counter punch.

This blow sent shockwaves into the surrounding area. If a core formation cultivator was flying unprotected around this battle he would find himself blowing up into small bloody meat chunks. The spiritual energies that these two were producing were just far too massive for any normal person to stomach. Even Huo Qiang and Zhang Liena needed to move away from the two giants.

It looked like the United Element Sect's Patriarch had everything under control. He was dancing around this monster delivering blow after blow. Each time his kick or punch connected part of the monster's body exploded. The problem was that afterward it mended itself back to its previous state.

Zhang Dong was slowly losing out, if this fight continued for too long he knew that he would run out of stamina. He was still only someone at the middle stage of the nascent soul realm. He was fighting an opponent two small realms above him. Even with his better cultivation method, he would tire out before it and he wasn't as proficient at healing himself as his opponent.

'Shit... what should I do...'

He dodged another blow while delivering a massive energy-filled palm strike to the monster's back. He injected his lightning energy along with his holy qi into the spot he hit making it explode. But when he was pulling his hand away it was already mending itself back into place.

Then he saw it, before the wound closed itself fully there was something he noticed. It was tiny compared to the monster and him but it was there. It was an item that he was familiar with why it was in the creature's body was unknown.

"Why is that there... did this thing absorb it... or is it powering itself through it..."

His eyes shone a bit as he quickly thought up another plan, with this new discovery he might stand a chance.

Chapter 266

The monster roared at Zhang Dong that looked like a giant electrified golden statue. Both of them were now in a contest of strength with their fingers interlocking. No one was giving their enemy an inch but also neither of them was able to move. The creature and the cultivator seemed equally matched in strength at least for now.

After a moment Zhang Dong's golden fingers started changing in color, they shifted into an unhealthy looking dark green. The monster's evil energy was seeping into his hands while expanding like tiny spiderwebs. Before this corruption could continue the monster received a swift strike to its nether regions.

It was kind of odd to see the monster's face convulse in pain after receiving this strike. The tentacles that were on its face weren't the only dangly bits that this Cthulhu possessed. It had apparently some humanoid traits with some common weaknesses with this being one of them.

The monster's grip loosened up after the swift smack to its more squishy lower organs. Thanks to this Zhang Dong could move his hands back while also delivering a swift palm strike to the beast's chest. This

strike caused a large shockwave to travel far and wide, causing even more destruction to the whole area.

‘Where is it... I’m sure it’s in there... I need to take it out...’

Zhang Dong was looking at the hole that he blasted into the monster’s chest with his palm strike. It took a few moments for it to close up but this was enough time for him to spot a tiny metallic object inside that opening. It was something he was familiar with and also something that he was looking for all these years.

It looked like a regular cube, similar to the ones he found in that secret ground and below the area where he was teleported into this world. It looked slightly different, it was pitch black and radiating a strange menacing demonic energy. The previous ones that he encountered weren’t like that. They mostly had regular spirit energy stored in them and acted as some kind of batteries or storage devices.

Somehow this device that was connected to him arriving in this world was inside that monster. Was this ruins a spot that a previous person that was spirited away arrived at? Maybe this thing was their tutorial monster, maybe they perished during it and it was left here to its own devices?

There were a lot of these scenarios going through Zhang Dong’s head right now. How it got there wasn’t that important but how this could help him in defeating this monster was.

He knew that these cubes stored a massive amount of spiritual energy in them. During the fight with the old Pride Demon all those years ago he was able to raise his cultivation level to a new height thanks to it.

This cube looked corrupt by the monster’s demonic energies. Zhang Dong had a suspicion that it was using this cube as a power source. The one he found below his initial summoning spot had a lot more energy in it than the one at the sacred grounds.

There was probably another spirit vein down here, or there was one at least. It was possible that the monster somehow fused with it after suffering injuries from the Divine Fist Sect relic weapon. How and why wasn’t important but now he had constructed a plan of action, there was some hope.

He only needed to get that tiny thing out of the creature’s body. The problem was that he had tried blasting several holes in this Cthulhu monster but the cube wasn’t there. He had used his spiritual sense to focus on it. This thing was moving around the monster’s body at a random pattern.

Whenever he tried getting to it, it shifted to another spot and got away. The monster was also quite resistant, even though he was blowing chunks out of it, most of his energy was consumed during this task.

After the initial strike, the cube dived back into the monster’s body to another part of it while the wound was mended. This had continued for several minutes, he was now slowly running out of stamina. The previous test of strength was proof enough, he was weakening.

Huo Qiang and Zhang Liena were further away. Fang Heng and the Argonaut were supporting those two from a distance. The ship was constantly firing its many cannons while moving around in the air. The nascent soul cultivator performed his own ranged attacks that utilized his Divine Dao.

The two monster helpers weren't easy foes though. They had similar healing capabilities to their master. They weren't as strong as the foes Zhang Dong was fighting but they were also battling against weaker opponents. Both sides were at a stalemate for the time being but the biggest problem was the main demonic being that was facing off against Zhang Dong.

It was much stronger than anyone here and Zhang Dong was barely contending with it. Was it not for his battle sense he would have gone down for the count a long time ago. A direct hit from the monster's massive fists or claws would be enough to topple the golden giant. In his smaller form, he would not be strong enough to deliver enough damage to the monster.

He also contemplated trying to invade the monster's body in his regular size to get to the cube but gave up on that idea quite fast. The monster was a shapeshifter and it could consume other people into its body. If he entered its insides he would probably find himself attacked by the inner organs, consumed in a matter of seconds by the demonic energy that was at the great circle of the nascent soul level. He was just not strong enough to resist them in his regular form.

For now, he decided to focus on the cube. That thing looked like it might be responsible for this creature's might. If it was fueling it, after its removal it should drop to a weaker state, maybe even revert to the core formation level. If it was that weak he would be able to crush it between his fingertips.

