

## Ancient 161

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Or perhaps it was the same for Li Changzhi at that time, though there was an instinctual sense of discord, it was hard to say exactly why.

"Interesting, then let's go to the last place."

Jing Ci snapped his fingers and uttered the name that was like a nightmare: "Haiqing Highway."

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The toll station on the highway was replaced by an eerie grocery store, the old man still lying on the redwood chair, feigning sleep.

His breathing seemed to diffuse with the howling wind.

It sounded like an ancient, deep sigh.

For some reason, in that sigh, Gu Jianlin felt an unprecedented sense of tranquility.

Originally, this highway was a nightmare for him, and after coming here once, he never wanted to return, yet occasionally in dreams he would come back, feeling that sense of coldness and helplessness, the sensation of being shattered to pieces.

He thought he would be very afraid to come back here again.

Yet in the old man's breaths, he seemed to hear the sound of the wind flowing through the air, leaves rustling in the breeze, the cries of insects in the jungle, clouds and mist spreading across the sky, the afternoon sun so warm.

It was as if a serene and beautiful piece of music was being played, and all misfortunes could not approach him.

Gu Jianlin felt all of this, and bowed deeply towards the old man.

"The teacher is very protective."

Jing Ci tossed the empty bottle into the trash bin and said lightly, "Follow me."

Gu Jianlin followed him.

Four months passed, the traces left by that car accident had been cleared away.

But Jing Ci took him past the highway guardrail into a field overgrown with wild grass.

Beneath the grass was a clear stream, smooth pebbles scattered in the water, occasionally frogs would jump.

Sunlight fell on the water, shimmering with sparkles.

"Did you know? What you saw that day truly exists."

Jing Ci said suddenly, "The Ghost Car, also known as the Nine-headed Bird. In the mythical stories written by humans, its origins can no longer be traced. As recorded in Chu Ci-Tian Wen: Nu Qi had no union, how did she have nine sons? It tells of the goddess Nu Qi who had no husband but bore nine sons. How did she get her nine sons?"

"Thus, some believed that she would descend to the mortal world to obtain sons. Later, the nine sons turned into nine heads, blending with other mythological tales to become the Nine-headed Bird, the Ghost Car."

His hands tucked in his pockets, he said softly, "But in reality, the so-called goddess is just the human form of the Ghost Car. Descending to the mortal world not to get sons, but to extend her life. Did you

know? Her authority is immortality. As long as the nine heads are not destroyed at the same time, she will never die."

Gu Jianlin's pupils trembled slightly, he couldn't explain his feelings.

He had thought about it.

If the King of Qing took him as a disciple, he might be told many things about the Ancient God.

This could verify whether the Ghost Car was real or not.

Unexpectedly, he got the answer so quickly.

"The curse your family speaks of, at least in your father's generation, has been verified. How your ancestors died, that cannot be verified. But your father died because of the Ghost Car."

Jing Ci turned to look at him: "An Ancestor among the Ancient Gods, from the Vermilion Bird Clan."

Gu Jianlin remained silent, his breathing grew heavy.

An Ancestor, not a Supreme.

He silently clenched his fists.

"Watch your breathing, don't mess up the rhythm."

Jing Ci said softly, "Did you always feel like your father didn't love you?"

Gu Jianlin didn't know how to respond. In fact, before becoming an Ascender, he had always thought so.

In his eyes, his father was an irresponsible man who didn't care for the family.

He didn't earn much money, hardly came home.

His wife divorced him, the son was left uncared for.

In his childhood, once Gu Jianlin had a high fever, cried for more than an hour at home without anyone caring, and finally it was a neighbor aunt who took him to the hospital. Calling his parents, he couldn't reach them either.

His father was nowhere to be found, the phone couldn't connect.

His mother was working out of town at the time, couldn't come back.

At times, Gu Jianlin suspected his father had a mistress outside.

"Truthfully, you really misunderstood him. In his eyes, as long as there was enough money to spend, it was fine; enough to ensure you lived a normal life, grew up healthy. Most of the money he left is in a private bank in Rui Country for investment, when you reach the legal marriage age of twenty-two, a lawyer will come to find you."

Jing Ci said lightly, "To protect you, to prevent you from awakening as an Ascender, he had to stay away from you. Since he couldn't always be by your side, he couldn't give you too much money, fearing you might stray."

Gu Jianlin was stunned.

On reflection, it was indeed so. If a person had great wealth during his teenage years, it wasn't a good thing.

With his self-control, he would most likely go astray.

"Do you know why your father got married? Initially, he was adopted by the Gu Family, and until he married and had a child, he hadn't become an Ascender, nor had anyone told him about the Gu Family's curse."

Jing Ci sighed, "Once he awakened, it was too late. By that time, he was already married to your mother, and you had been in your mother's womb for four months."

Gu Jianlin listened, his emotions were inexplicably complicated.

No wonder, his mother always said men change after marriage, grand promises are all nonsense.

Unexpectedly, this was the reason.

"Later he came to realize the curse of the Gu Family. He couldn't understand why, given the curse, the Gu Family insisted on continuing the lineage under the pretext of breaking the curse. And before his adoptive parents died, no one left any information to tell them about these things."

Jing Ci glanced at him and explained, "Your grandparents' thoughts are beyond verification, but perhaps they were trying to avoid the curse by not exposing the adopted sons to the Transcendent."

Gu Jianlin understood: "So the reason my father divorced was to make amends as much as possible. He'd rather lose this woman than let her die because of the curse."

"I met your father many years ago too."

Jing Ci laughed, "He was a man constantly tormented by guilt, living in much pain."

Gu Jianlin thought of the documents he saw in the refuge, and fell silent.

"But did you know? He actually had a chance to survive. Because the Ghost Car Ancestor is not a Supreme; in the real world, it's not invincible, and your father was a talent unprecedented in the human world. Though his rank was at Sixth Rank, he could exert strength beyond the Holy Land Level."

Jing Ci pointed at the sky, "And in that battle, he temporarily broke through to the Holy Land Level, plus with the support of the Mythical Weapon, he really had a chance to survive... But he had a fatal flaw."

Gu Jianlin's pupils trembled slightly, something deep within him began to collapse.

Cracking, piece by piece.

Disintegrating.

"His only flaw was you."



Jing Ci said softly, "He died to protect you."

In the gentle sigh, Gu Jianlin looked down at the empty highway, unable to stop the trembling.

The poignant sorrow buried deep within him was forcibly brought to the surface, sadness surged like tides.

"After that battle, many people rushed here, including the one who observed you on the overpass and the school building. The surprising thing was, she was the first to arrive, but she was still too late."

Jing Ci paused and said meaningfully, "What was her relationship with your father? Perhaps it's not important. But for your father's sake, she has always been protecting you in secret, like a dedicated nanny."

Clap.

A crisp snap of fingers.

The asphalt road on the highway rippled like water, revealing a patch of charred marks.

"Most of the battlefield traces have been cleared, this is the only piece hidden by the Ether Association."

Jing Ci said calmly, "If it weren't for the fact that the Deputy Minister of the Peak City District was Lu Zijin, it might have been taken away too."

He sighed, "It's time to show you."

Gu Jianlin looked down and saw the charred wasteland stained with mottled blood.

Two crooked lines of words were inscribed there.

"Sorry, Dad can only accompany you this far."

"Live on."