

Ancient 168

Chapter 168 - 84 Not Nearly Enough

Gu Jianlin increasingly felt that he possessed a talent for acting, as if two years ago, when a film crew came to his school's vicinity to shoot a movie, someone had specifically consulted him about it.

That crew seemed interested in letting him play a minor role as a little prince, which he subsequently declined.

And now, he genuinely thought of himself as an emperor from the Ancient Times, commanding authority without anger.

Just one cough from him, and the quarreling five individuals immediately regained their composure.

"We present ourselves before the Supreme!"

The Alchemist, resembling a Chief Eunuch, instantly knelt to the ground and kowtowed incessantly.

The Scholar played a minister, the Butcher a general, and they both prostrated themselves as well.

Meanwhile, the Sea Demon and the Moon Princess resembled palace maids, meekly kneeling, hands folded, and bowing their heads.

Gu Jianlin glanced at the five people, knowing full well that the premature leak of Black Cloud City's siege operation was indeed caused by a traitor within the Ether Association who betrayed them.

And this traitor's rank wasn't low.

Of course, the Ether Association might also be aware of the traitor's existence and deliberately set a trap.

He could understand this tactic.

If someone couldn't survive trials at this level, they were bound to die sooner or later in the transcendent world.

Gu Jianlin vividly remembered those fools who died during the attack, relaxing their vigilance merely because captains were nearby. They slept soundly at the inn without taking any precautions.

This matter served as a stark reminder to him as well.

In the transcendent world, human life was utterly worthless.

"What are you all standing around for? Activate the copper cauldron! The Supreme needs replenishment!"

The Alchemist barked orders.

Before the tomb's grand stone altar, the copper cauldron was activated. Blood-red spiritual secret medicine rolled and surged within it, incinerated by scorching flames, dispersing like mist.

At the cusp of the twenty-first century, Ascenders in the transcendent stage primarily used methods such as injection or ingestion for consuming spiritual secret medicine. This was because three particular ranks required no ritual assistance and abandoned feudalistic practices.

In Ancient Times, however, consuming secret medicine involved much more complex rituals.

Some methods required bathing and burning incense; others involved ritualistic animal slaughter for sacrifices, while certain practices required intercourse within an array.

— According to ancient records in "The Ancient Times Chronicle," the Supremes would often hold grand sacrificial ceremonies. Taking advantage of celestial timing and location, enslaved followers would offer vast quantities of secret medicine to restore their powers.

From this perspective, the Alchemist's efforts were indeed methodical.

Gu Jianlin employed the intricate rhythm of the breathing technique, entering a state of ethereal transcendence.

In the depths of his consciousness, the Black Qilin opened its golden, vertical pupils—bottomless whirlpools within the ocean depths—devouring vast amounts of spirituality voraciously, until its ancient, majestic body shuddered and roared fiercely.

Misty spirituality was exhaled by the entity and absorbed by the human transcendent form.

He could feel the fullness of spiritual energy.

His power surged exponentially.

Gu Jianlin soaked within the sea of spirituality, utterly comfortable.

"Advancing through the transcendent stage is indeed straightforward. Without considering the risk of losing control, one simply needs to forcefully bombard oneself with spiritual secret medicine. No wonder people say that the transcendent and superdimensional levels are a significant threshold. Since I won't lose control, as long as I have enough spiritual secret medicine, I can rapidly ascend to the Third Rank!"

Gu Jianlin exhaled deeply. This batch of spiritual secret medicine had propelled him to mid-First Rank.

In other words, with half as much of this medicine again, he could advance further.

"Supreme, this is my latest creation: Fallen Angel Blood! Completely distinct from prior works, this concoction includes Ancient God's Blood that has been diluted a hundredfold, making it—at present—the finest-quality spiritual secret medicine for the transcendent stage. Naturally, you are the first to enjoy it."

The Alchemist spoke respectfully, "For the great Supreme, spiritual secret medicine at the transcendent stage is little more than garbage, regardless of the grade. But please... grant me more time."

The remaining four continued kneeling silently.

Although Gu Jianlin was already satisfied, he raised his burning golden vertical pupils and cast an icy, condescending glance, saying indifferently, "And this is all you have?"

"It's all we could muster, given the Ether Association's relentless pursuit of us. Surviving alone has been an incredible stroke of misfortune, let alone finding time to investigate the situation regarding the false Gu Ci'an. We're utterly spent!"

The Alchemist knelt, pounding the ground in anguish. "Creating these spiritual secret medicines has already cost us everything! Especially the Scholar, who almost got killed while sourcing materials outside!"

The Moon Princess and Butcher, oblivious to the truth, exchanged empathetic glances, misguided compassion evident in their eyes.

The Sea Demon, however, revealed an expression of schadenfreude as though thinking, serves them right!

The Scholar, meanwhile, felt suffocated, casting a sidelong glance at his teacher with a look of incredulity—as though witnessing an imbecile.

Gu Jianlin's gaze remained serene. He uttered evenly, "And what of the intelligence?"

The Alchemist responded swiftly, "We have some! Definitely!"

He turned back and signaled with his eyes.

This time, it was the Moon Princess who stepped forward first, her voice cold as frost, "The results of my investigation are sparse, but I did uncover some clues regarding the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident. I can confirm that Gu Ci'an, who orchestrated the massacre, did not immediately leave the scene after the slaughter."

She paused briefly. "Instead, he clashed with members of the Judgement Court. None know the details of that battle's events, but the outcome was clear—Saint Li Qingsong, stationed at Peak City, was gravely injured. Two Councilmen have not reappeared since, likely dead. Captain-level casualties were over half."