So he tried again, this time around he used some of his reserves to activate another improved version of his old technique. He clasped his hands together, this combined with his golden form made him look like a giant Buddhist statue that was praying.

His body started to shine brightly, golden lightning bolts started shooting out of his back into the surroundings. A sound of shifting metal could be heard as his body started to change. A new set of arms erupted from his body. Those arms appeared right below his shoulders, soon another set of arms sprung out making him look as if he had six of them now.

Each of those arms opened up their hands while blue energy gathered. Soon each one was holding a sword made from lightning energy. This was one of his original techniques that he was sent to this world with, the Thunderlight sword. He had trained it up to perfection throughout the years as well as brought it towards the nascent soul level of strength.

With the six swords in hand, he charged towards the massive opponent that was already healed up. The monster didn't just stand there as it blasted him with more demonic energy. He had to force his way through it while defending himself with the swords but when he got in range the slicing started.

He was like a machine, the plasma-induced swords started chopping Quasi-thulhu's body into small pieces. His swordsmanship expertise showed as the body was carved up. His gaze was focused not on the damage he was doing but at the moving treasure inside the monster. He constantly tried hitting it with this thunderlight sword but each time he swung down the tiny object moved to another section of the monster's body.

The only thing he could do was to follow its movements while chopping parts of the monster up. The less body there was to travel through the easier it would be for him to get it. Time was of the essence as he knew that he wouldn't be able to keep this up for long. The monster's arms, legs, and even head

were now falling down to the ground but he still wasn't finished. Soon most of its torso was coming apart which left the small cube not much space to maneuver.

'Damn I can't hold it...'

The thunder swords started sizzling out of existence. His spiritual energy was almost drained now but he wasn't giving up just yet. He moved his arms towards the part of the monster's body that had the cube in it. All six of them were plunged inside of this demonic being but the moment they did Zhang Dong could feel that something was wrong.

When he sunk his hands into the monster he didn't feel much resistance but he couldn't stop now. With his six hands still there, he managed to force the cube into a corner, and finally his giant digits managed to grasp it in place.

The moment they did though, he felt a massive jolt of fear run through his body. With all his might he started pulling, his hand that was holding the small object jerked back but he was unable to remove it from the monster's oversized body.

Then it happened, the sliced up parts started moving back towards the chopped up body. Zhang Dong's multiple hands started vanishing which left him with two of his original ones. One was deeply stuck in the monster's body while he was using the other one to try and push himself back to freedom.

Before he knew it he was getting pulled inside of the monster's body. The corrupt cube was stuck in there with his whole fist around it. He just couldn't yank himself free from the monster's clutches. No matter how much he pushed, pulled, or even discharged his golden lightning into this demonic being it wasn't budging an inch.

He could feel the monster slowly absorbing his body. His golden form started corroding into a brownish color. Dark cracks started forming on his hands and face as he started to show signs of breaking. If he didn't get out of here he would certainly get consumed by this monster.

'I... I can't...'

He found himself unable to budge from his spot, canceling out of his transformation to get smaller was being blocked. The monster's demonic Qi was somehow affecting his state. Activating the system's teleportation function was also not working, things looked dire.

Zhang Dong looked around hoping to find something that could aid him. His gaze landed on the Argonaut that wasn't that far off. It was bombarding the large eyeball along with Huo Qiang that looked somewhat beat up.

He steeled his resolve and sent a quick message to the ship's captain. The man in question was sitting in his large chair as he received a red prompt on his monitor. There was a clear order there, the man grimaced but would comply with the Patriarch's edict.

The man stood up from his seat which brought attention to him. He remained silent without uttering a word while looking out to the large screen. On it, he could see the golden giant wrestling with the monster. With each passing moment the golden glow was dimming, this made him realize why the Patriarch gave him such an order.

“The order has been given, activate the Gungnir. Aim... aim for the Patriarch!”

Chapter 267

Zhang Dong was grasping the cube with his giant golden hand. He could feel its corruption even without examining it with his system. In his previous encounters, he only needed to touch this type of cube and he would either get a prompt to absorb its power or it would happen automatically. In this current situation, this wasn't happening, the cube was somehow absorbed into this creature's structure.

There wasn't much he could do in this situation. He was slowly getting absorbed into this creature as well, the only reason he wasn't already dead was his holy dao. It was sufficient in pushing the demonic energies away but it also had its limit. Maybe if he was also in the great circle like this monster then he could overpower this power leech but at his current level, it was impossible.

The only thing he could do now is buy time for his battleship to charge its main cannon. That thing was powerful enough to even kill him when fully energized. He could see the ship slowly moving towards his direction while the front part transformed. The cannon slowly expanded while pointing towards him, in a few seconds the moment of truth would be upon him.

It might have seemed that he was committing suicide by battleship cannons but that wasn't his plan. The beam of concentrated spiritual energy wasn't for him but for the cube inside the monster. If it was destroyed he theorized that this monster would suffer a backlash, thus losing most of its cultivation base. Even if he got injured Huo Qiang and Feng Liena would be enough to finish it off in that state.

“What are you doing?”

Before the ship could blast away at him he heard a voice from afar. It belonged to his wife Zhang Liena, her soul-beast was surrounding the centaur looking monster with green cyclones while she on the other hand was flying his way. She had noticed that the ship was powering up and also who it was aiming at.

“Don't come closer, I'll be fine.”

He sent her a message while also prompting the ship's captain to hurry up with charging the cannon.

“Captain, overload the engines, fry the systems if you have to, I can't hold this thing for long...”

