

Ancient 281

Chapter 281 - 148 The Co-living Life of a Beautiful Girl_3

"Don't overthink it, I'm not doing this entirely for you."

The Moon Princess avoided his gaze and said softly, "I just hate the Judgement Court, that's all."

Gu Jianlin sighed, "Even if you were my father's student, you don't have to be so good to me. Right now, the Judgement Court faction doesn't dare openly target me. All they do is play petty tricks in secret—it's nothing serious."

"I'm not, I didn't."

The Moon Princess turned her gaze away, refusing to look at him. "Speaking of, you remember the Butcher, right? When they were pillaging resources in the Immortal Palace, they encountered a creature from the Omega Sequence."

Gu Jianlin froze, "A creature?"

"Thunder."

The Moon Princess said casually, "It was wielding a mythical weapon named Extreme Thunder. Even though it's at the same Rank as me, it displayed incredible ferocity and even possesses the power to fight against Fifth Rank opponents."

Gu Jianlin was utterly shocked to learn that his Tiger General had not only recovered but somehow also made his way into the Immortal Palace.

"The You Ying Group is officially at war with the Ether Association?"

He asked instinctively.

"They already tore each other apart back at West Port. Before venturing into the Immortal Palace, people were still somewhat restrained. But inside the palace, when it comes to opportunities and resources, all bets are off. It's not just them—there are plenty of rogue Ascenders, scattered Ascender groups, all hoping to grab their share."

"People like me actively hunt Ether Association's Omegas because they carry plenty of resources. Who knows, some might even hold mythical weapons distributed by the association. Killing one of them is a huge win."

The Moon Princess reminded him, "Soon, it'll be your turn—the second wave—to venture into the Immortal Palace. Be careful."

She added, "Give me your hand."

Gu Jianlin, unsure of her intentions, extended his left wrist.

The Moon Princess came closer and pulled out a string of black Stone Beads from seemingly nowhere, tying them around his wrist.

"There we go."

She raised her right hand, revealing an identical string of Stone Beads on her wrist. Her voice carried a rare hint of pride, "With this, once you're inside the Immortal Palace, I'll be able to sense your position."

Gu Jianlin stared blankly, "Where did you get these? From inside the Immortal Palace?"

The Moon Princess ignored him.

But the answer was already evident.

"There's one more thing I need to warn you about."

Unexpectedly, the Moon Princess continued, "The first wave of the Omega Sequence seems to have encountered something in the Immortal Palace. In any case, by the time we retreated, they had gone deeper in pursuit. Based on part of the strategy I've deciphered, they ventured into a section of the Living Burial Area packed with terrifying entities. We didn't dare go deeper."

Gu Jianlin narrowed his eyes.

"I suspect they haven't gotten out yet."

The Moon Princess asked, "Do you have any intel on your side?"

Gu Jianlin shook his head, "I haven't even met the head instructor yet—just been dealing with rowdy kids."

The Moon Princess snorted, "You're probably getting back at the Ether Association's President. She's been giving you a hard time."

"Who knows?"

Gu Jianlin said faintly.

"The Ether Association's President is an extremely dangerous person."

The Moon Princess remarked, "If possible, keep your distance."

Gu Jianlin asked, "Do you also know about how she was cornered by the association's top brass and ended up killing her own children?"

The Moon Princess nodded, "I've heard. People say the President is undoubtedly one of humankind's pillars—a strongest individual ranked top five in human history—but she's hardly a saint. Moreover... her ambition has never been to protect the human world. She's only ever cared about preserving the Ether Association as an organization, safeguarding her husband's life's work. Her goals and those of many high-ranking members in the association don't align."

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Gu Jianlin flipped the meat on the electric grill with tongs and asked, "The guy you're talking about—is he my dad? I've heard people mention it recently. Back when they forced the President to abdicate, he played a part too."

Moon Princess pretended to look at the scenery, saying, "Mm."

The two exchanged glances and simultaneously cursed in their hearts.

"Unlucky!"

Moon Princess warned, "In any case, you need to be careful. The factional fights within the Ether Association are incredibly fierce—there's an undercurrent flowing everywhere. If you're looking into your father's past, it's very easy for some people to use you. When that happens, even if you don't mean to, the President will treat you as a pawn set up by other factions."

Her beautiful eyes gleamed with intense apprehension. "As long as the Association is threatened, she could even kill her own children. She possesses Catastrophe-Level strength—if she truly wants to kill someone, no one would be able to protect them."

Gu Jianlin deliberated for a moment. "Is that so?"

"The King of Qing might be stronger than the President, but they're ultimately on the same level. At their tier, no one can easily triumph over the other, but killing a junior like you would be far too simple."

Moon Princess added, "It's like Ultraman fighting a monster—humans on the ground can't possibly guarantee their own safety."

Gu Jianlin nodded slightly. "Fair point."

"And let me ask—when do those in power act the craziest?"

Moon Princess remarked with a faint air of mystery.

Gu Jianlin didn't need to think: the answer was old age!

"There's a saying that the President's time might be approaching—but who knows whether she'll outlast the King of Qing."

Moon Princess whispered, "In the Dark World, there are people counting the days on their fingers. If the President falls, and if the King of Qing also disappears, this world will undergo an earth-shattering transformation."

Gu Jianlin hesitated for a moment, fishing a golden emblem—the Golden Phoenix Feather—out of his pocket. Suspiciously, he said, "I honestly don't understand the President. What does she want? The Little Princess is wild, sure, but she couldn't bring her down—at most, she just embarrassed herself slightly, nothing serious. Instead, I feel like she's conveniently pushing me into the second echelon."

"And as for this Golden Phoenix Feather, I've heard it's her token of authority. To some extent, it symbolizes her prestige."

He paused. "If it's because I called her a Vulgar Master and she wanted to mess with me, why would she give me this?"

Unexpectedly, when Moon Princess saw the Golden Phoenix Feather, she froze.

"What's wrong?"

Gu Jianlin frowned and asked.

Moon Princess was silent for a long time before saying, "This comes from the Fusang Divine Palace, belonging to a high-ranking member of the Vermilion Bird Clan. I don't know if it's from an Ancestor or a

Supreme. Its power has already been drained, but it still holds significant value. It can be used to... construct an alchemy matrix specifically targeting the Vermilion Bird Clan."

She added, "Humans are creatures adept at leveraging their environment and tools. Since ancient times, humanity has fought against the Ancient God Clan using this method. It's like forming a raid party in an online game—someone gathers information about the boss: its fire resistance, lightning resistance, physical or magical defense, and attack stats. Then, gear is tailored accordingly."

Gu Jianlin gave a low acknowledgment. That was straightforward enough!

Yet when he thought about how he might one day become a "monster" himself, his feelings became a bit complicated.

"Your father sought something similar back then, too."

Moon Princess glanced at him, her tone deliberate.

"I see. That's why, in the battle against the Ghost Car Ancestor, he had even the slimmest chance. He had already prepared in advance. Since the curse came from the Vermilion Bird Clan..."

Gu Jianlin murmured, "Then he must've figured out how to fight back."

Chen Bojun was in the Seventh-Order Holy Realm. Even in the weaker state of the Kui Dragon Ancestor within the Qilin Immortal Palace, he suffered severe injuries fighting it.

The Ghost Car Ancestor was likely in a peak state, though its power couldn't be fully unleashed in the real world.

Still, relatively speaking, the fully powered Ghost Car Ancestor was far more difficult to handle.

If Gu Ci'an had a sliver of survival, it was surely due to using an alchemy matrix.

Gu Jianlin himself was evidence—despite lacking the Heavenly Person Realm, he could forcibly undergo Qilin transformation, massively increasing his combat power. Though the duration was limited, it was long enough for overwhelming attacks.

Moreover, the Ghost Car Ancestor had existed since the Ancient Times.

