

Ancient 48

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Nie, the Deacon, however, refused to give up and said with a smile, "When you reach the Third Rank, isn't there still an opportunity to change paths? If there are truly talented young individuals, with that one's methods, transitioning to the Divine Path wouldn't be too difficult either."

He sighed with heartfelt emotion and said, "These young talents were meticulously selected by me. They possess great potential and are truly outstanding individuals. I can assure you, these are the strongest of this generation in the Peak City District."

Lu Zijin couldn't deny it, because some of the geniuses in this group were ones she had nurtured herself.

The people on the list, barring any unforeseen circumstances, would become the backbone of this district.

The man pondered for a second and asked, "Does anyone among this group of newcomers possess the ability to challenge higher ranks?"

This question stumped Nie, the Deacon. He thought carefully and realized there probably wasn't.

"That one only cares about newcomers who can challenge higher ranks."

He ventured tentatively, "That's quite a high bar."

"Yes, and my master also has another requirement: no reliance on armaments."

The man said calmly, "Otherwise, over the years, it wouldn't just be my junior apprentice and me who were chosen."

"Challenging higher ranks..."

Nie, the Deacon's expression shifted slightly.

In the world of Ascenders, challenging higher ranks was exceedingly difficult.

Because every rank brought newly added abilities.

Even the abilities originally mastered would undergo qualitative transformation.

The accumulation of spirituality also differed greatly.

The gap was enormous.

At this moment, Lu Zijin furrowed her brows, as she thought of someone.

Gu Jianlin!

She just wasn't sure if Zero-tier defeating the First Order would count.

"What a pity, it seems there's really no such individual in our district."

Nie, the Deacon, shook his head but quickly smiled again, "But just because we don't have any now doesn't mean we won't in the future. Today, we launched a hunt for the Joker. I wonder if you're interested?"

The man squinted slightly, "The Joker? Interesting. Although his rank isn't high, he's someone my master personally pinpointed—a rather troublesome Fallen. At least among those of the same rank, he's one of the best."

"Of course he's troublesome; otherwise, he couldn't have stolen two valuable Mythical Weapons!"

Nie seemed to seethe as he mentioned this, his teeth grinding audibly, "This guy has mastered the Magician Path techniques thoroughly. He possesses a strong ability for danger foreknowledge. Whenever an Ascender with power vastly above his targets him with hostility, he immediately flees far away. Not to mention the two unidentified Mythical Weapons, whose full functions we don't even know."

"For him to be able to evade capture for so long, one of the artifacts must certainly have potent concealment capabilities. He could walk right past us now, and we might not even detect him."

He paused briefly, "I even suspect he may have secretly advanced. And as a Fallen, he has deformation abilities, making him extremely difficult to deal with. But this time, he has no escape."

The man's curiosity was piqued, "Oh?"

Nie held up a single finger, "We've set up bait—a lure he won't be able to resist!"

As Lu Zijin listened, a trace of disdain flashed through her beautiful eyes.

So this guy wasn't stupid; his mind was meticulous but purely malicious.

Despite knowing how dangerous the Joker was, he still assigned that child to this task.

Even though he knew that child had the ability to challenge higher ranks, he hadn't bothered to recommend him.

"Is that so?"

The man thought for a moment, "That's pretty interesting. I'm actually quite curious about those two Mythical Weapons."

"We've arranged a large team to ensure nothing goes wrong."

Nie, the Deacon, said earnestly, "I promise, this will be a spectacular hunt. Maybe during this mission, some exceptionally gifted young individual will earn that one's recognition."

The man fell silent for a moment, "Alright, then let's go take a look."

Lu Zijin initially wanted to recommend that young boy but suddenly refrained from speaking.

She knew very well the character of the man before her and the one standing behind him.

If she were to recommend him, he'd likely be labeled as someone affiliated with the Lu Family or seen as a beneficiary of nepotism.

That could inadvertently cause them to dislike him.

Anyway, with Lu Zicheng around, the kid wouldn't be in any danger.

The rest would be up to fate.

After evening self-study ended, a tide of students poured out of the teaching building, accompanied by a cacophony of chatter.

"Hey, have you heard? Zhang Lei from next door took leave!"

"Taking leave—what's so special about that? My mom would let me take leave too."

"No, you don't get it! He went on leave because he went crazy! Apparently, he beat up his parents at home, and the cops showed up to take him away. Word has it that he's been locked in a psychiatric hospital."

"Holy crap, I've heard of this. They say the same thing happened in classes three and six too—just went crazy out of nowhere!"

Gu Jianlin walked downstairs expressionlessly, listening to the idle gossip around him.

Since joining the Ether Association, he was already used to hearing about such incidents. Although the number of people in Peak City with Ascender talent wasn't particularly high, it wasn't so few that it became a rarity; spotting a few in a school was entirely normal.

According to the Ether Association's guidelines, those individuals would be allowed to leave psychiatric treatment after undergoing spiritual rehabilitation.

They would then proceed through training and, with the support of the association, awaken their abilities, becoming investigators.

From there, they would step into an entirely new world.

At this moment, someone silently approached him, chewing gum casually, and commented nonchalantly, "It's been ages since I've been back to the campus life. Brings back memories. I have to say, your school has quite a lot of pretty girls."