His glowing golden form was slowly flickering. The black miasma was engulfing him from head to toe. The creature's squid face was in close proximity to his own. Zhang Dong inserted some of his reserves to his forehead to deliver a headbutt to its face. The monster's head flew backward but this wouldn't keep it from giving up, it would soon regenerate while trying to swallow him whole.

“You're not fine at all...”

Liena wasn't hearing any of it as she transformed into a green beam of light and headed towards Zhang Dong's position. She was clearly unwilling to just let her husband be blasted by the giant ship's cannon.

“Stop!”

Her approach was halted though by one of her allies. In front of her was Huo Qiang, he was slightly beaten up from fighting the large eyeball but the monster was now contending with his soul beast. It wouldn't be held for long though.

“What are you doing, get out of my way Qiang!”

“Senior brother told me to stop you...”

“You...”

Liena looked into the distance, Zhang Dong in his giant form was slowly getting engulfed by a mass of dark green flesh. His golden color was dimming and the ship was almost done with charging up its main cannon. Liena knew that she wouldn't be able to get Huo Qiang out of the way at least not in time to help her husband. She would still try...

“Get out of my way, or die!”

She took out a certain item from her spatial ring. It looked like an emerald badge with a green phoenix engraving on it. She held it out in front of her and injected it with her spiritual energy to activate it.

“You're going to use that thing on me?!”

Huo Qiang put up his guard while looking at her. He knew well what the thing she was using was. He backed off while looking at her and his own soul beast that was wrestling with the giant eyeball monster.

Qiang wasn't sure what he should do, he promised Zhang Dong to stop Liena for her safety and he would carry out that request. He knew very well what his senior brother was doing was very dangerous. He had trust in him, he believed that he would be fine but Liena would need to stay back for his plan to work.

The problem was the item that Liena was holding. It was a special device that was gifted to her by Zhang Dong. Qiang himself was waiting for one of his own but Zhang Dong told him that he would need to wait as there weren't enough resources to go around just yet.

He put up his guard as he continued to block Liena's way. The woman's body started glowing in green color while the emerald badge floated towards her sternum. It attached itself a bit above that ample bosom which after an even shinier glow covered her body.

In a fraction of a second Liena's body started getting covered by metallic parts. They covered her entirely, from head to toe in a suit of armor. This armor had an intricate streamlined design that complimented Liena's form. It looked like it was made from some sort of green jade or crystal.

Qiang instantly felt Liena's cultivation realm shooting up past his own. This secret treasure was similar to the dark armor Zhang Dong had gifted his grandfather all those years ago. It was tailored for his wife and was the only one that he had made. There just weren't enough resources to go around, he didn't even have his own version yet.

Soon the transformation was done and Zhang Liena bolted forward. Both of her and Qiang collided in a bout of strength. What normally would be a specialty of this red-haired brute quickly turned around. The green wind energy overwhelmed the red plasma. Huo Qiang got pushed to the side by a strong smack to the face while Liena continued forward.

But the deed was already done, the ship's main cannon was getting activated. Her orders were ignored as the captain would follow Zhang Dong's over Liena's at any given moment.

“No, Stop!”

She cried out while seeing the cannon’s massive spiritual energy cannon fire away. This condensed torrent of Qi was much larger than the one the ship fired off during the battle against the Unlimited Sword Society.

This caused the ship’s main cannon to start melting, the tip of the ship even started to go up in flames as the order was given to overload the engines and fire at over 100%. Going over the limit would allow the cannon to fire off a stronger beam of energy but it would also destroy it in the process.

At this point in time, only half of Zhang Dong’s head and part of his feet were sticking out. He looked like a person that was getting entangled in some dark rubber that had tentacles. The creature was trying to devour him alive but also was having trouble maintaining its humanoid form while doing this.

He could feel the beam approaching, this was the moment to go all out. Zhang Dong gave it his all, with a burst of Qi he dipped into his reserves and the whole monster lit up along with him. He didn’t do this to free himself; at this point, it was far too late for that. No, he only used his last ounce of strength to move his hands forward.

In those hands of his, he had the corrupted cube that was being used to power this beast. The moment the beam of condensed energy was ready to hit, he opened up his palm so that it connected with the cube instead of him or the creature.

A gigantic explosion occurred instantly, everything went white. Liena that was charging forward was sent flying in the opposite direction, even with her armor on that pushed her power output by a small realm up she wasn’t able to hold on.

The ground rumbled, the people on the Argonaut were helplessly trying to control the ship. The alarms were going off everywhere and they were losing altitude. The main cannon was on fire and part of the repair crew was trying to put it off. “Get the ship under control! What happened to the Patriarch, get the screen running!”

The Ship’s captain barked out orders while the whole room’s crew was in a state of confusion. The explosion had seemed to have overloaded some of the spiritual devices. Before the Argonaut got stabilized two people rushed into the command deck.

“What is the meaning of this!”

The first person that had gone in was Zhang Liu, who was followed by Zhang Xue. Both of them looked maddened, why was obvious. They were manning the cannons not long ago but soon they found themselves looking at the main cannon firing at their Master. They weren’t able to do anything about it, so they rushed here to get some answers.

“It was the Patriarch’s orders! Now sit down you two brats, you might be the Patriarch’s disciples but here you have no authority!”

The man slammed his fist down on his chair while glaring back at the young man. Zhang Xue placed her hand on Liu’s shoulder as she tried to calm him down. Not long after the large screen flickered with light.

“We regained the signal Captain...”

They all started at the screen, there was a lot of static on it but slowly it started to clear up. When the dust had settled they were greeted with a surprising sight.

“Where are they?...”

What they saw was perplexing. There was absolutely nothing there, no monster or Zhang Dong anywhere. Instead, they saw a large hole, the strange thing about it was the shape. It was a perfect sphere. It was as if someone took a big chunk out of the ground.