Be it combat experience or the mastery of its own abilities, it far surpassed him.

Gu Jianlin, still exploring his inherited power from an Ancient Supreme, had only begun scratching the surface.

In terms of proficiency over the Ancient God Power, he wasn't even fit to carry their shoes.

Suddenly, Gu Jianlin thought of something. "I understand now."

Moon Princess tilted her head. "Hmm?"

Gu Jianlin pondered aloud, "If I'm right, this must be for the sake of the King of Qing."

Technically, the President was his Grandmaster.

But he hadn't formally apprenticed himself yet.

And for someone capable of killing their own children, why would she deliberately favor him?

Especially when he had mocked her so openly.

The most likely explanation was—it was something the King of Qing had requested for him.

The old man, who always sat in a wheelchair and never spoke to him, seemed to truly care for him after all.

"In any case, just be careful."

Moon Princess said softly.

"I will."

Suddenly, Gu Jianlin took out the Soul Comforting Bell: "The other day, I captured Hasegawa Shinichi's soul. Since you're here, let's interrogate him together. Back when we wiped out the Grave Digger Organization at Black Cloud City, you stayed by my side, didn't you?"

Moon Princess responded immediately, "That wasn't me. No way. Who's Hasegawa Shinichi?"

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But she still curiously leaned forward to take a look.

Gu Jianlin gently shook the Soul Comforting Bell, releasing a near-shattered, wooden soul.

Hasegawa Shinichi, leader of the Grave Diggers.

A subordinate of the Nightmare Master.

The Moon Princess claimed she didn't know, but upon seeing this soul, she immediately said, "You're a subordinate of the Nightmare Master, aren't you? Was the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident orchestrated by the Nightmare Master? Tell me everything you know."

Her gaze turned cold, radiating an icy hostility.

Gu Jianlin turned his head to glance at her.

Truth be told, when it came to knowing Old Gu, this student of his certainly understood him better than his own son.

In this matter, she had more authority to speak.

After a moment of silence, Hasegawa Shinichi replied woodenly, "I... don't know. At my level, I couldn't access those things. But before the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident, my mind had already been corrupted. At that time, the Nightmare Master had already sent someone to contact me, wanting me to act as a spy within the association and work for him."

Gu Jianlin and the Moon Princess exchanged a glance, their pupils slightly constricting.

"The Nightmare Master said that the shadow of death had already enveloped me, and only by becoming his servant could I have a slim chance of survival. I didn't believe him until I encountered the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident."

Hasegawa Shinichi said, "The Nightmare Master saved me at the brink of my death and promised me a chance at rebirth. At that time, I didn't know his true identity. It wasn't until later that I realized he was the Gu Master hunted by the association years ago. He survived, fell into a dimensional rift, but didn't die."

"He accidentally entered the Qilin Immortal Palace and received a gift from an Ancient Ancestor, becoming a Divine Servant of the Candle Dragon Clan. In just a few years, he rose to the Sixth Rank."

The Moon Princess coldly said, "What is his goal?"

Gu Jianlin frowned as he asked, "Is the Nightmare Master working for the Candle Dragon Clan now?"

Hasegawa Shinichi's soul stirred and said, "No, the Nightmare Master's goal seems to be breaking free from some kind of constraint. The Nightmare Master once contacted someone, or perhaps a certain force. That force once helped him perform a sacrificial ritual, allowing him to break through to the Superdimensional Level. But later, he discovered he'd been deceived."

"I once heard him angrily roar; the ascension ritual was correct, but someone tampered with it."

"After becoming a Divine Servant, the Nightmare Master's evolution wasn't complete, but he gained a certain degree of freedom. He wants revenge on that mysterious force, to vent his rage."

"As for the Candle Dragon Clan, although the Nightmare Master never explicitly said, I think he eagerly anticipates the day when Qilin Venerable resurrects from the Ancient Tomb to kill the Kui Dragon Ancestor. Only then could he achieve true freedom."

The room fell into a dead silence.

Gu Jianlin thought to himself, then your expectation is likely in vain.

Foolish Nightmare Master.

The Moon Princess looked at him and calmly said, "Hasegawa Shinichi's soul cannot be handed over as evidence."

Gu Jianlin nodded, "I understand. Clearing Old Gu's name now requires not just evidence but also power. If we hand it over now, it might only alert our enemies. Most importantly, Third Master once told me that they're also searching for the relics left by Candle Dragon Venerable. The Nightmare Master is clearly connected to those relics."

At this moment, Hasegawa Shinichi spoke again: "The Nightmare Master once said that Gu Ci'an was his best friend. He also tried to invite Gu Ci'an to join forces, as Gu Ci'an is widely recognized as the person who knows the Ancient God Clan best. But Gu Ci'an refused. The Nightmare Master was very angry. I once heard him say something... Now, Gu Ci'an should feel the same way, shouldn't he?"

Everything that needed to be said had been said.

Gu Jianlin narrowed his eyes: "Feel the same way?"

His first thought was being hunted by the Ether Association.

The Moon Princess glanced at him in surprise, clearly thinking of the same thing.

"Do you think the mysterious organization mentioned by Hasegawa Shinichi could be the one hunting me?"

Gu Jianlin pondered for a moment: "It's a pity that the sniper back then didn't leave anyone alive. Of course, I don't blame you; the person they sent must have been on a suicide mission. He could never allow himself to be captured alive under those circumstances."

The Moon Princess said indifferently, "Leave this matter to me. I can use the You Ying Group's focus to direct attention to the Nightmare Master, since they are determined to obtain Candle Dragon Venerable's legacy."

She paused for a moment: "But ultimately, if possible, the secrets of the Qilin Immortal Palace should be acquired by us. We have the strategy left behind by your father, and we're not without a chance."

Gu Jianlin was momentarily stunned.

Because she had said, "us."

This word carried intriguing connotations.

"If you want to break the Vermilion Bird Clan's curse, strength is indispensable, and Candle Dragon Venerable's legacy is extremely important to you. I'll find a way to create opportunities for you."

The Moon Princess pulled out a storage card and handed it to him: "This is the strategy I've decoded regarding the Qilin Immortal Palace. Trust your father; he was the world's best at exploration, even surpassing Catastrophe Levels in this area. But you must only open it after entering the Qilin Immortal Palace because Taixu will monitor everyone's phone."

Gu Jianlin nodded slightly: "Understood."

"In that case, I'll keep an eye out for information in the Ether Association. If there's anything of value, I'll share it with you as soon as possible. Outside, you must stay safe—be cautious in all things."

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He wasn't too worried about the girl's safety.

As long as he arranged for the Butcher to stay by her side at all times, it would be fine.

If anything happened, Gu Jianlin could directly descend with his mind and release the Ancient Divine Language.

"Hmm."

The Moon Princess turned around and softly said, "I'm going to sleep."

Gu Jianlin watched her graceful, slender figure and suddenly said, "Are you being too kind to me?"

The Moon Princess paused for a moment.

"Don't overthink it. I'm doing it for myself too."

With that, she closed the door and went to bed.

Gu Jianlin sat in silence for a long time, then smiled faintly. After a quick wash-up, he went to bed.

Click.

The light went out, and the night, like flowing water, engulfed the entire room.

After an unknown amount of time, the door to the room opened again.

A girl in a red camisole dress came in carrying a small stool, which she placed by the boy's bedside.

She rested her chin on her palm, quietly staring at the boy's sleeping profile.

Under the cat-faced mask, her red lips curved upward ever so slightly.

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The next morning, when Gu Jianlin woke up again, there was a faint sandalwood fragrance lingering around him.

That was the Moon Princess's scent.

But she was already gone, leaving behind only a breakfast takeout on the dining table.

Gu Jianlin shook his head with a wry smile, freshened up, ate breakfast, and headed downstairs.

