

Ancient 461

Chapter 461 - 226 Ji Zhou, Divine General_3

Gu Jianlin definitely wasn't trying to show off. Last time he came back from the Returning Burial Forest, he didn't have nearly this much.

But if he said it out loud, no one would believe him.

He might as well stay silent.

"Brother Lin, have you ever wandered around Dawn City? Let me tell you, this place is enormous. The Omega Sequence's resource vault is here, including the newly opened Cloud Bright Secret Treasure, all located in the Heroic Soul Hall. It's heavily guarded, with two powerhouses alternating on duty. Most days, Director Chen oversees the Heroic Soul Hall, though occasionally a Divine General will show up to take charge."

Cheng Youyu complained, "That Divine General has a bad temper and a really odd personality. Especially her gaze—it feels like it raises your blood pressure. The weird part is, even though she's a Divine General, no one knows her title, not even my dad has heard of her."

Nie Xiangsi quickly interjected, "Shhh, don't speak carelessly about a Divine General. Are you nuts?"

Gu Jianlin was slightly taken aback when he heard this: "What's that Divine General's name?"

"Didn't I already tell you? No one knows her title."

"It's said she's someone close to the President."

"She's from the Ji Family."

Gu Jianlin felt as though he had a vague suspicion in his heart.

Just then, he suddenly noticed a peculiar structure.

It was a grand hall resembling a pyramid, with a hollow framework. Golden light filtered through the gaps, illuminating the dark interior and a towering stone tablet.

On the tablet, lines of blood-red characters shimmered in and out of existence, flickering eerily.

"What is that?"

Gu Jianlin asked.

"Oh, that's called a Blood..."

Cheng Youyu got stuck, clearly not the most literate person around.

"That's the Blood Tablet. The Ancient God Clan also has grudges and killings. Wars frequently erupt between different clans, and even betrayals occur within the same clan. Legend has it that the Qilin Venerable used the blood of his enemies to engrave their names onto ancient stone tablets. Whoever presented the heads of these enemies would be granted supreme rewards."

Nie Xiangsi explained, "In the Ancient God Realm, humanity adapted this tradition and created the Blood Tablet. Most of the names here are Ascenders with red bounties on them—targets that the Ether Association has marked for death."

Gu Jianlin thought to himself, Well, I just learned something new.

Suddenly, he spotted a familiar name on the Blood Tablet.

Moon Princess.

Reward: 54,068 Merit Points!

"Moon Princess?"

Gu Jianlin squinted. "That's a massive bounty."

Cheng Youyu glanced at it and said, "Oh, Brother Lin, do you remember that Wang Taisheng who you beat up? He pooled all his assets—including merit points and wealth—to put up this bounty. And those merit points are just the tip of the iceberg. As an inspector for the Night Watchers, his family fortune is mind-blowingly vast."

"He's really going all out to kill the Moon Princess, isn't he?"

Cheng cleared his throat.

Nie Xiangsi nudged him, signaling him to stop talking recklessly.

Many in the Ether Association knew about Gu Jianlin's close relationship with the Moon Princess.

But just then, the bounty under the Moon Princess's name suddenly disappeared.

Her ranking plummeted to the bottom.

"What's going on?"

Gu Jianlin was startled.

"Oh, I totally forgot to tell you, Inspector Wang Taisheng was dismissed from his position today."

Cheng Youyu said, "Brother Lin, your intel is outdated."

"No, he wasn't just dismissed."

Nie Xiangsi spoke softly, "He's dead."

Gu Jianlin was shocked. "Dead?"

"Yes, after being dismissed today, Wang Taisheng wasn't satisfied and caused a scene everywhere. Later in the afternoon, while at a hotel, he mysteriously fell victim to an assassination and died. Officially, it's being declared as a sudden stroke, but the truth is he was killed."

Nie Xiangsi said quietly, "My uncle mentioned that all his assets were confiscated."

Cheng Youyu was stunned. "His assets were confiscated? Doesn't that scream faction power struggle?"

Gu Jianlin frowned. Sure, it was a good death, but it all seemed too fishy.

He hadn't even made a move, and the man was already dead.

"Forget about that for now. When we get to the Heroic Soul Hall, make sure not to say anything reckless. That Divine General has a bad temper."

Cheng Youyu warned, "Brother Lin, please don't provoke anyone unnecessarily!"

Nie Xiangsi whispered, "Rumor has it that this mysterious Divine General once beat someone to a pulp just because she didn't like the look of them, then dumped them on the street."

The so-called Heroic Soul Hall was also an Ancient God Clan structure. Its outward appearance resembled a pitch-black spire, with an interior made up of countless mirrored surfaces, spiraling black stone staircases leading upward to the top.

Countless colossal statues lowered their heads, as if lost souls were seeking redemption.

A woman wearing a beige trench coat stood there, holding a cup of tea in her hand, admiring the sculptures.

Gu Jianlin thought to himself, So it really is her.

Ji Zhou!

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An ancient, dimly lit hall, Ji Zhou turned around to face the three young individuals.

It was said that Divine Generals were at least of the Seventh Rank, Holy Land Level. No one knew what level this woman had reached, but the instant she cast a glance backward, an immense sense of oppression could be felt.

The ancient stone tower trembled, and the towering stone statues also shuddered.

"Senior."

Gu Jianlin nodded in greeting: "We meet again."

Cheng Youyu quickly said, "Senior Ji, we're here to exchange some materials for promotion!"

Faced with such pressure, Nie Xiangsi was frightened pale, not daring to utter a single word. She shrank to the back, afraid to even poke her head out.

"The material storage is on the second floor."

Ji Zhou said indifferently, "Go ahead."

"Thank you, Senior! Farewell, Senior!" Cheng Youyu and Nie Xiangsi felt as though they had narrowly escaped calamity. After exchanging a glance, they hurried up the stone steps.

The spiraling black stone staircase suddenly roared into motion. In the blink of an eye, the two of them vanished completely, swallowed by the darkness, with not even the rhythms of their life remaining. If one didn't know better, they might have thought they had been killed instantly.

Gu Jianlin's expression grew peculiar.

"It's merely a spatial trick of the Alchemy Matrix, no need to overreact."

Ji Zhou held a teacup in her hand, speaking casually, "Tea?"

For an instant, a steaming hot teacup appeared out of thin air before Gu Jianlin. Within the cup, light brown tea leaves floated, exuding a rich fragrance.

If not for his quick reflexes, the cup might have fallen and shattered on the ground.

"This is Heavenly Fragrant Tea, nurtured with the blood of Ancient God Seeds. Seeing as you're about to advance, I wouldn't offer this to you otherwise. Your rapid advancement may appear promising, but ultimately, your foundation is weak. Over time, this will affect your psyche and temperament."

Ji Zhou held the teacup close, inhaling lightly: "Heavenly Fragrant Tea can nourish your spirit, preventing your overwhelming power from crushing your rationality and turning you into someone like the King of Qing or the Red King—a lunatic."

A parrot screeched, "What a savage tongue she has!"

Gu Jianlin said earnestly, "I don't know if the Red King is a lunatic, but my teacher is not."

At these words, Ji Zhou looked at him with newfound interest. "Explain."

Without hesitation, Gu Jianlin spoke, "My teacher's philosophy is straightforward. When humanity faces the crisis posed by the Ancient God Clan, we cannot cling to outdated traditions. We must grasp more formidable powers because the Ancient God Clan's civilization hasn't stagnated. Humanity... doesn't actually have the great advantage we imagine."

He paused: "What's more, my teacher doesn't arbitrarily kill innocents. He only targets members of The Order of the Hidden. Although the Evolution Path is indeed perilous and could cause massive upheaval, we cannot abandon it entirely out of fear."

Abandon it entirely out of fear.

Ji Zhou raised an eyebrow and sipped her tea. "I'll tentatively agree. The King of Qing killing those members of The Order of the Hidden was an act of relatively minor destruction to prevent greater crises in the future. However, his reason for pioneering the Evolution Path is his belief that the Heavenly Person Realm cannot serve as a weapon to protect the Human World."

She raised her hand and pointed to the sky.

