

Ancient 301

Chapter 301 - 157 Moon Princess: Are you sick?

The luxurious giant cruise ship seemed like a giant sea beast, breaking through the wind and waves as it sailed on the sea.

In the mist, the lights on the ship were bright and flashy.

Amidst the fog, the lights were as radiant as a paradise in the darkness.

MMercenaries armed to the teeth stood on the deck, and heavy alchemy cannons were set up in all directions, beams of light sweeping across the dark sea, probing for any potential danger.

Moon Princess leaned idly on the railing, the wind blowing her long black hair.

The deck was as wide as a plaza, many social elites with transcendent status walked by with their partners in the crowd, waiters wandering with exquisite silver trays, holding fruit snacks and red wine.

The noise inside the cabin was louder than the wind and waves at sea, offering all kinds of venues for these Dark World bigwigs to indulge in, such as casinos and auctions, underground black circles and musical performances, as well as many private gatherings for trading forbidden items from the Ancient God Realm.

Ever since the Qilin Immortal Palace started its exploration, it has attracted transcendental forces from all over the world.

Those who don't join the Ether Association end up in the Dark World.

More freedom.

More chaos.

Nowadays, many such giant cruise ships float in this sea area.

All coming for the Immortal Palace.

On the crowded and noisy deck, there was a vacuum area twenty meters around the girl alone.

Because no one dared to approach her.

Many cast wary yet respectful glances towards her back.

This seemingly petite and slender girl had a notorious reputation in the Dark World.

Powerful and decisive.

It's said she's seen as a successor by a prominent figure in the Dark World.

"Sister Yue Ji, is there something you need?"

A restrained and elegant female voice came from the phone, accompanied by the sizzling sound of welding and a loud roar.

This was Miss Lan's voice, most likely tinkering with alchemy weapons in some laboratory.

Moon Princess touched the cat-face mask on her face, her voice cool and pleasant: "The method you taught me last time didn't work."

"Eh, how could that be?"

Miss Lan was shocked: "Could it be discovered when you administered the drug?"

Moon Princess pursed her cherry lips: "The effect of the Mao Sheng Liquid isn't strong enough, and his self-control is very strong."

Miss Lan was silent for a second, then curiously asked: "It shouldn't be, if there really are feelings between you, then after taking the liquid, there should be some reaction, aren't men all like this? Or could it be he actually has someone he likes, and has no interest in you at all?"

"Wait."

She paused: "You didn't tell him your true identity, did you?"

Moon Princess held back: "Mm."

Miss Lan sighed on the other end: "So in his eyes, you're just a weird woman with a mask, being inexplicably nice to him. How can that succeed? What if he thinks you're an ugly monster after you take off the mask? What if he thinks you have ulterior motives?"

"Based on your description, the person you're pining for is naturally aloof, so if you keep holding back like this, you'll have to use a stronger secret medicine."

She paused: "The Desire Fire Secret Medicine, and it must be in liquid form!"

Moon Princess's beautiful eyes flickered, saying: "I, I just want to speed up the progress a bit, didn't really plan to go that far with him. And, I... I am a bit inconvenient."

"Hm?"

Miss Lan said with a teasing tone: "Won't it be fine after this week passes?"

Moon Princess puffed her cheeks, saying: "It's not about my period, it's for another reason. Anyway, for now, I just want to speed up the progress a bit, I'm not intending to go that far. For now, I feel he just doesn't have any special feelings for me, maybe sees me as a fellow traveler or just wants to repay me."

She hesitated for a moment: "Besides, I'm quite happy that he's not interested in this identity of mine."

After a brief silence, Miss Lan softly said: "Sister Yue Ji, you're so awkward."

"Never mind, help me notify Third Master."

Moon Princess said softly: "This time entering the Immortal Palace for exploration, I want to go to the Living Burial Area."

Miss Lan thought for a moment: "It's possible, but that area is likely controlled by the Ether Association, it's very dangerous. Plus, the area was originally under the care of Fourth Master's people. You've already had a conflict with them."

Moon Princess said coldly: "I don't care."

Miss Lan softly said: "Is it worth it for him? You've been neglecting your training lately, even though someone appreciates you, their patience is limited. I'm really curious now, what kind of man can captivate you like this. I remember last year, a prince pursued you, but you coldly rejected him."

Moon Princess said flatly: "Just a prince of a broken small country, not worthy to compare with him."

"What kind of person is he then?"

Miss Lan asked: "Is he really not interested in you? What about your real identity?"

Moon Princess fell into silence.

She looked at the vast, turbulent sea, recalling the first time she met that boy.

His eyes seemed like this too.

Lonely, deep.

Hidden turbulence.

Alienated from the whole world, going against the flow.

"Whether he likes me or not is not important."

Moon Princess said softly: "I just feel too indebted to him. Although it wasn't my intention, and I couldn't change anything back then, I indeed took away the happiness that should have been his."

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She said softly, "Those warm moments, those companionships, were supposed to be his."

Miss Lan sighed again, "You, huh."

"Besides, I promised the teacher that I would definitely protect him."

The Moon Princess paused: "Whether he likes me or likes someone else, it doesn't matter. I just want to compensate him as much as possible, even if it's just to give him a little happiness."

Miss Lan: "Then why do you like him?"

The Moon Princess didn't say anything.

Miss Lan said helplessly, "Alright, I'll help you contact him."

The Moon Princess made a sound of agreement, "Thank you."

The call was disconnected.

At this moment, a sneaky character approached the twenty-meter-wide vacuum zone.

"You idiot, what are you doing here?"

The Moon Princess immediately turned her head and said coldly, "Have your wounds healed?"

Butcher grinned, scratched his head, and said, "Why so fierce? Those little wounds healed long ago."

The Moon Princess said coldly, "Stay away from me."

The big guy Butcher looked quite aggrieved, "Boss, why are you so fierce?"

The Moon Princess ignored him, just made a secretive gesture.

It meant that you're now a Divine Servant, being controlled by others.

Butcher was instantly embarrassed.

The Moon Princess interrogated coldly, "You weren't eavesdropping on my conversation just now, were you?"

Butcher snorted, "Why would I listen to you talking? It's always about that boyfriend of yours."

The Moon Princess narrowed her beautiful eyes when she heard the word "boyfriend."

She seemed to enjoy it quite a bit.

She suddenly asked, "Butcher, you're a man too, what kind of girls do men like?"

Without thinking, Butcher replied, "Big boobs and a big butt."

The Moon Princess doubted her sanity for asking such a question to this rough man.

"That's you!"

She said coldly, "He's nothing like you with no taste."

Butcher said puzzled, "How do I have no taste?"

The Moon Princess asked coldly, "Have you ever been married?"

"Of course, my ex-wife and I used to be very affectionate."

Butcher gazed at the sea and said with emotion, "In those years as a mercenary, I never returned home, and she waited for me at home. To surprise me, she didn't even tell me she was pregnant."

The Moon Princess: "..."

Shouldn't have asked this question.

"Has he given you any instructions lately?"

After asking, she held her head, "Forget it, even if he did, you wouldn't say."

Divine Servants are usually completely controlled.

Unless the Supreme is truly trapped in the Ancient God Realm.

Then the instructions issued in the Ancient God Realm would be erased by the rules in the real world.

But now, it's obvious that the Supreme has found a way out.

Butcher looked odd, there actually was an instruction, just one.

"Boss, you need to be careful lately, don't neglect your cultivation."

He said in a low voice, "The competition among the six directors is very intense, all trying to get their invested candidates up. It's said that the legend of the king has appeared again in the Dark World. And boss, you're the one with the best chance. There are many auctions and private trade shows, aren't you going to participate?"

Such Ascender activities are valuable, who knows what treasures one might find.

The Moon Princess made a sound of agreement: "I know, you can go now."

A clearly perfunctory tone.

Actually, she was just being perfunctory; it's not that she didn't want to improve herself, but she disliked such a materialistic lifestyle. Plus, the cabin was stuffy, making it hard to breathe and easily causing seasickness.

Occasionally encountering some competitors, scheming against one another, made her quite annoyed.

She still preferred staying at home, in the little house she just renovated, flipping through shows while enjoying air-conditioning and barbecues. When bored, she'd seduce that guy.

Even though his expressionless face was quite discouraging, even making her doubt her charm.

She lowered her head to look at her ample bosom, her dark red short dress blooming like a rose, her slender legs wrapped in black stockings, stepping on round-toed little leather shoes.

Isn't it cute?

"Is there an auction?"

The Moon Princess suddenly asked.

Butcher quickly replied, "Yes, yes, yes!"

The Moon Princess nodded in satisfaction, "Then I'll go pick out a few more dresses."

Butcher: "..."

The girl instantly transformed into a shadow and disappeared from where she stood.

Butcher watched the girl's back, couldn't help scratching his head, and also returned to the cabin.