On the outside, Zhang Liena and Huo Qiang were closer to this phenomenon. Both of them could feel the strong spiritual energy coming from the center of that large hole. The two huge monsters that they were fighting against weren't looking so good either.

The moment the light subsided and the sphere hole was revealed they noticed that the two beasts started crumbling into dust. They could only explain this with the death of the main monster that Zhang Dong was fighting with. The big question was, where did he end up? Was he killed in the explosion along with it? Or did he get out in time? No one was sure but they wouldn't be leaving this place before they found some clues.

“I... I don't feel him anywhere...”

Zhang Liena looked around but couldn't get a read on her husband. She quickly deactivated her emerald armor and looked at her hand. On it was a ring that her husband gave her, it was linked to another one that he had with him. The two rings were linked by a teleportation formation, if she activated it she should have been able to go to her husband.

Her hands trembled a bit but she activated it but to her dismay, nothing had happened. She tried again and again but to no avail, it just wasn't working.

Huo Qiang dived for that large hole that was formed after the explosion. He lit up the place with his fire but he couldn't spot anything either. There was nothing there, no monster remains, and no Zhang Dong.

“Where are you, senior brother...”

Chapter 268

“Did you find anything? Any clues?”

An angry-looking Zhang Liena was tapping her foot on the ground. There were some people standing around her, they were looking at that tapping foot. The more it moved the more the ground shook around her.

These people were members of the Argonaut 1 ship crew. The flying vessel had been put out of commission after overloading the main cannon. While repairs were underway the people that were free started searching the area where Zhang Dong had vanished in. It looked as if a chunk of earth was evaporating out of existence. The hole was perfectly circular and over a kilometer in diameter.

A day had already passed since the fight with the gigantic monster and its two companions. The moment the monster vanished along with the sect Patriarch the other two went up in smoke. There was nothing

left to tell the tale, the only thing there was the giant hole in the middle of those old ruins that didn't exist anymore.

"We have examined the explosion site... after a day of searching we couldn't find any rem..."

The person that was answering was one of the elders that came along on this expedition. The moment he tried to mention Zhang Dong as the 'remains' he felt a chill run down his spine. Zhang Liena looked at him with rage-filled eyes and while exuding some killing intent.

"I mean... we couldn't find any sign of the Patriarch being there. There are also no monster remains, it's as if they evaporated along with this fog."

The old man sweated while shifting the conversation in a different direction. After the cannon was fired and both the monster and the Patriarch were gone, the mist cleared up.

"We have contacted our sect members that remained at the Divine Fist Sect. It seems that the fog is now gone from these lands. Even the creatures that were inhabiting the infected people seemed to have vanished, as if they were never there, to begin with..."

"Is that so... you may leave...but keep looking!"

Liena waved with her fan and the old man quickly bowed and removed himself from this location. This was just in time for Huo Qiang to appear out of the distance, he emerged from the bottom of the hole that Liena was also in close proximity. He landed next to the Patriarch, a big frown on his face along with furrowed brows could be spotted.

"This is bizarre, there are no traces left of him or the monster. It's as if the battle never took place."

He stood next to Liena with his arms crossed over one another while both of them looked to the large perfect sphere hole down below. There were many lights and people moving down there as everyone was ordered to search.

"He lives, I know it... A master of his caliber would leave a trace behind, something... it's as if..."

"He was teleported away?"

Liena nodded at Qiang's question. The two were thinking of the same thing, it looked like everything in this hole was just wished out of existence. A regular explosion would have left traces of spiritual energy behind. There would be faint signs of the creature's and Zhang Dong's nascent souls, those were much harder to erase. For these two people here it looked as if the whole spot that this detonation occurred was removed from this place.

"My thought exactly... the other possibility would be..."

The two looked down with their faces grim as they didn't want the other option to be true. This being that Zhang Dong was truly dead either by this explosion or by total eradication of his very being.

"Yes... what will you do? One of us must return back to the sect, I'm sure the Divine Fist Sect will aid us in the search now but we need to keep the news from spreading..."

Huo Qiang asked while moving away, the news of their Patriarch perishing or vanishing in strange circumstances would bring them harm. They were already on a brink of war against the Limitless Sword Society. There was also the Yggdrasil Sect working in the shadows which was another problem they might have to contend with.

"I'll remain here with some of our sect members, the ship needs to be repaired, I'll protect it."

"I'll return to the sect and bring the news, we will wait for Senior Brother's return..."

Huo Qiang nodded while moving away, before leaving he was sure to give Liena a small pat on the shoulder. She didn't react much besides giving him a nod, without Zhang Dong around they would need to keep everything in check.

The biggest problem was the other sects that might try to use Zhang Dong's absence to their advantage. The next one was the inner members of their own sect, with the most powerful member now gone the power dynamic would be shifting in another direction. Even though these two didn't want it, their camps were at odds with each other. Zhang Dong was a large sturdy wall between the two which kept anything from escalating but now he was gone.

Liena didn't look back at Qiang as he floated away. She looked down at her golden ring that she was gifted by her husband. It was one of the most treasured gifts that she received as it was the item that was proof of their betrothal. She was unsure of what had happened to her husband but she dreaded the thought of this ring becoming just a memento.

She took up flight and closed her eyes, her spiritual sense examining everything once more. Liana wasn't willing to just give up yet, if Zhang Dong was only teleported away then he might be alive, he might also still be battling this evil creature in another part of this world. If she could just get a hint as to where he went, then maybe the masters at the sect would be able to pinpoint his location. For now, she could only continue searching and she would search for as long as she had to....

"Dong'er... where are you..."

.....

'Some time earlier.'

Zhang Dong opened his eyes, he wasn't sure where he was but he was in a heap of trouble. The last thing he remembered doing was positioning the corrupt cube in the line of the spiritual cannon beam. He was sure it was a direct hit but what came next was a blur.

