

A Snake 1031

Chapter 1031: Are You About to Flaunt Your Love?

"Even if I met Huang Wude first, I wouldn't like him!" I replied firmly.

Qing Li pulled out the white jade hairpin from my head and carved words into her palm, "Cut, you're saying one thing and thinking another."

"I'm not lying. I have standards when it comes to good looks; not just anyone can be my partner." Images of a beautiful youth I caught falling from a tree flashed through my mind, giving me all the confidence.

Qing Li didn't care about the blood dripping from her palm and looked at me, "You care about looks?"

I nodded without hesitation.

That's right, I've been captivated by Yu Longting's beauty.

"Then what do you think of this face of mine?" Qing Li suddenly smiled charmingly.

"Uh..." My entire face turned hot, flaming red.

I'm doomed; my heart has stopped beating!

Could it be I'm turning gay?

No, no, no, that's absolutely impossible.

I'm utterly loyal to Yu Longting; there's no way my heart will be swayed.

Never...choosing beauty over character...

Qing Li's eyes were seductive; she breathed a soft, orchid-like breath over my face, icy and gentle, "Hmm?"

"Indeed...it's quite easy...to make one's heart flutter~" My mind was a chaotic mess, and internally, I was madly ranting.

Come on, Qing Li, can you cut me some slack?

Is having Dragon Dad not enough for you, that you have to lure your own daughter-in-law?

I'm not exactly a saint; my self-control...is a bit weak...

A knowing look flitted across Qing Li's gaze as she continued carving words into her palm, "It seems you're truly taken by his looks; I believe you fancy Yu Longting's beauty."

Phew~

I let out a long sigh of relief in my heart; I nearly lost my virtue...

Luckily, Dragon Mom held back just in time, or I really would have been seduced!

I looked down at Qing Li's carving actions, not sure what words she's inscribing on her palm, reminding me of the Snake Sect's ancient script.

Anyway, it's all unreadable to me, but she surely has her reasons for carving them.

I didn't inquire further, and I gently leaned my head against her shoulder, "Mother-in-law, shall I tell you about my past with Yu Longting?"

"Are you...going to sprinkle love confetti everywhere?" Qing Li hesitated, giving me a glance and furrowing her brows.

I shook my head, then nodded, "It seems like it is...a bit of spreading love confetti, but I'd rather not; I just wanted to chat with you, sharing some of our past."

"If you want to talk, go ahead; I'm curious why the boss chose his enemy's daughter." Suddenly, Qing Li grabbed my wrist, and without a word, used the bloody hairpin to carve words into my palm.

A piercing pain swept through, and I screamed right away, "Ah~ It hurts, mother-in-law~ I hurt so much, why are you not satisfied with carving on yourself and now carving my palm too?"

"You're screaming like a slaughtered pig; I'm avenging my son." Qing Li said discontentedly.

With tears in my eyes, I stared at my palm's new wounds, daring not to pull my hand back, "A little softer, I...am terrified of pain...boo hoo hoo..."

"Look at your little worth; 132 characters in total, did you see me frown a bit when carving?" Qing Li tightened her grip on my wrist but the carving pressure eased a little.

Yet, it was still incredibly painful; cold sweat poured out as I involuntarily gasped for air.

Qing Li remarked, "Average looks, mediocre intelligence, and afraid of pain! Why Yu Longting is interested in you is beyond me."

I clenched my molars tightly and squeezed out a cheeky grin, "Mother-in-law, it was after I threw myself at Yu Longting that he took interest in me."

"You threw yourself at... Yu Longting? But I heard from the people of the Lin family that Yu Longting bullied you first to get revenge? Don't you try to bluff me for face." Qing Li looked about ready to burst.

It's unbelievable that her own son could be overpowered.

Cold sweat dripped from my forehead as I endured the intense pain, cautiously recounting past events.

From standing under the tree at the school gate to the first child's body being implanted with the Demon Qi Seed by Qingyang, Yu Longting personally killed his own child.

Upon hearing this, the hairpin in Qing Li's hand suddenly paused.

I got stabbed, crying out in pain, "Ouch~ Mother-in-law, don't get worked up yet; the story isn't...over..."

Chapter 1032: Monkey, Do You Want to Fight Me?

"You and Yu Longting's PDA, I'm afraid we'll have to save it for next time." Qing Li swept her gaze around, her engraving speed quickened, "We've returned to our previous position, the Dust World Serpent is likely starting to sink."

I looked around, and everything still seemed like a vast ocean; no matter where we drifted, it was indistinguishable, "There are no reference points on the water, Granny, how did you figure it out?"

Suddenly, the statue of the Dust World Serpent sank into the water.

The icy Nether Spring instantly rose over half of Qing Li and my body, and quickly submerged up to our necks.

"I just used human biological clocks to deduce it from the sailing time." Qing Li fixed her gaze on my palm, her expression somber, "Wanwan, sometimes you're not diligent enough."

I felt guilty and was about to say something humble and accepting.