"Lord Butcher."

The Bunny Girls bowed respectfully.

Everyone was a candidate in the Dark World, invested and cultivated by the directors.

But the difference was, the Moon Princess was invited over.

So, her status was very high.

And Butcher rose up by underground fighting, obviously inferior in status.

Especially since he hadn't openly stated, but he had long been infected and had been going through a period of breaking down.

But everything changed once he became a Divine Servant.

Backed by an Ancient Great Dad.

He felt unprecedently powerful, lately even looking down on people.

Butcher returned to his room, and the bronze fragment in his pocket was so hot it turned red.

At the same time, murmurs whispered faintly in his ears.

As if echoing from the Ancient Times, in the dark abyss.

"Oh my God, don't rush!"

He hurriedly took out the bronze fragment and placed it on the floor.

"This alchemy matrix needs virgin blood, damn it, I've searched almost the entire ship and couldn't find any virgins. These bastards, always messing up the girls..."

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All he could do was clumsily pull out a bottle of mercury, scribbling an array on the floor. Then he dug out a blood bag filled with virgin blood, along with various sacrificial tools, bone powder, and so on.

Finally, he managed to sketch out a wobbly and messy Alchemy Matrix on the floor.

Although it was ugly, it worked.

As Butcher dripped his own blood into the matrix, spirituality activated the array.

A faint mist began to spread.

Before his eyes, an endless darkness seemed to take shape.

At the edge of the darkness, he vaguely saw a pair of golden vertical eyes, resplendent like the sun.

"Supreme."

Butcher lowered his head, not daring to meet those eyes directly.

The majestic and scorching golden eyes carried no emotion.

Amidst the silence, a detached voice echoed faintly, "Speak."

Butcher steeled himself and recounted every word of the conversation he had just overheard.

Not a single word was omitted.

But his body trembled as he spoke, clearly unwilling to say these things.

His ten fingers even dug into the ground, struggling intensely.

In the silence, the detached voice spoke again, "It seems you are very resistant."

Beads of cold sweat streamed down Butcher's brutish forehead as he quickly knelt and bowed, saying in a low voice, "If there is anything you need, just tell me. You granted me a second life, and I am willing to serve you even at the cost of my own life. But Moon Princess... she's still a child, and she has been kind to me. I beg you not to harm her."

The burly man trembled as he summoned his lifelong courage and said, "She's a good girl, not a Fallen, and she bears no malice toward you. She joined the Pharmacist's group simply to investigate her teacher's matter. She's long guessed you have a way to leave the Immortal Palace but told no one about it."

He lowered his head heavily to the floor. "Except me, but I have been loyal to you! I am not like that Pharmacist Old Thief!"

After a moment of silence, the detached voice asked, "She seems valuable."

"Yes, very valuable indeed,"

Butcher said earnestly. "But there's no need for her to become a Divine Servant and get drawn into this conflict. Everyone's constitution differs; if she rejects the Ancient God's Blood, wouldn't that be a great loss? When it comes to fighting, just rely on me!"

In the darkness, the golden eyes flickered faintly, about to extinguish. A soft voice asked, "How did you come to know her?"

Unable to resist the Supreme's will, Butcher confessed everything: "Her teacher once defeated me in the Immortal Palace but showed me mercy and let me go. However, they documented my existence in their notes. Later, her teacher died unexpectedly. Based on the notes left behind, she managed to find me."

He added, "At that time, I was gravely injured and happened to be found by her. It was then that I became corrupted and turned into a Fallen. But she didn't discriminate against me; she just asked me to take her to the Pharmacist, claiming it could save me."

The Supreme's ethereal voice arose, "How did you fall?"

Butcher lowered his head as his voice grew somber, "We used to have a team that explored the outskirts of the Immortal Palace to make a little extra money to support our families. Unfortunately, we encountered a group of ancient corpses that had fallen from a dimensional rift. They asked me to stay behind as the rear guard while they went for reinforcements. I thought we were brothers, a family, so I agreed."

The golden eyes in the darkness silently fixed on him.

"But they never came back. Instead, they left the Immortal Palace and retired directly."

Butcher said in a low voice, "I was abandoned."

The Supreme said indifferently, "And yet you trust Moon Princess?"

Butcher thought for a moment and replied, "Boss, she's different."

The Supreme cast him a glance, "Then, what if I truly intend to harm her?"

Butcher's entire body suddenly tensed. He raised his rugged face, pale as a sheet. "Why? She bears no malice toward you! And I'll keep watch over her; she won't betray you! Why do you want to kill her?"

As if realizing something, his expression changed drastically. "Wait, do you want to make her your Female Sacrifice?"

The so-called Female Sacrifice was a concept passed down from ancient times.

According to legend, the Ancient God Clan would select beautiful maidens from among humans, whose spirit and soul were pure and flawless. Through acts of intimacy conducted on the altar, the Ancient God Clan would better absorb spirituality to restore their power.

In the darkness, the Supreme remained silent.

"No, she's not fit for it! In the Human World, she's just an ugly girl! You haven't seen what she looks like beneath the mask; she's so ugly that she could frighten children to tears! In our Human World, there are plenty of outstanding women. Take your pick, anyone but her! She already has someone she likes. Rumor has it they're even living together."

Butcher was so frantic his face turned red, veins bulging on his neck. "She's way too young to be up to any good, messing around with her boyfriend all day. Give it a few more months, and she'll have a big belly! What use could such a woman possibly have to you? She's not worthy! Pfft!"

During his tirade, he kept his head down and thus didn't notice.

The majestic and ancient golden eyes flickered for just a brief moment with disbelief and surprise.

Living together was true, but they hadn't been messing around.

And her belly getting big? What nonsense.

Slanderous lies.

After a long pause.

The Supreme remarked coldly, "What if I order you to kill her?"

Boom!

It was as if thunderclaps had exploded next to Butcher's ears.

He took a deep breath, his sturdy frame trembling slightly as he rasped, "Then I'd rather die than carry out your order. Just give the word, and I'll explode myself right now!"

But after waiting a long while, the Supreme did not give the order.

"Then protect her well."

The Supreme said indifferently, "But keep your mouth shut."

Butcher was overjoyed and quickly replied, "If I don't die, she won't die!"

A moment later, the Supreme spoke again, "Put something into the matrix at random."

Bewildered, Butcher pulled a handgun from his waist and placed it at the center of the matrix.

The mist churned and gradually engulfed the handgun.

With a bang.

Butcher felt as though much of his spirituality had been drained away.

The darkness before his eyes vanished, and the oppressive force disappeared without a trace.

Along with the Alchemy Matrix, which dissipated into thin air.

And the handgun, which had similarly evaporated.

"What was Supreme doing? Why did He take a handgun? Is He studying Human World weaponry?"

Butcher's big head was filled with confusion.

Suddenly, he seemed to realize something, rummaging through the room to find a bag before briskly running out.

"Lord Butcher."

The Bunny Girls once again bowed in greeting, revealing a dizzying view.

Butcher didn't even glance at them as he brushed past all sorts of candidates. "Get lost, get lost! Do you want a beating?"

He stormed straight to a luxury cabin at the far end of the ship and banged on the door.

Thud, thud, thud!

After a moment, a cold voice came from inside: "Are you insane?"

The door opened.

A furious Moon Princess stood there, clutching the little dress she had just bought—a collection of expensive Lolita dresses.

At the sight of her holding the dresses, Butcher's face darkened in alarm: "Sin, this is all sin!"

With one swipe, the brute snatched the dresses and tore them in half with both hands!

Rip!

Moon Princess was dumbfounded as her five thousand yuan literally vanished into thin air.

Without saying another word, Butcher barged into the room, eyeing her vanity table, which was cluttered with bottles and jars.

Then he swept his massive hand across, smashing all her skincare and makeup products.

Crash, bang, smash—he destroyed everything.

"Sin, the source of all sin!"

He even turned to her wardrobe and showed no mercy.

Raising his hand, a burst of violent Qi Force destroyed it into dust.

Moon Princess widened her eyes, her beautiful gaze locking on him. "Are you insane? What am I supposed to use for makeup and clothing now?"

"Makeup? What makeup? You always wear a mask. What's the point of makeup?"

Butcher glared at her, shoving his bag into her hands. "From now on, wear this!"

Moon Princess silently pulled out a silk shirt with pink and white lotus blossoms printed on it, along with a pair of black pants from the bag.

Yes, the kind old market ladies often wore.

"Butcher!"

She gritted her teeth. "Even my grandmother wouldn't wear such hideous clothes!"

"It's a birthday gift I bought for my mother. I'll reluctantly lend it to you."

Butcher gave her a thumbs-up, grinning broadly. "Wear these from now on. It's safer!"

Moon Princess was dumbfounded, her voice rising sharply. "Butcher, are you out of your mind?"

