

Ancient 491

Chapter 491: I Am the Qilin, I Am the Candle Dragon

The Golden Temple quivered violently.

Accompanied by the deafening kneel of countless sculptures, it seemed on the verge of collapse!

Gu Jianlin lifted his fierce golden eyes. A golden Divine Fire ignited on his forehead as his entire body burned with blazing golden flames, like a colossal god returning from ancient times, exuding an overwhelming divine aura.

A fleeting silhouette of unparalleled beauty flashed by. The blood-red mask was so commanding and arrogant, with a glimmer of eerie light streaking fleetingly through the eyes, and just a glance made one feel as if they had fallen into the Netherworld.

In the history of war between humans and the Ancient God Clan, at least before the creation of the Heavenly Person's Wedge, the Ancient Supremes were invincible entities. Even the Primordials struggled to overcome them, matching at best the ancestor-level. During that uninitiated era, merely guarding the juncture between the two worlds was already an arduous task.

It was only due to the infighting among the Supremes that they managed to survive in the crevices.

Only the sages in human history possessed the power to defeat the Primordials.

Later, the activation of the Heavenly Person Realm began to turn the tide of battle.

And after the arrival of the Catastrophe Era, with the evolvers stepping onto the historical stage, humanity possessed the means to resist the Ancient Supremes for the first time—without relying on external forces.

Yet even the King of Qing, the one who had advanced the furthest on the path of evolution,

could not bridge the gap in the levels of life.

More importantly, those who had encountered the Ancient Supremes in this world were a rare few.

It was naturally impossible to comprehend such terrifying disparity!

Rumble!

The killing intent was as deep as the sea.

Although his rank was still pathetically low, it was nonetheless the power of an Ancient Supreme.

Even though this power was incomplete for the moment.

Without a complete Wedge.

Unable to perform the so-called Primordial Return that even he didn't understand.

Far from proficient in controlling his own power, and insignificant compared to a true Supreme.

But, it was enough!

He hadn't even expected it himself,

that the Shadow would undergo Ancient God Transformation with him!

This moment felt all too familiar, as if Candle Dragon Sister were standing by his side.

Facing such a vast divine might for the first time, Jiang Hanyi let out a sharp screech, a mix of terror and fury, akin to a maddened beast, raising her burning right fist.

This Mythical Weapon was called the Curse of the Giant, a massive killing tool unearthed from the Vermilion Bird Divine Palace. It was said that in ancient times, a Primordial had swung their right fist toward the Supreme's Divine Seat, only to be slain on the spot, buried for thirty thousand years before being resurrected. Its essence and flesh were extracted through alchemy, creating a blood-colored ring.

When the Giant roars in fury, even the heavens would burn!

This Mythical Weapon later fell into the hands of the Jiang Family and, in the hands of this direct descendant, it had crushed countless enemies' skulls—even members of the Ether Association's Omega!

The Moon Princess was defeated by this punch back then because she had yet to develop a growth-type Mythical Weapon!

But today, that punch had lost its former dominance.

Gu Jianlin sat high on the Divine Seat, merely lifting a finger. A massive black flash instantly enveloped the entire Golden Temple, and the terrifying roar echoed like rolling thunder.

Darkness lasted only for a moment before light was swiftly restored.

The howling wind swept through as Jiang Hanyi's furious expression froze on her face—her entire right arm had vanished. The wound on her right shoulder revealed a horrifying cauterized burn, while the Curse of the Giant spun in midair, riddled with cracks.

"What... is this thing?"

The thought flashed in her mind.

A massive terror exploded within her heart as the ferocious nebula above her head suddenly erupted!

Star Fall!

Double Star Fall!

The blazing starlight fell like a torrential flood!

Four colossal golden ghost hands roared as they materialized, intertwining above the youth's head. Like demons from Hell extending their palms toward the heavens, they charged against the descending starlight with unstoppable momentum!

What kind of gigantic ghost hands were these? They seemed like the embodiment of divine palms. Despite the violent impact of the stars, they remained unyielding, roaring upward and forcibly tearing apart the boundless star cluster gathering across the sky!

Snap.

A crisp sound of fingers snapping.

Jiang Hanyi's entire body burst in blood, already cursed by the Ghost Curse Technique!

At this moment, Gu Jianlin stood up from the Divine Seat, leaping down to the woman before him and unleashing a punch!

In a sound like a great bell and brass drum, Jiang Hanyi shielded her head and took the blow head-on. The immense force shattered the bones in her arms, erupting in horrific sounds of splintering bones.

Without hesitation, she detonated the Divine Sacrificial Fire, pale Ghost Fire spreading through the air.

Draining the youth's life force.

"Did you just call me... a bastard?"

Gu Jianlin coldly watched her arm gradually recover, feeling his own life force draining away. Yet he showed no concern, lifting his right fist once more and smashing it down!

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Like the pounding of heavy hammers, three punches in succession.

To her forehead, her jaw, and even her temple.

All heavily struck—her eyeballs seemed ready to pop out, her skull dented, her jawbone crushed.

As for the hands guarding her head, they were long since twisted and shattered.

"Who's the bastard now?"

Bam!

A brutal punch to the abdomen made Jiang Hanyi spew blood, the intense shock displacing her organs.

She let out a harrowing scream as a grotesque ghostly mask rose before her!

"I didn't know who bullied the Moon Princess,"

Gu Jianlin said indifferently. "But you've just outed yourself."

With a loud bang, the ghostly mask spirit roared and charged, only to be arrested by his hands!

As Gu Jianlin's hands exerted constant pressure, the ghostly mask spirit shattered inch by inch!

"What are you all waiting for?!"

Jiang Hanyi howled, "Kill him!"

The three Twilight Candidates had blood rushing to their heads. