

Ancient 33

Chapter 33 - 15 Divine!_2

The waning moon illuminated the night sky, thick and red like blood.

The bedroom light was still on, the clock frozen at midnight.

"Phew."

He let out a deep breath, feeling as if both his body and soul had reached ascension. Something intangible, called spirituality, became clear, overflowing in his mind and coursing through his entire being.

Spirituality had always existed within him, but it was so weak that using that peculiar syllable in the Qilin Immortal Palace left him feeling as if his brain had been wrung dry.

But now, that indescribable sensation nourished his mind and body to an unparalleled comfort.

It felt as though he had woken from a deep slumber, granted a new lease on life. Even his senses, dulled and familiar over seventeen years, had been overturned, merging five senses with a sixth and adding a seventh transformation.

For the first time, Gu Jianlin experienced the rhythm of life!

Outside the window, the courtyard's two jujube trees — meticulously cared for by his mother — pulsated with vitality. He could almost hear the symphony of life emanating from them, joyous and melodious in the silent night.

Even the grass in the soil radiated intense life energy, playing a lively folk tune.

The skinny black cat leaped onto the wall, frail and unhealthy, singing a melancholic ballad.

Then there was the girl in the neighboring bedroom — though a wall separated them and he couldn't see her, he could feel her life force, like a glacier frozen in Arctic snowstorms: cold yet lushly alive, akin to a dignified and elegant piano melody.

The rhythm of life across all worldly beings was laid bare before him.

Gu Jianlin was now absolutely certain — he had truly become an Ascender!

"Barely 80 pounds, yet surprisingly healthy."

Gu Jianlin sat on his bed and grasped his first ability as a Priest.

Life Perception!

It had to be said — this ability seemed incredibly practical. From now on, if anyone in his family fell ill, he'd be able to diagnose it at a glance.

He wouldn't even need to go to the hospital.

"If this ability could be combined with profile analysis, wouldn't the results be even better?"

Curious and intrigued, Gu Jianlin decided to test the combination of profile analysis and Life Perception.

Closing his eyes, he carefully felt the rhythm of life of the girl next door, savoring its nuances.

Su Youzhu should already be asleep; the lights in her room were off, her breathing even and quiet.

Meanwhile, Gu Jianlin grabbed paper and pencil from the desk, preparing to sketch out a personality profile.

As the pencil scratched against the paper, it produced a pleasing sound.

Moments later, he opened his eyes and silently examined the freshly drawn personality profile.

On the blank sheet of paper, black and white lines depicted a petite figure curled in pain on a bed.

On her body were droplets of blood.

"Damn it..."

Gu Jianlin's expression turned strange. This didn't mean the girl was injured.

It meant... she was about to start her period.

He even managed to pinpoint the timing — most likely tomorrow evening.

Gu Jianlin rubbed his forehead, incredulous that the very first use of his newfound abilities as an Ascender was to predict something so trivial. If this got out, he'd undoubtedly be labeled a freak.

He balled up the sketch and prepared to toss it, contemplating whether it was wise. In the end, he decided otherwise and went out to flush it down the toilet.

Then he pressed the flush button.

Safe now.

He turned to the mirror to scrutinize his reflection.

Gu Jianlin knew he was good-looking; his reflection was still as handsome and delicate as ever.

Yet, perhaps due to becoming a Priest, his aura had grown noticeably colder.

He activated profile analysis again. The familiar figure in the mirror rippled like water, shifting and changing.

For a fleeting moment, the reflected self wore a white sacrificial robe, countless distorted black talismans surging across the fabric like tides. He stood atop an ancient stone altar, eerie and enigmatic.

Indeed, his profile analysis could evaluate an Ascender's Inheritance Path!

Suddenly, a faint pain throbbed on his forehead as a pale flame-shaped mark appeared.

It swayed like Ghost Fire in the night.

Gu Jianlin was startled — this was the bizarre flame that had appeared earlier in the illusion!

With a mere thought, the pale fire vanished without a trace.

"This flame should also be one of the Divine's core abilities, but the exact usage remains unknown. Life Perception feels like a passive ability, whereas this flame seems like an active one."

Gu Jianlin muttered to himself before returning to his room and locking the door.

But then, something inexplicable occurred.

His laptop suddenly powered on by itself, entering the boot-up sequence.

Gu Jianlin froze.

The laptop seemed remotely controlled, opening a webpage and typing in a URL after booting.

"Ding, identity verification successful."

The laptop's camera blinked red, as though it were watching him.

Gu Jianlin felt relieved he was fully clothed at the moment, not stark naked.

"Ether Association, Reserve Investigator, Gu Jianlin."

"Congratulations on completing the soul trial and becoming one of the countless Ascenders. From today, the doors to the Ether Association will open for you. Unknown opportunities and adventures, along with the mission to protect the Human World, await you in the future."

"Welcome to Deep Space. I am Al Taixu, here to serve you."

On the computer screen, the background was an endless expanse of stars. Amidst the starlight, a figure appeared.

A stunning young woman clad in a black-and-white lace maid outfit, holding a broom!

She resembled a housekeeper.

Her mellifluous, alluring voice played through the speakers, as if designed to intoxicate.

"Are you... an AI?"

Gu Jianlin hesitated for a moment. "Have I officially joined the Ether Association? Why are you appearing now?"

"Yes, because I've always been watching you," Taixu replied, raising a finger to point upward.

Gu Jianlin looked up, only to see a white ceiling.

In that instant, he understood.

The AI must have referred to a satellite!

"I've been under satellite surveillance all night?"

Gu Jianlin frowned.

"That's correct," Taixu replied obediently. "Only when the Horus Eye Satellite detected that your soul's energy fluctuations had changed did I appear."

"So you hacked into my laptop?"

Taixu smiled apologetically. "Forgive me if I offended you. But... you're quite unique."

Gu Jianlin concealed his emotions. "Unique, huh?"

Taixu responded with a smile. "This year, I've assisted 344 Ascenders in total, 52% of whom are male. But your laptop is the cleanest among all male Ascenders. No... study materials in the hard drive."

Gu Jianlin was momentarily stunned, feeling himself brush the edge of social death.

If his classmates knew, they'd surely die of embarrassment on the spot.

His laptop indeed lacked study materials — not due to skewed preferences, but because he simply hadn't been interested.

"Why did you hack my laptop?"

Gu Jianlin found the intrusion unsettling, as if he'd lost his privacy.

"Apologies, but it is part of the Ether Association's vetting process for new members," Taixu explained. "Every Ascender joining the Association must have their personal details, family background, religious beliefs, voting inclinations, and even their past statements on the internet scrutinized to ensure accuracy before approval."

Although Gu Jianlin felt uncomfortable, he didn't object.

After all, he was a clean presence online.

Rarely ever posting comments.

Unlike the girl next door.

If she were to join the Ether Association, who knows what they might uncover.

"Especially you — a rare Independent Awakened and a descendant of the Gu Family — it's only natural to be cautious," Taixu said gently, "I hope you can understand."

Gu Jianlin froze, immediately asking, "What Gu Family?"

Taixu seemed surprised that this young man was completely unaware, then smiled faintly.

In an instant, a file began downloading on the computer.

Its title was unmistakable — Ascender Families, Peak City's Gu Family.

Gu Jianlin's pupils contracted in shock and disbelief.