The bitter Nether Spring flooded into my mouth, turning my words into bubbles in the water that kept rising and scattering.

Although the buoyancy of Nether Spring is strong, falling from a height won't kill you.

Even it won't, like ordinary water, seep into electronic products to cause damage.

However, just like regular water, Nether Spring has no oxygen, and you can't say anything underwater.

When the oxygen in your lungs runs out, your heart and lungs ache intensely from the lack of oxygen.

Yet Qing Li seemed to have an endless supply of oxygen in her lungs, showing no discomfort in the icy water.

Her silky arm half-embraced my waist while continuing to engrave in my palm.

As a monster, Yuan Hong was even less concerned about surviving underwater, holding his knees.

His gaze darkly watching Qing Li and me, who knows what he was thinking.

However, I believed Yuan Hong wouldn't dare to do anything to us for now, considering only the Dust World Serpent could help us leave the Abyss.

"Huh... Oh my... Granny, I can breathe!" I suddenly felt fresh air entering my lungs.

The heavy body due to lack of oxygen became light.

Qing Li casually took the White Jade Hairpin that Lin Huan passed to me, and pinned it back into my hair bun, "Touch your neck."

"Something's growing on my neck, slippery and round, it moves open and close on its own..." I touched my neck and almost passed out from shock, "I grew gills, Granny, you've got fish gills on your neck too."

Yuan Hong squinted his eyes, a face full of apprehension, "Big Sister Qing Li, did you engrave a snake seal on your palm and your daughter-in-law's?"

"Indeed, I used the Snake Seal to engrave the Fish Gill Grass Curse." Qing Li rolled her eyes at me, her sleeves drifting in the water arrogantly said to Yuan Hong.

Yuan Hong tightened his fist, "I already told the Dragon Emperor, although the snake seal sorcery can imitate all things in the world, it's ultimately too troublesome. Too many words are one thing, but after more than one shichen, it becomes invalid, and before a fight even starts, you'd be beaten to death."

"Monkey, are you looking to fight me?" Qing Li smiled mockingly, as if she heard something amusing.

Yuan Hong was probably belittling Qing Li's art to bolster his courage.

Confronted with Qing Li's provocation, he was scared stiff, drawing circles on the statue with his fingers, "I didn't say that, I was just casually remarking on the drawbacks of Snake Seals."

"My Snake Tribe's sorcery is not something a mere monkey can casually comment on." Qing Li spoke with almost no forcefulness, standing there in the posture of an ordinary woman.

Such slender yet beautiful she was, possibly even in a slightly lawless street, would attract fearless thugs to come up and flirt.

Yet she scared Yuan Hong to the ground, bowing with his whole body sticking to the statue, "I'm wrong, Big Sister, I won't dare to speak rashly anymore."

Chapter 1033: King Yu Statue

"Next time, if it happens again, cut off your own tongue." Qing Li's cold gaze was fixed on the utterly humble Yuan Hong.

"Granny, you actually drew the Snake Seal for me! Luckily, you were so thoughtful; otherwise, I would have drowned." I hugged Qing Li's arm joyfully, sweetly expressing my gratitude, "Thank you~ I like you the most~"

Actually, I was not totally unprepared; I had also considered how to handle things once in the water.

Within the Taoist Sect, there is a unique hand seal, known as the Water Repelling Spell.

If Qing Li hadn't helped me carve the Snake Seal, I would have expanded the range of the Water Repelling Spell to protect both myself and Qing Li.

However, the hand seal for the Water Repelling Spell has a significant flaw.

One must constantly maintain the grip on the hand seal; otherwise, it loses effect immediately in the water.

Unlike the Snake Seal carved into the palm by Qing Li, though it was excruciatingly painful, it allows one to move in the water like a fish for a short period.

This way, if encountered by enemies, one wouldn't be hindered by holding the hand seal, unable to fight.

Qing Li glanced at me helplessly, somewhat worriedly saying, "Wanwan, it's not time to be happy yet. King Yu's Tomb sunk into the Nether Spring is merely your speculation, and it's hard to determine whether it actually fell in the same place as us. We don't know if diving further will truly find it."

"There's really no need to worry; look at that." I pointed in a certain direction within the darkness, prompting Qing Li to look over.

Both Qing Li and Yuan Hong lowered their heads to look in the direction I pointed.

In the water, with no light source, we could only rely on the extent of our own eye training to pierce the darkness and see the situation in the water.

The depth of the Nether Spring seemed infinite, yet it was not far beneath our feet.

A majestic statue actually emerged, with the angle just right to see the statue's impossibly broad shoulders and its neck which was empty, missing a head weighing hundreds of pounds.

As everyone was in a daze, the Dust World Serpent's statue already brought us before the divine statue.

"It's King Yu Statue." Qing Li's gaze was fixed on the statue in the water, "It was directly carved into the mountain's belly, and it... actually fell into the Nether Spring too."

The statue was carved directly with the mountain's stones during the hollowing of the mountain's belly, connected with the mountain.