Above the spire's dome, dazzling golden light radiated intensely.

"This is the Heavenly Person Realm, a peerless marvel created by the Heavenly Person's Wedge. For over two thousand years since the Qin and Han Era, the Ancient God Clan hasn't managed to invade even an inch of the Human World."

She said: "Take the President, for example. At her peak, she could compete against an Ancient Supreme in the real world. And an Ancient Supreme would never dare set foot in the Heavenly Person Realm."

Gu Jianlin understood her meaning and replied, "Even the Sun will burn out in billions of years."

There is nothing eternal in this world.

"Evidence?"

Ji Zhou gazed at him deeply with profound eyes.

Gu Jianlin fell silent for a moment and shook his head.

But deep down, he had an answer.

Because his very existence was evidence.

"Still, from my personal perspective, I do agree with you. The Heavenly Person Realm indeed might be cracked, and humanity truly needs stronger power to defend this world."

Ji Zhou's lips curled into a faint smile: "But why can't it be upgrading the Heavenly Person's Wedge?"

Gu Jianlin lowered his eyes and drank his tea.

He thought to himself that it was better not to say more. He had only just become an amphibian; he didn't want to get dragged into another mess.

"Why have you come today?"

Ji Zhou asked calmly.

Gu Jianlin replied earnestly, "I want to select a growth-type Mythical Weapon."

"Do you have enough merit?"

"I should, and it's plenty—absurdly plentiful."

"Heh."

With the faint sound of crisp footsteps, Ji Zhou turned and ascended the spiraling staircase.

"Follow me."

Gu Jianlin instinctively realized that this woman's attitude toward him was noticeably different from her attitude toward others.

Though she seemed cold, she was, in fact, quite amicable.

With a loud rumble, the black stone spiral staircase rotated, and the surrounding scenery spun wildly as chaotic sounds echoed all around.

Unbeknownst to them, they found themselves in a massive museum, surrounded on all sides by ancient and exquisitely crafted display stands showcasing all sorts of strange artifacts, as if they had entered an antique shop.

"This is the third floor, which contains the Omega Sequence Mythical Weapon resource library."

Ji Zhou said indifferently, "The level above is the location of the Cloud Bright Secret Treasure. However, it's not exchanged for merit but earned through bounty missions to collect ancient tokens before you're allowed to observe it. The Cloud Bright Secret Treasure is quite the treasure; even now, its full value hasn't been completely unearthed."

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She seemed to ponder for a moment: "If you're perceptive enough, you could learn quite a few Forbidden Spells in here, including Breathing Techniques. Hmm... except for the Heavenly Realm, that's top secret and never to be shared."

Gu Jianlin glanced around, feeling somewhat lost.

On the display stand, mirrors reflecting ghostly faces were winking at him.

There was also a sinister Demon Blade exuding eerie ghost energy, dripping with fresh blood—utterly horrifying.

In addition, Green Jade Flying Swords hovered and darted through the air, radiating a biting chill, menacingly sharp.

On the massive bookshelves, ancient books jumped around energetically.

A grotesque skeleton, like a monstrous specimen, stood tall at the edge of his field of vision, appearing like a dinosaur.

Its hollow eye sockets, blazing with icy flames, shot a fleeting glance in his direction.

Gu Jianlin remarked, "Are all these Mythical Weapons?"

"Mhm."

Ji Zhou replied nonchalantly, "They're all Growth Type Mythical Weapons, and each one is alive. Usually, they're suppressed; otherwise, they'd cause an uproar. Even so, managing them is exhausting, like wrangling a bunch of unruly kids—utterly exasperating."

Gu Jianlin curiously asked, "You, as a Divine General, why were you assigned here?"

Logically speaking, Divine Generals are supposed to be the Guardian Gods of the Human World, safeguarding their lands. Being stationed here feels like a waste of talent.

Though Mythical Weapons are important, no one is capable of invading this place.

Unless Gu Jianlin was mistaken, this so-called Heroic Soul Hall could likely be teleported straight to the Soul Skywell at any time.

"Oh."

Ji Zhou's face turned cold as she said, "Because I badmouthed the President and got sidelined."

Gu Jianlin was taken aback. "The President is that petty?"

Ji Zhou was silent for a moment before replying, "Yes, women are hard to deal with, especially a woman like her."

"Well said!"

The parrot screeched obnoxiously.

Gu Jianlin smacked it, grumbling, "The President has screwed me over, too."

Ji Zhou glanced at him. "Yu?"

Gu Jianlin thought for a moment and replied, "Yes, initially, I found that little girl quite annoying. But later, I realized she's actually quite endearing; she has her shining moments—she's not that insufferable. By the way, do you know why she dives into alchemy?"

Ji Zhou replied indifferently, "She's not an Alchemist, yet she wants to concoct a cure to reverse contamination."

"Heh."

She sneered dismissively. "Plenty of people think she's delusional."

Gu Jianlin frowned, responding earnestly, "Please, don't say that. Even if it's a pipe dream, the child's intentions are good. You shouldn't belittle her like that. Besides, who says it's merely a pipe dream?"

Ji Zhou paused, taken aback.

"My father mentioned it once—there is indeed a drug capable of saving the Fallen."

Gu Jianlin said solemnly, "I'll help her find it."

Ji Zhou unexpectedly stopped mid-stride, her hand holding the teacup freezing briefly.

A trace of surprise flickered in her eyes before she quickly concealed it.

After a long silence, she said, "Yu is also a member of the Ji Family. Having a team leader like you is, in a way, her blessing. So, the President owes you one, doesn't she?"

Gu Jianlin decided not to respond, but the parrot chimed in, "Isn't that the truth? Raising uneducated children is their grandmother's failing! She won't care for her own kid, yet expects daycare to pick up the slack—and still charges a fee!"

What the hell.

Gu Jianlin was stunned. This parrot's intelligence was off the charts.

Even Ji Zhou glanced at the parrot in astonishment.

"This little creature is something else—shamelessly sharp-tongued."

She said with a faint smirk, "You've earned 170,000 Merit Points. Pick whatever you want. The Ether Association is the world leader in Growth Type Mythical Weapons—every single one of these was plundered... uh, I mean, collected by the President."

Gu Jianlin caught the slip immediately. "Plundered?"

Ji Zhou stayed silent.

Gu Jianlin was taken aback. Gazing at the vast array of Growth Type Mythical Weapons—easily over a hundred of them—he was stunned.

All of these were actually plundered!

Unbelievable.

He was shaken to his core and couldn't help but ask, "What kind of person is the President?"

Ji Zhou gazed at the Mythical Weapons before speaking calmly, "Cold, domineering, rebellious, ruthless, brutal, selfish, paranoid, and old-fashioned. Every trait historically associated with tyrants—she embodies them all."

Gu Jianlin instinctively felt this to be outright slander. "But the President's achievements are undeniable."

"Hah."

Ji Zhou let out a cold laugh. "Those aren't the President's achievements; they're the sacrifices of the people under her command. Our dear President has simply been lucky—born in the Golden Age. The ones truly deserving of praise are those who followed her along the way, shedding blood and tears."

"Sadly, they were stuck with a boss like her."

She sighed deeply and added, "Most of those people are dead now."

Gu Jianlin froze, detecting a mix of resentment and grievance.

"The world stands at a crossroads, yet she hesitates, torn between preserving the Ether Association and avoiding its devastation—indecisive and weak."

Ji Zhou said, "Calling her a Vulgar Master isn't entirely wrong."

No, no, no.

I didn't say that—you said it.

Gu Jianlin kept his face expressionless, staying silent.

No way he'd take this bait.

"Don't worry; the President isn't here."

Ji Zhou cast him a glance. "But you'd best be careful—the President and the King of Qing have never gotten along. Two hundred years ago, they were as close as mother and son, but the President is ruthless enough to kill even her own child. Their relationship soured completely after the King of Qing nearly destroyed the Ether Association back then."

Chapter 464 - 227: The Knife of Candle Dragon Venerable_3

Gu Jianlin's heart tightened as he carefully studied the woman before him, asking, "How do you know so much?"

Ji Zhou raised her brow in displeasure, catching the skepticism in his gaze: "What do you mean?"