At that moment, a handsome young man holding a bouquet of exquisitely wrapped roses approached the door, stunned. "Uh, what's going on? Miss Yue Ji, do you have some time? I'd like to invite you to dinner—"

Bang!

Butcher, with his current status, casually smacked him into the wall. Blood splattered everywhere.

"Dinner with my ass."

He cursed, "Blind mutt."

Chapter 304 - 158: Crossing Over, The New World!

Late at night, Gu Jianlin made himself a cup of instant coffee in the bedroom of his apartment.

He lay on the bed with a sense of relief, fiddling with the pistol in his hand.

This was obtained from the Butcher.

A gun might not mean much, but the significance behind it was monumental.

"The restraints left by the Candle Dragon Venerable back then have long degraded; I've already broken through six layers of them. Previously, I was able to project my whispers into the real world using ancient tokens, but now when I log into the main account, I can even try transferring items using Divine Servants and ancient tokens. I just don't know if there's a limit to the size."

He mused for a moment: "When I enter the Qilin Immortal Palace, I can definitely make good use of this."

Isn't this essentially having a portable, anytime-anywhere warehouse?

The key to what's stored in the warehouse lies in people!

Whenever Gu Jianlin needs something, he can directly command the Divine Servants.

Then, he can have the necessary supplies transported to his hands through the Qilin Immortal Palace.

Divine Servants cannot disobey the commands of the Ancient Supreme.

Gu Jianlin raised his hand and conjured the one remaining drop of Ancient God's Blood he possessed.

"It's time to let the Ancient God's Blood flow out. I wonder who the unlucky—no, fortunate soul—will be that obtains it, allowing me to cultivate a faction of my own. Hmm, perhaps I should ask the Scholar or the Butcher to find a way to distribute this drop of Ancient God's Blood into the Dark World. Wait, it still needs to be paired with an ancient token."

He murmured internally: "No, it can't be just any ordinary ancient token. What the Butcher and the others acquired seems to be a special token capable of teleporting directly to the tomb of the Qilin Venerable. According to logical deduction, Xu Fu Jian built the palace surrounding the Immortal Palace and left a shortcut that quickly connects the three layers of the Immortal Palace."

"So, from a design perspective, wouldn't ancient tokens that teleport into the Immortal Palace be redundant? Nine out of ten chances, this is a token created by the Qilin Venerable to facilitate its escape."

"Exactly, it's using its powers to erode the Qilin Immortal Palace, so it must have created some ancient tokens to allow people to reach it directly."

"Manufacturing this batch of ancient tokens shouldn't be difficult. If it can do it, I should be able to as well."

Ancient God's Blood paired with ancient tokens equals a human-shaped warehouse!

Gu Jianlin already knew what he needed to collect after entering the Immortal Palace.

Ancient tokens are hard to come by now.

But he could snatch them if needed.

"Next, I'm already a Third-Rank Great Fate Master, so I should prepare for the Fourth-Rank."

Gu Jianlin said softly.

That's the Superdimensional Level—the Fourth-Order Cloud Monarch!

At this stage, trying to break through isn't just a matter of accumulating spirituality.

It requires ritual assistance.

Gu Jianlin logged into the Deep Space Network. His permissions within the Omega Sequence were markedly enhanced compared to before.

Searching for the ritual for ascension didn't even require him to expend merit points.

"The roots of the Roaring Tree Monster, the heart of the Mutant, the egg of the Calamity Ruins, and Corrosive Magma."

He looked at the data on the screen, murmuring: "The lock of hair belonging to the Charming Lady?"

What exactly is the Charming Lady?

How peculiar.

He casually searched the official website and instantly fell into silence.

The Charming Goddess is a rare biological anomaly that only appears in the Ancient God Realm. It is said to be a human subspecies, invariably consisting of stunningly beautiful women who must mate with human males to continue their bloodline.

They appear late at night, seducing human Ascenders.

Furthermore, they pose no harm. After copulation, they even gift the partner a portion of their spirituality.

This is a unique race cultivated during Ancient Times by the Ancient God Clan using human genes.

Similar to organisms tainted by the Ancient God's Breath, yet of a far higher echelon.

The forums were filled with comments like: "The taste of the Charming Lady is truly divine!"

One particular post mentioned how numerous human Ascenders willingly stayed in the Ancient God Realm after their encounter, marrying a Charming Lady and enjoying a legitimate harem.

Gu Jianlin couldn't help but marvel at the richness and diversity of the Ancient God Realm.

"The ascension ritual requires a heart-stopping massacre that elevates the spirit."

After seeing this prerequisite, he fell silent once again.

Heart-stopping.

Actually, the carnage he unleashed at Black Cloud City could be considered heart-stopping enough.

The preparations before entering the Qilin Immortal Palace were nearly complete.

There was only one regret, and that was the Mythical Weapon.

Currently, Gu Jianlin had thirty thousand merit points, which would suffice to purchase secret medicine.

But with the Pharmacist Old Thief around, there was no need for him to waste money on that—after all, he was still at the Extraordinary Rank.

And high-quality Mythical Weapons typically started at fifty thousand points.

If all goes as planned, by the time he exits the Immortal Palace, he should have enough.

Entering the Qilin Immortal Palace would allow him to utilize ancient tokens for back-and-forth traversals. As long as dimensional fluctuations stabilized, he could return to reality directly, avoiding prolonged stays inside.

Thus, he wouldn't expend excess effort on unnecessary preparations.

"Lastly..."

Gu Jianlin lay on the bed, gazing at the empty ceiling: "Moon Princess."

He closed his eyes, and a face without the cat-shaped mask surfaced in his mind.

The words of the Butcher had left a profound impact on him.

So this is what it feels like to be liked by someone.

Though he had vowed not to consider matters of affection until the Gu Family curse was lifted.

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But this time, he inexplicably felt his heart pounding.

It was beating so fast that it was hard to fall asleep.

The next afternoon, a powerful roar echoed across the seaside.

"Rookies, remember this: no matter how impressive your resume may look, no matter how excellent your previous ratings were, no matter how prestigious your family background is, none of that matters to me!"

"In the face of the Ancient God Realm, and in my presence, you are all rookies! My name is Wan Runtu—remember it, because from this day forward, I will be your nightmare! Until the day you defeat me!"

"There will be no forgiveness, and certainly no mercy before me. I will hold you to the harshest standards, I will make you feel pain, taste pain, and even come to love pain! Because the more sweat and tears you shed here with me, the less blood you'll shed when confronting the Ancient God Clan in the future!"

"From this moment on, devil training begins!"

The waves of sound surged, as if the entire base was trembling.

To the unknowing, it might have seemed like an Ancient God Seed had risen from the dead.

Or perhaps a Fire Dragon was roaring.

Wan Runtu stood on the platform, dressed in a black trench coat, as sturdy and towering as an iron tower.

Behind him was a weapon bag containing thirteen various alchemy weapons.

They looked rather peculiar in design.

The eardrums of nearly all the Omega trainees in the second tier were trembling.

Those who could make it into the second tier were almost always heirs of powerful families, sects, or major factions, with quite a few talented individuals from more modest backgrounds. Every single one of them carried a sense of pride.

But against this instructor's opening salvo of psychological warfare, none of them dared to show even the slightest dissatisfaction.

After all, Instructor Wan was already infamous.

Since he had taken on the role of chief instructor, every class of Omega had been tormented miserably by his hands.

Especially recently, after Wan Runtu seemed to experience some sort of provocation.

He had been obsessively training his Slaughter Domain, nearly refining this extraordinary ability to its peak.

Legend had it that each path's extraordinary ability could be enhanced through rigorous training.

Although there was an upper limit, most people never reached it.

But Wan Runtu was different, as he was already a specialist in the Slaughter Domain.

He even resorted to doping and exchanged for a matching Mythical Weapon.

All for the sake of defeating one person.

The geniuses collectively turned their heads, gazing at the imposing and domineering figure at the forefront.

Gu Jianlin stood at the very front of the formation, feeling the stares from every direction, his face impassive.

Today, he wore a simple white shirt and black tailored pants, paired with white sneakers.

On his shoulder perched a parrot.

Besides that, he carried nothing—only a Desert Eagle at his waist and a dagger.

He was neither brawny nor overbearing, and had nothing to do with being imposing or domineering.

But what was different today was the presence of an extra person by his side.

Ji Xiaoyu.

The Little Princess, after enduring a whole night of being brutally beaten, was in a dazed state of existential crisis today, occasionally shuddering as she recalled the sheer terror of being utterly dominated.

Now, every time she saw a chair, her scalp tingled, and she trembled all over.

She had lived twelve whole years, but never before had she been beaten so mercilessly.

Even those who were stronger than her had never dared to lay a hand on her ruthlessly.