Thus, the mountain that collapsed also ended up in this part of the Nether Spring.

After being submerged, it seemed to restore its previous completeness, right behind King Yu's Statue.

Yuan Hong was dumbfounded, kneeling and kowtowing in earnest repentance, "My lord, I didn't mean to... lose your head, please forgive me."

The head of King Yu, which Yuan Hong was holding in his arms, was extraordinarily large; if it weren't for his monster strength, there was no way to carry it around.

However, when he fell into the Nether Spring, he was overwhelmed, and soon the head was lost in the water.

"Since King Yu's statue appeared here, it indicates that the Royal Tomb likely fell as well." As I analyzed, the Dust World Serpent landed atop a massive glazed treasure dome underwater.

As weight pressed down, the glazed tiles slipped off.

Beneath these glazed tiles was not a mausoleum palace; instead, it was an indestructible surface paved with Vajra Stone.

This means the glazed tiles were merely decorative, and the Royal Tomb was encased in Vajra Stone as securely as a fortress.

"Big Serpent, we can't enter the Royal Tomb from here; why don't you take us down to have a look." I bent down and patted the snake's head on the statue.

Soon, the Dust World Serpent spiraled downward to the bottom of the Nether Spring.

In front of us were two immense stone doors carved with various exotic birds and beasts, matching the Royal Tomb's height perfectly.

Too... incredible... it was...

It hardly seems like something that could be crafted by human hands... much less by ancient people... such architecture...

Chapter 1034: A Bit Too Obedient

"Monkey, go open the door." Qing Li casually ordered Yuan Hong.

Yuan Hong, face darkened, took off his Cultivation Spiritual Garment and reverted to a monkey.

He climbed up the tomb door, reaching the lock position.

He pulled a Golden Key out from the long hair on his waist and inserted it into the lock on the door.

With the sound of the mechanism turning, the thousand-pound stone door slowly opened.

"Grandma, the tomb door is open, be careful." I looked at Qing Li nervously, aware that cunning Demonic Caves inside the tomb might harm her at any moment.

Qing Li remained as calm as ever, seemingly unaffected, "Watch the monkey."

"Don't worry, if Yuan Hong shows any sign of misbehavior, I'll kill him." I keenly noticed the uncontrolled tremor in Qing Li's arm within her sleeve.

I reached out to hold her hand, interlocking our fingers tightly.

The strands of Demonic Qi that seeped through the door slit were immediately neutralized by the Sharp Gold Aura emanating from me.

Qing Li's eyes showed a hint of surprise as she subtly shifted her body's weight towards me.

Being so close to the Demonic Cave made her involuntarily weak, "At crucial times, only you can be relied on."

Yuan Hong wanted to jump down from the door above but found the buoyancy too strong to descend.

He had no choice but to climb back down along the carved patterns on the stone door, obediently returning the way he came.

"Big Serpent, wait for us here, okay?" I knew well the importance of the Dust World Serpent at the very bottom of the Nether Spring.

Without the support of the Nether Spring Serpent, we wouldn't even have the ability to float to the water's surface.

For now, we could only plead with it to wait for us outside for a while.

The Dust World Serpent's astonishingly large statue flickered with a red glow a few times, as if responding to my words.

A warm feeling filled my heart; it was clearly an inanimate object.

Yet, it felt like a friend or family member accompanying and helping me.

Falling into the Nether Spring Abyss was typically an extremely unfortunate incident, but at this moment, I felt inexplicably fortunate.

"Monkey, lead the way and block any traps we encounter." The moment Yuan Hong landed, Qing Li, who was half-asleep in my embrace, suddenly opened her eyes, her cold gaze falling on him.

Qing Li appeared to be weak as though a breeze could knock her down, yet she exuded a lazy and soft allure that was quite captivating.

Yuan Hong obeyed without question, resignedly walking ahead of us, "Yes, boss lady."

It seemed he hadn't noticed Qing Li's weakened state at all, only assuming she had become lazy.

As I stepped through the gate of King Yu's Tomb, I felt like I had entered another world altogether, the air thick with the gloom of the tomb.

Strangely enough, the water from the outer Nether Spring couldn't flow inside, making the gills on my neck a burden.

Breathing was hindered, causing my airways to feel as if they were being sanded back and forth.

Qing Li was already quite frail, and the gills made breathing difficult for her.

Her complexion turned completely pale, like gold paper, her legs giving way as she clung tightly to my neck, "Hold me."

"Mm." I was strong, plus I had Spiritual Power, so carrying Qing Li, who weighed less than eighty pounds, was a breeze.

All the Demonic Qi trying to invade Qing Li's body was preemptively eradicated by my Sharp Gold Aura.

Qing Li entered a state of complete reliance on me, yet her body was incredibly relaxed, "Wanwan."

"Mm?" As I enjoyed stroking her silky-smooth hair, she interrupted me, making me feel a bit guilty.

Could it be that she caught me indulging in feeling her hair?