"Senior, how old are you?"

Gu Jianlin asked bluntly.

Ji Zhou didn't expect the young man to be so bold and hesitated for a moment: "Four hundred and seventy-two years."

Gu Jianlin's eyes widened: "Over four hundred years?"

"I am of the same generation as the President."

Ji Zhou replied calmly: "We have lived this long because we take good care of ourselves. Your teacher is different, though. The King of Qing has clashed with the Ancient Supreme far too many times, exhausting a significant amount of his life force."

Gu Jianlin's heart stirred: "Who has he fought so many times?"

Ji Zhou turned to gaze at the boundless sandstorm outside and said indifferently, "Xuanming Venerable, twice. Vermilion Bird Venerate, three times. Bai Ze Venerable, twelve times. Candle Dragon Venerable, seventy-four times."

"Wait a moment."

Gu Jianlin felt as though he had been struck by lightning: "Candle Dragon Venerable, seventy-four times?"

A trace of nostalgia flickered through Ji Zhou's eyes: "Yes. I watched him grow up back then. Even in those days, he loved leveraging the Heavenly Person Realm to spar playfully with that supreme figure. If not for those numerous battles, he might not have grown to this extent. Candle Dragon Venerable never harbored killing intent; it seemed more like he was playing with him."

She pondered her phrasing for a moment: "Or perhaps, testing something with the strongest human in history."

Gu Jianlin found himself lost in thought.

He himself could recklessly traverse the Ancient God Realm, provoking that old monster.

Calculating it that way.

Gu Jianlin and his teacher were evenly matched.

"Actually, the Human World's current stability owes much to the King of Qing repeatedly disturbing the Ancient Supreme's slumber. However, the one who contributed the most to the Human World is also the one who caused the most destruction."

Ji Zhou remarked: "That's why the President dislikes him... You're his student, but don't mimic his actions. Just master what he teaches you and steer clear of his bad habits."

Gu Jianlin fell silent for a while: "Teacher never tells me these things."

"The King of Qing has his own method of educating students. He emphasizes gradual progress, allowing things to unfold naturally."

Ji Zhou said: "If it's not something you need to know now, he naturally won't tell you."

Gu Jianlin thought this made sense. His teacher and senior brother were always mysterious, frequently disappearing as if treating him like a child.

Never telling him anything.

Never requiring him to do anything.

Suddenly, he spoke: "Senior."

Ji Zhou glanced at him: "Yes?"

"I heard from my senior brother that Teacher's old wounds have flared up again, and he's in a lot of pain."

Gu Jianlin asked, "Is there a way to ease it?"

Ji Zhou pondered: "From my perspective, this is his own doing. He's old, burdened with too many chronic ailments, and most importantly, he defies the heavens, matching gods with a mortal body. The strain is immense. Extending his life would be incredibly difficult, and right now he must be in extreme pain."

Extreme pain.

Gu Jianlin was stunned.

"Your level of evolution is likely deeper than Tang Ling's; otherwise, during the incident at Black Cloud City, you wouldn't have been able to eliminate those weaklings, even if they were injured."

Ji Zhou looked deeply at him: "You must have experienced the pain of being countered by the rules."

Gu Jianlin was taken aback.

He had forgotten about this.

Back in Black Cloud City, he'd barely wielded a small amount of power to kill a few weaklings.

And nearly fainted from the pain, only recovering later thanks to Dragon Marrow Liquid.

Whereas his teacher demonstrated Quasi-Supreme Level!

"The difference in power between the King of Qing and the strength you used that time measures the magnitude of his pain compared to yours."

Ji Zhou stated calmly: "To my knowledge, he cannot avoid it for now."

Gu Jianlin suddenly grew silent, thinking of the elderly man sitting in the wheelchair, his heart inexplicably heavy.

"Is there no way to ease it?"

He asked.

Ji Zhou stared at him for a few seconds.

"You're quite filial."

She remarked: "There is a way. Theoretically, somewhere in the Sea of Eternal Life, there might be something that can alleviate his pain. Of course, this is merely theoretical; whether such a thing exists, no one can say for sure."

Upon hearing there might be hope, Gu Jianlin felt much more relieved: "Senior, I want to join the Vanguard for this investigation of the Sea of Eternal Life. But I feel my strength isn't adequate yet. Is there any Mythical Weapon suitable for me?"

Looking out at the array of Mythical Weapons, they truly were numerous.

For some reason, Ji Zhou suddenly smiled strangely.

Gu Jianlin suddenly felt a chill run down his spine.

Then, the eerie smile vanished.

As if it had been an illusion.

"There is something."

Ji Zhou said, "And there are three options."

Gu Jianlin adopted a serious, eager-to-learn expression.

Ji Zhou pulled out a tablet from her pocket, tapped on it casually a couple of times, and handed it to him: "The first is a Demon Sword unearthed from the Nordic World Tree, named Lei Wating. The Sword of Apocalypse, also the Sword of Conflagration. Back then, Thunder considered this Mythical Weapon but ultimately abandoned it due to poor compatibility."

"The second originates from the Fusang Divine Palace and is called the Heavenly Divine Throne. It matches your nickname quite nicely. It's a massive throne that can be stored in a matrix, summoned when necessary."

She added: "However, it's a defensive-type Mythical Weapon."

Gu Jianlin shook his head: "I don't need defense."

"The last one is quite interesting."

Ji Zhou looked at him: "It's a Tang Blade, and according to records, it was created by Candle Dragon Venerable."

Gu Jianlin blurted out: "Old monster?"

Ji Zhou frowned: "What?"

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Gu Jianlin cleared his throat and spoke seriously, "It's nothing. Is that the blade created by the Candle Dragon Venerable?"

He glanced around, searching through the bizarre chaos of dancing demons.

"No need to look; it's not here."

Ji Zhou raised a hand and made a sweeping motion in the air, his palm emanating intricate, ancient patterns.

Space in front of them twisted and revealed three enormous chasms.

The first chasm burned with blistering flames, faintly revealing a menacing blood-red demon sword suspended mid-air. The terrifying heat warped the air, sending waves of scorching heat rolling outward.

The second chasm gleamed with golden brilliance; deep within the darkness stood an imposing, ancient golden throne. Its immense and majestic stature was adorned with fiery crimson patterns, faintly aglow with light.

As for the third chasm, an eerie blood-red light flickered. Within it hung a blood-colored Tang Blade, illuminating the surrounding darkness. The blade exuded a torrential, lava-like bloodlust. The area surrounding the blade felt like stepping into Hell.

Gu Jianlin was slightly mesmerized by the miraculous scene.

A true growth-type Mythical Weapon—it's certainly extraordinary.

Lei Wating needed no introduction—violent and blazing—but unfortunately, he wasn't a sword user.

The Heavenly Divine Throne stirred even the instincts engraved in his genes, yet its sheer size and weight were a problem.

The idea of lifting that throne and smashing it into someone seemed... challenging.

The last Tang Blade looked promising; after all, he had a secondary path he could use.

Moreover, the aura of bloodlust indeed reminded him of that old monster.

"This blade is called Jiuyin."

Ji Zhou's eyes flashed with a hint of regret as he introduced, "This is the weapon discarded by the Candle Dragon Venerable. Although it appears to be a blade, it's in fact a domain-type weapon, capable of generating the Senluo Ghost Domain. As for specific details, I can't recall—they've long been forgotten because it hasn't been used in ages."

A blade capable of generating its own domain—now that seemed intriguing.

Gu Jianlin asked, "Does this blade have a story?"

"Heh."

Ji Zhou said, "Since ancient times, the Candle Dragon Venerable has constantly been a major adversary of the human world. Every time it awoke from slumber, it would disguise itself as a human, regaining its strength and understanding the progress of civilization within human realms. In the year 640 AD, the Candle Dragon Venerable transferred the spirituality of a certain Mythical Weapon into a Tang Blade."

"That's how Jiuyin was born, earning its name by killing two Bai Ze Ancestors' primal bloodline."

Ji Zhou continued, "But ultimately, this blade met its end by the hand of Bai Ze Venerable."