The supermarket beneath his apartment building had disappeared at some point, replaced by an antique-looking grocery store.

Gu Jianlin froze for a moment, surprised to find several people in the store today.

Huai Yin was still lounging in the chair at the entrance, dressed in a white martial arts uniform, fanning himself calmly, just like an ordinary old man.

In front of him stood five figures cloaked in black robes, with hoods covering their heads, their attire lightly swaying in the breeze.

"More than two thousand years have passed. You've worked hard."

It was Huai Yin's voice, aged and gentle.

"There is no such thing as hard work. To us, time is meaningless."

One of the black-robed individuals spoke indifferently: "We have merely honored our pact with the Emperor."

Huai Yin smiled. "Even so, gratitude is still warranted. By the way, has the Great Wilderness awakened?"

The black-robed individual replied, "With our strength, awakening it is beyond us."

Huai Yin sighed. "Alright then."

The black-robed figure said, "Regardless of what happens next in the Qilin Immortal Palace, we will appear in time to recover the Holy Corpse. If possible, I hope that Taihua's remains can also be entrusted to us."

Huai Yin grinned slyly. "And what about mine?"

The black-robed individual shook his head and coldly said, "Not accepted."

With that, he turned and left with the others.

Gu Jianlin happened to cross paths with them, pausing slightly in surprise.

Beneath the hoods of the five black-robed figures were faces of almost divine beauty, like sculpted jade, their skin crystal-clear and devoid of any color, exuding a strange allure.

Especially their pale, pupil-less eyes, which were deeply unnerving.

For a moment, the Black Qilin within Gu Jianlin's mind opened a slit of its golden eyes, blazing with majesty.

It seemed to sense something.

The five black-robed figures also glanced at him in mild surprise.

At that moment, Huai Yin's voice rang out from behind, filled with pride: "This is my last disciple. Although he hasn't officially apprenticed yet, it will happen soon. What do you think? Not bad, right?"

Gu Jianlin was momentarily stunned.

The five black-robed figures detected his breathing pattern and snorted coldly.

In the blink of an eye, they vanished beneath the sunlight.

Gu Jianlin stared at their disappearing backs, utterly perplexed.

A short while later, Jing Ci emerged from the grocery store, carrying a glass of liquor early in the morning. He stated plainly, "Those guys are from Lishan. They bear the responsibility of guarding the Human World. Don't overthink it."

Huai Yin closed his eyes again, humming an unknown tune.

Gu Jianlin turned around and hesitantly asked, "Are they Ascenders?"

They didn't seem human to him.

After all, to elicit a response from the Black Qilin, they couldn't possibly be ordinary people.

Jing Ci shook his head.

Huai Yin's smile grew even broader.

"Then are they Ancient Ancestors?"

Gu Jianlin grew even more astonished.

"You'll find out eventually."

Jing Ci replied nonchalantly, "Stop asking so many questions. You've already mastered one Breathing Technique, so next, I'll teach you something else. Once you complete the third lesson, you'll need to decide whether or not to formally become a disciple."

Huai Yin yawned, and a pale Ghost Fire suddenly ignited on his forehead.

His pupils turned pitch black and sinister like those of an Evil Spirit as he raised his right index finger.

A faint flicker of Ghost Fire ignited behind him, shadowy figures appearing and vanishing within it.

A dark cross-shaped flash of light formed at his fingertip, releasing a fleeting ray of black brilliance.

In an instant, his left hand was pierced through, leaving a bloody hole.

Simultaneously, bizarre black spells spread across his left hand like living creatures, causing it to decay and rot entirely.

Gu Jianlin's pupils contracted. "Is this an advanced ability of the Divine Path?"

"No."

Jing Ci smiled and said, "This is a Combined Skill: Ghost Curse Technique, Ghost Transformation, Spirit Body Transformation, and Dark Shock."

Gu Jianlin was stunned. This thing actually had Combined Skills.

Oh, right, no one had ever said that Extraordinary Abilities couldn't be combined.

He had just never thought of using them this way before.

He had assumed that Dark Shock was merely for explosions.

Nor had he considered that the Ghost Curse Technique could be augmented onto other attacks.

And the foundation of it all seemed to be Spirit Body Transformation and Ghost Transformation.

Narrow thinking!

"The strength of the Divine Path depends primarily on Ghost Transformation and Spirit Body Transformation."

Jing Ci said calmly, "This is one of our teacher's unique techniques. Before you study Forbidden Spells, learn this first."

At this moment, Huai Yin shook his left hand and snapped his fingers again.

His decayed left hand instantly returned to its unblemished state.

Gu Jianlin didn't even see the Divine Sacrificial Fire ignite; the old man's wounds had already healed.

"Hmm, looks like all the mosquitoes in Peak City are dead now."

Jing Ci said indifferently, "To heal himself, our teacher has caused quite a bit of collateral damage."

Gu Jianlin remained silent for a second.

"Collateral damage? More like a living Buddha."

He remarked.

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Black Cloud City Base Office Building.

Chen Bojun was woken up early in the morning by a phone call.

Standing before the glass curtain wall and gazing at the surging sea, he said in a heavy tone, "Are you certain? The initial Omega team that entered the Qilin Immortal Palace has all gone missing?"

A deep voice came through the phone: "Only Thunder made it out."

Chen Bojun's pupils contracted sharply. "Ying Changsheng and Mu Qingyou have both gone missing?"

"Yes, Director Chen."

The voice on the phone replied, "We need to start preparing a rescue plan..."

Chapter 285 - 150 Elder Brother Disciple Harms Me!

In the grocery store, Huai Yin was calmly drinking soy milk and eating fried dough sticks.

The old-fashioned radio was playing a tune.

Jing Ci was wiping antique items nearby, his expression calm and composed, as he casually remarked, "Combined skills are not difficult for someone with your talent to master. It mainly comes down to practice. Your battles will become much more elegant in the future."

He added, "Once you've learned the combined skills, the teacher will teach you forbidden spells."

Gu Jianlin appeared thoughtful, recalling the scene earlier, and expressed his understanding.

These combined skills exponentially amplify one's extraordinary abilities.

Not only does the power increase, but the domain and scope of application also change, making them nearly impossible to counter.

Suddenly, he thought of something and couldn't help asking, "Then, what's the content of the third lesson?"

Huai Yin peeled a tea egg and suddenly sighed.

Jing Ci glanced at the elderly man and blandly said, "The third lesson is the simplest—it's about choices. Choosing whether or not to become the teacher's student, choosing whether or not to bear the teacher's karma—these are decisions you'll need to make. Of course, it's not time yet for the choice; you still have time to consider it carefully."

Gu Jianlin thought deeply for a long time and curiously asked, "What if, in the end, I decide not to take the teacher as my mentor? But I've already been taught the breathing technique and combined skills in advance—wouldn't that feel like a waste?"

Jing Ci patted his shoulder and said, "That's why you shouldn't let the teacher down. You know, he cherishes talent and staunchly defends his students, even though he has a bad temper, a difficult personality, and a not-so-great reputation. Over the years, he's been ostracized by others, and in his old age, he has no children, is disabled, and only I remain by his side."

Huai Yin's face darkened as he sat silently.

Gu Jianlin was utterly shocked—how could someone talk about their teacher like this?

Anyhow, he suddenly pulled out the Golden Phoenix Feather and asked, "Was this obtained by asking the President?"

Huai Yin silently chuckled and rarely glanced at him.

"You're quite clever."

Jing Ci leaned against the counter, casting him a sidelong glance: "But... the President? Isn't that the Vulgar Master?"

Gu Jianlin: "..."

Huai Yin's face grew even darker.

Jing Ci sighed, "You really dare to mock anyone, don't you?"

Gu Jianlin struggled for a while before saying, "I think I can explain. Mainly, I didn't know the President's identity. As for the Golden Phoenix Feather... thank you."