That would be too embarrassing; I found myself addicted to stroking my grandma's hair.

But who could blame me when her hair had such an irresistible texture and a faint rose scent?

Luckily, Qing Li didn't notice my little secret thoughts, letting out a soft laugh, "Don't you think that Dust World Serpent listens to you a little too well? I think... it resembles Yu Longting."

Chapter 1035: When the Scheme Is Revealed, the Dagger Emerges

"When you say it like that, it indeed seems that way." Hearing Qing Li say this, I felt an epiphany.

The only one in this world who unconditionally obeys me is Yu Longting.

Yet the Dust World Serpent, who oversees the cycle of all things in the Abyss, gives me a similar feeling.

Qing Li clicked her tongue, looking at me with enchanting eyes, "It's a pity that the Dust World Serpent has been in the Abyss since ancient times; otherwise, I might mistake it for a long-lost kin."

"These three iron chain bridges, they're all blinding methods. Walking on them will trigger mechanisms and you'll fall into the abyss. You must..." As we passed the stern hall of the Mystic Palace, Yuan Hong turned and saw me holding Qing Li horizontally in my arms, his expression froze for a moment.

His words came to a halt, standing there like a statue.

Qing Li languidly lifted her eyelids, "What are you staring at? Never seen a beauty before?"

"I meant no offense, Qing Li... big sister, please calm down." Yuan Hong quickly diverted his gaze, but an indiscernible shadow flashed in his eyes. He introduced us to the method to pass through the mechanism ahead of the empty valley, "This path without a bridge seems devoid of footing. In reality, it has plum blossom piles supported by black stone."

With that, Yuan Hong jumped into the abyss.

Landing on a stone platform hidden in the darkness, he then leaped onto another stone platform.

This particular mechanism was indeed very peculiar. It used black stones to craft several plum blossom piles that blend seamlessly with the black mist below, making them hard to discern unless you're standing on them.

Moreover, there are three iron chain bridges nearby, and an ordinary person would choose one of the three bridges to seek a way out.

I didn't immediately step onto the Golden Lotus to follow Yuan Hong; instead, I cautiously discussed with Qing Li, "Mother-in-law, about this mechanism, is it possible that stepping onto it once was fine, but the second person to step on it will cause it to collapse?"

"It's possible. Let me test it for you." Qing Li pushed away from my shoulder and left my embrace, landing on the ground with both feet, then smiled charmingly at Yuan Hong, "Monkey, my daughter-in-law and I don't want to go on; can you come over and carry us?"

"Don't want to continue? I see you two are just too scared to move forward, aren't you?" Seeing that we weren't taking the bait, Yuan Hong didn't bother to conceal the murderous intent on his face and said coldly.

Qing Li raised her dark brows and spread her hands toward me, "We're in trouble, the plan has been laid bare."

"There's no choice. Yuan Hong was born to guard the tomb. Now that he's back in the tomb, he might not want to leave again. Betraying us isn't strange at all..."

My brow furrowed with concern as I faced the troubling situation, reluctantly saying, "I'll try to persuade him."

Because from the beginning, I foresaw Yuan Hong's desire to remain in King Yu's Tomb, not needing our help to leave, and preemptively betrayed us.

Having already been wary of him, once he stepped onto the plum blossom pile mechanism to the other side,

I became more concerned about falling into a trap, which made me cautious not to follow.

"Just go ahead and try." Qing Li yawned lazily, as if she was sure I couldn't sway Yuan Hong.

I gritted my teeth and said to Yuan Hong, "We, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, came to King Yu's Tomb only to purify the Demonic Cave and won't touch a single brick of the tomb. You also wouldn't want King Yu's tomb to be consumed by Demonic Qi, right?"

"Such filth as the Demonic Cave couldn't possibly exist in the tomb of my master, such a wise person." Yuan Hong looked at me coldly, "You must have come for treasure, intending to steal my master's possessions. I will never permit any outsider's footprints to desecrate my master's tomb or disturb his rest."

"From the start, you never intended to trust us?" My heart turned cold, realizing that Yuan Hong's seemingly honest behavior all along was because he was constrained.

His heavy injuries were healed by the Cultivation Spiritual Garment, and once back in the Royal Tomb, he adapted like a fish to water and began to plot against us.

And it's not just a simple scheme—he plans to take both mine and Qing Li's lives!

Yuan Hong sneered and pressed a jade mechanism on the wall, "Did you think that just by not coming over, you wouldn't have to die? Ha ha ha, no matter how powerful your Mysterious Art, can it stand against mercury? Prepare to die!"

Chapter 1036: Still So Stupid

"Monkey, you really haven't changed a bit, despite thousands of years passing, you're still so dumb," Qing Li sneered and provocatively asked, "Have you read Legend of the Condor Heroes?"

Yuan Hong was dumbfounded by this leap in logic, "What do you mean?"

Once the mechanism was activated, countless drops of mercury began falling from above Qing Li and me.