Gu Jianlin cast a doubtful glance at the blade. "Destroyed?"

"Growth-type Mythical Weapons possess self-repairing capabilities—they are living entities."

Ji Zhou said, "But the Candle Dragon Venerable is nothing if not arrogant. Once something of hers gets destroyed, she won't deign to use it again. This blade was buried in the Netherworld River beneath Buzhou Mountain until it resurfaced five hundred years ago."

Gu Jianlin thought to himself, what a pitiful blade, stuck with such a lousy owner.

But this was entirely in line with the old monster's character.

Back when they'd first crossed paths in the dimensional tunnel of the Qilin Immortal Palace, this woman had been casually speaking modern Mandarin.

Her Mandarin was remarkably standard.

Without even a discernible regional accent.

She could even hum melodies.

Tsk, truly terrifying.

An Ancient Supreme capable of blending seamlessly into the human world—all too insidious.

"Though it may be discarded, Jiuyin has inherited the arrogance of the Candle Dragon Venerable. It's unruly and wild. Over the years, no one has managed to unlock its true potential—instead, it's caused endless misery. Its previous owners have all perished, making it a weapon few dare to choose."

Ji Zhou calmly said, "What's more, its growth requirements are demanding, and advancing it is exceedingly difficult. I wouldn't recommend choosing this Mythical Weapon, especially since you're not on the Ghost Slayer Path."

Gu Jianlin fixed his gaze on the Tang Blade radiating bloodlust and said seriously, "Alright, senior, I've decided—this one."

Ji Zhou was taken aback.

"Are you sure?"

"I'm sure."

"Let me warn you—growth-type Mythical Weapons have shifting containment conditions, and they won't hesitate to turn on you. In the past five hundred years, no one has been able to tame it."

"I know, but I enjoy challenges like these."

Ji Zhou fell into silence.

"One more thing."

She said calmly, "This happens to be a personal collection of the President, sealed in an independent space. Its price is one hundred fifty thousand merit points, and before it's sold, strict reviews and assessments are required. Without the President's explicit approval, no one is permitted to obtain any of these three Mythical Weapons."

A question mark popped into Gu Jianlin's head.

A parrot screeched nearby, "Say 'hook'... say hook, not eight—civilization starts with harmony!"

"But this rule isn't something you need to worry about."

Ji Zhou glanced at the youth and said indifferently, "You've made contributions to tracking The Order of the Hidden, so there's no need for those dull examinations and tests. I have the authority to let you take it with you."

"Are you sure about this?"

Gu Jianlin hesitated. "Won't this cause trouble for you...?"

Ji Zhou sipped her tea and sneered, "I've known her for over four hundred years. What is there to be afraid of? Since she sent me here, it's clear everything is left to my discretion. Besides, no one can deny your merits—and not even the President herself could refute that today."

Gu Jianlin remained silent for a moment. "Understood. Thank you."

Boom!

Ji Zhou raised her hand and grabbed the air forcefully.

The three shadowy chasms vanished in an instant.

Chapter 466 - 228 Breathing Technique, Heavenly Realm_2

The void sealing the Jiuyin rapidly collapsed, finally transforming into a crimson-gold sword box.

The blade named Jiuyin was sealed within the box, not a sound escaped from it.

"Take it."

Ji Zhou handed the sword box over.

Gu Jianlin didn't expect the matter to be resolved so easily and hesitantly reached out to accept it.

The sword box was cold and heavy, radiating a chilling aura.

"A growth-type mythical weapon, initially it doesn't seem special, but as your rank improves and the weapon itself evolves, it will reveal extraordinary mysteries. At that point, it can transform into a matrix and attach to your body at will, far more convenient than now," Ji Zhou glanced at the Tang Blade and said indifferently.

Gu Jianlin, having the Wedge's spatial capacity, didn't find it inconvenient.

"But I must warn you, if you can't tame this mythical weapon, you won't receive any combat strength enhancement. Worse, it might backfire on you, causing great harm."

Ji Zhou warned with deep implication, "Aren't you planning to explore the Sea of Eternal Life?"

Gu Jianlin was taken aback: "Hmm?"

"The Ether Association conducted strategic analysis and preliminary simulation based on the intelligence you provided. In the first layer of the Qilin Immortal Palace, the most perilous place is the Sea of Eternal Life, ten times more dangerous than the Returning Burial Forest."

Ji Zhou snorted, speaking coldly, "The Sea of Eternal Life involves the two Lords, Qilin and Candle Dragon, with Xu Fu—the Immortal—also meddling, not to mention other unknown oddities. No matter how well-prepared the Ether Association is, they can't guarantee absolute safety. This time, people are bound to die."

Men die for wealth, birds die for food.

Ascenders have always set their lives aside, chasing after awe-inspiring power.

To say that no one would perish would be impossible.

"I understand."

Gu Jianlin stroked the sword box and said earnestly, "Thank you for the warning."

Ji Zhou suddenly narrowed her eyes and asked, "Why do you still want to go despite the danger? Someone as talented as you should focus on building your strength, staying away from risky ventures. When your power is sufficient, everything will fall into place."

Gu Jianlin pondered for a moment before answering, "I don't have much time left. I carry a cursed bloodline, and in the future, I may have to face a Primordial in full glory. Moreover, the Order of the Hidden has provoked me; I can't simply stand idly by. I also won't allow my companions to encounter trouble one by one—that's why my teacher chose me."

He continued, "Besides, risks often come hand in hand with opportunities."

Ji Zhou regarded him calmly and asked, "What about you?"

Gu Jianlin shook his head: "I'm not important."

After a long pause, Ji Zhou let out a soft sigh, "So be it. For someone like you, shackles are more of a torment than death itself. But let me remind you, today's world is not what it used to be. While there are indeed many Evolvers in this world, most of them stand at the peak of existence, so they no longer have anything to fear."

"As for someone as weak as you."

She said, "Other than you, only Thunder remains."

Gu Jianlin faintly grasped what Evolvers signify in this realm.

No fear of contamination.

Harnessing the power of Ancient Gods in mortal flesh.

An endless temptation.

"Everyone seeking the path of evolution will come for you."

Ji Zhou spoke with indifference, "Thunder is still manageable. She awakened long before you, though she wasted a lot of time herself. Nonetheless, she's built a solid foundation and will ascend rapidly in the short term—this isn't an issue."

Her sentence trailed off.

But Gu Jianlin understood her implication.

His own foundation was genuinely shallow, making swift advancement nearly impossible.

At this moment, he suddenly remembered something and asked, "Senior, is Tang Ling alright?"

Ji Zhou shot a glance at him, "That young lady went through so much with you, risking life and limb in all your nonsense, and you're only now thinking of her?"

Gu Jianlin felt a bit embarrassed; he truly hadn't considered it earlier.

That woman came from the Sword Tomb lineage, which made her prone to discrimination due to her family background.

Now, with her identity as an Evolver revealed, she was likely to face punishment from her mentors.

"You don't have to worry about her. It's precisely because she accidentally unlocked the path of evolution that she garnered respect."

Ji Zhou said, "Even the President discovered through her that the Heavenly Realm and the path of evolution are not mutually exclusive."

Gu Jianlin's heart stirred: "The President truly values her?"

Ji Zhou nodded slightly, "A prodigy. Given time, she is destined to surpass the President."

Only then did Gu Jianlin comprehend just how exceptional that young woman was.

He relied on cheats.

But she achieved all this as a pure human—it wasn't simple.

"Sadly, Thunder still hasn't learned to be ruthless and harbors a deep dislike for the Extraordinary World."

Ji Zhou sighed softly, "Even now, she's wasting time on trivial matters."

Gu Jianlin was puzzled, "What do you mean?"

"Why do you think she appeared in the Peak City District? Why did she participate in the Underwater Palace's mission? Or team up with you in the Returning Burial Forest? It's all because of her ancestor."

Ji Zhou gazed out at the spire and remarked with a sense of nostalgia, "The President always saw Thunder as the successor, but she doesn't appreciate it. A significant reason is that if Thunder truly becomes the next President, she can no longer pursue these matters, nor can she reverse the injustice suffered by her ancestor."