"Thank what? It's just a small item. Though Golden Phoenix Feather is indeed rare, since the teacher is the strongest in the human world, trading a favor with the President was still obtainable. After all, you're still young, and despite your rapid ascension, reaching the Third Rank in just half a month..."

Jing Ci paused: "Beating the Little Princess indicates that your strength has surpassed the teacher's expectations. Once you learn combined skills and forbidden spells, you'll likely be able to challenge higher ranks at any stage."

He emphasized: "But... the end of the world is approaching."

"The end of the world?"

Gu Jianlin frowned: "When I met with Candle Dragon Venerable, she seemed to mention something similar."

Huai Yin looked up, his gaze peculiar.

Jing Ci asked, "What did she say?"

"She said Bai Ze has already awakened, and Vermilion Bird has returned."

Gu Jianlin felt this was something worth alerting them about, but he refrained from mentioning Qilin and said, "It seems... something is about to happen."

The grocery store fell into dead silence.

Huai Yin and Jing Ci's gazes subtly shifted.

After a moment, Jing Ci raised an eyebrow: "Hmm, there is talk of that. Major upheaval is coming. The teacher is afraid you won't have enough time, so while he's still alive, he'll do everything to protect and nurture you."

Huai Yin sighed faintly, his gaze aged, his figure hunched.

Bathing in the morning light, he seemed already in decline.

Gu Jianlin fell into silence.

Truthfully, ever since he stepped into the extraordinary world, this pair of mentor and disciple had given him the most support.

If it weren't for them, he wouldn't have made it to where he was today.

He bowed deeply, expressing his respect.

"Don't overthink it, and don't put too much pressure on yourself. The best way to repay the teacher is to grow quickly and let him witness the day when you shine brightly and conquer the world."

Jing Ci gently said, "The teacher is old now, and his legs are already disabled. If you become the last piece of his legacy left in this world, then you must carry on the path of our lineage in his stead."

Gu Jianlin looked at the man's warm smile and the elderly man's crippled legs.

For some reason, a wave of indescribable bitterness welled up in his heart.

He took a deep breath: "Understood."

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After a long while, Huai Yin put down his bowl and chopsticks, gazing toward the door: "The brat left?"

"He left."

Jing Ci was brewing coffee.

Huai Yin suddenly stood up from his wheelchair, stretched lazily.

All signs of frailty vanished; his body seemed full of vitality, his face radiant.

Jing Ci suddenly looked up, lost in thought: "Wait, I feel like I've forgotten something."

"Ah, I just remembered—I forgot to warn him about that reckless Wan Rentu."

Jing Ci calmly said, "I heard that guy's been obsessively practicing the Slaughter Domain these past few days."

Huai Yin chuckled, "Well, isn't that perfect? If the brat can't handle it, let him learn a lesson. Young people, full of themselves, mocking everyone—he's bound to meet some resistance. If he can withstand it, though, it means I've taught him well. Speaking of Wan Rentu, that fool has been an eyesore to me for ages."

Chapter 286 - 150 Elder Brother Disciple Harms Me!_2

At this moment, a carrier pigeon flew in through the window and landed on the counter.

Jing Ci took the note off the pigeon and glanced at it.

"Teacher."

He frowned. "There's news from Laojun Mountain."

Huai Yin raised an eyebrow. "What is it?"

Jing Ci's expression turned grave and he said, "It's dire."

Huai Yin's weathered eyes narrowed slightly.

For a fleeting moment, it felt as if everyone in Peak City could sense the tremor of the Sky Dome.

But it seemed like an illusion—silent and elusive.

That chilling sensation, however, was real, flashing through everyone's hearts briefly yet unmistakably.

"Even if Master has other plans, I'm still alive, and so are you."

Huai Yin spoke without emotion. "I even begged for the Golden Phoenix Feather for that disobedient disciple, so why is it still dire?"

Jing Ci shook his head and said, "That's why Senior Lin Zhengchun is right: the curse from the Vermilion Bird Clan isn't so simple. Otherwise, why has the Gu Family been adamant about preserving their lineage? Wouldn't it be simpler to end their bloodline altogether? Unless they know that if their lineage

breaks, something terrifying will happen. Moreover, all records related to the Gu Family have been erased."

He added, "After Gu Ci'an's death, all the ancient books of the Gu Family disappeared. Even Grandmaster and the Judgement Court couldn't have done something like that right under our noses. So, there's something we don't know."

Huai Yin frowned. "Still, it shouldn't be dire now."

After all, the disobedient disciple is only seventeen.

"That's not necessarily true."

Jing Ci reminded, "His mother... she's already in her forties."

After a long pause, Huai Yin said, "Let Lin Zhengchun divine another reading."

Jing Ci raised an eyebrow. "Teacher, one reading costs a Longevity Bone. Our stock..."

Huai Yin waved his hand dismissively. "Do it!"

Jing Ci nodded. "Understood."

Huai Yin withdrew his gaze, fiddling with the Copper Coins on the table, staring at them for a long time.

In the end, finding nothing of significance, he turned and tossed the four Copper Coins into the trash can.

"What worthless junk."

With a clang, he kicked the trash can over.

Jing Ci said nothing; he knew the old man was angry.

"Prepare yourself. Let's enter the Immortal Palace and fulfill Master's promise."

Huai Yin said, "Then we'll make a trip to the Fusang Divine Palace to search for clues."

Jing Ci casually asked, "Is the junior also heading to the frontier? What if we run into him?"

"What a pity Gu Ci'an handed the Yin Yang Twin Jade to his little apprentice."

Huai Yin sighed. "Otherwise, even if he could profile and use Life Perception, he wouldn't recognize me."

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The hospital at the Black Cloud City Base.

Gu Jianlin sat on a stone bench in the garden, placed the birdcage down, and calmly asked, "Are you settling in alright?"

Wanwan, wearing a pink-and-white hoodie, sat blankly beside him, dazed and lost in thought.

Uncle Mu, clad in a sleeveless shirt, boxed nearby and chuckled. "Yesterday, her older sister made her do homework for five to six hours straight. We taught her Pinyin and literacy before, but she wasn't very keen on learning—preferred running wild in the settlement instead. But things are different now. When she enters society later, she can't be illiterate."

Thanks to the King of Qing's endorsement, the Unclean had a chance to be pardoned.

As for Wanwan, being only a six-year-old girl, she wasn't going to be prosecuted either way.

After all, the King of Qing had spoken.

Though her psyche had been tainted, medication could suppress it, and with proper care from the Priests, she could live until the age of fifty or sixty and, under certain supervision, lead a normal life in society.

"I'm settling in fine."

Wanwan murmured, "Brother, why do I have to study?"

Gu Jianlin replied sternly, "Because you need to support your father and sister. In this place, there are rules—everyone must serve nine years of educational conscription, or they'll be kicked out."

Wanwan was startled, her attention instantly sharpening. "Everyone will be kicked out?"

Gu Jianlin confirmed. "Yes. There will even be exams. If someone fails, they'll be kicked out. Not just your father and sister—even I'll be kicked out. Then we'll all be homeless."

Wanwan panicked a little. "Big brother, why would you be kicked out? Don't you have a home?"

Gu Jianlin explained, "Because, just like your father, I was framed."

Wanwan was too young, and the bloodshed and violence of Black Cloud City could easily scar her psyche. After much deliberation, the association had her drink Mind-bending Tea accompanied by psychological treatments.

Currently, she couldn't recall the details of that day—only that everyone had been captured.

"Ah."

Wanwan blinked blankly and said, "Then... why am I the only one who needs to study?"

Gu Jianlin thought for a moment and decided to craft an elaborate lie: "Because we're all too stupid to study. In this world, not everyone deserves the privilege of education—especially someone like your Cheng Youyu brother. You're a smart child, so you must be responsible for supporting us fools, understand?"