Mercury is a highly toxic heavy metal, whether inhaled into the lungs or absorbed through the skin.

It would poison Qing Li and me, killing us stiff.

Qing Li leaned towards me, "Carry me, I'll tell you how to walk."

"Alright~ Granny," my mood lifted from being pushed into despair to suddenly being invigorated.

I carried the frail Qing Li on my back, following her directions.

In less than ten seconds, I was standing in front of Yuan Hong on the other side.

"The solution was demonstrated in Legend of the Condor Heroes, for those who understand the Fuxi Eight Trigrams Formation, any complex mechanism in the eyes of fools can be solved with just one glance," Qing Li coughed lightly and scoffed, "Just the likes of the King Yu's Tomb, you think it could stop me?"

"You... actually solved the Plum Blossom Piles' formation in such a short time!" Yuan Hong was terrified when he saw me pulling out the fire charm, and started to run.

I still needed Yuan Hong's help to crack the mechanisms along the way, so how could I let him run away?

In a moment of inspiration, I stepped on the Golden Lotus to chase, my spell was cast swiftly, speeding up two or three times faster than usual.

Qing Li shot out a strand of blood-colored spider silk and said to me, "Wanwan, don't chase, that monkey is crafty and treacherous, be cautious of more mechanisms on the road."

"Oh oh oh." I was just a small fry watching the deities fight, obediently responding, "But if he runs away, we're unfamiliar with the Royal Tomb, how do we continue to find the Demonic Cave?"

Qing Li laughed sinisterly, "He will come back and obediently lead the way for us."

The spider silk flew out for only half a minute.

Yuan Hong returned, fuming, "When did you cast the Forbidden Woman Witchcraft on me?"

Upon closer inspection, there was a tattoo of a blood-colored human-faced spider between Yuan Hong's eyebrows.

The human-faced spider seemed to be both a tattoo and a living thing.

Nesting between the white hairs of Yuan Hong's brow, the red web slowly spread across his entire body.

"From the moment you fell from the top into the Nether Spring, I started casting the spell on you," Qing Li nonchalantly taunted Yuan Hong, "If you had realized it immediately and interrupted my Art, you wouldn't be like this now."

"Despicable and shameless, you're just as cunning as you were back then!" Yuan Hong raged, the angrier he got.

The more the red spider silk spread across his pale skin, the deeper the grip of this spider Forbidden Woman Witchcraft became the angrier one got.

Qing Li played with the spider silk like puppet strings, maneuvering Yuan Hong to kneel on the ground, "You now have only one path, to pledge loyalty to me, or else you'll just drop dead here."

"I... I choose to be loyal." Yuan Hong knelt on one knee, clenching his fist to his chest.

Biting his teeth in humiliation...

And so, Yuan Hong led the way for Qing Li and me.

We passed through a series of intricate, ornate, and treasure-filled burial chambers.

Yuan Hong led us into a narrow corridor.

The murals depicted scenes of people entering the Underworld after death.

Quite eerie, I couldn't help but take a cold gasp in fear.

Afraid that Yuan Hong might trigger some mechanism and cause trouble in the corridor.

"Big Sister Qing Li, where exactly is the Demonic Cave, you must tell me," Yuan Hong stopped at a fork in the corridor, with twelve separate paths, he looked at the different routes and said hesitantly, "Otherwise, this Royal Tomb is so vast, searching aimlessly might take us three years and we still might not find it."

"The Demonic Cave is drawn to the Emperor's aura, head first to King Yu's main burial chamber, and don't try any tricks," Qing Li warned Yuan Hong.

Chapter 1037: Only Fit to Be a Burden

Yuan Hong bit his lip and chose the middle path to continue forward.

The passage seemed like an endless maze; Yuan Hong must have come here often, adeptly navigating through it.

If not for him leading the way, Qing Li and I might never have successfully emerged from the passage even after exhausting our legs.

"Ahead is the forbidden area, full of Forbidden Techniques, even I don't fully understand them. I'll take you to this point." Suddenly, Yuan Hong halted his steps at the passage's exit.

The cave entrance was extremely narrow, and with Yuan Hong's massive body blocking it, I still couldn't clearly see the situation outside.

"Put me down." After Qing Li asked me to let her down, she playfully flicked the thread controlling Yuan Hong, pulling it tighter.

Yuan Hong groaned and fell to the ground, a spider pattern appearing on his forehead.

The veins all over his body bulged out, and thick green poisonous blood dripped from his mouth as he rolled on the ground in agony. "Ah... ah... big sister, what's your... meaning... Stop... Did I offend you?"

Qing Li just crossed her arms, watching Yuan Hong being tormented beyond human endurance. "This is the first time I've seen someone under my Forbidden Woman Witchcraft dare to talk so much nonsense."

"I'll continue leading the way... spare me... spare me... Rather than leaving me in a fate worse than death, you'd better kill me!!" Yuan Hong strangled his own neck so fiercely, he nearly broke his thick neck.