Gu Jianlin didn't understand. If she became the President, wouldn't it just take a word to resolve everything?

Chapter 467 - 228 Breathing Technique, Heavenly Realm_3

Ji Zhou didn't even need to turn his head to know what Gu Jianlin was thinking. He sneered coldly: "What do you take the President to be? Do you think he's really some kind of Emperor? Even an

Emperor cannot act recklessly. Some rules cannot be broken. Some bottom lines must be upheld. The position of the President is not merely a title—it's a responsibility and a duty."

Gu Jianlin vaguely understood something.

This senior seemed to have summed up the helplessness and sorrow of standing atop the world in just one sentence.

"Look."

Ji Zhou gazed into the distance and raised his chin slightly.

Gu Jianlin followed his gaze and saw a bronze pillar standing tall amidst endless yellow sands.

It was a massive sacrificial ground, surrounded by colossal kneeling stone statues.

"Since ancient times, humanity has engraved the names of traitors onto the bronze pillar, using blood and fire to ensure that future generations remember their hatred. Betrayal is unforgivable—it is a sin across the ages. For they tarnish humanity's bottom line, defile the faith of the sages across millennia, and disgrace the honor built upon the lives of countless predecessors."

Ji Zhou paused: "The names of Tang Zijing and Meng Hebo are carved there, condemned for all eternity."

Gu Jianlin stared at the massive bronze pillar and fell into silence.

No wonder that young woman had poor relations with the Sword Tomb disciples.

She wasn't close to anyone.

"My father isn't up there too, is he?"

He suddenly realized the possibility.

"No, he's not—your father wasn't a Divine Servant, after all."

Ji Zhou mocked, "In some sense, Thunder is quite like you—constantly met with disdain and exclusion. But look at the two of you now, both Evolvers. Seems like you can't shake off that label."

Gu Jianlin himself didn't really mind any of this.

But if Thunder was involved, he had to say something.

"Senior, although I can't show you proof yet, I can say with certainty that Tang Ling's great-grandfather was first controlled by The Order of the Hidden before being forced to defect to the Ancient God Clan. Everything has a cause-and-effect relationship. Moreover, that man only appeared on a few occasions over the years and didn't cause much harm to humanity."

Gu Jianlin said seriously: "On the contrary, it was humanity's own issues that drove him toward the Ancient God Clan."

Ji Zhou said nothing.

"Therefore, Tang Zijing's name shouldn't be on that bronze pillar."

Gu Jianlin paused: "Neither the President nor the Silver King should be using this to coerce Thunder—it's truly despicable behavior. It's unfair to Thunder and unfair to her great-grandfather."

The parrot squawked, "Despicable behavior!"

For a moment, an eerie silence enveloped the Heroic Soul Hall.

After a long while, Ji Zhou tapped the teacup rhythmically.

Tap, tap, tap.

Her breathing rhythm subtly shifted, and a faint golden hue flickered in her eyes.

The spire faintly trembled as the chaotic Mythical Weapons fell silent one by one.

As if an enormous oppressive force had appeared out of nowhere, only to vanish into thin air a moment later.

Gu Jianlin thought he might have misspoken but didn't feel threatened at all.

He simply watched this senior's hand, observing the rhythm of her tapping.

Listening to the cadence of her breathing.

It was almost mesmerizing.

"I understand."

Suddenly, Ji Zhou's words startled him back to reality.

All the anomalies vanished.

The chaotic Mythical Weapons resumed their wild movements.

Gu Jianlin noticed that the woman's pupils had returned to normal, and those rhythms and breathing patterns had disappeared as well.

"What you've said isn't without merit."

Ji Zhou remarked.

Gu Jianlin's impression of this woman improved—she was someone with a strong sense of reason.

"Then work hard for it. Strive to change those stubborn old minds."

Ji Zhou said lightly: "The headquarters has already issued a mission to explore the Sea of Eternal Life. You can register at any time, and I suggest you take your Guardian with you. A word of caution, though—this time, it's not just the Ether Association involved. Many other factions are watching closely. Make sure you return alive."

"Remember, it was my decision that allowed you to take this Mythical Weapon."

She glanced at the young man: "If you're ever idle, come visit me. I may not be as reliable as those so-called pillars of the Human World, but believe me, I'm more dependable than they are."

Gu Jianlin sensed a hint of warmth in her words.

"Understood. Thank you, Senior."

He bowed respectfully.

Ji Zhou responded with a satisfied hum: "Go on."

Gu Jianlin turned and descended the stone steps, vanishing amidst the rumbling of massive rocks.

In the vast Heroic Soul Hall, a sound that could be mistaken for a lonely sigh echoed softly.

Ji Zhou wiped her face with her hand. Her cold, striking, and deadly demeanor reappeared, radiating the aura of authority and gravitas befitting the Ether Association's President. The once-rowdy Mythical Weapons trembled in terror and scattered in all directions.

"That little guy can sense the rhythms of the Heavenly Realm."

She murmured softly, "And it only took an instant."

The strongest who had stood at humanity's summit for centuries fell silent for a long time, her gaze inscrutably deep.

"Huai Yin's student is no ordinary person."

The Mythical Weapons seemed to sense her mood and began their uproar once again.

"Quiet."

Ji Zhou commanded coldly.

In an instant, the Heroic Soul Hall plunged into silence once more.

With an expression of solitude and melancholy, Ji Zhou added, "Just tone it down."

The noises rose again, though somewhat muted.

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Dawn City, First Army Group Command.

Snap!

Huai Yin placed a black stone on the board and said calmly, "Old Lu, you're losing."

He picked up his teacup, took a light sip, and his expression was smug.

Commander Lu sat across from him, watching as his white stones turned black one by one. Irritated, he said, "Playing chess with someone as bad as you is an insult to me!"

Commander Lu was an austere and stoic old man. Despite his graying hair, his face was rugged like a sculpture, and his hawk-like eyes were sharp. Dressed in a crisp and commanding military uniform, his posture was impeccably straight.

He looked remarkably robust.

"You're still just as unwilling to lose as ever."

Huai Yin said lightly, "What's with the long face? I don't often get the chance to play chess with you anymore."

Commander Lu scowled, "How much longer can you live, anyway?"

"A little over two years, I suppose."

Huai Yin chuckled.

"Is it really worth it?"

Commander Lu asked coldly.

"If I don't do this, the Master will never make up her mind. I know she has her concerns, but I must push her to the edge of the cliff. This world needs to be handed over to younger people with more vitality. The future should be theirs to decide. We are merely stepping stones, bowing to pave the way."

Huai Yin said with a smile, "When I went to Peak City and sent my student to your daughter, you already tacitly approved of my actions. If there's a fight to be fought, why retreat?"

Commander Lu picked up his teacup as well and said flatly, "The problem is, whether Zijin can survive this is still up in the air."

Huai Yin waved dismissively, completely unconcerned: "Laojun Mountain's master has already calculated it—not much danger. Besides, if something really happens, my two students will step in. What are you worried about?"

After a moment of silence, Commander Lu said, "If it were Jing Ci, I'd be at ease. But what about your other student? I admit his talent is unparalleled, but having you as a lousy teacher feels like a waste. He's still too young and his Rank is insufficient."

"At his current power level, he might not even be a match for Qingqing."

He added, "He's still just a fledgling eagle in need of protection."

Huai Yin was displeased: "Your dumb daughter is worthy of being compared to my student? Ha! With your foolish perspective, you're doomed to never find a good successor. You have the nerve to call me lousy?"

Commander Lu retorted angrily: "Qingqing may not have made the top tier, but her achievements in Qilin Immortal Palace aren't insignificant. She even obtained a growth-type Mythical Weapon, and I've taught her both the Breathing Technique and a Forbidden Spell."

Huai Yin sneered scornfully: "Why don't we make a bet, then?"

Commander Lu, his temper rising, said, "Fine, let's bet. What's the wager?"

Chapter 468 - 229: Catching Lu Zijin Off Guard

"Ding, exploration mission updating."

"System updating. You will participate in Mission Code 045, exploring the Sea of Eternal Life. You have been assigned to the third squad. Please report to the military district by 8:30 tonight."

