

Ancient 187

Chapter 187 - 94: Are You Trying to Extort Someone?_2

"Precious information is also acceptable," she paused.

Although Gu Jianlin looked utterly disheveled at the moment, the people here were different from those in the outside world.

They didn't carry that superior attitude of looking down on others.

As long as someone was a customer, they would fight for them.

Because even a downtrodden little kid might carry precious resources unearthed from the Immortal Palace.

Very likely, resources that their parents had exchanged their lives for.

Gu Jianlin couldn't help but think about how the lives of two living, breathing girls were worth less than a million, and the discomfort in his heart grew stronger.

He took a deep breath and turned to leave.

"Don't buy it, forget you ever saw us, unless you want to die,"

Scholar said coldly and walked after him.

The white woman smiled faintly, turned back, and led the two girls away.

Upon arriving here, Gu Jianlin felt inexplicably heavy-hearted, yet he could do nothing.

Because, within his Life Perception, he sensed many powerful presences.

There was no way he could single-handedly eradicate this entire place.

The power of one person could only kill, kill, and kill.

If he truly wanted to change something, solutions had to come from the upper echelons.

"Supreme, look over there,"

Scholar pointed ahead.

Gu Jianlin looked over and saw an antique pawnshop.

A diverse crowd lined up at the entrance—men, women, young, and old—faces full of unease.

"Guess what these people are here for? Certainly not to buy antiques. They're here to apply as treasure appraisers. Some Extraordinary Resources unearthed might be polluted, and no one's sure whether they're safe. So they hire people to test them. If the items aren't polluted, they take them away and pay the testers a sum of money."

Scholar explained, "If they are polluted, the treasure appraisers will purify them; in return, the appraisers receive even bigger rewards. Some Fallen suppress their Deformation after falling by consuming Heavenly Born Grass, then take up treasure appraising. Sure, they can make a lot of money, but they'll wear themselves out and won't live for more than a year."

Gu Jianlin flatly asked, "Why do it then?"

This was essentially sacrificing life to filter pollution—whether fallen already or not, this job was a guaranteed death sentence.

Without hesitation, Scholar replied, "To pave the way for the next generation."

Gu Jianlin's heart twisted sharply upon hearing this.

Because it reminded him of his father.

"Those applying to be treasure appraisers inevitably have family and children. They're giving up their chance to keep living, hoping to save enough money to leave their loved ones a fighting chance. Odds are their family members have been polluted too. The world under the sun has no room for them to survive. But here, in the black market, there's still a deal to be made."

Scholar elaborated, "There's a mysterious organization claiming they have a secret haven in Northern Europe, where they can avoid Deep Space's observation, and even the Ether Association can't find. It's a paradise. As long as you pay them enough, they'll take you there to live out your life safely. Whether it's true or not, no one knows."

He shrugged, "Anyway, those who went have all gone out of contact."

Gu Jianlin knew this was most likely a lie.

But why did people still believe it?

They weren't idiots.

The essence of a lie lies in how beautiful it is—how deeply it resonates with your greatest desires.

Because people long for the Light so much, they plunge forward even knowing it's false.

Once engrossed, people start deceiving themselves.

Even though it's impossible, their hearts still cling to that one-in-a-billion possibility.

What if? Right?

Back then, Uncle Mu and his group wanted to head to Northern Europe. But before the voyage even began, they were caught.

"Teacher often said, 'The suffering of humanity should not be witnessed. The more you see, the more you think about it; things that shouldn't concern you suddenly weigh on your mind. Of course, you're the Supreme—you wouldn't deal with such troubles.'"

Scholar spoke respectfully.

Gu Jianlin glanced at him, "From what you're saying, do you think you have humanity?"

Scholar fell silent for a moment, "I'm not a good person, but I still have humanity. I won't do anything for these people. Yet, seeing their miserable state does stir something inside me. If it were possible, who wouldn't yearn for happiness? I also wish I could be a good person, but fate never gave me that chance."

Gu Jianlin said no more and followed Scholar into an underground bar.

The narrow, dark hallway had walls lined with all sorts of small advertisements.

They descended to the bottommost level. Under the white lights stood two men in black clothing.

"Please present proof,"

They said icily.

Scholar, expressionless, produced a black membership card, "Is this enough?"

Gu Jianlin followed closely behind like a shadow—or a lackey.

The two men glanced at him, stepped aside, and said, "Go ahead."

Scholar walked in with an air of arrogance, hands behind his back, acting like he owned the place.

Gu Jianlin, however, played the part of someone meek and unobtrusive.

Upon entering the bar, a wave of choking smoke rolled out to greet them. The air was saturated with the stench of grease, vomit, sweaty men, and body odor. Disgusting.

Scholar found a spot, snapped his fingers sharply, summoning a server.

Gu Jianlin wrinkled his nose, repelled by the overwhelming stench.

"Days are getting harder. Without the city fortress, I have no income. Even the money for booze was stolen from some kid—I can't even afford a freaking pack of cigarettes."

"Heh, the Black Cloud City Grave Digger Organization's been wiped out; who'd still dare go there?"

"What? No way! Did Hasegawa Shinichi make it out?"

"You just crawled out of some village, didn't you? This happened days ago. Hasegawa Shinichi didn't escape—he died deep within the Forbidden Zone. And he was killed by a rookie no less. Guess whose kid that rookie is? Gu Ci'an's son!"

"Wait, Gu Ci'an's son? How the hell did he end up working for the Association?"

"Oh, stop freaking out. Loads of fallen criminals' offspring end up wanting to stay in the Association. What's the alternative? Live like rats in the darkness like us? If Light were still alive, maybe it'd be possible. But now that Rhein's in charge, forget about it. He won't last long before having to fend for himself."

"Well, that's better. At least the Association's rookies won't get so strong they push us out of hiding."

"By the way, you heard the gossip? Gu Ci'an's son upset the Yan family during that mission. Apparently, their two sons became Fallen, and he killed them."

"Damn, seriously? That's brutal. Oh wait—I think I saw his bounty on the black market today."

"Yeah, five million. Butcher's already taken the job; apparently went out last night."

"Ugh, that's a shame. He looked pretty hot in the bounty photo. I was hoping for a taste, hehe."

"Dream on, you walking trash fire. You think someone in the Association would go for low-grade goods like you?"

A crowd drank and chattered loudly in the bar.

Gu Jianlin listened silently, expression unreadable.

Scholar, despite flaunting arrogance, didn't dare speak recklessly.

Until a server walked over with a tray.

"Go, fetch Butcher for me."

Scholar pulled out a stack of red bills from his wallet, handing them over, "Immediately."

The server hesitated, "Butcher might not be available."

Scholar didn't even look at him, pulled out another stack, "Is this enough?"

The server quickly accepted it, replying, "This really isn't about the money."

Scholar grew impatient, slammed his wallet down, "Enough?"

The server's eyes lit up, "Butcher got seriously injured yesterday—he's negotiating compensation with his employer."

Gu Jianlin almost couldn't contain himself.

Seriously injured? What a joke. He's just extorting someone, clearly.

Scholar wanted to say more but was stopped by Gu Jianlin's glare.

Gu Jianlin signaled the server to leave, then said faintly, "No need—I've already located Butcher."

Through his Life Perception, he recognized that familiar Life Rhythm.

Aside from traces of pollution, Butcher was perfectly fine.

Far from seriously injured—not even a scratch.

"Supreme, what now?"

Scholar asked in a low tone.

Gu Jianlin rose without expression, "Perfect timing—the employer's still here. Let's go kill them."