Wanwan seemed to ponder this, as though she believed it. "Then... what's homework?"

Gu Jianlin made up something on the spot. "That's your Cheng Youyu brother's gift to you. Since he's too stupid to become educated, he's pinned all his hopes on you. When you grow up, make sure to repay him well."

Hmm, this kind of lie—once the little girl grows up—she'll definitely see through it.

When that happens, let her blame the Fatty.

Wanwan fell silent for a moment, then turned to look at the mountains of textbooks inside the house.

Chapter 287 - 150 Elder Brother Disciple Harms Me!_3

She thought to herself, perhaps she should just go back to the scrapyard...

It somehow feels a bit happier there.

At this moment, Uncle Mu couldn't bear to watch anymore and changed the subject: "Did you beat up the Little Princess yesterday?"

Gu Jianlin replied with a hum.

"That child's nature isn't entirely bad, but growing up in such a family has made her warped."

Uncle Mu, always the kindhearted mediator, advised, "If you can educate her, try to do so properly."

Gu Jianlin replied earnestly, "I'll reform her with kindness and love."

Uncle Mu smiled with relief, "That's good to hear."

"Speaking of which, I heard about something recently."

Gu Jianlin suddenly lowered his voice, "Back then, did you and my father force the President into a corner?"

Uncle Mu froze for a moment, a touch of sentiment flashing through his eyes: "Yes, it was for the unification of humanity."

Gu Jianlin asked, "Unification?"

"How should I put this? Fifteen years ago, Lin Zhengchun from Laojun Mountain prophesied that the day the King of Qing reaches the end of his life will mark the beginning of the apocalypse for the Human World."

Uncle Mu explained, "Because the President is likely to pass away before the King of Qing, and the Red King died many years ago. Moreover, there are differences even among Catastrophes. This prophecy implies that even if future generations of the Human World face new Catastrophes, they won't be as powerful as the Red King and the King of Qing, nor as formidable as the President."

"At the time, the leader of the Night Watcher Department, Lin Dong, was a man with great dreams. He attempted to unify all Ascenders from the Dark World, which meant fully cooperating with the You Ying Group to confront external threats."

He sighed, "Back then, many people agreed with his idea, including prominent families like the Ji Family and the Ying Family, as well as thirteen ministers. We all believed that humanity must unite to face the threat of the Ancient God Clan."

Gu Jianlin said, "The President didn't agree?"

"No, the President had to compromise despite her reluctance, in order to prevent divisions within the Ether Association. Even Rhein had to compromise."

Uncle Mu glanced at him, "But the situation was overturned by the appearance of one person."

Gu Jianlin had a bad feeling.

"Yes, it was the King of Qing."

Uncle Mu stated, "To this day, we don't understand why he chose to do so, but he firmly opposed an alliance with the Dark World. Even seventy years ago, when the Dark World was on the verge of rising, he single-handedly crushed it. He even believed that humanity's greatest threat doesn't come from the Ancient God Clan."

Gu Jianlin was shocked: "Why?"

Uncle Mu said, "I can't say. Since he chose you and you wish to be his student, he'll tell you when the time comes. Although our attempt at reform failed back then, I believe the President and the King of Qing had their reasons. After all, those two rarely stand on the same united front."

Gu Jianlin pondered deeply for a long time, "I see."

At that moment, heart-wrenching wails echoed across the entire base from afar.

A young man was seen crawling and scrambling toward the hospital, his face contorted and twisted, his eyes bloodshot: "I'm done! I'm done! I want out! I need a doctor! I want to go home and find my mom!"

He screamed wildly, "Too terrifying! A devil! He's a devil!"

Immediately, guards pinned him to the ground and administered sedatives.

A towering, dark-skinned, muscular man resembling a giant strode forth.

He grabbed the deranged young man with one big hand, a sinister grin revealing a set of chilling teeth.

Though it was merely a casual smile, it was terrifying as a demon's, exuding a suffocating aura that felt like carnage and blood.

Instructor Wan!

"Alas, such a tragedy."

Uncle Mu sighed, "Another one's gone mad."

Gu Jianlin asked in confusion, "What's happening?"

"This is the fourth case today. And these are just the stragglers in the First Division, propped up with resources."

Uncle Mu explained, "The elite members of the First Division have already ventured into the Immortal Palace. Only the support members and these stragglers remain in the base for special training. Who'd have thought that Instructor Wan suddenly went insane, doing everything he could to enhance the Slaughter Domain, even going so far as to exchange for a Mythical Weapon perfectly suited to the domain and resort to doping."

He elaborated, "The Slaughter Domain is a unique ability of the Dragon Slayer path, enabling the release of almost tangible killing intent and pressure that weighs down on your body. The Omegas these days are truly suffering."

Gu Jianlin asked in confusion, "That burly man is... Instructor Wan? Why's he acting crazy?"

"Yes."

Uncle Mu gave him a strange look: "Because he found that his Slaughter Domain doesn't work on one person."

Gu Jianlin asked again, "Who?"

He wondered who could be so unlucky as to mess things up for the Omegas.

The key point was that the Slaughter Domain didn't seem to be a mental skill.

Instead, it materialized killing intent.

One couldn't possibly be immune to it.

Why insist on being a troublemaker? Wouldn't it be smarter to admit defeat?

No matter how arrogant you are, you can't outmatch a Sixth Rank instructor.

Although Gu Jianlin was proud, he wasn't a reckless fool.

"Isn't it you?"

Uncle Mu's gaze turned eerie: "Word has spread throughout the Ether Association—The Chair Killer gained fame in West Port for mocking the Judgement Court as useless and completely ignoring Instructor Wan's Slaughter Domain with a dismissive attitude."

He said, "I've even watched the footage myself. Otherwise, do you think you'd be directly promoted to the Second Division without dissent? It's because you've already earned the respect of others."

Gu Jianlin was bewildered: "When did I..."

Wait a minute!

He suddenly realized what had happened.

My senior brother led me astray!

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Approaching noon, the online conference on the Deep Space Network was finally nearing its end.

"We've gathered a clear understanding of the situation."

Chen Bojun's avatar lit up in the center of the grid: "Next, we will immediately deploy a rescue team to re-enter the Immortal Palace. Due to the severe lack of combat power in the First Division, this mission will adopt flexible group formations to ensure adequate strength and minimize unexpected incidents."

Chen Xingli said solemnly, "Bojun, this matter is of utmost importance. You must exercise extreme caution."

Councilman Zhang's expression was icy as he spoke coldly, "I will arrange for the Demon Hunter squads to carry out synchronized rescuing efforts. The current priority is rescuing personnel, halting any hunts targeting You Ying Group members temporarily."

Wang Taisheng's face was filled with rage as he said, "I disagree! With the First Division's combat strength, how could they vanish without reason? It's most likely those rats from the Dark World causing trouble behind the scenes. I propose that while launching a rescue mission in the Qilin Immortal Palace, we should simultaneously execute a stern crackdown on the You Ying Group in the real world."

Lu Zijin's delicate and pretty face remained expressionless as she said flatly, "Do as you please."

On the video call grid, a large number of avatars were displayed.

They included the thirteen ministers.

Representatives sent from various special departments.

Even the heads of major families and ancient legacies.

After all, the Omega Sequence contained their most elite prodigies.

No mistakes could be tolerated.

"However, before the operation begins, I need to confirm one thing."

Chen Bojun said seriously, "Thunder, are you willing to participate in the rescue mission at the Qilin Immortal Palace again? It's not your obligation. You can choose to decline and stay at the base to rest."

Hearing this, many people frowned.

Amid the severe lack of combat power, Thunder, despite being Fourth Rank, possesses Fifth Rank-level combat abilities.

She is the core of this rescue mission.

In the video, a white-haired ice queen lifted her head, her pale and expressionless face under the brim of her sun hat displaying natural arrogance. Her voice chilled with indifference: "I can go, but I have one condition."