"The journey will be dangerous. Please prepare in advance and return safely."

Gu Jianlin wore a long black trench coat, sunglasses that shielded against wind and sand, and had his collar pulled up to cover his mouth and nose. On his back was a heavy travel bag filled with food and emergency supplies.

In truth, he could have simply stored everything in the Wedge's space.

But if everyone else was fully equipped and he came empty-handed, it would have been too suspicious.

So he played along, carrying a travel bag while storing his Mythical Weapon in the Wedge's space along with an extensive amount of food, weapons, countless daily necessities, changes of clothes, and even a large bed—everything exchanged from the resource depot in Dawn City.

If anything went wrong in the Sea of Eternal Life, these supplies could last several people for three months.

Gu Jianlin strolled through the military camp with a sense of curiosity. The place felt like a restricted military zone, with armored vehicles parked along the roadsides and helicopters roaring as they landed and took off from their pads.

Trucks transporting supplies rumbled past, kicking up swirling clouds of dust.

Soldiers in military uniforms, nano warriors, were busily hauling cargo. Lighthouses scanned the area with blazing beams of light, and the entire camp was on high alert.

Here, outside the city, lay the military defensive lines. Their primary purpose was to transfer supplies and combat the invasion of living corpses and monsters.

In the desolate Ancient God Realm, the bustling signs of civilization were particularly striking.

A short time ago, the guild hall in Dawn City had released a data packet and brief guide concerning the Sea of Eternal Life. The lucrative merit rewards it offered had attracted over a hundred investigators, prompting the formation of more than a dozen squads. Each team was slightly disguised and spread out on their way to the destination.

Just then, ahead of him, a petite figure carrying an oversized backpack appeared.

She looked like a clumsy monkey hauling her heavy luggage on a pilgrimage to the West.

Gu Jianlin stayed silent as he walked up to her and lifted her heavy backpack for her.

"Eh?"

Ji Xiaoyu looked up in shock. "How did you recognize me?"

This guy was wearing goggles and a gas mask, as flamboyant as ever.

"Life Rhythm."

Gu Jianlin casually asked, "How did you recognize me?"

Ji Xiaoyu thought for a moment. "I could feel that fierce aura emanating from you!"

What a load of rubbish!

Gu Jianlin suddenly felt like he no longer wanted to carry her bag.

Their relationship had never been particularly friendly, but things had shifted ever since they had jointly beaten up a superior.

When people share a common enemy, their bond often grows stronger very quickly.

It was a peculiar phenomenon.

Besides, this Little Princess was merely spoiled and undisciplined. A good thrashing here and there would straighten her out; deep down, she wasn't bad at all.

She was actually rather innocent and kindhearted.

"You're on the third squad as well?"

Ji Xiaoyu widened her eyes and asked.

Gu Jianlin nodded. Since they were part of the same team, it made sense they'd be grouped together.

Along with their Guardians.

"By the way."

He suddenly remembered something dreadful and looked towards the backpack in his hands. "What's in here?"

It should just be normal supplies, right?

Please let it just be supplies!

However, Ji Xiaoyu flashed an evil grin. "Haha, of course it's my Emperor-grade poisons!"

Gu Jianlin's hand trembled, nearly dropping the bag.

This was one of the few things that truly terrified him in the Extraordinary World.

At the top of the list was the Old Monster.

The second was this Little Princess's poisons.

Following Taixu's instructions, a massive transport truck appeared ahead of them.

Gu Jianlin's two older female companions were waving at him from atop the vehicle.

"You're here?"

Today, Chen Qing had merely applied light makeup and ditched her regular suit-and-skirt ensemble. Instead, she was dressed in a sleek camouflage uniform, her long hair neatly tied behind her head. She looked like a cold but strikingly beautiful female instructor.

Lin Wanqiu was seated in the vehicle, her makeup still alluring and radiant. Her long, wavy hair hung freely, and her snug-fitting camouflage uniform accentuated her perfect figure. She wore suede military boots on her feet.

She didn't speak but gave the young man a meaningful look.

These were Gu Jianlin's two Guardians, here to join the mission.

Chen Qing was now a Fourth-Order Spiritualist, fulfilling the team's required support role.

Lin Wanqiu, on the other hand, was a Fourth-Order Holy Mother, a reliable healer with steady offensive capabilities.

As for Lu Zicheng, he had already ascended to Fifth Order and could no longer serve as a Guardian. He was now pushing for a Ministerial position and likely attempting to climb to Sixth Order after this mission—a pace that was truly astonishing.

"Sister Chen Qing, Captain Lin."

Gu Jianlin nodded slightly and gestured toward the playful monkey by his side. "This is Ji Xiaoyu."

Logically, Ji Xiaoyu should also have her own Guardian.

"Where is your Guardian?"

Ji Xiaoyu shouted, "Come out now!"

As her voice echoed, a pair of miserable-looking twin brothers, burdened with hefty luggage, stepped out.

Gu Jianlin blinked. "Didn't you kidnap some unlucky Alchemist?"

Ji Xiaoyu placed her hands on her hips and sneered.

The twin brothers gave a wretched smile, one that was more pained than if they were crying. "Yeah, that's us."

"Since the Poison Master Sister isn't here for this mission, I had to bring them. Both of these guys are Fourth-Order Alchemists, the only ones capable of identifying the ingredients necessary to craft an antidote." Ji Xiaoyu huffed.

She then started ordering the Alchemists around, hauling them into the truck's cabin. She began analyzing a map and planning routes to gather herbs along the way.

Gu Jianlin noticed this and was somewhat surprised. This little troublemaker actually had the antidote in mind all along.

"Taking along two Alchemists—does that weaken our offensive capabilities?"

He placed his own backpack on the truck and casually asked.

"There's no need to worry about that."

Lin Wanqiu explained, "As far as the second echelon is concerned, the Little Princess ranks among the strongest. Add you, the hidden trump card and real number one, and our offense is pretty solid. Moreover, to be on the safe side, headquarters also sent along two prodigies."

Chen Qing noticed the boy's troubled expression and added, "This time they're true prodigies, not the fake ones from before. One of them is Commander Lu's daughter, Lu Qingqing. She recently inherited some sort of legacy within the Immortal Palace, and her strength has skyrocketed. As a Fourth-Order Ruler on the Overlord Path, she's already a rare match for anyone."

"The other is from the Sword Tomb, a Sword Sect disciple and a Fourth-Order Sword Spirit."

She added, "His name is Zhou Yiming, and he's Thunder's senior apprentice brother."

Gu Jianlin felt much more at ease hearing this. With such an arrangement, the offensive lineup was essentially complete.

Each of the two would likely bring along two Guardians.

Meanwhile, another transport truck had arrived, and from its cabin, someone called out, "Sister Wanqiu, looking forward to working with you."

Four Guardians stood next to the truck, two of them familiar faces.

"Li Yijie? Wang Jingchuan?"

Chen Qing narrowed her eyes and warned, "Xiao Gu, stay alert. Do you remember Captain Wang Bolin, who was killed by Mr. Jing? Plenty of people from the Peak City District had close ties to him. They may not dare act overtly against you, but if they find any leverage, they'll never let it go."

"Oh, so it's them."

Lin Wanqiu put on a facade of indifference, but inwardly, she was highly vigilant. These two were from the Judgement Court faction, and they had recently been probing into her affairs. A few times, she had narrowly avoided being exposed.

Gu Jianlin nodded in understanding.

From atop the other transport truck, a young man with white hair and a sword box strapped to his back spoke into a radio: "Greetings, everyone. My name is Zhou Yiming, the deputy commander of this mission, following the Sword Sect Path. I will serve as an output unit."

"I am the mission commander, Lu Qingqing."

Stepping forward was a tall girl with short, chestnut-colored hair. She wore a sharp and efficient gray trench coat that couldn't hide her striking figure. At her waist hung two crimson pistols, and she carried a sniper rifle on her back.

Her beauty was fiery yet intimidating. Speaking in an even tone, she said, "I'm on the Overlord Path, assigned to output and reconnaissance roles. Although our squad has exceptional combat power, we lack experience. As a member of the Lu Family and someone raised in the Dawn Combat Sequence training camps, my battle and command experience match anyone's in the top ten of Omega."

