

Ancient 184

Chapter 184 - 92 The Patch of the King of Qing

Xiao Gu ate the midnight snack clean and then carefully washed the lunchbox.

The pork chop was grilled to perfection, crispy on the outside and tender on the inside, with a firm yet springy texture. A single bite released bursts of juicy flavor, and the sauce was generously applied. It had to be said that a midnight snack cooked with care by a girl was infinitely tastier than takeout.

He could almost picture the girl wearing gloves, pressing down on the pork chop with meticulous care, and spreading the sauce evenly.

"Thanks."

Xiao Gu sent over a message and then fell into thought.

He couldn't help but feel that this girl was being a little too good to him.

Analyzing the girl's personality profile, it indeed seemed a bit off. After all, nothing particularly special had happened during their four months of interaction, and she wasn't the type to easily grow close to others. Her attitude toward everyone was distant, even doing only what was expected when it came to her parents.

Xiao Gu was the one exception.

This kindness went beyond normal behavior. It wasn't simply a matter of them being step-siblings in a restructured family.

There had to be another reason.

And it certainly wasn't because of his looks.

Youzhu wasn't the type to care about appearances.

"What could it be that I don't know?"

Xiao Gu murmured softly.

Feeling a bit tired, he lay on the bed, closed his eyes, and drifted off to sleep.

When he woke again, it was already nine in the morning.

Ever since becoming an Ascender, he required less sleep than regular people, and his lifespan was considerably longer.

With a trade-off like that, he had much more time on his hands compared to ordinary people.

Upon waking, several new video files had been added to his phone.

Lu Zicheng had left him a message: "Profile the characteristics of this person, the operation starts today. The Dawn Combat Sequence will gradually arrive in Peak City, along with reinforcements from other divisions. Get prepared; Peak City is about to face turmoil in the near future. To the outside, you're in a state of severe injury, so stay home and rest well."

Outside the window, he could faintly hear the hum of rotary wings.

Helicopters swept like black falcons in low-altitude flight, weaving through the city's buildings.

Xiao Gu gazed at them, lost in thought.

He logged into the Deep Space Network and entered six words: Dawn Combat Sequence.

Deep Space's introduction revealed that the Dawn Combat Sequence was a military institution cultivated by the Ether Association. It had a history of 157 years, stationed long-term in various ultra-ancient spaces. They were warriors protecting the boundaries of reality, the backbone in humanity's wars against the Ancient God Clan, and pioneers in exploring ancient civilizations.

While investigators in various divisions were responsible for maintaining order in the real world...

The Dawn Combat Sequence mainly spearheaded warfare.

And the Omega Sequence was an even higher-tier secret project, purely aimed at cultivating the strongest combat forces.

"So, the Ether Association really plans to invade the Qilin Immortal Palace."

There was no sense of urgency in Xiao Gu regarding this, as he hadn't decided whether it was a good or bad thing.

Besides, he could freely enter and exit the tomb; worst case, he just wouldn't go in.

Moreover, the ghostly thing hiding in the Immortal Palace was weighing heavily on his mind.

"What does the Grave Digger Organization want to get from me by worshipping it?"

Xiao Gu took out the pitch-black Soul Comforting Bell, his gaze seemingly piercing through it to rest on a fragmented soul.

He had an urge to interrogate it right away.

But recalling how the Joker's soul had exploded last time, he restrained himself with great effort.

At present, Xiao Gu had set himself three short-term goals.

"First, resolve the issue with Uncle Mu as quickly as possible."

"Second, figure out what exactly the ghostly thing in the Immortal Palace is."

"Third, destroy the Yan family."

Xiao Gu glanced at the video files on his phone, one of which showed a long street from yesterday evening.

The video, captured by the Deep Space Supercomputer, was incredibly clear. It showed a tall, thin man in black and a burly man standing at a roadside barbecue stall drinking beer. Both wore custom Human Skin Masks and discreetly put on contact lenses, their gazes subtly scanning the flow of traffic on the street.

One of them was the Butcher.

The other was the person who had paid to hire him.

"A bit clever, but not clever enough."

Xiao Gu detected some hidden details from the tall, thin figure.

Tapping the screen twice, he zoomed in on the video.

In an instant, countless details stormed toward him like a raging tempest!

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In the top-floor office of the Deep Space Technology Building.

Slurp.

Lu Zicheng drank a bowl of pumpkin porridge, an expression of utter hopelessness on his face.

His nose was bruised, and his face swollen, as if he'd been thoroughly beaten up. Technically, given his Fourth-Order Mad King rank, such injuries should have healed quickly, but for some reason, they lingered.

A bald parrot's beak was locked in a steel cage, its eyes darting around inquisitively.

"Young master, here."

Chen Qing handed him a pair of sunglasses and a mask. "Cover up a bit."

Lu Zicheng's eye twitched, but he obediently took them and put them on to hide his face.

"Zicheng, you really ought to reflect on yourself. Back in the day, you were just one rank below me, but now I'm close to advancing to the Seventh Rank, while you're still stuck at the Fourth."

Lu Zijin sat in an office chair, her slender legs perched on the edge of the desk. "You can't live in the past forever."

Lu Zicheng replied absentmindedly, "Spare me the motivational speech. Even if I advance, I still won't be able to defeat you."

Chen Qing glanced at the man and sighed inwardly.

Truth be told, Lu Zicheng had extraordinary talent, but ever since that incident years ago, he'd developed a heart demon.

Of course, a "heart demon" was a rather nebulous concept.

To put it more accurately, the trauma caused by that past event was so severe that it led to serious psychological issues, making him instinctively reject any external intervention and close himself off completely.