But this chair-wielding murderer was different—he had gone straight for a brutal assault, completely unafraid of any consequences.

Now, even her poison-crafting secret manual had been confiscated, and her poison bag was entirely used up.

She couldn't win in a fight.

It was both frustrating and humiliating.

To make matters worse, the Deep Space Network forums were plastered with photos of her being hung from a lamppost.

Utter humiliation.

The Little Princess was still in a deep haze of social death, utterly disoriented.

To top it off, her grandmother had even given the Golden Phoenix Feather to *him*.

While Ji Xiaoyu might have been a foolish brat, she wasn't so dense as to not understand that her grandmother had specifically arranged for someone to discipline her.

She decided to bide her time and avoid conflict for now.

She'd wait for an opening, then seize the opportunity to regain her honor.

And at this moment, hearing Instructor Wan's angry roar, a sly excitement rose within her.

An opening had appeared!

"Just you wait!"

Ji Xiaoyu secretly thrilled, already imagining the scene of this guy making a fool of himself under the Slaughter Domain.

In truth, a similar thought crossed the minds of other geniuses.

The rumors about the chair-wielding murderer painted him as a ruthless figure, able to ignore the effects of the Slaughter Domain, subdue the Little Princess—a renowned troublemaker—and boast terrifying battle achievements. It was no surprise he had made it into the second tier with ease.

But people always loved a good spectacle.

The higher a genius soared, the harder they fell!

"Perhaps you've already heard: the top ten from the Omega Sequence's first tier have all vanished. That's my failure. I was too lenient with them, which led to their downfall! I take full responsibility for this, and I will not make the same mistake twice! Therefore, every single one of you in the second tier—your training will now be doubled!"

Wan Runtu's roar caused nearly everyone to turn pale.

"Those who can endure this training will immediately be awarded an ancient token and join an honorable rescue mission!"

He paused. "As for the rest, you'll stay here and continue training until I'm satisfied."

Meanwhile, a few bystanders enjoying the show stood on the platform.

They were mostly first-tier elites serving as support roles.

A Nightmare, a Spirit Medium from the Spirit Medium Path, and a Fifth Rank Prophet.

The white prophet from North America didn't look too pleased, shrouded in his hood, exuding an unsettling gloom.

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The other two were both peculiar individuals.

One dressed like a priest, clad in a black Divine Robe, wearing a golden cross, muttering "Amen" under his breath. He appeared to be in his thirties, with ordinary features but a tall and imposing stature.

Dawn, Priest Path, Fifth-Rank Pope.

The other one wore a gas mask, resembling a mad scientist, with a tall and graceful figure.

Poison Master, Alchemist Path, Fifth-Rank Medicine King.

In addition, there was a figure clad in flowing white, carrying a massive guitar case, standing at the highest point.

Tang Ling was wearing a sunhat, its brim casting a shadow over her fair and exquisite face. She rested her chin on her hand, sitting on the spectators' platform with an aloof gaze, as if she were an Empress overlooking her army.

Truthfully, she was indeed reviewing her army.

Because aside from Gu Jianlin, everyone else here needed her personal approval.

She was the main force of this operation.

Though she was a Fourth-Order Sword Spirit of the Sword Sect Path, she possessed combat power rivaling that of a Fifth Rank.

As the sole daughter of the Tang Family and trained by the Sword Tomb, she was a personal disciple of a Catastrophe-level figure.

Her talent was so exceptional that the higher-ups collectively valued her highly. The President even ventured into the Dark World himself to kill a Holy Land Level Ascender and seized a growth-oriented Mythical Weapon specifically for her use.

It's no exaggeration to call her a Mary Sue of the highest caliber.

"In the Ancient God Realm, what you need most isn't rank, nor skills, nor Mythical Weapons, or any variety of resources. What you need is courage and guts! Can you withstand the spiritual suppression of the Ancient God Clan, an upper-rank race? Can you resist the momentum precipitated by millennia of heritage?"

Wan Runtu shouted to the rookies, cutting off their daydreams.

"Next, be prepared!"

The towering, iron-like man revealed an insane grin: "Slaughter Domain!"

Boom!

For a moment, his pupils turned blood red.

A brutal bloody aura surged forth, almost solidifying, pressing down on the entire training ground!

Hahaha!

Wan Runtu laughed maniacally to himself. Prepare to die!

Gu Jianlin also glanced at him at this moment, and silently thought of just three words: Prepare to die!

With a resounding boom, the Slaughter Domain engulfed the entire field.

Plop!

Several trainees dropped to their knees instantly, trembling and convulsing, cold sweat pouring down like rain.

Many groaned, struggling to stay standing, but their legs eventually buckled, and they collapsed to the ground.

No matter how hard their legs tried to hold up, they inevitably bent and knelt under the overwhelming pressure.

Even Ji Xiaoyu paled under the intense aura. Her petite frame shivered involuntarily, and the platinum tuft of hair atop her head stood on end. Her legs shook uncontrollably, her whole body on edge.

Thankfully, she managed to endure it, avoiding further embarrassment.

Yet when she turned to look beside her, she froze.

What was going on? Where was his weakness?

Gu Jianlin stood expressionless, seemingly unaffected, casually lowering his gaze as he filed his nails with ease.

The parrot he had with him, unaffected since it wasn't targeted, strutted around arrogantly.

At that moment, Wan Rentu also turned his gaze to this calm youth and was dumbfounded.

Gu Jianlin raised his head slightly and looked at the instructor opposite him with an inscrutable expression.

It wasn't for nothing that Candle Dragon Sister had trained him for six hours.

Such a trivial Slaughter Domain.

A joke—it had no effect on him whatsoever.

"Huh?"

Wan Rentu's eyes widened in disbelief, his mind racing as if tens of thousands of llamas were stampeding through it.

Impossible!

This was absolutely impossible!

He had clearly amplified the Slaughter Domain with a Mythical Weapon and had even consumed secret medicine.

A triple enhancement!

How could this be the result!

The place was filled with cries of agony, but only Gu Jianlin stood tall, as if he were the protagonist on stage.

At this moment, Wan Runtu felt his heart crack.

He felt mocked.

Felt humiliated!

All those days and nights of grueling training now seemed like a farce.

What's more, last time the boy must have used some kind of Mythical Weapon.

This time, Wan Runtu had set up a Barrier in advance. If anyone used a Mythical Weapon to cheat, it would create a repelling reaction.

It shouldn't have turned out like this.

Boom!

In his mounting rage and frustration, his eyes turned blood red again, and he pushed the Slaughter Domain to its absolute limit.

Plop, plop!

At this point, even the second-tier prodigies collapsed collectively into unconsciousness.

Those few still standing also fell to their knees.

Ji Xiaoyu hit the ground with a thud, and a curse was stuck in her throat.

Yet under such heavy pressure, Gu Jianlin remained utterly indifferent, even letting out a yawn, his gaze detached.

The parrot mimicked him, yawning and staring with disdain: "Slaughter Domain? That's it?"

Boom!

Wan Runtu's mind went blank.

Yes, it was that look.

A look mingled with apathy and ridicule.

A ridicule that conveyed scorn.

A scorn laced with amusement.

The entire lineage of the King of Qing—every single one of them carried this damn look!

And that cursed parrot too!

At this moment, Wan Rentu once again experienced the fear of being dominated.

The Dawn Pope and the Poison Master, who had been spectating from the stands, froze mid-amusement.

Even the Nightmare allowed a flicker of unease to cross his gaze.

Because all of them realized: not a single Mythical Weapon was in play here.

So how was this boy, nicknamed "Chair Murderer," immune to the Slaughter Domain?

Even they, as Fifth-Rank elites, struggled under such pressure.

From the highest point in the stands, Tang Ling lifted her head. A keen, sharp light flashed beneath her hat's brim.

Even her posture straightened slightly, her demeanor visibly heavy.

Meanwhile, Instructor Zhu walked over with a team, expressionless, distributing ancient tokens.

Among the second-tier prodigies, only five remained conscious under the oppressive pressure.

As a result, they earned the qualification to participate in the rescue mission.

Gu Jianlin and Ji Xiaoyu were among them, each receiving an ancient token.

Gu Jianlin's was a Black Jade Pendant, ancient and exquisite, its touch cool and smooth.

It appeared to be at least three thousand years old, worth a fortune if sold.

"Instructor Wan will be teleporting with you to the Qilin Immortal Palace. The designated location is the Living Burial Area, where you'll receive further mission details. Before teleportation, we'll provide each of you with secret medicine to negate the effects of the Slaughter Domain, so don't panic too much."

"Tang Ling, Gu Jianlin. The two of you should note that once you enter the Qilin Immortal Palace, your consciousness will be drawn into the Soul Skywell, which serves as the Ether Association's repository of forbidden knowledge. You'll be granted access to the materials you wish to study, but you'll only have ten minutes."