"You're all talented individuals, but I hope none of you act on your own. A team must function as one—work together, support each other. We're a squad of thirteen, and my hope is for everyone to return safely."

She paused. "That's all."

"Thirteen?"

Gu Jianlin frowned. Four Omegas and eight Guardians made twelve.

But he could sense an extra entity through its distinct Life Rhythm.

And this presence was completely unfamiliar.

Click.

The metal shutter on the truck's cabin slid open, and from the passenger seat emerged a face Gu Jianlin didn't recognize.

Almost theatrically, she tore off a Human Skin Mask.

That familiar face was as adorable as ever.

"Surprised? Caught off guard?"

Lu Zijin cheerfully swung her twin ponytails, a sly grin on her delicate, impish face. "It's me!"

Gu Jianlin stared in shock before lowering his voice. "Minister Lu?"

No way. He couldn't have guessed that the soon-to-be Seventh-Order Holy Realm powerhouse, Minister Lu, would be hiding in their squad.

"Looks like this plan worked—if even you didn't notice, then no one else will suspect."

Lu Zijin smiled faintly. "My presence in the vanguard is completely unexpected."

Gu Jianlin was silent for a moment before realizing the rationale.

This stemmed from distrust within the Ether Association.

After all, the association harbored a traitor, and no one knew who it was.

In that scenario, being openly visible was risky.

The best course of action was to even deceive those on your side, hide within the exploration vanguard, and strike unexpectedly. By the time the enemy realized it, they'd already have reached the target and begun advancing.

The Ether Association knew nothing.

The You Ying Group knew nothing.

Granted, this required the trustworthiness of their squad.

"Why us, though?"

Gu Jianlin felt immense pressure. How'd their squad end up harboring a powerhouse?

Well, a currently non-combatant powerhouse.

"I've already taken the secret medicine. I'm in a weakened state—it's up to you to protect me, isn't it?"

Lu Zijin's bright eyes twinkled mischievously as she said with a smile, "I don't trust anyone else. Only you."

Chapter 469 - 230 Moon Princess: I was terrified

The fully armed Jeep roared across the endless desert.

"Chase! Keep chasing them hard!"

Third Master Liu gripped the steering wheel, slammed the gas pedal, and shouted, "Don't let those Judgement Court bastards get that drop of the Ancient God's Blood, and definitely don't let that bastard Si Wei'an succeed! Butcher, ram them hard! The Ancient God's Blood is ours!"

As a director of You Ying Group, he rarely drove himself, but this time, he was truly in a frenzy.

His bloodshot eyes and distorted face gave him the look of a raging bull.

"Got it, Third Master!"

Butcher was equally thrilled. He wasn't interested in the Ancient God's Blood; he simply loved fighting.

Especially beating up members of the Judgement Court.

"Sister Moon Princess, are you okay?"

Miss Lan, seated in the back, turned to look at the young girl beside her. "Are your wounds still unhealed?"

The current Moon Princess had already used the Yin Yang Twin Jade to create a clone once more. Not only that, but she had completed the ritual and was now ready to break through the spirituality barrier, becoming a Fifth Rank Moon Master at any moment.

But she wasn't happy about it at all.

She felt an immense pressure, a deep yearning for death.

"I'm fine. I just didn't sleep well last night,"

the Moon Princess replied weakly.

Miss Lan shot her a skeptical glance. Her boyfriend had just helped her obtain the Moonstone Heart the day before, and now she looked utterly exhausted. It was hard not to let one's imagination run rampant.

"What did you two get up to last night? Rolling in the sheets? Went at it all night?"

She added with feigned restraint, "How did it feel?"

Moon Princess, wearing a mask, gazed off with vacant eyes. A stray tuft of hair on her head stood on end as she pulled her down jacket tighter around herself and said faintly, "No, if we had been rolling in the sheets, I probably wouldn't feel this tired, would I? From what I heard, aside from the first time being a bit painful, the rest is supposed to feel really good."

Miss Lan gave her a long, contemplative look and said, "No need to explain. I admit my taste in men is questionable, but if I met a man willing to ring the bell for me and take on five others, I wouldn't sleep for the whole night either."

Heh.

A thought suddenly formed in Moon Princess's mind.

Who the hell do you think you are? Do you really think your taste in men compares to mine?

Hurriedly, she pushed the thought aside, nerves fraying.

The entire night before, she had been grind-training obsessively in that pitch-black world.

For reasons unknown, Qilin Venerable had suddenly cranked up the difficulty on her training.

She had initially thought she'd never have any connection to the Candle Dragon Forbidden Curse.

Yet, after all the twists and turns, here she was, being forced to learn it still.

Granted, her aptitude was decent; she genuinely had a chance at mastering the Candle Dragon Forbidden Curse.

But even before fully learning it, she was already experiencing its side effects.

Both understanding and casting a Forbidden Spell come with certain consequences, after all.

Moon Princess had already tasted just how terrifying those side effects could be. Her emotions had shifted; she noticed she had become exceptionally arrogant, seeing herself as an Empress gazing down at the world, sneering at everything in disdain.

She found herself displeased with everyone and everything, as if the entire world was garbage.

And these effects crept up insidiously, making it impossible to predict when her innermost thoughts might slip out.

It was truly frightening.

What on earth had Qilin Venerable seen in her? Couldn't she just change?

But even that wasn't the scariest part.

The worst part was that a fragment of the Qilin's Wedge was now on her person!

It was like carrying a nuclear bomb in her pocket, leaving her terrified out of her wits.

And the worst thing was that this "nuclear bomb" kept disappearing randomly, only to reappear in her consciousness.

It was the kind of thing straight out of a ghost story.

"Who's holding the Ancient God's Blood now?"

Moon Princess asked calmly.

She was itching to charge forward and pick a fight.

"The previous contenders for the Ancient God's Blood included the head of Ying Province's Orochi Shrine, the vice president of North America's Arcane Society, and a Pharaoh in Egypt. They're all dead now. Currently, it's been taken by Deacon Wang of the Judgement Court, and he's held onto it the longest so far,"

Miss Lan replied, idly toying with a Copper Coin. "That's because he has Ji Han and Ji Ye from Omega protecting him. Those two are both descendants of the Ji Family, and their combat skills are formidable."

"Got it."

Moon Princess stared out at the yellow sands outside, her ears faintly picking up the sound of a massive rumble.

Just then, the roaring thrum of helicopter blades came from overhead.

"Forget about Third Master. Head straight after Deacon Wang,"

Old Master Si said grimly, pronouncing each word with precision, "Tonight, we shall bury him."

The elderly man, with hair as white as frost, was withered and frail, like rotting wood on the verge of collapse. But even seated as he was, he emanated a cold, fearsome aura. His eyes were as chilling as death itself.

"Uncle,"

Si Wei'an's gaze bore down below, his eyes locked onto the petite figure in the Jeep. A sinister grin spread wider and wider across his face as he snarled, "Moon Princess—she's still alive! She's not dead! Back in the underground ruins, she thwarted me once. The fragments of the Qilin's Wedge must be on her! Uncle, let me go kill her!"

Pale Ghost Fire suddenly ignited on his forehead, illuminating his twisted expression.

Old Master Si's face turned cold as he barked, "Insolence!"

Si Wei'an's expression contorted violently.

"I know you're always cautious, aware of the dangers of harboring treasure, even pretending to be mad to protect yourself. But there's no need to fear. With me by your side, who can touch you? Besides, Lord Youming has made it clear—when the time comes to use the fragments of the Qilin's Wedge, you can hand it over temporarily."

Old Master Si tapped his cane and continued, "That thing will still be yours!"

Chapter 470 - 230 Moon Princess: I Was Extremely Scared_2

Si Wei'an suppressed a low growl: "I've told you countless times, the fragment of the Qilin Wedge is not in my hands!"

Old Master Si waved his hand: "How could that be possible? With your ingenuity, you've plotted for eight years, and even my divinations have shown that you're without failure. What are you afraid of? Besides, this Moon Princess's identity is not simple. Though she isn't part of the Jiang family's main lineage, Jiang's blood still flows in her veins. You must never touch her, understand?"

