

Ancient 101

Chapter 101 - 51 Carrying the Sack

At this moment, a single word collectively echoed in the minds of the survivors.

Fuck!

Because this scene was simply too horrifying. Seeing the team leaders alive was supposed to be good news, but those grotesque smiles on their faces combined with their crawling and writhing movements on the ground—fuck, it was terrifying!

As Gu Jianlin let out a roar, the black mist surged forward.

A sharp, grating noise, like a rewinding cassette tape, erupted. It was as if an old black-and-white film was being fast-forwarded at ten times the normal speed. The figures standing or crawling in the mist suddenly accelerated and appeared right in front of them.

Gu Jianlin froze, stunned, as a huge face loomed directly in front of his own.

"Son, don't you recognize me?"

The man's hair was streaked with gray, his face was refined and handsome, and his deep eyes exuded an aged warmth.

His tone was soft, tinged with the emotion of a long-awaited reunion.

Never in his life did Gu Jianlin imagine encountering this man again in such a way. For a fleeting moment, it felt like he was back four months ago—an ordinary boy standing under a streetlamp, waiting for his father to come home.

A storm of emotions churned within the young man. Overwhelmed, he grabbed a chair and smashed it directly into the man's head.

A loud *bang* echoed as the skull exploded like a watermelon—but no blood sprayed out.

Instead, writhing, crimson worms squirmed out, jumping and twisting on the ground.

Shit!

Gu Jianlin nearly vomited at the sight. He didn't even want to summon the Divine Sacrificial Fire to burn those things.

Because it was disgusting!

Forcing down his nausea, Gu Jianlin dashed forward again, swinging the chair in broad, sweeping arcs.

He shattered the heads of Lu Zicheng and Chen Qing one after another, unleashing countless crimson worms that sprang out in a scene of utter horror.

So much for meeting old acquaintances—this was pure illusion. Every single one of them was a monster!

Meanwhile, others had fallen into their own states of shock and disbelief.

Nie Xiangsi stared in utter astonishment at the man and woman before her, who appeared to be her parents.

But the couple's heads split open from the center of their foreheads, unfurling like flower petals. Countless crimson worms with blade-sharp tips emerged, poised as if to devour the girl whole.

Just as Gu Jianlin was about to rush over and help, a Holy Light suddenly radiated from the girl's heart.

Under the Holy Light's illumination, the crimson tendrils dissolved like blood evaporating into thin air.

Nie Xiangsi snapped back to clarity, her face pale with lingering fear.

Gu Jianlin thought to himself, as expected—someone from a powerful family always carries something handy.

Elsewhere, Cheng Youyu pulled out handfuls of talisman papers from his clothes, slapping them onto the monsters' heads.

The talisman papers, covered in intricate and mysterious runes, ignited spontaneously in the night without any wind.

The flames immediately engulfed the monsters, burning fiercely.

Cheng Youyu cursed loudly, "For fuck's sake, my great-grandfather's been dead and buried for sixty years! Who the hell are you trying to fool?"

Yeah, this guy was definitely a rich kid with stockpiles of gear.

Over on Zhang Cheng's side, he sprang into action, grabbing an arrow and plunging it into his uncle's head.

It was like a massive family betrayal party.

Meanwhile, Yan Ye and Yan Feng stood protectively in front of Mu Ziqing. Their team faced the largest number of monsters, leaving them heavily surrounded.

But surprisingly, Yan Ye remained completely unfazed. He formed multiple hand seals, summoning the power of the night's elements.

Crimson rage flashed in his left eye, while a tempestuous storm swirled in his right.

He inhaled deeply, his chest and abdomen tightening as he exhaled with a roar of violent Breath!

Boom!

A raging inferno mixed with howling winds erupted, transforming the street into a sea of fire, engulfed by a storm of flames.

Dressed in a white suit, he stood amidst the inferno with an indifferent expression.

Clearly, this guy had been holding back during the earlier fight at the inn!

Elsewhere, Yan Feng charged into the crowd and pulled the remaining survivors to safety.

"Save me!"

Li Xun shouted desperately.

Yan Feng glanced at him and begrudgingly reached out to grab him.

By this point, only Li Yi remained at the center of the monstrous horde. His body convulsed violently in the black mist, showing clear signs of Deformation. His skin was encased in a sinister, horrifying exoskeleton—he looked as though he had been consumed.

"Brother, help me..."

In that moment, clarity seemed to return to him, and fear painted his face.

The monsters extended crimson worms toward him, closing in.

Li Xun looked at him, his expression cold and detached, as if staring at a stranger.

"I'm your brother! Take me with you! I don't want to die!"

Li Yi howled hoarsely, his voice filled with anguish.

But Li Xun remained unmoved.

Yan Feng glanced back briefly, then turned away without hesitation.

"Yan Ye, Yan Feng..."

Behind them, Li Yi was consumed by the monsters, his screams piercing and wretched.

Yan Ye turned back, his tone indifferent. "I did say I'd take responsibility for the safety of all team members. But now, you're no longer one of us. You're... a Fallen. If I were you, I'd end my life with dignity. Don't sully the beliefs of the association."

As his words faded, the sound of flesh being ripped apart reached their ears, followed by Li Yi's agonized shrieks.

The members of the first team turned away, their expressions cold, as if their fallen comrade had never existed.