The senior leaders relaxed slightly. As long as she agreed to go, it wouldn't be an issue.

Chen Bojun replied, "Please state it. If reasonable, it will be fulfilled."

"I need to ask someone for their opinion."

Tang Ling said each word distinctly, "If he doesn't participate, neither will I."

A dead silence fell; no one spoke.

Chen Bojun asked, "Who?"

Tang Ling replied coldly, "Gu Jianlin."

Chapter 288 - 151 Candle Dragon Sister, Wait for Me!

Gu Jianlin felt his scalp tingle.

For some reason, he felt like his life after entering the Extraordinary World could only be described as complete chaos.

Damn it, not a single peaceful day.

"What a cursed life."

The parrot muttered gloomily.

Gu Jianlin held his forehead and let out a soft sigh. What bad luck.

Instructor Wan, the burly man built like an iron tower from earlier, belonged to the Western Dragon Slayer path and stood at the apex of the Superdimensional Level. Just one look at him and you'd know he didn't even need a profile. Just his fierce face and the thuggish way he carried himself were enough to spell it all out—what kind of person he was.

Currently, the nickname of the "Chair Killer" could stop children from crying in Black Cloud City.

And Instructor Wan's face could make those same kids cry again out of fear.

Gu Jianlin even suspected that the thug's sinister grin earlier was directed specifically at him.

As if saying, get ready to die!

"No, no, no! Let me go! I don't want to train! I quit! I'm done with this!"

A spine-chilling wail echoed through the air.

It was accompanied by Instructor Wan's bone-chilling, sinister laughter.

Hearing that laugh, Gu Jianlin felt a shiver run down his spine.

The parrot squawked, "He's laughing like he just ate ten Soul Hall elders or something!"

Uncle Mu, seemingly oblivious to his thoughts, sighed and said, "Why did you have to provoke him? Instructor Wan already has a bad temper. He was tormented terribly before by a few of the King of

Qing's students. And now, you hit him with a blow the moment you arrived, reminding him of the trauma of being dominated in the past."

He continued, "And then, the man just snapped."

"Old grudges?"

Gu Jianlin blinked in surprise, not expecting the King of Qing to have had other students.

But in the grocery store, there was only his senior brother around.

"Uncle Mu, where did the King of Qing's other students go?"

He asked curiously.

Uncle Mu shook his head, "Don't know. They've been hiding out here and there for years and have lost contact with the outside world."

Gu Jianlin pondered deeply.

Bang!

In the distance, the training ground erupted with a deafening roar, as a terrifying aura descended from above.

The killing intent was as vast as the ocean, rumbling in endless waves.

Gu Jianlin listened to the noise, a touch of reflection in his expression.

"Can he handle it?"

Uncle Mu asked, "Besides the King of Qing, Old Gu left you quite a few things, didn't he?"

Gu Jianlin's combat strength was undeniably exceptional, currently attributed to two main factors.

One was being the student of the King of Qing—surely equipped with numerous unique methods.

The other was the relics left behind by Gu Ci'an for his son.

The issue was, only Gu Jianlin himself knew that Old Gu left him with absolutely nothing!

What rotten luck!

Tomorrow would mark the start of intensive training, and there was less than a day left.

For someone with Gu Jianlin's pride, he would never allow himself to collapse in the face of the Slaughter Domain.

But the problem was, he was only at Third Rank.

Meanwhile, the others were at Sixth Rank, with their skills heavily upgraded.

What should he do?

Gu Jianlin pondered for a solid ten seconds before suddenly thinking of someone.

Alright, maybe it wasn't entirely accurate to call her a "someone."

Though several days had passed, he didn't know if she was still around or not.

But this time, Gu Jianlin silently prayed in his heart—please, don't leave!

Touching the Lock of Nonexistence on his left wrist, Gu Jianlin firmed his resolve.

"Uncle Mu, mind if I borrow your bathroom?"

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Wanwan lay sprawled over her desk, staring at the workbook in front of her, frowning deeply.

"Seven times six equals...?"

She counted her fingers, her voice soft and tentative.

Since she hadn't memorized the multiplication table, she resorted to a crude method.

Simply adding seven to itself, six times over.

"How many times do I have to tell you? Six times seven is forty-two!"

Mu Qingge walked over, lightly tapping her on the head with a ballpoint pen. She spoke with a mix of sternness and exasperation, "You're usually smart enough; how come you get so dumb when it comes to math? Alright, stop writing. Roll up your pants leg."

She took out a bottle of Red Flower Oil and a pack of cotton swabs, letting out a sigh, "Let me apply the medicine for you."

Wanwan perked up as soon as she heard she didn't have to do her homework anymore. Happily, she obediently rolled up her pant leg.

On her pale and tender calf was a deep bruise.

"Sister, how much longer can we stay here?"

She asked sweetly.

Mu Qingge crouched down to apply the medicine and casually replied, "That depends on how well you're studying."

Wanwan responded with an "oh."

"Why haven't I seen you playing with the other kids lately?"

Mu Qingge asked, her tone carrying a teasing lilt as she smiled faintly, "You're the only one who's allowed to leave this courtyard, after all."

Wanwan kept her head down, muttering, "They don't like playing with me."

Mu Qingge lovingly patted her sister's head and said softly, "Then why don't you tell your brother when someone bullies you? He'll definitely stand up for you."

Wanwan shook her head furiously, her voice low, "That's exactly why I can't tell him. You all talk about it behind his back, saying Big Brother is already tired enough. I can't make things harder for him."

She added, "Besides, that big sister last time already helped me take care of it."

Mu Qingge planted a gentle kiss on her little sister's cheek. "Good girl. Go watch TV now."

Wanwan cheerfully nodded and dashed off to the downstairs living room to watch TV.

In the shadows of the hallway, Uncle Mu silently watched his two daughters and sighed deeply.

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The world shattered with a thunderous crash, blood-red light pouring through the crisscrossing, jagged fissures.

Time and space intertwined, the heavens and earth spinning chaotically.

Gu Jianlin felt the thick Ancient God's Breath rush toward him, as his human body once again underwent Qilin transformation. Black Qilin Horns sprouted, and jet-black, unyielding Dragon Scales burst through his skin, while his golden vertical pupils ignited in the darkness.

Chapter 289 - 151: Candle Dragon Sister, Wait for Me!_2

He awakened from the Ancient Coffin of gold, and the three pitch-black chains binding him abruptly snapped.

Boom!

The Qilin Immortal Palace trembled violently.

His consciousness seemed to fuse further with this immense tomb.

This was not his power.

If nothing unexpected happened, this must be the true Qilin Venerable preparing to break free.

This Qilin Immortal Palace had originally been constructed as a tomb for It.

Yet, over the course of more than two thousand years, the Supreme sealed in the depths of darkness never ceased trying to leave this place, using Its power every moment to erode this dimension.

As the three chains shattered, the Qilin Immortal Palace in Gu Jianlin's mind grew increasingly tangible, as if dense, dark mist spread out, shrouding the massive floating islands in shadowy depths.

Gu Jianlin realized that as he continued breaking free from his constraints, while in his transformed state as the Qilin Venerable, he could glimpse the outside world from this tomb—and perhaps even take control in the future!

This island had three layers.

Sunken wastelands beneath the ocean.

An island still floating atop the desolate seas.

And an enormous floating island suspended above the heavens.

A spine-like column reaching sky and earth pierced through them.

He could also feel the Qilin Immortal Palace in his mind growing increasingly stable, with only a few visible cracks.

These seemed to be tunnels through time and space, linking various entrances to the deep interior of the Immortal Palace.

The scope of the Qilin Immortal Palace defied imagination, impossible to comprehend with ordinary concepts of space and time. He could feel countless life rhythms resonating here, like the roar of waves across a vast ocean.