"The current Nightwatch Department captain, codenamed Lin Dong, also participated in the battle and returned heavily wounded."

"What's stranger still... at the time of occurrence, Peak City's deputy director, Lu Zijin, had been reassigned to the Fengdu District to assist in sealing an Ancient God Seed and did not return to Peak City until two months later."

Upon hearing this, the Butcher visibly froze, blurting in his booming voice, "Oh, yeah! I've heard about that too. At the same time, there was word of a black-market operation urging me to scram. Because the Nightwatch Department descended upon Peak City, it seemed a clear-out was imminent."

He scratched his head, "I packed my bags and prepared to flee. Then word came that Lin Dong had been secretly escorted out within three days of arriving. Scared the hell out of me!"

The Sea Demon reflected for a moment before speaking, "That's right; I can confirm this as well. My colleagues mentioned it—four months ago, all Ether Association alchemists and priests were ordered to assemble at the Peak City division."

"Otherwise, the pursuit on me and my teacher wouldn't have lifted so quickly."

The Scholar added, "That must have been the Peak City District division's weakest moment. Their intentions remain incomprehensible—what were they doing gathering such overwhelming combat power? They could've taken on a Primordial-level being!"

Gu Jianlin exhaled deeply internally; to him, this was monumental news.

It further confirmed that the ultimate perpetrator of the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident was definitely not his father.

At the time, his father returned unharmed, full of vigor.

He had even fought an Ancestor-level Ancient God afterward.

Unless his father possessed the power to decimate Peak City's senior combat forces unscathed, then immediately turn around and battle an Ancestor-level opponent, such theories lacked logic.

If that were the case, his father wouldn't have needed to flee.

If fallen, his father surely would've exterminated everyone.

Moreover, the Ether Association's records did not cite his father as having obliterated so many senior elite forces.

The scenario was implausible and would provoke skepticism rather than belief.

Combining all available evidence, the Judgement Court was most certainly concealing something.

"Hmm."

Gu Jianlin remarked calmly, "Decent enough contribution."

The Alchemist cleared his throat, saying, "Speaking of which, I also have something peculiar to report. Years ago, upon the Ether Association's discovery of the Qilin Immortal Palace, a team was dispatched to dive underwater and explore the Ancient God Realm. Among them was a Nightwatch Department elite named Mu Feng—a Sixth-order Domain King."

"No one knows what transpired during that descent. Ultimately, only Mu Feng surfaced alive, his mind polluted, leading to his being declared wanted by the association."

He added, "I grew intrigued by Qilin Immortal Palace back then and kept tabs on this matter. They say Mu Feng lost all memories of the event, yet evidence of his slaughtering comrades was sealed away by the Judgement Court, revealing alarming parallels to the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident."

The Sea Demon commented respectfully, "Regarding Mu Feng, if the Supreme has need, I can provide information. To my knowledge, Mu Feng narrowly escaped being purged in Black Cloud City not long ago. Ultimately, Gu Ci'an's son demonstrated power far beyond his current rank and leveraged significant backing to shield him."

She appeared to want to add something but was interrupted.

The Alchemist interjected, "Indeed, the Sea Demon thrives within the Ether Association and can provide updates on the association's plans, including their intended timeline for attacking the Qilin Immortal Palace."

The Sea Demon seemed to grasp the old man's motive for curtailing her, her expression momentarily serious: "It's as he says. As long as my colleagues don't betray me, I can continue offering valuable intelligence."

The Scholar seemed to receive a warning, bowing his head silently.

The Moon Princess and the Butcher, seemingly closer, exchanged glances but remained quiet.

Gu Jianlin understood these individuals' hidden agendas.

The Alchemist was likely withholding information about external affairs.

The other four could only offer intelligence with this old man's permission.

"Whether it's the King of Qing, Chen Bojun, or Jing Ci—their immense combat strength—they've utterly avoided mentioning them. It's clear that when the Ether Association mobilizes substantial forces for an assault on the Immortal Palace, they still won't disclose anything."

Gu Jianlin considered privately.

A prolonged silence ensued.

Medicine Master and the others, noting the Supreme's continued quietude, began tentatively raising their heads.

"Supreme."

The Alchemist paused, swallowing nervously: "Regarding this transaction..."

Gu Jianlin sat amidst the darkness, his golden vertical pupils like frozen embers, staring down with an air of supremacy.

"Not enough."

He remarked coldly, "With this meager offering, you presume to exchange for Ancient God's Blood? It falls pitifully short."

The Alchemist froze: "But Supreme..."

Boom!

The Ancient Times' divine pressure erupted, as though heaven and earth crumbled, detonating in his mind.

The Alchemist's internal power went berserk, spiraling out of control as he was ruthlessly pinned to the ground.

His bulging veins seemed on the verge of rupturing.

His bones creaked under unbearable strain.

His mind plunged into sheer darkness, as if descending into an abyss of boundless terror!

"I granted you the chance to live, yet you've accomplished so little in return, leaving me gravely disappointed. And your petty schemes? I've grown weary of them."

Gu Jianlin eyed him indifferently: "Your existence—whether continued or extinguished—rests upon my whim. Is that clear?"

Though unaffected by the pressure afflicting him, the others knelt in terror, pressing their foreheads to the ground anxiously.

The Alchemist emitted agonized wails, like a dying old dog crushed under cruel weight.

"I'll give you one more chance."

Gu Jianlin spoke with tranquil detachment: "If you fail next time, you may as well die."

Boom!

A low rumble sounded faintly in the distance.

Time was up.

The figures of the five slowly blurred as if mirages reflected on water, their outlines twisting, and gradually faded away.