"The rescue operation begins now. All participants, proceed to the giant stone array immediately!"

The Black Cloud City's beach lay just beyond the training grounds.

A massive giant stone array had been constructed on the shore, resembling the monoliths of Easter Island, exuding a potent religious aura.

Boom!

It felt as though the spacetime continuum trembled.

The rescue teams stepped into the vast stone array, where ancient, arcane Spells illuminated the towering monoliths on all sides.

Gu Jianlin felt the ancient token in his hand absorbing his spirituality.

For a moment, the Qilin Island above the sky obscured the sunlight, plunging the world into darkness.

He knew that when he opened his eyes again, he would be in the Qilin Immortal Palace.

That was the Ancient God Realm.

A higher-dimensional world.

An ancient civilization that descended upon Earth.

A saga of blood and fire, faith and war.

For Gu Jianlin, he was different from everyone else.

Because this was his first time truly observing a world that did not belong to humanity.

For him, it was the start of something new.

A wholly new world!

Chapter 307 - 159: Candle Dragon, Vermilion Bird, Qilin

Instructor Zhu once said that when Gu Jianlin and Tang Ling crossed over to the Qilin Immortal Palace, their consciousness would briefly be drawn into a place called the Soul Skywell to obtain the knowledge they needed.

Meanwhile, their physical selves would already be within the Qilin Immortal Palace.

In other words, they would access knowledge in a purely conscious state.

It was truly miraculous.

No one knew exactly what the Soul Skywell was.

But it was clear that this place was utilized by the Ether Association to store forbidden knowledge and data.

Gu Jianlin felt an invisible pull and, in his conscious form, appeared in a dim space.

Meanwhile, a tall, graceful silhouette materialized by his side.

"So this is the Soul Skywell?"

Tang Ling glanced around and asked calmly, "It's my first time here. Fascinating."

Gu Jianlin made a faint sound of assent, also examining his surroundings.

The place turned out to be a library of an extraordinarily unique architectural design. Countless towering bookshelves were arranged in a matrix-like formation according to some arcane logic, appearing as a massive labyrinth, interwoven, encircling, and in perpetual motion.

The ceiling was a seemingly endless skywell, with dim skylight spilling down softly.

It conveniently illuminated the black wooden table before them.

On the table lay two documents.

One was thick and bore the sword-and-saber emblem of the Night Watchers.

This was likely the intelligence that Gu Ci'an had uncovered—his final report before entering the Immortal Palace.

The other was an ancient sheepskin scroll inscribed with illegible characters.

Beyond that, a cluster of mist hovered above the table.

Within the depths of the mist, something indistinct could faintly be seen.

"These are the two archives we need, plus the Destiny Mud Tablet."

Tang Ling extended an ethereal hand toward the ancient sheepskin scroll. "Can you read this?"

Gu Jianlin fell silent immediately. "I can't."

In the real world, he was an academic overachiever—but his knowledge was confined to that of ordinary humans.

When it came to the ancient script of the Extraordinary World, he was entirely lost.

"I can. Let me handle this one," Tang Ling said lightly.

Gu Jianlin nodded slightly. "Alright."

He reached for the archive.

Though the document should have been tangible, in this moment it became surreal, its seal dissolving under his touch as he began reading through it.

The sensation was indeed peculiar.

Gu Jianlin had guessed correctly: this was a compendium of Old Gu's investigation into the Qilin Immortal Palace.

This time, it seemed to contain nothing but crucial information—no fluff at all.

Nor any proverbial poison hidden among the lines; otherwise, he'd feel like punching someone.

Moreover, the archive had been carefully refined, with slight differences from the information he'd seen earlier.

Thus, it required a dialectical approach to fully understand.

"I am Gu Ci'an, codename Nanli. Based on several surveys and scientific investigations over the past six months, I have finally completed the first comprehensive guide to the Qilin Immortal Palace. In summary, regarding the danger level of the Qilin Immortal Palace, from a rational and academic standpoint, I believe it should be assessed as Unknown Level."

"In other words, the descent of the Qilin Immortal Palace this time could either brew a threat capable of destroying the world or pass peacefully without any incidents."

"However, from an emotional standpoint, I am inclined to rate it as Absolute Forbidden Level—the highest and most dangerous category."

"My reasoning is that the Qilin Immortal Palace involves secrets among multiple Supremes. The Human World could be facing, for the first time, a scenario where it must contend with numerous Ancient Supremes simultaneously. Regardless of the intentions of these Supremes and the ultimate outcome, they would inevitably sow seeds of disaster for the Human World."

"What is currently known is that the conflict between Qilin and Candle Dragon began when Qilin Venerable was secretly preparing a ritual in the East Sea. This ritual was meant to create a lethal weapon to deal with Candle Dragon Venerable."

"Judging by Candle Dragon Venerable's actions, their level of threat surpasses even the Ghost Valley Secret Treasure."

"Therefore, when the ultimate secret of the Qilin Immortal Palace surfaces, Candle Dragon Venerable is highly likely to return."

"Though the President, the Catastrophes, and predictions from Yun Mengze provide evidence that Candle Dragon Venerable has always been searching for something and undergoing some kind of metamorphosis, they are now at a critical juncture and likely stretched thin. Still, I believe they will find a secretive way to manifest."

"Additionally, my initial exploration of the Qilin Immortal Palace has uncovered a shocking truth."

"The relationship between Vermilion Bird and Qilin is not as simple as we imagined. First off, we know these two Supremes descended together into Chu during the Pre-Qin Period. The people of Chu revered Feng Shangchi, worshiped fire, and paid homage to the Sun. They believed themselves to be descendants of the Sun God and legitimate heirs of the Fire God, and they venerated the Divine Sun God."

"However, the problem lies in the fact that their supreme deity, Donghuang Taiyi—the pinnacle of the divine path—was actually Qilin Venerable! The Chu people's penchant for Wu practices and fondness for ghosts also stemmed from this."

"This confusion in faith should not have occurred."

"From the Heavenly Master Path derived from Vermilion Bird Venerate, which symbolizes feathered transformation and rebirth, representing vitality and sacred nature, to the Divine Path derived from Qilin Venerable, associated with Wu and ghosts, plundering life, and devouring souls—the contrast is striking."

"Yet in Chu culture, Qilin was mentioned only in fragments, while Vermilion Bird Venerate was deified and worshiped. This strikes me as peculiar. Based on my profiling, I believe that during the Pre-Qin Period, Qilin Venerable had fallen into a deep slumber and was exploited by Vermilion Bird Venerate to resist Candle Dragon Venerable!"

"Subsequently, Qilin Venerable awakened in some manner. Interestingly, this coincided with the period when Vermilion Bird Venerate, having lost their greatest support, was pushed into dormancy by Candle Dragon Venerable."

"Candle Dragon, Vermilion Bird—these two Supremes share a common thread. I think they are both in pursuit of something, and their powers are intimately tied to the Sun."

"If Vermilion Bird Venerable represents the Sun of the mortal world, then Candle Dragon Venerable represents the Sun of the netherworld. Both belong to the Sun lineage. In ancient times, the Sun was known as the Candle Light God!"

"The Sun Candle corresponds to Taiyin Youying, symbolizing two other Supremes."

"So what role does Qilin Venerable play in this? I theorize that Qilin Venerable's position is exceedingly unique, and their purpose differs from those of the other Supremes."

"To this day, we still don't know what transpired among the Ancient God Clan in those times. But throughout history, there have been only five Ancient Supremes; it's unlikely there will be more."

"From the remnants of Qilin Venerable's mental domain within the Qilin Immortal Palace, I can still sense emotions belonging to them. Savagery, madness, wrath, coldness, and a crazed desperation born of betrayal. For two thousand years, they have been trying to break free of their shackles and once again lord over the world, unleashing their fury."

"For two and a half millennia, they have spread their power, using the promise of immortality as bait to lure successive generations, and even people worldwide, into the palace."

"Most of these individuals have become nourishment for Qilin Venerable, helping them recover their strength."

"Finally, from the remnants of their spiritual domain, I sensed one more thing. While it may not be reliable, I suspect that the descent of the Qilin Immortal Palace is a deliberate act by them, one that consumed much of their power."

"This is bizarre. If they had preserved their strength instead, the palace would still have appeared in the real world in a few centuries, at which point they could have broken free with their power intact."

"So why would they do this?"

"I suspect it's a trap."

Gu Jianlin fell into a long silence upon reading this.

"What's wrong?"

Tang Ling glanced at him and asked softly.

Gu Jianlin shook his head, resting a hand against his forehead. "There's too much information. I need time to process."

Clearly, this document was written after that file in the sewer's secret chamber.

But one thing wasn't mentioned.

Back in the Qilin Immortal Palace, Old Gu had discovered a secret.

A secret so shocking that he cried out in terror.