Some brimmed with vitality, while others were eerily stagnant.

Most belonged to humans who had entered the Ancient God Realm from the real world—their life rhythms were distinctly vibrant, large in scale, sometimes gathered, sometimes scattered, spread across various regions but not delving too deep.

Some were the Fallen, sick beyond redemption, with chaotic and erratic life rhythms.

Gu Jianlin attempted to perceive further. This time, in the depths of infinite silence, he sensed terrifying life rhythms buried in the darkness—howling like Evil Spirits.

Even he felt deeply apprehensive.

Of course, his apprehension stemmed from knowing that, in his human state, he stood no chance at all.

But once he transformed into the Qilin Venerable, fear was no longer an emotion he possessed—he looked down on everyone.

"Could it be the Kui Dragon Ancestor?"

Gu Jianlin murmured to himself, "Or perhaps some other ghostly thing?"

Over two thousand years ago, after two Supremes fought their decisive battle here, this Ancient God world was buried within the chaotic flow of time-space—until eight years ago, when it returned to the human realm.

During those two millennia, it was possible the dimensional door of the Qilin Immortal Palace had been opened before.

Who knows how many people, seeking the power of the Ancient Gods and the secrets of immortality, had recklessly entered here from the Qin Dynasty to now—only to end up turning into neither-human-nor-ghost abominations.

Many who crossed over in consciousness claimed to have seen a corpse rising from the Ancient Coffin.

The mere thought of it sent shivers down the spine—what kind of monstrosity could that be?

Alright, Gu Jianlin muttered to curse at himself.

He was the biggest "corpse" in the Qilin Immortal Palace.

"This is the Qilin Immortal Palace... if only I could escape from here."

By now, Gu Jianlin had pieced it all together.

The Qilin Immortal Palace—it was just a name.

Xu Fu likely used alchemy to construct the outer bronze palace.

Then came the actual tomb sealing the Qilin Venerable.

And the secret passage leading deep into the tomb.

Humans lack the capabilities to create a world of this colossal scale.

Within the Qilin Immortal Palace lingered an aura that made him deeply uncomfortable—it was the golden radiance burning fiercely in the darkness.

Its vastness unknown, blazing wildly!

The Heavenly Person Realm!

Just as Gu Jianlin sought to perceive more, the mist surrounding the floating islands suddenly churned violently.

From the shadows emerged a terrifying fissure, the roaring Nether River raging in the darkness, with blood rain cascading across the skies. A colossal pillar piercing the heavens and the earth rose amidst the distant echoes of a dragon roar.

Two divine vertical pupils, crackling with storm and lightning, ignited within the darkness.

Crimson as blood, seductive and eerie!

She had arrived!

This time, Gu Jianlin had somehow sensed her arrival beforehand!

Apparently, his connection with the Qilin Immortal Palace had grown stronger, though he still couldn't prevent her descent.

But at least he could anticipate it now.

BOOM!

Like the collapse of heavens and earth, an overwhelming pressure swept down upon him.

Gu Jianlin's mind roared in chaos, his soul trembling with screams, his mental defenses shattering.

He had to admit, even among Supremes, there were gaps in power.

Especially now, during his weakened state. Even if she wasn't at her peak, she was far too strong for him.

THUNDER!

It felt as though the world was plunging into an abyss.

Gu Jianlin braced against the collapsing weight of the heavens and earth, forcing himself to remain composed.

His golden eyes burned fiercely, unyieldingly locking gazes with the crimson vertical pupils.

On the edge, ancient hymns faintly resonated amidst the chaos.

Her voice—like chiming wind bells, ethereal yet fierce as thunder tearing through the skies—resounded with boundless authority.

"Qilin."

She spoke softly, "Return it to me."

Gu Jianlin could no longer think, his mind drowned in endless reverberations.

It felt as though destruction was imminent.

Anyone else in his position would've been obliterated instantly.

Though he carried the status of Supreme, sheer pressure couldn't break him.

But his endurance was, after all, still that of a mere human.

The situation was delicate.

He wouldn't die, but he was miserably uncomfortable.

Perfect—exactly the desired outcome.

Unable to discern what she wanted, Gu Jianlin merely held his stance, summoning his last ounce of strength.

On the verge of mental collapse, he spoke coldly: "Candle Dragon, you've grown weaker."

BANG!

A fleeting glimpse of an unparalleled, blood-red silhouette flashed before his eyes.

Those crimson vertical pupils burned with divine wrath!

The world shattered.

Gu Jianlin's mental defenses crumbled entirely, forcibly pulling him back into the human realm!

Darkness overtook him completely, with faint stars flickering intermittently.

A deafening hum filled his ears.

The breakdown of his mental state flooded his body with fatigue, leaving him drenched in cold sweat and utterly weakened.

Thud.

He collapsed onto the toilet seat, gasping heavily for air.

Too terrifying.

What on earth was that?

The First Generation Qilin Venerable could actually fight this woman.

Respect.

"But what did she just say? To return what to her?"

Gu Jianlin muttered softly.

Forget it.

The Candle Dragon Venerable's pressure far surpassed that slaughter-domain nonsense.

Clenching his teeth, Gu Jianlin revisited the structures of the Qilin Immortal Palace in his mind.

Sister, wait for me—I'm coming!

Chapter 290 - 152 S-Class Mission

Forget Sorrow Grocery Store.

Jing Ci adjusted the tie on his suit, regarded himself in the mirror, and calmly asked, "Teacher, regarding what Junior Brother mentioned about Candle Dragon Venerable—what is your opinion?"

Huai Yin put on his wide-brimmed hat, dressed like a fisherman, picked up his fishing gear, and walked out of the shop while answering, "I have no opinion. Ghosts know what happened when he crossed over to the Immortal Palace or what strange thing Gu Ci'an might have left him. Who can say? Anyway, she won't show herself for a while."

He chuckled and added, "Although Candle Dragon Venerable did defeat Qilin Venerable back then, she paid a heavy price herself. Besides... Qilin Venerable isn't someone easily dealt with; he likely had additional plans."

"The struggle between Supremes is not as simple as you think. You think you've gained, but in truth, I haven't lost. Sometimes you think I've lost, but actually, you haven't gained much either."

What kind of nonsense was this?

Jing Ci turned around, frowned at the elderly man, and asked, "According to your logic, wouldn't it be unsurprising if Candle Dragon Venerable focuses her attention here after the Qilin Immortal Palace manifests? In other words, could this be another showdown between two Ancient Supremes, two thousand years later?"

Huai Yin responded with a "Hmm," and added, "But it won't be as intense as it was two thousand years ago. The structure of the Human World is quite stable now, and humans have already developed the Heavenly Person Realm. Plus, they themselves are not what they once were."

"I see."

Jing Ci posed another question, "Then, what if Candle Dragon Venerable recovers her peak condition?"

Huai Yin replied with a perfectly calm expression, "What does that have to do with me?"

Jing Ci: "..."

"By that time, I'd probably already be dead. What could I possibly do about it? March into Buzhou Mountain for an ultimate one-for-one exchange with Candle Dragon Venerable? Do I look that stupid?"

Huai Yin suddenly glanced at a painting within the grocery store. Staring at the breathtakingly beautiful woman within the artwork, he remarked faintly, "Humans always see Candle Dragon Venerable as their

number one threat, but that's entirely humans overestimating themselves. This Venerable has never regarded humanity seriously. From start to finish, the one she truly fears... is someone else altogether."

Jing Ci felt the need to carefully ponder this statement.

"Candle Dragon Venerable is indeed strong. As the first Supreme born after the Primordial Era in the history of the Ancient God Clan, her authority and strength are undeniably unmatched. But precisely because she's so strong, she faces the harshest rejection, and her goals have never involved humanity."

Huai Yin added, "On the contrary, it's the Vermilion Bird Clan that makes me uneasy."