Qing Li ignored his plight and contemptuously dismissed it, grabbing my wrist and walking out of the passage. "Wanwan, the aura of the Demonic Cave is near, I can feel it."

Outside the passage was vast, and the ground was covered in mushrooms of various colors.

No, these strange mushrooms didn't grow from the ground.

They grew from the mouths of fish; there were half-decayed black fish on the ground.

They have endured thousands of years and by reason should have rotted away to bones.

Yet their bodies were still quite intact, the most decay was only a hole rotting in the belly, with some spots growing on them.

Encountering the scattered Demonic Qi from King Yu's Tomb, the mushrooms were not corroded.

Instead, they grew more vibrant and colorful, emitting a sweet fragrance.

I didn't know if they were poisonous, covering my mouth and nose with my hand. "Grandma, this fragrance is toxic gas, right?"

"It merely induces Illusions, ensnaring people here to die," Qing Li gave me an Elixir. "Swallow it, and you'll be fine."

I immediately stuffed it into my mouth, swallowing hard. "Hey, this fragrance, why has it turned to a foul smell?"

"Because you've emerged from the Illusion, the Illusion tricked you into thinking the foul odor was exceptionally fragrant, entrapping you in self-destructive hallucinations," Qing Li glanced at Yuan Hong, "just like him, believing he was in a beautiful dream, yet unconsciously harming himself."

Well then, Yuan Hong had just freed himself from the Forbidden Woman Witchcraft.

Only to fall into an Illusion, displaying an intoxicated expression.

Yet he used his black, sharp nails to gouge out his left eyeball.

Qing Li flicked the pill over, perfectly aiming it into Yuan Hong's large nostril.

Soon, Yuan Hong absorbed the antidote and became alert.

Clutching his gouged-out left eye, he screamed in despair, "My eye~"

"Grandma, he... is a Tomb Guardian, how could he fall into an Illusion? Hasn't he lived in the tomb for years and knows the mechanisms inside by heart?" I followed Qing Li, my ears filled with Yuan Hong's cries, curious.

Qing Li raised her index finger to her lips, gesturing for me to be silent.

Yuan Hong's ceaseless cries rendered our silence useless.

Suddenly, small blue lights twinkled from above.

This was the Everlasting Lamps I saw as I fell down the mountain.

At that time, I fell too quickly to see clearly what material the Everlasting Lamps were made of.

Now, I could see it completely; they were human-shaped lamps constructed from peculiar Fish People.

The Fish People stood in hollows carved into the belly of the mountain, with wick-like structures protruding from their wide-open mouths.

The wicks emitted a blue glow, likely ignited by the oils within the Fish People's bodies.

Yet after thousands of years, by reason, the oils should have been burned up.

Yuan Hong's cries illuminated not only the Everlasting Lamps.

The Fish People, whose mouths emitted flames, began to open their eyes one after another.

As if suddenly awakened from a long slumber~

"Anyway, now that they've all been disturbed, being silent won't help us," Qing Li said indifferently.
"The mushrooms on the ground are just ordinary Corpse Cap Mushrooms, which emit hallucinogenic scents, actually to deceive the Fish People into intoxicating dreams, sustaining their duty of being Everlasting Lamps here. However, these mushrooms have absorbed the Demonic Qi, seemingly... making their hallucinogenic ability stronger..."

Chapter 1038: Thieves Falling Out

"Could it be that the mushroom's hallucinogenic ability has grown stronger, causing even Yuan Hong, the Tomb Guardian, to lose himself after inhaling the scent?" I asked with wide eyes.

Otherwise, Yuan Hong wouldn't have stumbled faster than us upon arrival.

Qing Li was noncommittal, "He lifted a stone only to drop it on his own foot. He intended to feed us to the fish, but ended up falling into the Illusion Realm himself. Judging from the layout of the corridors we passed through, there must be a path to avoid this place and reach the main burial chamber."

At that moment, I was utterly impressed with Qing Li, admiring her from the bottom of my heart. I thought I had a good sense of direction, but in the labyrinthine corridors, I was completely lost.

She actually figured it out and purposely turned the tables, outsmarting Yuan Hong in a battle of wits!

"Old lady, I have a bad feeling... Is there any way to keep the Fish People asleep?" I looked up at the cave where Everlasting Lamps stood, my heart racing with fear.

The Fish People in the cave resembled thousand-year-old zombies, maintaining the same posture for a long time.

They twisted their rigid bodies, adapting to their mummified forms.

Qing Li yawned out of boredom, "Probably can only wait until they are full and quiet again."

"Full?? What do Fish People normally eat?" I silently prayed to the Bodhisattva and the Jade Emperor, hoping it wasn't human flesh.

Even if we three merged, we wouldn't suffice for all these Fish People.

Qing Li smiled slightly, leading me to the largest, most colorful mushroom in the center of the clearing, "Mushrooms. These mushrooms grow by feeding on fish corpses and inherently hold a sea-like flavor."