Otherwise, he'd surely be at the peak of the Fifth Rank by now.

Ding!

Lu Zicheng took out his phone, his pupils shrinking slightly: "Sis, Xiao Gu just sent a message."

"Male, aged between thirty-four to thirty-nine, with a mark from wearing a ring on his left hand, indicating he was married. Prefers using his left hand for knives and guns, dislikes wearing watches. Has visible discoloration at the corners of his eyes from wearing glasses long-term; he's nearsighted. Rule out any sensory-based inheritance paths. Judging by his gait, he's received rigorous training, with faded tattoo scarring on the back of his hand suggesting he was previously a foreign mercenary. Recently, he sustained an injury to his left leg."

He paused, his expression turning odd: "Heterosexual, recently involved with a woman. There's lipstick residue between his fingers. His peculiar habit is letting women lick his fingers."

Chen Qing was dumbfounded listening nearby.

"All this from just one video?"

Lu Zijin narrowed her beautiful eyes, murmuring, "This father-son duo's profiling truly..."

Made her scalp tingle.

"According to Xiao Gu, as long as there are clues, he can conduct deductions. Sometimes, the deductions may yield various possibilities, but he uses the overall feel of all clues combined, along with a strong sixth sense, to zero in on one conclusion and create a personality profile."

Lu Zicheng gasped audibly and explained, "The principle is simple, like you, Sis. Based on your meticulous grooming and appearance, along with your desktop wallpaper and bedroom decoration, it's easy to deduce that you're obsessed with aesthetics. Someone like Nie, the Deacon, is exactly the type you dislike."

Chen Qing thought for a moment. "When you put it that way, it does make sense."

Lu Zijin raised an eyebrow. "But that's based on obvious external traits."

"Exactly, which is why deeper understanding is necessary. Once you know more..."

Lu Zicheng shrugged. "He could probably guess what color underwear you'll wear tomorrow."

Lu Zijin shot him a cold glare, her eyes brimming with murderous intent.

Chen Qing found it indifferent, as she'd already seen the boy several times anyway.

"Based on these traits, pull up Mrs. Yan's social circle. It shouldn't be hard to find this person. If there's no mistake, he's likely a gray Ascender, specializing in black-market dealings and coordination."

Lu Zicheng remarked, "No surprise, he's probably mixed up in things at West Port."

Chen Qing pulled up her tablet and checked. "People like him deserve to die."

The so-called gray Ascenders weren't sanctioned by the Ether Association.

While not Fallen, they committed crimes behind the scenes.

Contract killings, trading taboo items, organizing illicit activities, and so forth.

Lu Zijin nodded slightly and gave the order: "Taixu."

At the same time, Taixu's sultry voice chimed in: "Matching characteristics, please wait."

"Match confirmed."

She spoke gently: "Target identified: Lin Yuan, 37 years old, married. Studied abroad in parts of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf coastal regions. Returned eight years ago to start a business. Now a shareholder in Red Sleeve Bar. Three months ago, he had close contact with Mrs. Yan's friend Lin Ye."

Indeed, by comparing social circles, clues were corroborated quickly.

Gray Ascenders always maintained a stable identity in reality.

Once external traits were confirmed, finding them became straightforward.

"Zicheng, lead a team to apprehend him."

Lu Zijin filed her pink nails and declared indifferently, "Those idiots like Wang Bolin, who loved cozying up to Judgement Court, are almost all dead now. Only Lin Wanqiu remains alive. The newly appointed team leaders were transferred from other divisions—newcomers without a strong background."

She paused. "With your abilities, keeping them in line should be easy."

Lu Zicheng stood with his parrot, waved lazily, "Got it, I'm off."

Chen Qing bowed slightly in respect toward the minister before following him out.

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In an old shabby house, Xiao Gu wore a white shirt and black slim-fit pants, along with a plain white baseball cap. Oversized black sunglasses masked half his face, accentuating the slightly sharp contours.

A bag left by his father hung slung over his shoulder, containing a Desert Eagle and alchemy bullets.

He looked at his reflection, scrutinizing his outfit. Fortunately, his shirt was white.

The sound of an engine roaring came from downstairs.

Scholar arrived with a new car, waiting below.

Knock, knock!

Unexpectedly, someone knocked on his door again.

Xiao Gu suspiciously opened the door to find a surprising visitor.

"Good morning."

Jing Ci was still impeccably dressed in a suit, hands in his pockets, greeting him with a smile.

Xiao Gu paused briefly. "Good morning."

Jing Ci smiled faintly. "Nothing in particular, just that the teacher thinks if you're going to act outside the Association's radar, aside from the Lock of Nonexistence, you'll need a small patch."

He stepped aside, revealing a wooden puppet behind him.

When Xiao Gu saw the puppet, it trembled like a reflection on water.

In an instant, the wooden puppet transformed into his likeness, entering the room as it brushed past him.

Xiao Gu was stunned.

"Don't overreact. It's just a regular alchemy weapon, capable only of replicating your external features, simulating your breathing and heartbeat, but unable to mimic spiritual aura or fluctuations of spirituality. However, since you have the Lock of Nonexistence, those detection methods can't probe you anyway, so this is a perfect match."

Jing Ci explained nonchalantly, "While you're causing mischief outside, this will serve as your alibi. After all, if the Association discovered an official investigator secretly dealing in underground black markets..."

Xiao Gu's scalp tingled.

The King of Qing... what kind of existence was he really?

He evoked the unsettling feeling that every minute detail of your life—even the most trivial—was entirely transparent to him.