Jing Ci understood—it was because of the curse originating from the Gu Family.

Although a peak-stage Ancestor was certainly terrifying.

It wasn't catastrophic.

Because if this curse was merely the result of Jiuyin slaying countless victims over centuries, its essence wasn't that enigmatic. When the unknown turns into the known, countermeasures can be devised.

For someone like the teacher, it wouldn't pose a real threat.

After all, the King of Qing was a Catastrophe capable of challenging Ancient Supremes in the real world.

But just then, the painting named "Jiuyin" suddenly shimmered with a hint of blood-red light.

Jing Ci's face changed slightly: "Teacher!"

Huai Yin looked bewildered.

The ink in the painting turned crimson as blood, as though a burning dragon were soaring into the heavens.

The breathtaking woman in the painting opened her blood-red slitted pupils just slightly.

The eerie blood light flashed momentarily.

Boom!

The grocery store trembled violently as blood poured from the painting like a waterfall, overwhelming everything.

It wasn't real but a bizarre illusionary phenomenon.

But it undoubtedly signified that the Supreme was enraged.

"Who's the brazen lunatic provoking the Venerable now?"

Huai Yin was visibly stunned: "Is someone courting disaster or what?"

Jing Ci's gaze trembled—it was his first time seeing his teacher lose composure like this.

"Huh, the Venerable's Life Rhythm... weakened?"

Huai Yin murmured.

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At sunset, the cacophony roaring inside Gu Jianlin's mind began to ebb away.

Yet, he now resembled a man wearing the mask of agony, utterly drained and frail, almost lifeless.

He sat on the toilet lid, drenched in sweat, with wet locks of hair plastered against his forehead.

Six hours. Three hundred and seventy-two trips back and forth.

Each time was an experience of his body and soul on the verge of being crushed, akin to being repeatedly run over by a car, except he couldn't die—forced to endure the torment and pain over and over.

The killing intent and oppressive force of Candle Dragon Venerable were terrifying beyond imagination, as if the entire world were about to perish alongside him.

Gu Jianlin managed to survive over two hundred such instances.

Dancing along the edge of death repeatedly.

How exhilarating.

This didn't mean he had some peculiar masochistic tendencies—it was just a rare opportunity for training.

Candle Dragon Venerable was the Strongest, the mightiest Ancient Supreme in existence.

If one could withstand her pressure.

Then in this world, almost no one's aura could impose fear upon him.

Although he hadn't yet experienced the power of the Slaughter Domain.

How could such a lower-level thing compare to the presence of an Ancient Supreme?

It was like being a feeder at the zoo, spending each day joking around with lions and tigers.

Then encountering a stray kitten baring its teeth on the streets—

You certainly wouldn't find it frightening.

During his crash course on the Extraordinary World, Gu Jianlin had learned one thing: once, an unlucky Ascender at Superdimensional Level whose Inheritance Path happened to be Dragon Slayer accidentally encountered an Ancestor in Yun Mengze.

Specifically, a peak-stage Ancestor.

The Superdimensional Dragon Slayer had no resistance whatsoever, losing their sanity on the spot due to the sheer terror.

If Gu Jianlin continued progressing and further awakened Qilin Venerable's strength, he could pull off similar feats.

"In any case, as long as she remains around, this is all profit."

Gu Jianlin exhaled deeply and silently chuckled, "As I gradually break free from bindings, my control over Qilin Immortal Palace grows stronger. Now she's even less able to handle me. I can sense her presence anytime—she seems reliant on those chains to detect me across time and space."

You're powerless against me, while I can use you for leveling.

A peaked Candle Dragon falters; a Third-Order Qilin shines.

The advantage is mine.

In this skirmish, Gu Jianlin once again unilaterally declared victory.

Why so?

Because ultimately, Candle Dragon Venerable was provoked to the point of leaving, dissipating like a thunderous crash as the world seemed to collapse, vanishing entirely without returning.

This prematurely ended today's training.

Gu Jianlin felt it was a bit unsatisfying, lingering inside for an extra half-hour.

Seeing no sign of her return, he had no choice but to accept it.

He'd wait until her fury subsided next time so they could chat some more.

Besides, every word uttered by an Ancient Supreme held immense significance.

Perhaps more secrets could be pried from her.

"Candle Dragon Venerable mentioned that I should return something to her? Could it be that over two thousand years ago, Qilin Venerable took something from her, and that's the true root of their conflict?"

Gu Jianlin pondered for a moment and became increasingly convinced that it was a crucial artifact.

Clearly, he didn't have it now.

If it did exist, it must be within the Qilin Immortal Palace.

Perfect. Worth it!

"As for Pharmacist and the others, I can directly contact them through ancient tokens in the tomb. Saves us from any attacks by Candle Dragon Venerable along the way—I might withstand it, but others could be scared witless. There's no need to use Spiritual Secret Medicine inside the Immortal Palace anymore; aside from Sea Demon, the rest are all my people now."

Gu Jianlin deliberated briefly: "It's time to capture Pharmacist and lock him in the little black room."

With that thought, he struggled to stand, and the Barrier formed by the Lock of Nonexistence silently collapsed.

Silver-white chains rewrapped themselves around his body.

Gu Jianlin stepped out of the bathroom, where his bald parrot flapped its wings and landed on his shoulder.

"If men want healthy kidneys, they should drink Kidney Boost!"

Gu Jianlin's eyebrow twitched slightly as he muttered under his breath: "Shut up!"

He stretched his stiff limbs as he walked into the courtyard.

The setting sun bathed the base in warm, golden hues as the refreshing sea breeze swept through.

A world free of Candle Dragon Venerable truly was wonderful.

"Xiao Gu."

Uncle Mu, practicing in the courtyard, stared at him in shock. "What happened to you?"

Mu Qingge and Wanwan stood frozen, staring at him in astonishment.

Gu Jianlin knew his current condition looked utterly drained.

Well, of course—how could he not be after clashing with such a terrifying woman?

"It's nothing, don't overthink it."

Gu Jianlin, physically and mentally exhausted, blurted out, "Went to look at a beauty."

The group's shock deepened.

This seemingly stoic, ice-cold, and ascetic man—actually went to admire a beauty?

And for hours on end?

Then returned looking like this?

It was hard not to think about it.

Gu Jianlin had no energy left to explain further when his phone suddenly buzzed with a message.

Tang Ling: "Are you free?"

Gu Jianlin paused—since the woman said she was going to shower, she hadn't messaged him until now.

He initially wanted to say no, but thinking of the Black Cloud City situation, he politely replied, "What's up?"

Tang Ling: "There's an opportunity to grab some benefits; I think you'll want in. Plus, you could use the chance to squeeze a bit out of the Judgement Court. You're aiming to clear your father and Mu Feng senior's names, right? This is the perfect chance."

Gu Jianlin's eyes narrowed as he replied, "Alright, on my way."

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Fifteen minutes later, Gu Jianlin arrived at the base's top-floor office.

Before him was a tablet displaying the detailed information for the mission.

"Mission Location: Qilin Immortal Palace, First Layer."

"Mission Difficulty: S-Level."

"Type: Rescue mission, team-based."

"Mission Description: Top ten Omega Sequence prodigies disappeared mysteriously during an investigation of living corpses and Ancient Ancestors in the Living Burial Pit region. The traces left at the scene are exceedingly strange. Immediate clarification of the events is required, along with the assembly of elite rescue teams for the operation."

"Note: As the mission site is within Qilin Immortal Palace's First Layer and outside the Dawn Combat Sequence's guarded areas, the danger level is extremely high. Operatives must proceed with extreme caution."

After a long silence.

Gu Jianlin set the tablet down and said with a blank expression: "Ten Fifth Ranks, all vanished?"

The office fell into a heavy silence; no one seemed capable of answering his question.