"That's good, that's good!! I wondered why the air smelled like dried salted fish after the Illusion vanished. Turns out, it was Fish People's food." I patted my chest in relief; thankfully, it was mushrooms, not humans!

Once upon a time, my family had an ancient book that mentioned a type of fungus mushroom that fed on corpses in ancient folklore.

Perhaps it's this kind of mushroom!

"It's rather boring in the tomb. How about letting the monkeys put on a show for you?" Qing Li led me under a two-meter-high mushroom cap and bit her finger.

Fresh human blood seemed to be the fungus's nemesis, and she easily sliced a long cut onto the mushroom stalk by hand.

This large mushroom had grown for so long that its inside was hollow.

She directly pulled me inside, and we hid together in the stalk, peering outward.

I kind of understood what she meant, "What show... Umm, you're not planning to watch Yuan Hong and those Fish People fight amongst themselves, are you?"

"Just wait and see, Yuan Hong and those fish have deep-seated enmity." Qing Li had just finished speaking indifferently.

Then we saw the Fish Person with a wick in its mouth, taking up an iron fork from the weapon rack and leaping down.

Their skin was ghostly blue and eerie, a large group of them charged down the cave corridors in a blue wave.

This group of Fish People had a very bizarre appearance, with emaciated human-like legs.

Each had severely bow-legged limbs, with duck-like webbed feet and fish fins on the sides of their legs.

Their bodies were sleek with fish skin but lacked a single scale.

They are referred to as Fish People because they match the description in the Classic of Mountains and Seas.

They had fish-like heads, which appeared quite bizarre.

Wherever they trod, they devoured all the mushrooms on the ground.

Upon spotting Yuan Hong, they ceased eating mushrooms, yelling and charging forward.

Yuan Hong's round, glossy eyes flashed with a cold, murderous intent.

He sprang up, spitting out the red gold sword, engaging fiercely with the attacking Fish People.

The Fish People looked savage, with ferocious faces.

They fought fiercely, unrelenting with a wild aggression.

They were extremely strong, their every move notably valiant.

Facing the ancient Divine Beast Yuan Hong, they showed no fear, even landing a few blows.

Though a few were slain by Yuan Hong, the remaining Fish People grew even bolder in the face of adversity.

One after another, they charged forth to strike Yuan Hong. Both sides fought ferociously, turning the sky dark and blotting out the sun and moon.

Chapter 1039: The Annihilation of the Mermen

The Fish People, just as Qing Li said, had quite an enmity with Yuan Hong.

Their eyes were all bloodshot, babbling nonsense, shouting curses in an unknown tongue.

Yuan Hong seemed to understand this language, and cursed back just as incoherently.

It would have been better if he hadn't retorted, but as soon as Yuan Hong responded.

The entire Fish People tribe became enraged, and they even went so far as to skin their dead members to make war drums on the spot.

The war drums pounded continuously, the scene suddenly becoming majestic and vast.

This place had unexpectedly become a battlefield, both sides engaged in endless slaughter.

"What are they saying, Grandma, can you understand?" I asked Qing Li in a low voice beside me.

"It's the Mermaid Clan language," Qing Li pinched her nose, enduring the salty fish smell from the mushrooms, "The gist is, in order to make these Everlasting Lamps, the Mermaid Clan nearly went extinct. The Fish People bitterly hate Yuan Hong, but Yuan Hong believes it's the survival of the fittest, with opposing stances, naturally, they fight endlessly."

"But the Fish People had turned into Everlasting Lamps, how did they suddenly come back to life?" I was even more confused, having just realized that these Everlasting Lamps were made from the bodies of Fish People, I thought they were all dead.

When they suddenly woke up, it really felt like they had come back to life.

Qing Li sighed and said mournfully, "The Everlasting Lamps were made from living fish, the Fish People wake up regularly, eat salty fish-flavored mushrooms to maintain their body oil, ensuring they don't extinguish."

"I see, only by staying alive can they have everlasting life, maintaining the real Everlasting," I patted my forehead in understanding, and cautiously glanced at Qing Li, whispering, "Grandma, since you have a desire to kill Yuan Hong, why not use the Forbidden Woman Witchcraft to kill him, why go round and round like this?"

The current battle situation is quite delicate, Yuan Hong because of his high demonic power.

Fights evenly with a group of fiercely battling Fish People, with the Fish People taking heavy casualties.

"I'm not as compassionate as you, if I could kill him, I would have long done so." Qing Li coughed lightly, and coldly said with a laugh, "In King Yu's Tomb, killing the Tomb Guardian will cause all the mechanisms and restrictions in the tomb to target you."

"So, Yuan Hong must die by someone else's hand, high, truly high!" I gave a thumbs up.

Inwardly, I couldn't help but admire Qing Li's meticulous thinking, no wonder her eldest son Yu Longting has such high intelligence.

Qing Li narrowed her eyes slightly, and said calmly, "Actually, I didn't do much, I was just worried about finding a way to deal with the monkey. It was the monkey himself who shouted so loudly and woke the Fish People."