However, that part of the text had been erased through some mysterious method by an unknown entity.

Given Old Gu's personality, he likely deemed it unsuitable for the association to know.

Instead, it was left within the underground base.

It was reserved for the Moon Princess.

Or perhaps, for his future self, upon entering the Extraordinary World.

That erased portion might not be critical on its own.

But following its trail could uncover some earth-shattering secret.

Both Gu Ci'an and Gu Jianlin inherited the talent for profiling—what the father could uncover, the son could too.

This realization made his skin crawl.

Who exactly erased that part of the text?

Clearly, someone didn't want him to see it.

Another pressing question: where had Qilin Venerable gone?

Gu Jianlin's first thought was possession, yet he remained perfectly normal with no signs of abnormality.

Moreover, no one had ever heard of an Ancient Supreme possessing human hosts. If that were possible, the war between the Human Clan and the Ancient God Clan would have ended early, with the Divine Race ruling supreme.

In this Extraordinary World, the concept of possession simply didn't seem to exist; otherwise, the Ancient Gods could have easily circumvented the rules' restrictions.

Even the Catastrophes couldn't discern anything unusual about him.

Not even Candle Dragon Venerable, powerful as they were, could see through him.

Nevertheless, Gu Jianlin did have some insight as to why Qilin Venerable was in such a rush to descend.

Because Candle Dragon Venerable had mentioned that something was about to happen, and none of the Supremes would be absent when it occurred.

By "none," they were clearly referring to the Supremes.

"This sheepskin scroll contains information about Qilin Venerable," Tang Ling said after studying the scroll for a long while. "Their unique authority is Devour."

Gu Jianlin was slightly taken aback. "Devour?"

His feelings became inexplicably complicated.

For someone who had been Qilin Venerable for a month, he hadn't even been aware of having an authority.

Nor did he have the faintest idea how to wield it.

Worse still, he only learned about it through others.

What terrible luck.

But then, he suddenly recalled something.

Back then, the old monster Candle Dragon Venerable had demanded something be returned to them.

What had Qilin Venerable taken from them?

Chapter 308 - 160 This is a Gift, Also a Curse

Gu Jianlin pondered for a long time: "Is there anything else?"

Tang Ling put down the sheepskin scroll and continued, "This is a fragment of an ancient Han Dynasty scroll, containing some information about the Qilin Venerable. Historically, he has appeared three times. The first was during the Xia Dynasty, where he appeared on Min Mountain, under the alias 'Wu.' Legend has it that the establishment of the Ancient Shu Kingdom was due to his direct involvement."

"The second was in the Pre-Qin Period, in Chu. Legend has it that the Vermilion Bird Clan and Candle Dragon Clan erupted into a war, during which the Qilin Wedge appeared, forcefully devouring the life force of all surrounding tribes. This led to years of natural disasters and man-made calamities afterward."

She paused and explained, "The third was during the Qin Dynasty, where he appeared at the East Sea. Using the Wedge, he devoured the entire sea's life force and, at the peak of his power, fought against the Candle Dragon Venerable. This is the closest appearance to the present day."

Gu Jianlin thought to himself that this First Generation Qilin Venerable was indeed insane, with that unmistakable taste of late-stage misfortune.

No, wait—this doesn't seem like just late-stage misfortune.

This is damn perpetual misfortune!

He originally thought the Qilin Venerable might have companions.

But now it seems even the Vermilion Bird Venerate's relationship with him is questionable.

Indeed, the existence of the Qilin Venerable made nearly all other Supremes wary.

Even his own clan betrayed him.

Truly a case of being unloved by both grandmother and uncle.

Yet the next moment, Gu Jianlin suddenly thought of himself.

The First Generation Qilin Venerable had offended so many, and wouldn't all this karmic burden now fall on his shoulders?

Gu Jianlin suddenly felt a weight pressing down on his head, as if saddled with an enormous burden.

This was not a weight meant for someone his age!

And he vaguely realized something.

Though his self-control could completely keep him rational, his reputation had become abysmal.

To the extent that he'd become the figure used to scare children into silence at night.

He couldn't let this continue.

Be kind to others!

Always remember to be kind to others!

"Your expression looks pretty grim," Tang Ling suddenly remarked.

Gu Jianlin shook his head. "One question: what exactly is the Qilin Wedge?"

Tang Ling glanced at the contents of the scroll again and said, "The Wedge is said to be the companion artifact of each Ancient Supreme, formed from their flesh and soul. The status of an Ancient Supreme is born from the devouring of an entire planet, each owning a world. The Wedge allows their world to manifest in reality."

"I see."

Gu Jianlin curiously asked, "How did this information survive? Is it reliable?"

"It's largely reliable. Many legends passed down from ancient tribal times have been verified through historical research over the ages. Additionally, many secrets actually originate from within the Ancient God Clan," Tang Ling replied.

She continued, "It's not just humans who defected to the Ancient God Clan; some members of the Ancient God Clan chose to join the human faction. This reportedly happened even during the era of the Emperor."

Gu Jianlin thought about it and agreed.

Though the Ancient God Clan seemed like a unified race, they were constantly fighting among themselves like lunatics.

Joining the human faction for peace of mind made more sense.

"According to the President, such individuals are considered the shame of the Ancient Gods."

Tang Ling adopted a peculiar expression and said, "Not of much use."

"Hmm?"

Gu Jianlin asked, "Ancient Gods joining the human faction isn't a good thing?"

Tang Ling's reply was concise: "Because they don't listen to the President."

Gu Jianlin suddenly understood—this was indeed the President's style.

After all, even among Ancient Gods, distinctions existed.

Supremes, Primordials, Ancestors.

These weren't concepts on the same level.

His senior brother once remarked that he had no idea how many lesser-tier Ancient God Seeds he had killed.

"By the way."

Gu Jianlin remembered an urgent matter: "Is a Supreme's authority tied to the Wedge?"

Tang Ling shook her head. "Not necessarily. The authority of Ancient Gods likely has multiple uses, while the Wedge is applied to domains or world-level effects. Scholars speculate that the ultimate goal of the Ancient God Clan is to implant their Wedges into Earth's core, completely transforming this planet into the Ancient God Realm."

Gu Jianlin frowned. "What happens if the Wedge is lost?"

He suddenly remembered something.

The Candle Dragon Venerable had told him to return something to her.

Could it be the Wedge?

However, Tang Ling's next words disproved this assumption: "That's impossible. Wedges can't be truly lost. As long as a Supreme wills it, the Wedge can return anytime. If it ends up in someone else's possession, there are only three possibilities. First, the Supreme has fallen asleep or been exiled into dimensional chaos. Second, the Supreme intentionally handed the Wedge to another. Third, the Supreme has completely died."

She then added a reminder: "The third possibility is mere speculation, as no one has truly killed an Ancient Supreme. Theoretically, if a Supreme died completely, the Wedge would lose its function."

Gu Jianlin understood.

The Nightmare Master once sought the Qilin Wedge with the hope of taking a gamble.

If the first possibility were true, it would be a huge gain.

The real challenge now was how he could reclaim the Qilin Wedge.

Frankly, this lack of a beginner's tutorial was frustrating.

Tang Ling glanced at the document again and pondered momentarily before saying, "Well, I have to admit your father is quite capable. Although this guide is not detailed, failing to illustrate methods for tackling dangers within the Immortal Palace, it is highly useful for Ascenders competing for supremacy."

"If this is a trap and the Qilin Venerable isn't actually dead, it would pose an enormous risk to humanity, potentially crippling its top-tier combat power."

She softly remarked, "And his authority is focused on devouring."

Gu Jianlin thought to himself, that wouldn't happen, as the Qilin Venerable's power resides within him.

"Furthermore, this document proves one point."

Tang Ling glanced at him. "Your father is either willingly fallen or not fallen at all."

Gu Jianlin narrowed his eyes, realizing this was indeed the case.

Say what you will, Old Gu was already capable of residing within the Qilin Venerable's spiritual domain, sensing the emotions of a deity.

Someone like that being corrupted?

Pure nonsense.

Most who could fight against the Ancient God Clan possessed resistance against corruption.

"By the way, was the man I drew yesterday your great-grandfather?"

Gu Jianlin paused for a second. "I heard his experience was similar to my father's?"

Tang Ling responded with an enigmatic expression: "He used to be very fond of me."

"Have you ever faced discrimination in the Ether Association because of this?"

Gu Jianlin's thoughts stirred, prompting him to ask.

Tang Ling contemplated briefly, her amber-red eyes flashing with pride before plainly answering, "Initially, yes, but after I cut a few down, no one dared anymore. The President once said that this world is full of arrogance and prejudice; you can't change others' opinions, but you can use your fists to silence them."

Gu Jianlin thought this was quite strange.

This girl might be somewhat of a recluse, but her reputation was at least normal.

