

Ancient 186

Chapter 186 - 94: Are You Trying to Extort Someone?

Gu Jianlin withdrew his gaze and turned to look at the little boy.

He looked about twelve or thirteen years old. His blue short-sleeved shirt hadn't been washed in a long time, and it was covered in dust and grime. His shorts had holes, and his sneakers were caked in mud.

His features were somewhat delicate, but his face bore a few shoe prints.

Scholar grabbed the boy's collar, making his face turn pale with fear as he gritted his teeth tightly.

The group of young men standing nearby exchanged glances and quickly fled into the alley, not daring to pursue further.

Gu Jianlin said calmly, "Give me your phone."

The boy lowered his head and silently handed over the phone.

"Let's go. Stop making trouble; it's just a kid," he said.

Gu Jianlin took the phone and turned to leave.

Scholar released the boy's collar, cast him a cold glance, and then turned to follow.

"Straight to the black market," Gu Jianlin said nonchalantly as he glanced at the time.

At that moment, the boy suddenly ran up to him and hugged him, smearing his dirty hands on Gu Jianlin's clothes.

Gu Jianlin glanced down; he was wearing a white shirt today, which was now stained.

Scholar's face showed astonishment and anger as he spun around and shouted furiously, "You little..."

He was about to hit the boy to teach him a lesson.

Unexpectedly, the boy stubbornly raised his face and said, "Black Cloud City has already been raided. People are highly vigilant now. If you want to disguise yourselves as locals to gather information, you have to act the part. Otherwise, you will arouse suspicion. The big players in the Forbidden Zone wouldn't risk going to the black market personally."

Gu Jianlin realized the boy seemed to know who the decision-maker between them was.

From start to finish, he only fixed his gaze on Gu Jianlin.

"Your aura is too polished; you don't look like someone from here. Your family must love you a lot, huh?"

The boy smirked and scurried away like a monkey.

Scholar's expression darkened, though he understood that the aura of a Supreme indeed stood out in the black market.

Still, he didn't dare to say much, as forcing a Supreme to humble himself and blend in with common folk would be absurdly disrespectful.

Gu Jianlin was preoccupied with the boy's words, his mind stirred in thought.

Suddenly, he squatted down, smeared dirt on himself, ripped a corner of his clothing, and smudged his cap with dust.

This transformation made him look convincingly like a smuggler.

"Supreme, we're already under surveillance after just that small interaction. This place isn't like Black Cloud City nearby Immortal Palace; over there, most people are reckless grifters trying to pilfer treasures from the palace. Here, however, is truly chaotic—a massive underground trading hub," Scholar muttered softly.

"You get all kinds in this crowd. Take that little brat earlier—he's just awakened as an Ascender but hasn't chosen an Inheritance Path yet," he continued.

Gu Jianlin asked thoughtfully, "Where do these children come from?"

"Hard to say. Most are abandoned by parents smuggling themselves here. Others are kidnapped from the real world and brought here to see if they can awaken. If they don't awaken, they're left behind to do grueling manual labor. If they do, they're sent to Black Cloud City to mine," Scholar explained.

He added, "Some are escaping persecution from the association but find little refuge here, as they're still enslaved and exploited. Some parents leave for work elsewhere, and the kids wander the streets aimlessly."

Walking barely 200 meters, Gu Jianlin saw many children on the streets.

They came from all races—Asian, African, and Caucasian.

Across the street, there was even an orphanage. A Caucasian nun handed out candies to the children.

The scene looked warm and innocent.

Just as Gu Jianlin approached, the nun came up to him eagerly.

"Do you need a pathfinder?"

She pulled over two adolescent girls and smiled. "We have two exceptional witches here, both at the Second Rank. If you're planning an exploration of the Immortal Palace, they would be excellent choices."

Gu Jianlin instinctively frowned. He didn't know what a pathfinder was, but her tone clearly treated living people as merchandise, which disturbed him deeply.

"Pathfinders are auxiliary personnel bred by the black market to act as bait during expeditions. For example, in Immortal Palace explorations, they go ahead to scout the danger. If something monstrous appears, they die in your place, buying you enough time to escape," Scholar whispered.

He continued, "These people selling witches are smugglers from overseas. Whenever an ultra-ancient gate opens, they flock to nearby Forbidden Zones to do business. Within Hua Country's borders, this phenomenon is relatively minimized. Abroad, in the world of Ascenders, it's far worse—chaos with no bounds."

He explained further, "Once they've made enough money, they vanish overnight. The witches left unsold are either abandoned or killed. And you might wonder why only witches are sold—it's because Priests and Alchemists are priceless commodities. If they have those, they keep them to maximize their profits."

Gu Jianlin felt increasingly uneasy hearing this.

It reminded him of someone.

Sister Chen Qing was on the witch path and an orphan herself.

If she hadn't met Captain Lu back then, her fate could very well have been the same.

The nun noticed his expression and smiled. "The pale-skinned one at Second Rank peak is priced at six hundred thousand. The dark-skinned one, freshly appointed at Second Rank, is priced at four hundred thousand. Once purchased, they're yours entirely. Sign a contract, and you can take them away. If you're interested in hiring me, my rate is three million per session—or equivalent extraordinary resources for trade."