He didn't feel any pain or that he suffered an injury. When he opened up his eyes he found himself back at his regular size. His avatar form was canceled out but he was alive.

The odd thing was his surroundings consisted of chaotic energy. He found himself floating through some kind of tunnel, the walls of it were composed of strange Qi. He could feel that he was spinning out of control at an immense speed, where he was going and what this strange space was he had no idea.

'Did that Cthulhu die?'

'How long have I been in here?'

'What is this place? How can I get back?'

He started asking himself questions, it was very hard for him to concentrate around here. He tried gathering his spiritual energy to make himself stop from spinning but to no avail. He was like a rock hurled into outer space, his destination unknown.

Zhang Dong could see strange energy torrents, lightning-like energy, and flickering of lights everywhere. This looked like one of those bad drug trips that some people had when overdosing.

The whole experience was making him sick, he was disoriented and had no idea what to do. The more he tried to activate his cultivation to free himself from this place the more his head hurt. It was as if this place wasn't letting him use his powers at all.

He tried feeling out the Dao around this strange space but the feeling was totally different than to what he was used to. He felt like he was running on an unsupported operating system, any attempts to gather his qi were getting shut down. The only thing he could rely on now was his system, the moment he brought up the screen he saw red.

There were 'Danger' and 'Error' signs plastered all over this display. It was already hard to tell anything while spinning around but this just made things less bearable. With time and some squinting, he was finally able to see something. 'Lost world tether? What is that anyway?'

The system was giving him some strange prompts, there were a lot of corrupt text and warning signals littering his display. Finally, he was greeted with a button that he could press, without any other options he begrudgingly pressed it. This prompted the system to give him more corrupt text but some of it was readable.

'Missing world tether...'

'Trying to establish a new connection... please wait...'

'Searching...error... error...'

'Error... missing tether...'

'Overwriting commands... looking for a new link... please wait...'

'Trying to establish a new world tether to user number 80082... error ... subject deceased...'

'... found a new world tether from sector 41067 setting up a new link...'

The error signals and prompts continued to appear for a while. With time something like a new world tether was found. His body started glowing immensely during this process and somehow the spinning motion started to lessen. He found himself stopping in his tracks together with a dinging sound that his system gave him.

'... new tether added... transferring user to the new sector now...'

The moment that message appeared he felt his whole body jerking toward the energy tube wall. He was now traveling at neck-breaking speeds towards something that looked like pure energy, energy that was

far above his cultivation realm. Before he could be fried by it an opening appeared. It was composed of white light and large enough for his body to go through.

The inside of this white light was another energy corridor. This one was much smaller and he couldn't actually move at all. It felt like he was going down a constrained tube of energy what was on the other side would remain to be seen.

"GAHHHHHHhhhhhh"

With a plop he was finally out, he hit something hard and tumbled forward. The momentum carried him further and further until he hit something hard. His face hit the ground and he sprawled out like a starfish. He couldn't hear anything or anyone as he just remained face planted on the ground.

"Ow... my head..."

He had a splitting headache, he tried activating his holy energies and they worked. A golden light surrounded his body while healing it. The wounds that he had sustained were slowly vanishing and he also felt like his energy reserves were larger than before.

'Where am I?... did I absorb some of that cubes power, I think my cultivation is higher...'

He stood up to see where he was, what he saw was not something that he expected.

'Huh? What is this place?'

There was nothing here besides a small wide pillar that he had hit while tumbling. The rest of this space was filled with nothing but the void. This void wasn't pitch black, there was a stary sky above him that faintly lit everything up.

He looked around but besides the wide pillar that reached up to his belly button, there was nothing there. Before he could examine this whole place further he felt a jolt of energy. He quickly glanced to the source which was right in the middle of that pillar.

To his surprise, he saw someone appearing out of thin air right in the middle. It looked to be a person but compared to him, the person was quite tiny. It looked to be a young girl in her teens, she was so small that he would be able to squish her with one finger.

The girl looked a bit confused while looking around, with time she looked up and noticed Zhang Dong staring down at her. After opening up her mouth wide along with her eyes she dropped down to her knees and started bowing. Then she finally spoke up.

"Honorable heroic spirit, I Beatrice Hohenberg beseech thee to grand me a contract!"

Zhang Dong just blinked repeatedly while staring down, soon a sound escaped from his mouth.

"Ehhhhh???"

Chapter 269

"Lady Hohenberg?..."

"Lady Beatrice Hohenberg of Dawn Lake, are you paying attention?"

“Huh?”

A young girl jolted awake, her vision blurry. The girl was fifteen years old, she was about 170 cm in height and was noticeable by her long golden hair. This was a trait of the Hohenberg noble house that was given to its true descendants.

“I see that you are with us again, Lady Beatrice. I know today is the day that you get your summoned spirit but please at least try to pay attention.”

The blond-haired girl saw an uptight glass wearing lady looking up to her. They were in a classroom and the person that was speaking to her was one of the teachers at this noble academy. Beatrice blushed a bit while trying to cover her face with a book, the other people in this classroom started laughing and snickering.

“I apologize Miss Enora.”

The lady stuck up her nose a bit high while looking at the other people in the room. Everyone here was of the same age, it was filled with a mix of boys and girls and all of them were wearing uniforms.

Not everyone had the same uniform, some were white and some were black. There was a clear status distinction between the people here. The classroom was built up high similar to how a movie theater was made. The people in the white uniforms were sitting back up high while the ones in the black ones were down below and closer to the blackboard.

Beatrice was someone that was sitting down at the first desk so her sleeping form was hard to miss. The young girl wasn't able to sleep the whole night as today was a very important event. An event that would decide how her life would play out in the future.