Yet when it came to him, he was labeled the 'Chair-killer Psycho.'

It had to be deliberate defamation; he refused to believe otherwise.

Tang Ling gazed at him deeply, as if unraveling his thoughts. She earnestly suggested, "Perhaps you weren't ruthless enough. Try being even more violent next time."

Gu Jianlin hesitated. "You mean be even more violent?"

"You've already got every debuff stacked on you; what are you afraid of?"

Tang Ling solemnly said, "Strike harder next time, and maybe no one will dare to slander you anymore. After all, slander taken to extremes becomes reverence—this is another principle the President taught me."

Gu Jianlin suspected this woman was trying to mislead him, but he couldn't prove it.

This kind of nonsense couldn't be trusted—better to stick with kindness!

"Alright, let's look at the Destiny Mud Tablet now."

Tang Ling turned away, gazing at the mist. "Legend has it that this tablet originated from the Qin Dynasty, uncovered by ancient human sages at the battlefield where the Candle Dragon Venerable and Qilin Venerable clashed. Many who glimpsed its contents gained forbidden knowledge."

Gu Jianlin also lifted his head, sensing the presence behind the mist to be intimately familiar.

It belonged to the Ancient God Clan, holding records of ancient, hidden truths.

"Focus your gaze; pierce through the mist," Tang Ling said sternly.

Gu Jianlin nodded and fixed his stare beyond the veil of mist.

The mist churned and rippled, slowly revealing an ancient, decaying mud tablet etched with snake-like, writhing inscriptions. These carvings seemed alive, shimmering with an eerie glow.

Bang!

For a fleeting moment, Gu Jianlin's mind resonated with faint echoing booms.

Darkness.

Profound and overwhelming blackness, with a faint gleam of blood-red light illuminating the abyss.

In this instant, he perceived a majestic and enigmatic Black Qilin.

Stalwart like a sculpture, standing in the depths of the void.

Its body trembled violently, golden blood bleeding from its many fissures, radiating brilliance amidst the pitch-black surroundings.

A fearsome aura brewed, hinting at some kind of transformation.

Yet, as the crescendo of rumbling reached its peak, the Black Qilin crumbled and shattered, like a sandcastle collapsing. Cascading fragments fell like waterfalls, reverberating with roars of frustration and fury.

The darkness surged, condensing into a youth wearing a Qilin Mask.

His pitch-black pupils glimmered faintly with golden light.

Those golden, serpentine eyes burned fiercely, inexplicably reflecting his own likeness!

Bang!

A massive fear exploded in the youth's consciousness.

Gu Jianlin's scalp tingled—he realized that what he saw was crucial, yet its true meaning eluded him.

"As we know, Ancient Supremes represent the pinnacle of two worlds. So if there were a way to transfer an Ancient Supreme's power to a human, only the Ancient Supreme themselves could achieve it," he speculated.

The further he thought about it, the more alarmed he became. Startling questions reverberated through his mind: "What exactly is the Qilin Venerable planning?"

The mysterious Qilin Mask.

The long-vanished courier Lao Zhang.

He couldn't even distinguish the truth from the falsehood in his own memories.

"My senior brother once said that the Ancient God Clan's biggest challenge in invading the human world is adapting to the environmental constraints, particularly the Heavenly Person Realm," he recalled.

"If an Ancient Supreme could fully acclimate to human-world conditions, they would undoubtedly become the strongest."

"The Candle Dragon Venerable is unquestionably advancing down this path. That ancient monster has always been active in the real world—it's impossible that they've done nothing. In fact, all five Ancient Supremes are probably exploring ways to adapt to human-life conditions. They are peers, but also competitors."

"But then, what about the Qilin Venerable?"

Imprisoned and suppressed for over two millennia, even if he recovered his peak power and regained freedom, he might not catch up.

Because the other Supremes had already gone ahead.

Unless he could make a radical leap forward.

Or there was another possibility.

In those two thousand years, the Qilin Venerable had also been conducting experiments.

Wait!

Gu Jianlin suddenly thought of a terrifying possibility.

Because he had realized two things.

First, the Qilin Venerable's experiment succeeded.

Second, the Qilin Venerable had returned.

After all, Gu Jianlin himself was the ultimate evidence.

Bang!

His consciousness dissipated in the Soul Skywell.

Chapter 309 - 161: Returning Burial Forest

Qilin Immortal Palace, First Layer, Living Burial Area.

When Gu Jianlin regained consciousness, his entire body was already drenched in cold sweat, gasping for air in large gulps.

Howling winds whipped against his face, lifting the stray locks of hair on his forehead.

He raised his head to look—above the Sky Dome, the surface of a flowing sea shimmered, with light inexplicably piercing through.

The light resembled auroras, flowing in the darkness, radiant and dazzling.

Beneath his feet lay a cracked, scorched wasteland, with gaps filled with bubbling molten lava.

Massive stone pillars surged into the sky, piercing through the flowing seawater on the Sky Dome, reaching even higher realms.

A shadowy dense forest sprawled across the expanse, with giant crown-like trees stretching skyward, faint wolf howls echoing within.

Black crows flapped their wings across the sky, their feathers covered with blood-red pupils.

Scorched campfires, abandoned wrappers, and tattered tents were scattered in the distance.

These were traces left behind by humans.

Colossal stone statues of giants loomed between the cliffs—like kneeling believers in prayer, worshiping toward the heavens.

Deeper in the dense forest lay fragmented ruins, with a protruding human face carved into a smooth stone wall!

Vast, profound.

Boundless, endless.

This was the Qilin Immortal Palace.

The domain of the Qilin Venerable.

Breathtaking, truly.

However, it was still not as shocking as the things he had just seen within the Destiny Mud Tablet.

Gu Jianlin sensed the Black Qilin within his mind, intricately connected to this world.

In the unseen depths, he seemed to hear an ancient, resonant laughter—malicious and unrestrained.

Yet this malice appeared not necessarily directed at him.

The Qilin Venerable had said before: this is both a gift and a curse.

If Gu Jianlin's suspicions were correct, then the meaning of that phrase was quite straightforward to understand.

Because achieving your goal doesn't always require taking action yourself.

For example, if someone were to tell him now that he could fulfill all his wishes by transferring his power to another,

he wouldn't hesitate to agree.

The Qilin Venerable was mad.

Mad with the desire to exact revenge and obliterate certain existences.

As long as the objective was achieved, that was enough.

Whether the Qilin Venerable broke free or not, it didn't matter.

Whether or not the Qilin Venerable could adapt to the world of reality, also didn't matter.

Gu Jianlin's existence had already perfectly resolved those two problems.

Gu Jianlin felt he was created by it—a weapon forged to avenge this world.

Most crucially, the Qilin Venerable was utterly unconcerned that the weapon it had forged might defy its will.

Because it had no reason to worry.

Once one inherited this power, one was bound by this karma.

The Candle Dragon Venerable targeting him was the best proof of that.

"How terrifying."

Gu Jianlin did not know why he was the one chosen to accept this gift and this curse.

Most likely, it had something to do with Old Gu.

What bad luck!

"Your face looks awful. What on earth rattled you so much?"

Tang Ling squatted beside him, resting her chin in her hands, and stared at him with her sharp, icy eyes: "The Destiny Tablet probably only reveals some details about the Ancient God Clan. What you saw is undoubtedly real, and has surely already happened. Theoretically, it shouldn't scare you like this. Or... have you grasped some terrifying Forbidden Spell?"

Even now, I don't know what a Forbidden Spell really is.

Gu Jianlin shook his head, fell silent for a moment, then said, "Nothing."

The matter of the Qilin Venerable was of monumental importance, absolutely unacceptable to share. He had to find a way to muddle through.

Tang Ling glanced at him, her tone light: "For someone so young, you're awfully unadorable. I rarely feel like offering comfort, and you can't even pretend to be a little more panicked?"

Gu Jianlin turned and looked at her, his gaze confused.

A parrot nearby was about to throw out a taunt, but he clamped its beak shut.

Without saying more, Tang Ling said, "Get ready; let's begin the operation."

Only then did Gu Jianlin realize that everyone around them was looking at the two of them with envy.

It was likely because they had entered the Soul Skywell and read the top-secret strategies and insights in the Destiny Mud Tablet.

Such a priceless gift would, in time, undoubtedly widen the gap between them and the others.

And within the Omega Sequence, everyone was a competitor.

"Excuse me, do you need healing?"

Dawn approached him, a gentle and friendly smile on his face: "You seem to be in a bad state."

The Poison Master stood nearby—a woman with a graceful figure but dark, heavy eye circles. She looked terminally sick, as if she might collapse at any moment: "I also have secret medicine for recovery."

She offered a sinister smile: "Don't worry. Nightmare tested the poison; it won't kill anyone."

With that, she opened a bottle of the medicine and downed it.