From the start Qing Li used Forbidden Woman Witchcraft to control Yuan Hong, but could only make Yuan Hong suffer.

Because there was no way to kill Yuan Hong, even if he intentionally led us astray.

Qing Li remained silent, following quietly.

Until Yuan Hong led us here, wanting the awakened Fish People to finish us off.

If it weren't for Qing Li cleverly pulling me into a mushroom for hiding, by now both Qing Li and I would have certainly been tricked, beaten up by the Fish People into pulp.

Our hiding made Yuan Hong himself the target of everyone's attacks.

In the end, he shot himself in the foot.

"So Grandma, now we have no one leading the way, what should we do?" Though I knew Yuan Hong deserved this fate, both Qing Li and I were still in a precarious situation.

Qing Li's long finger touched her lips, making a silence gesture, with a mysterious smile: "Shh, the time is about right."

Huh?

What time is it??

"Big Sister, can you... help me, save my life." Yuan Hong had lost his right arm in the fight, suffering many injuries.

By now he was at the end of his strength, his entire fur stained glaring red, jumping onto a mushroom's cap searching for our figures, "I know you must have a way to help me, just teach me, I swear I won't lay a hand on you, please come out."

Chapter 1040: Slay Yuan Hong to Offer Sacrifice to Heaven

Qing Li curled her lips, remaining silent.

Seeing Qing Li holding her position, I also decided to watch events unfold quietly.

"Qing Li, come out, where on earth are you hiding?" Yuan Hong stopped fighting with the remaining Fish People.

He brandished the Red Gold Longsword, hacking wildly in the Mushroom Forest.

Large swaths of mushrooms were chopped down, wilting once detached from the dead fish's mouth.

In my heart, it was crystal clear: Yuan Hong never intended for Qing Li to save him.

He wanted to expose my and Qing Li's hiding spot, dragging us down with him to die together.

Qing Li and I were hiding in the largest mushroom, in the perfect blind spot.

With Yuan Hong's intelligence, he would overlook this largest mushroom.

His reckless hacking and cursing drained him significantly, losing his chance to stand equal against the Fish People.

The Fish People caught up with the exhausted Yuan Hong, stabbing him repeatedly from behind with their spears.

The long spears pierced through his belly, pulling out his intestines.

They even used the sharp end of the spears to tear at his skin, trying to flay the Old Ape's hide.

Though I couldn't understand the gibberish spoken by the Fish People, I figured they planned to torture Yuan Hong enough before killing him as a sacrifice.

"Yuan Hong, if you're willing to take an Oath Curse, I'll reluctantly save your life." At that moment, Qing Li calmly pushed aside the mushroom stem's cover and stepped out.

I hurriedly followed her, ready to protect Qing Li at any moment.

Poor Yuan Hong, with half of his skin flayed off, was blood-soaked and horrifying. He had no choice but to concede, "I swear... I swear, I swear not to... not to ever lay a hand on you and Su Wan again."

"Not enough, if you encounter any traps, you must not hide them and you must inform us in advance." Qing Li didn't make any excessive demands, just asked Yuan Hong to continue his mission.

Yuan Hong howled in agony from the flaying, taking intermittent Oath Curse. By the time he finished, ninety-nine percent of his skin was gone.

"Quick... save me... my skin has been peeled off!" Yuan Hong's solitary eye widened, seeing Qing Li still standing there, on the brink of madness.

Qing Li picked up Yuan Hong's severed arm and a fish spear from the ground.

She used the spear to gouge out the bones, crafting a Bone Flute on the spot.

She played the bloodstained Bone Flute, its sound hauntingly cold.

It sounded like the wailing of a ghost at a lonely grave, yet the Fish People seemed unfazed by its tune.

They continued to torture Yuan Hong, even more frenzied, with some starting to come at Qing Li and me with spears.

Just then, I noticed the stench of salted fish from the mushrooms becoming even stronger.

Stronger than fermented herring packed tenfold, enough to make one foam at the mouth after prolonged exposure.

Yet the Fish People seemed mesmerized, letting go of their spears with a clatter, devouring the mushrooms on the ground.

Once done with the mushrooms, they went back into the mountain to be the Everlasting Lamps.

The Bone Flute's sound wasn't meant to control the Fish People, but to stimulate the mushrooms to emit a hallucinogenic aroma, thereby restoring the Fish People to their normal state.

"Tsk tsk, what a pity, Monkey, if you'd behaved earlier, you wouldn't have had it this bad." Qing Li clicked her tongue twice, gingerly nudging Yuan Hong's blood-soaked body with the tip of her shoe.

Yuan Hong tried to reattach his flayed skin, but it wouldn't heal.

His entire body shook with rage, "Qing Li!! You tricked me, you used your vile plot to turn me into this wretched state."

"Vile plot? Who brought Su Wan and me here? Who woke the Fish People with loud cries? Who has intense hatred towards the Fish People?"