“Good, let me go through today's ceremony. I'm sure that you are all aware of the utmost importance of this magical ritual that you will go through.”

“You have been practicing for this very occasion.”

The glasses-wearing lady teacher had a small wooden wand in her hand. She waved it around while pointing at the blackboard the moment she did the letters started shifting around. They took the form of some kind of pentagram with a lot of runes.

“You will be brought to a room with this magic circle, be sure to go through the ritual as you have been instructed and place your prepared items at each point. Don't make any mistakes as you could offend the spirits.”

“If you fail your ceremony your next one will be held next year. I must remind you that the older the summoner is the harder it is for them to connect to the spirit realm. A person that isn't able to make a contract with a spirit will be deemed a failure at the age of 18 and will have to find a different profession.”

The teacher continued to talk while Beatrice's heart skipped a beat at the mention of someone failing. This reminded her of how she wasn't allowed to fail, if she wasn't able to procure a strong or even a middle-class spirit contract then the future of her noble house would be put into question.

'I can't fail... everyone is counting on me... the main house might revoke our branch family rights if I fail too...'

She was reminded of her older brother who was that unfortunate person. He was three years older and had dropped out after failing to establish a summoner contract. She wasn't sure what he was doing now, he had left the main house while saying that he would find his own way outside the summoner profession.

This left her as the sole heir to the whole Hohenberg of Dawn Lake family estate. A big burden was dropped on her shoulders and she wasn't sure if she would be able to succeed. The fear of disappointing her parents had taken root deeply in her mind.

There was a certain prestige that the noble families needed to uphold. She was part of a branch family, the main noble house required them to bring forth a summoner as an heir. Without it, the main family would drop their support and they would be stripped of their noble status. Without it, they wouldn't be able to afford their estate that was also rented out through the main noble house to them.

In reality, her branch family was nothing more than the property of the main house. They were just dogs kept on a short leash. If a dog lost its teeth and wouldn't be able to protect its master then it didn't have a purpose of being. Without a proper summoned spirit she wouldn't be considered worth the investment. If that happened there would be only one option, a thing that she knew her parents would do.

'The will probably force me to marry someone... '

She shivered at the thought of being forced to marry some older man and having to bear his children. That was mostly what happened to noble ladies with no status and money. They would be sent out to tie the knot with a rich enough noble that would be able to support the failing estate. Her parents would be secure but her life would be in turmoil depending on who she would be left with.

Beatrice looked at the blackboard that was constantly being changed. The teacher went through the procedures again but she had already memorized everything down to a tee. This didn't mean that she didn't look at the explanation again. Worrying that she might have forgotten something she continued to pay attention.

The lecture concluded soon and the students had to go outside. She remained seated at her desk with all the other black uniform students. There was a certain class rule here, unless all of the white uniforms left the classroom the lower born weren't allowed to leave. This sometimes caused her to remain here for up to an hour if some of the noble ladies got too chatty.

She looked up to a certain person, it was a beautiful noble lady with similar blond hair to hers. The two looked a bit similar in one way or the other but this one was clearly of higher status. She was surrounded by other girls and boys in white uniforms and they were chatting away.

"What do you think Lady Isabella will receive?"

"I bet it will be a legendary spirit king like a white dragon!"

"I think a phoenix would fit Lady Isabella much better."

“Wouldn’t a Sylph be more aligned with that?”

Beatrice listened in while a certain green-haired youth walked over towards Lady Isabella. He was quite handsome and the other people that were chatting took notice. They all moved back slightly, they were clearly making way for this individual that was of higher status than they were.

“Would that be to your liking, your Majesty?”

Isabella smiled at the new arrival and the two started talking. Beatrice turned her head away out of indignation. She knew that the man approaching was one of this country’s princes while the blond girl was his fiancée. She didn’t want to interact with that girl but this was something impossible as she was someone from the main family. To her, she was nothing more than a servant, a useless one if she wasn’t able to get a fitting summoned spirit.

The high nobles finally decided to move their butts. Beatrice was in Isabella’s camp so she followed behind her. She was the odd person out of this group, mostly her use was in doing troublesome errands. Today was an important day though, so even these nobles were more focused on the summoning ceremony. If they failed their prestige would be put in question even more than hers was.

There was only one chamber to perform this ritual so she needed to wait. First came the more distinguished nobles like the Prince or Isabella. She and some others would need to wait till late at night to get their turn.

She remained outside while waiting for her turn, the people that were from the more pristine noble houses were all able to receive their spirit summons. It was easier to achieve this with some additional items, some summons could be somewhat ‘bought’ over to form a contract.

The lower nobles like her didn’t have enough money for something like that. The items that a person offered during the ritual were a form of tribute to the summoned being. They were there to attract them, more than one spirit could answer your call. The strongest one would then win out over the others and be the one to form a contract.

Time continued to fly and now the youths in the black uniforms were beginning their rituals. Some of them were successful while some failed. With lacking resources, they could only count on their lackluster talent. Soon it was her turn to give it a try, the large doors to the spacious ceremony room opened up and she was left alone there.

She could see the stairs leading up to the summoning platform. The room was dimly lit but rays of light were shining on that platform. In its center was the magical circle that the teacher mentioned before. It had already been used by many other students before, some of the mana used in the ritual was still lingering.

‘Time to place the gifts...’

Beatrice took out the items that she prepared. They had some magic in them that was supposed to lure the spirits here. They were just ordinary magical items, the more costly ones were already used during her brother’s tries. Even with the higher quality ones he was unsuccessful. Even with moderately good items around there was a big chance of failure, she hoped that this wouldn’t be the case for her.

‘Please... let this work...’

She went down to her knees in the center of the magical circle. Her hands were clasped together as she went down into a kneeling position. The magical symbols started lighting up in a deep blue color as the ritual started.