Moments later, her entire body convulsed, froth spurted from her mouth, and blood streamed from her seven orifices.

Nightmare's expression shifted dramatically as he rushed to support her: "Damn it, she grabbed the wrong bottle!"

Gu Jianlin was utterly dumbfounded. Just entering the Immortal Palace and they were already down one teammate?

"Uh... who are you?"

His voice carried slight hesitation.

Clearly used to such sights, Dawn casually cast a beam of Holy Light, speaking warmly: "I'm Waste Number One."

Bathing in the Holy Light, the Poison Master opened her eyes and murmured weakly, "I'm Waste Number Two."

"And I,"

Nightmare sneered, clearly someone from the Black Iron Faction, his tone dripping with sarcasm, "am Waste Number Three. Looks like our vice-captain didn't even bother reviewing our profiles beforehand—clearly doesn't think we're worth it, huh?"

Gu Jianlin froze. These three were precisely the ones tangled in his mass taunt during the debacle at the West Port Forbidden Zone.

He turned toward the white-haired older sister standing to the side.

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His meaning was clear—why hadn't you given me the team members' information earlier?

Tang Ling blinked her sharp eyes and tilted her head. "You never asked. I thought you didn't care."

The loner chair killer clearly didn't feel the need for teammates.

Gu Jianlin pinched his forehead, visibly exasperated.

In fact, he had only just learned that he was the deputy team leader.

"Dawn is a Fifth Rank Pope, and a very rare hard support. Yes, the kind you're thinking of—the type that can take hits at the frontline with their physical body. Extremely uncommon, though he's a bit slow and... quite old."

Tang Ling hesitated for a moment, unusually choosing to explain: "The Poison Master is a Fifth Rank Medicine King. Although she seems unreliable, that's just a side effect of testing her drugs on herself. Her medicines are actually very effective, and she's skilled in both poisoning and detoxification. Nightmare is a Fifth Rank Prophet. Although I don't like Judgement Court people, he barely qualifies as an elite."

A Fourth Rank critiquing three Fifth Ranks.

Yet none of the three seemed particularly bothered by it.

It was most likely because this woman had fought her way to this position.

"Our side has no major issues. Even though they're all a bit... peculiar, they're all support types."

Tang Ling cleared her throat. "What about your side?"

Gu Jianlin hesitated for a moment, then turned to the members of the second tier.

"Codename Mountain Ghost, Divine Path, Fourth-Order Cloud Monarch."

A young man clad in a black trench coat spoke in a hoarse tone, his appearance cold and sinister, his body covered in tattoos.

"Codename Demon Blade, Ghost Slayer Path, Fourth-tier Shura."

This was a tall, voluptuous woman with wine-red wavy curls, a delicate and alluring face, dressed in tight leather that accentuated her figure, with seven long blades in scabbards strapped to her back.

"My codename is Blue Whale, Heavenly Master Path, Fourth Rank Feather Master."

A scholarly-looking young man adjusted his glasses, appearing to be the most normal of the group.

The next moment, everyone's eyes dropped to the last member—a troublemaker in their midst.

Ji Xiaoyu placed her hands on her hips, her expression changing slightly. "What are you looking at?"

"Most others are relatively normal. Even the poisons made by the Poison Master are proper combat toxins."

Tang Ling, standing loftily, spoke indifferently: "But the most abnormal person here... is you!"

Ji Xiaoyu braced herself like a foe awaiting battle. "You wicked woman, what are you trying to do?"

Clearly, these two were longtime enemies with old grudges to settle.

When their eyes met, sparks seemed to ignite in the air.

"Wicked woman! Don't assume I can't actually beat you!"

Ji Xiaoyu snarled, "My grandmother is the President!"

Tang Ling replied expressionlessly, "My master is the Silver King."

"My grandmother is the President!"

"My master is the Silver King."

"My grandmother is the President!"

It looked like this was about to escalate into a brawl.

"Relax. Her poison bag is already empty."

Gu Jianlin waved dismissively. "I have all her formulas. She won't be causing any significant trouble."

The group was momentarily stunned.

Especially the Poison Master, who stared at him with a fervent expression—as if she'd just discovered a priceless treasure.

Ji Xiaoyu bit her handkerchief in frustration, gnashing her teeth.

To be fair, the girl's face was quite delicate, with platinum-dyed short hair, making her look petite and adorable.

It was just that her expressions twisted too much.

Once upon a time, she was a queen. But now, like a tiger fallen from grace, she had to endure constant bullying.

Everyone sighed in relief.

The Little Princess's lethality came almost entirely from her poisons.

Without them, she was like a tiger without its fangs.

Her combat effectiveness instantly plummeted by ninety percent.

After all, no matter how unruly the Little Princess was, she wouldn't sabotage a mission or stab anyone in the back mid-operation.

But if she carried poison and got cornered in frustration, things could get... ugly.

She was practically a walking disaster.

"Hey, where's Instructor Wan?"

Someone suddenly noticed his absence.

Everyone turned their heads and saw a towering man sitting blankly under a tree. His face was both dazed and contorted, muttering under his breath: "Slaughter Domain, is this it? Slaughter Domain, is this it? Slaughter Domain, is this it? No way, this is impossible. How did it end like this? I can't accept it..."

In the next moment, a thought seemed to strike him, and he broke into an utterly deranged laugh.

He resembled a madman.

Gu Jianlin exchanged looks with the parrot, both feeling an ominous chill about this mission.

The ecosystem within the Qilin Immortal Palace was drastically different from the real world, though there were some similarities.

Here, one could breathe freely. Winds howled, and mist rose.

However, Gu Jianlin could only sense faint traces of the Ancient God's Breath—far less potent than what he'd experienced in the tomb, not even enough for him to initiate Ancient God Transformation.

He roughly guessed the reason.

In the distance, a resplendent golden hue spread across the horizon, subtly altering the rules of this realm.

Heavenly Person Realm!

Gu Jianlin's caution heightened.

Thankfully, he was adaptable.

If Ancient God Transformation wasn't an option, he could always rely on Breathing Technique.

He rubbed his fingers together—the air was heavy with humidity.

Mist enveloped the surroundings, and ahead lay an endless, murky forest. Crown-like ancient trees pierced the sky.

Though ostensibly a forest, it felt like a massive graveyard.

Dull and lifeless.

Beneath the oppressive silence, distant roars trembled from the heart of the woods.

"One of the top ten Omegas went missing in that graveyard," Tang Ling suddenly remarked.

Gu Jianlin squinted, scrutinizing the traces around him, lost in thought.

"We are currently in the Living Burial Area. Based on the current map, we've named it the Returning Burial Forest. It's about fifty kilometers from Dawn City, the headquarters of the Dawn Combat Sequence," Nightmare said as he produced a crystal ball, his body wrapped in a black wizard robe. His expression betrayed no emotion. "In other words, this territory is beyond the Ether Association's jurisdiction. It's highly likely we could encounter forces from hostile factions here. If we encounter trouble, timely rescue will be nearly impossible. If supplies run short, there will be no logistical support to rely on."

The Poison Master said softly, "Supplies can be my responsibility. The Qilin Immortal Palace is full of medicinal herbs. I can craft various secret medicines to replenish everyone's strength and spirituality—so long as I survive."

"Recon can be handled by Nightmare, and I'll manage the healing," Dawn assured. "So, no need to worry too much."

Their task this time was simply to find clues and rescue a missing person.

If a serious problem arose, there was always Instructor Wan.

Although the dimensional stability of the first layer of the Qilin Immortal Palace was currently insufficient, any surge of spirituality on par with or exceeding the Holy Land Level would result in being forcibly ejected.

But the Ether Association had means to stabilize the dimension forcefully.

The time might be short, but for someone of Instructor Wan's caliber, it would be enough.

Moreover, they carried specialized alchemy weapons capable of opening a wormhole.

In other words, reinforcements were an option.

Aside from the four people in the first tier, this was the first time any of the rest had ventured into the Ancient God Realm.

That explained their collective nervousness.

The only exception: Ji Xiaoyu.

She bounded around the dry wilderness like an unleashed husky—fearless and utterly at ease.

When asked, it turned out that this troublemaker had been to the Ancient God Realm at the age of seven.

And not just anywhere—she had roamed the notoriously dangerous Buzhou Mountain.

Wan Runtu, bearing thirteen weapons on his back, trailed behind the greenhorns with a variety of expressions.

At times sinister, at times apathetic, at times quietly sneering.

At this moment, Gu Jianlin inserted the storage card into his phone.

At the same time, he glanced at the string of stone beads on his wrist, imbuing them with a trace of spirituality.

In an instant, his gaze shifted toward the northwest.

Through the stone beads, he sensed a familiar spiritual fluctuation.

Moon Princess.

For some reason, he suddenly felt at ease.