Even Li Xun, his own brother, showed no reaction.

The Divine Path has always been the most prone to corruption.

Though Li Xun had stabilized himself after his last Ghost Transformation, it had taken a large amount of Purification Stones, leaving him unable to use the transformation again for a while.

Li Yi, however, had apparently been ambushed and used Ghost Transformation without Purification Stones on hand.

This led to his loss of control and spiritual corruption.

"Retreat!"

Someone shouted urgently.

The sound of scurrying, chillingly creepy, echoed again from the black mist.

"Run! Head east!"

Gu Jianlin wasted no time, carrying his chair and fleeing.

Lu Zicheng's phone displayed the word "East," likely a clue.

If they headed east, there might be a safe haven waiting for them.

But someone cried out, "Why should we listen to you? What if you're the traitor?"

Gu Jianlin couldn't be bothered with the fool. The black mist was growing thicker by the second.

It seemed intent on engulfing everyone.

He turned on the flashlight on his phone and froze as he illuminated the nearby buildings.

Every household had bloodstains at their doorways, with black flowers hanging from the beams.

Gu Jianlin came to a grim realization: in Black Cloud City's Forbidden Zone, at midnight, the black mist would spread, and grotesque monsters would emerge to devour everything.

The residents here wouldn't leave their homes during this time.

They likely had specific methods to protect their homes from these creatures.

"If you don't want to die, head east."

Gu Jianlin turned coolly, but a sudden chill ran down his spine.

Among the group, Tang Ling had vanished without a trace.

Uneasiness crept into his heart.

That woman seemed suspicious. While it wasn't clear if she was the traitor, her psychological profile indicated she was unlikely to be the Sea Demon.

No time for overthinking. Gu Jianlin tightened his grip on the flashlight and headed deeper into the black mist.

Cheng Youyu and Zhang Cheng exchanged glances before making up their minds. "Xiangsi, stay close!"

Nie Xiangsi simply replied, "Okay," and activated Saint's Protection before following.

The others hesitated further.

Yan Ye surveyed the scene in silence.

"Brother, which way should we go?"

Yan Feng asked.

"I can't trust the offspring of a Fallen, but we need to leave and find shelter fast."

Yan Ye's expression was stoic as he replied, "Let's head south."

Mu Ziqing glanced around, unnerved by the encroaching black mist. "I'll activate Saint's Protection to shield us from mental corruption. But I can't guarantee it'll counter whatever abilities these monsters have."

The group nodded slightly before following her lead.

The black mist crept in silently.

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The black mist had already consumed the entirety of Black Cloud City.

The skittering, countless crawling sounds echoed everywhere.

Gu Jianlin briefly considered retreating into one of the homes to take refuge.

But when he activated Life Perception, he found that the entire street seemed devoid of any other living beings besides their group.

It was as if the residents' protective methods had erased their presence entirely.

Gu Jianlin figured that even if he tried breaking down a door, it would yield no results.

And frankly, it wasn't in him to try that.

"Brother Lin, something feels off."

Cheng Youyu, walking behind him, suddenly bent over in pain. "I think I hear whispers..."

He collapsed to his knees, his face turning ashen, his body trembling.

Zhang Cheng also noticed something was wrong. Nosebleeds trickled down his face, which had turned deathly pale.

Nie Xiangsi fared the best, given her Priest powers, which made her almost immune unless killed directly. But even she had turned ghastly pale, her previously fair skin now tinged with an unnatural greenish hue.

The three of them quickly consumed Purification Stones, managing to recover slightly.

"What's going on?"

Gu Jianlin was startled. They were walking together, yet the three of them had been affected—leaving him completely unharmed.

"The black mist."

Nie Xiangsi, leaning against a wall in pain, frowned and said, "This black mist doesn't just induce corruption—it carries some sort of toxin... You, you need to undo your Ghost Transformation. If this keeps up, you'll fall."

Gu Jianlin froze as she placed her hand on his chest.

At that moment, a surge of warmth filled him as her spirituality poured into him.

The dry well of his essence overflowed once again.

"Using too much Blue Blood can also lead to corruption, so use my spirituality for now."

After transferring all of her spirituality to him, Nie Xiangsi fainted, her body tilting as she lost consciousness.

Had Gu Jianlin not caught her in time, she might have collapsed completely.

Gu Jianlin remained silent.

This seemingly bashful girl, with her naive and clumsy demeanor, turned out to be incredibly sharp.

Under these circumstances, someone needed to retain their combat strength.

Otherwise, even with a Priest like her, they'd all be doomed.

So she didn't hesitate to use her abilities to pass her remaining spirituality to him.

In essence, she had entrusted her life to him.

"Are you two okay?"

Gu Jianlin asked calmly, supporting the unconscious girl.

"We probably won't lose control, but the sounds those things make in the mist—they're toxic, not in a physical sense but spiritually. They're affecting our minds..." Zhang Cheng's expression was grim.

"Xiangsi is right."

Cheng Youyu added, "Brother Lin, if you don't undo your Ghost Transformation soon..."

Gu Jianlin cut him off. "Don't worry, I'll be fine. Just follow me—I'll get us out."

With that, he found a tattered burlap sack on the ground, slinging the unconscious girl onto his shoulder.

Cheng Youyu and Zhang Cheng: "..."

Unconscious Nie Xiangsi: "..."