“Ego antiquum spirituum te rogamus, occurre obsecro mihi testimonii...”

She started a long chant that she had remembered thoroughly. There was no stuttering and no hesitation in her voice. This was her one and only chance, failure was not an option. Rays of light shone down on her as she continued praying. Nothing seemed to be happening and she couldn't feel the presence of any spirits. Normally they would start to appear the moment she finished the chant but even after going through with it once, there was nothing.

There was still some time left in this ritual, the magic circle was active so she started repeating the incantation over and over again. She couldn't feel anything happening but when she opened her eyes a strange scenery filled her vision.

She wasn't in the ritual chamber anymore, she was in some kind of dark space. When she looked up she could see a strange unfamiliar sky with many stars. Some of them were moving around, it made it look like rain, a rain of stars.

Then she looked behind her and saw him. There was a giant standing before her, his large glowing eyes focused on her small form. This giant was wearing some strange white robes and his body was covered in some kind of otherworldly golden glow. She could also see arcs of lightning bursting forward from his very being.

‘Is... that a summoned spirit... I never heard of something like this...’

She racked her brain about an answer while slightly panicking. Then it came to her, in one book there was writing that some special spirits could pull their summoners into their own realm. These spirits were considered legendary ones, the ones that had a humanoid shape were also considered even rarer.

She dropped down to her knees and started bowing the moment she realized that this spirit might have been a rare legendary one. Beatrice wasn't sure why he chose her but this was her big chance, there was a possibility of the ritual failing if the summoned spirit didn't agree. Thus she assumed the kneeling position and did her best to plead her case.

“Honorable heroic spirit, I Beatrice Hohenberg beseech thee to grant me a contract!”

After she spoke those words an uncomfortable silence was all that greeted her. This was only broken by a strange deep groan that this giant gave out. This only made her plant her face deeper into the ground while pleading more.

“Sorry about that little girl, could you raise your head it's hard to talk like that...”

The next time the giant spoke up his voice was much softer sounding. She did as instructed and looked up, her body trembling slightly at the giant before her.

“I think you need to explain a few things here...”

The giant spoke up while moving his large face closer, the time for contract negotiations had begun.

Chapter 270

Zhang Dong looked down at the golden-haired girl that looked to be in the middle of her teens. At this moment in time, she was clutching her ears. After his little outburst, her ears were probably ringing. He noticed that his increased size was causing the girl harm so he tried to lower his tone.

The need to lower the amount of energy he was giving out was also a must. He started glowing less but shrinking to her size was not an option apparently. If she was just someone from a tiny race was a possibility. Zhang Dong had a hard time believing that he had turned into a giant by coming to this other world.

“Sorry about that little girl, could you raise your head it’s hard to talk like that. What did you mean by a heroic spirit when you addressed me? What is this about a contract?”

She had clearly given him a title of some sort. This was probably a clue to this predicament, if not he would need to search for answers of his own accord.

“Great Spirit...?”

The girl looked up towards him, he had leaned closer slightly so his giant face along with his glowing eyes were now looking intently at the small girl. Surprisingly the girl didn’t flinch at his colossal sight again, was it bravery or resolve?

“I thank you for answering my call, If the great spirit is willing I would be honored to form a contract...”

He could see her fidget a bit after returning the question with a statement. From the short exchange, he could somehow figure out what this was. The problem was that it didn’t really make much sense, how was he a summoned being? He came from a fantasy-like world of cultivators, so summoners and wizards wouldn’t be really shocking to him.

“You would like to form a contract with me?”

He asked out of curiosity, maybe prodding with questions someone that thought that he was some kind of summoned spirit wasn’t the greatest idea.

“I would be honored, Great spirit!”

The answer didn’t give him much, though he didn’t even know how to form this ‘contract’ even if he wanted to oblige. Also signing strange binding contracts with unknown people in an unknown location would probably not be the smartest option.

The space around him felt strange. He could somehow use his cultivation and powers but the energies were different than what he was used to. He could spread his spiritual sense in all directions but he couldn’t feel any other living being here. The girl and he himself were the only two people here. Even then, she felt more like an energy construct or a soul than a real living being.

He wanted to try some other options before asking the girl for further answers. This space felt like some kind of dead-end, the only thing he wanted to do is get back to his sect. After going through all the teleportation treasures and his system options, he still couldn’t find a way out, being stuck here was a very real possibility.

The girl down below remained silent while trying not to fidget while he continued to think.

“G-great spirit? C-could we form a contract? D-didn’t you summon me here to form one, great spirit?”

Zhang Dong looked down at her, one brow raised. The girl really wanted to get this contract deal going but there wasn’t really much in it for him. He would rather decline her request but a sudden new development threw a wrench into his plan.

“Warning... world link fading... need to establish a stronger tether... warning!”

‘What is it now?’

He groaned a bit while looking at his system window that started flickering with warning signs. He could see some kind of new counter that was going down.

World synchronization rate 89%.... 88%...87%...

It started going down and continued without stopping. He started getting some kind of strange feeling in his very soul. Zhang Dong could see that he was somehow getting rejected from this world by something, slowly fading away. He looked at his hands and after the rate dropped below 70% he could see them flickering in and out of existence.

“It is advised for the user to form a contract with the summoner named Beatrice Hohenberg.”

“What the?”

He heard a voice from the side, it sounded like an old text to speech module from an old operating system. He turned to the side to see a wisp of blue light hovering there, this was the thing that just talked.

“Who are you supposed to be?”

“I am the AI companion generated to aid the User number 80082. If the user fails to form a connection with someone from sector number 41067 he will be erased from existence.”

Apparently, the system had gained some kind of sentience or it was just a more elaborate AI program. It was advising him to form a contract with this girl. It sounded that if he didn’t go through with it, it would end in death.