The Ghost Fire on Si Wei'an's forehead raged violently, and the immense humiliation caused his pupils to turn blood-red!

Why won't anyone believe him!

Why!

The overwhelming humiliation and anger during this period had driven his sanity into madness.

As everyone knew, the more insane one became through the Divine Path, the stronger they became.

He was almost reaching the Sixth Rank!

Bang!

A car in front suddenly exploded with a deafening roar.

Deacon Wang of the Judgement Court soared through the air, wielding his sword. He was a Fifth Rank Sword Soul!

The intangible and formless Qi Realm expanded instantly, surging like an avalanche, sweeping away the swirling desert winds and enveloping everything in all directions.

Cacti along its path were crushed; dead trees disintegrated into powder.

Qi Realm!

Ji Ye stood in the blazing sea of fire, arms crossed like a wild and robust leopard.

Ji Han's face was icy cold, clutching an antiquated, heavy Iron Shield covered in golden spells.

The two Fifth Rank World Kings combined their efforts to drive the Qi Realm, forming an indestructible barrier!

A helicopter roared past.

"Ji Family's people? Perfect."

Old Master Si raised his withered right hand, and the vast yellow sand surged skyward, resembling waves crashing into the heavens.

Ancient Forbidden Curse, Sand Sea Burial!

Generally speaking, support professions did not possess combat capabilities.

But there was one exception: mastering Forbidden Spells!

"Wei'an, prepare to act."

He said indifferently.

Although Si Wei'an felt unwilling, he shifted his gaze toward the Ji siblings from the Ji Family, his eyes cold.

At the same time, a calm voice echoed through the communication channel.

"Everyone, finish them off quickly and retrieve the Ancient God's Blood."

It was Hel's voice: "We've just received news that Peak City's District Minister, Lu Zijin, is currently heading toward the Sea of Eternal Life. She will pass through the Silent Wilderness in two hours. It will be the perfect ambush spot. Since the Ether Association declared war on us last night, let's return the favor with her head."

She paused: "This is Lord Youming's order."

Following her words, massive explosions erupted.

The directors of the You Ying Group launched a fierce assault collectively!

The Qi Realm was bombarded relentlessly!

No one objected to this command.

After all, they belonged to the Dark World and were inherently opposed to the Ether Association.

Only one person stood apart.

Moon Princess's beautiful eyes flickered with cold light.

Just earlier, Gu Jianlin had sent her a message informing her of his itinerary.

If Minister Lu was already on her way to the Sea of Eternal Life, it was highly likely that he was accompanying her.

This was Moon Princess's intuition.

"Logically, Minister Lu should be disguised and acting secretly."

She stroked the Stone Bead on her wrist, murmuring inwardly, "How was she discovered so quickly?"

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The transport truck raced across the wilderness. The Sky Dome resembled flowing seawater, and the heavens were dim.

Chen Qing was driving. As a Fourth Rank Spiritualist, she possessed an excellent sense of direction and overarching strategy. Along the way, she could avoid many monster and living corpse attacks and predict the movements of Ancient God Seeds.

"Hold tight; it's going to get bumpy ahead."

She said calmly.

Lin Wanqiu smiled and said, "I'll use Holy Light Skill to help ease your fatigue."

The two unlucky pharmacists were still fiddling with their potions: "If you're hungry, we have energy secret medicine."

"So boring! We haven't even encountered any Ancient God Seeds along the way. I was hoping to hunt one down, strip its skin, and tear out its tendons as material. Maybe I could craft a decent Alchemy Weapon," Lu Zijin said, staring out the window.

As a minister who had lost her combat prowess, she refrained from wearing Lolita today, instead donning a heavy white down coat and a black skirt, paired with black stockings and knee-high boots—a striking ensemble.

Given her current task, being inconspicuous was essential.

"Even if you encounter an Ancient God Seed, it won't be you hunting it down!"

Ji Xiaoyu said irritably: "That will be us! Aunt Zijin, you're as weak as a paramecium now!"

It was evident these two had known each other for a long time.

"How rude! I've told you countless times—call me sister!"

Lu Zijin glared: "And don't mimic your grandmother's catchphrases! You're the paramecium!"

Ji Xiaoyu retorted, "You're the paramecium! Why did you suddenly show up here anyway? Oh, I know! You must think my unparalleled talent is enough to protect you, right?"

Lu Zijin rolled her eyes. "Sure, sure."

The truck cabin remained lively throughout, filled with chatter.

Gu Jianlin didn't join in the conversation, sitting on his seat with eyes closed and maintaining his breathing rhythm, which seemed to merge with the natural cadence—though this time it wasn't aligned with the frequency of the Realm of Freedom.

It was a brand new, unprecedented frequency.

Before leaving the Heroic Soul Hall, Ji Zhou had deliberately demonstrated this frequency in front of him.

He had memorized the rhythm back then, and now he was practicing it repeatedly.

Breathing Techniques are mysterious like that. When practicing inhalation and exhalation, the rhythm can be remembered and taught to others. But when it comes to deploying domains, the shift in tempo happens in an instant.

In the Heroic Soul Hall, Ji Zhou had breathed deliberately for a long time in his presence, ensuring he remembered the rhythm.

At that moment, gold had shimmered faintly in the elder's eyes, and the Heavenly Person Realm had trembled slightly.

Gu Jianlin suspected this rhythm might belong to the Heavenly Realm. If he could steal this knowledge, he'd be vastly rewarded. Facing the Ghost Car Ancestor or the Candle Dragon Venerable would then be much easier.

That said, advancing the breathing technique required emotional buildup.

The Realm of Freedom necessitates courage.

The Heavenly Realm, however, demands an entirely different emotion—one unknown to him.

"Minister Lu."

Gu Jianlin suddenly opened his eyes, a fleeting golden light in his gaze, as he curiously asked: "Is mastering the Heavenly Person's Wedge the greatest benefit of becoming a Divine General?"

Lu Zijin replied casually, "Yes, that way we can synchronize, master the breathing technique of the Heavenly Realm, and gain the qualification to leverage the power of the Heavenly Person's Wedge."

Gu Jianlin fell silent for a moment. He had just performed the breathing technique of the Heavenly Realm, yet no one in the cabin had noticed anything unusual. "None of the Ji Family knows it either?"

"Are you joking?"

Ji Xiaoyu pouted: "Grandmother would never teach us the breathing technique."

Gu Jianlin thought they might have already been taught but failed to comprehend it.

"Did you just say the paramecium phrase is the President's catchphrase?"

He recalled something and asked seriously.

"Of course."

Ji Xiaoyu said matter-of-factly: "The President thinks we're all paramecia, except herself!"

Gu Jianlin suddenly felt strange. That Divine General senior also called him a paramecium.

"Do you know Ji Zhou?"

He asked: "A Divine General."

Unexpectedly, Ji Xiaoyu froze: "Who? Someone from the Ji Family? Must've died years ago. Anyway, I don't know anyone named that who's still alive. And a Divine General? Impossible!"

Lu Zijin frowned as well: "Ji Zhou? Divine General? Never heard of them. Could be an alias?"

Gu Jianlin's eyes were filled with suspicion, and he began to feel uncertain about that senior's identity.

"That senior said she has over four hundred fragments and has known the President for many years."

He added: "She's female."

"There are two or three female Divine Generals who've been with the President for centuries."

Lu Zijin rested her chin on her hand: "I don't know who you encountered."

"Who cares!"

Ji Xiaoyu waved dismissively.

Knowing these two didn't have the answers either, Gu Jianlin stopped asking questions.

Because of Minister Lu's presence, he felt a significant amount of pressure.

The advancement he sought was still out of grasp.

Although he exchanged plenty of materials in the Heroic Soul Hall, he still lacked a strand of hair from the Charming Lady.

And he had no idea how to perform the final ritual.

For now, strengthening his combat abilities was his only option.

He continued his meditation, repeating the Breathing Technique.

Among the fragments of the Qilin Wedge was the blade known as Jiuyin, which still required containment and taming.

Just then, he sensed something and his expression changed slightly.