“Is there another way?”

He asked.

“Analysing the question... The User could absorb the person called Beatrice Hohenberg and inhabit her body forcefully. The User would be then recognized as an inhabitant of this sector.”

He looked at the young girl that was still kneeling down. She was looking at him with those big blue eyes, taking over her body was out of the question. He wasn’t an evil spirit that possessed others and he would like to keep it like that.

‘I might not have a choice...’

The counter dropped below 50% and he started to fade away. There didn't seem to be another option but to take this girl up on the offer and form that contract. He wasn't sure what that foretold for his future but he had to live. His family was still out there, he needed more time to figure things out. Sticking around a teenage girl for some time didn't seem like much of a problem.

"Uh... system? AI helper? How do I form a contract with the girl?"

"... sending information to the user... please wait for the data transfer..."

He felt a familiar pain run through his head. It was reminiscent of the jolt he always got when buying techniques from the old system store. In a matter of moments, he had the information in his brain.

'So that's how it is... it's not as bad as I thought it would be...'

The contract wasn't binding him for life. Thanks to his level of power being far superior to the summoner he was the one with all the decision-making power. He would be able to break it off by his own will if he ever wanted to. If the summoner wasn't strong enough to keep the summoned spirit at bay in some way, the spirit could leave at any moment. He could even switch hosts if he wanted to.

"Girl...Beatrice was it, I will form a contract with you."

The girl looked up, her blue eyes went wide with surprise. He wasn't sure what she was thinking but she looked equally confused and ecstatic. Zhang Dong had gotten the instructions on how to perform this 'contract' through this strange ball of light AI. He still wasn't sure if he could trust that thing and how it even came out.

He had a suspicion that it had something to do with that other cube, he had absorbed it and might have unlocked some new functions. The contract was similar to binding two souls together. They would be connected by a sort of chain and both of them could gain benefits.

The summoned creature would be given energy from the Summoner and fed off of them. The one using the spirit would gain its aid in return, it was mostly a symbiotic relationship. Both of the parties were getting something for it.

After the contract was broken the spirit would return to the so-called spirit realm. It would get to keep any strength that it was given and with time could even evolve into a being of higher power.

Zhang Dong moved his finger out towards Beatrice. It was as large as her whole head but he needed physical contact with his summoner to perform the soul binding procedure.

"Accept it"

The girl shivered slightly while closing her eyes. He gently bumped his finger against her forehead to begin the procedure. A small fraction of his soul transformed into a golden shackle, it flew out towards the girl's own soul and the two were connected with each other. This process was only possible if both of the parties were willing, if not the weaker one would be quite dead.

He could feel the young girl's soul getting connected with his own. His soul arts were still lacking but with the system's help, he was able to perform this strange ritual. The magic this world used was similar to the one of his world but the 'wavelength' of mana was slightly different than of Qi that he was used to.

‘That should do it...’

World synchronization rate 43%.... 44%...47%...

The synchronization rate started going up the moment the connection was finalized. Before he could ask the girl more questions he saw her vanish. She just popped like a soap bubble and only faint energy particles remained.

‘Damn, what now... and how should I call you?’

Zhang Dong frowned while looking at the small glowing blue light that was hovering over his shoulder. This thing reminded him of an annoying game element from one of the old games that he played. It was as noisy though and only spoke up when asked a question by him directly.

“This unit’s designation number is 000451200-B08...”

“... B08?... Okay, I’ll just call you Bob. So tell me, Bob, where am I and how do I get out of here?”

He took a seat on the platform the girl appeared on. It was the only thing besides the sea of stars above. While looking around he spread his senses far and wide again, this place was kind of weird. With a bit of prodding he figured something out, this place wasn’t as big as it seemed. The sky above was only an illusion, the wide dark space spread a few kilometers in each direction.

“So Bob, can you explain where I am and how do I get home? Also, what are you and this system...”

The glowing light moved towards him while changing colors. It looked like it was thinking, after a few moments its robotic voice sounded out.

“Insufficient data... must gather more nuclei”

“Nuclei?”

“A nucleus is a concentrated hub of information about a given sector....”

The machine started a long-winded explanation that pointed him back to the cubes as always.

“Wait... if I get more of those cubes, could I get back to my old world? I mean, to my previous sector?”

“Calculating...”

“With an additional nucleus, the probability of establishing a tether to users’ original sector is 37%...”

“Oh? How probable is it without one?”

“0,00145%”

“Great...”

Zhang Dong looked around this closed space and was already feeling homesick. The only thing on his mind were his wife and kids. There was the problem with the crazy sect of swordmasters still to be resolved. He was worried that with him not there a war between sects could happen.

“How do I even find one of those cubes if I’m trapped in here?... huh?”

He felt something tugging at him from the inside. He focused on this strange feeling and in a moment could see something strange. He could see a strange ritual chamber through the eyes of someone else. This was clearly the girl that he made the contract with, he was now connected with her. It was a strange sensation of being in two places at once.

"I guess I will have to use this child to help me out... I need to gather more information about this world."

He rubbed his chin while looking at the girl through her eyes. The blond was looking at a glowing mark on her right hand. He could feel his own energy signature coming off it and it was the sign of a successful summoner contract. He could feel the girl's joy when she looked at this strange runic symbol.

'I did it grandfather, I'm a summoner maybe with this...'

He jerked a bit after hearing the girl's voice in his head. Somehow he was able to hear her thoughts but it didn't seem like she could hear his.

"This will take some time to get used to... think I'll just observe her for now..."

"Bob can you tell me more about this world..."

He sat down cross-legged in this empty space, he wasn't sure how long he would be stuck here but he would do anything in his power to return to his family and friends.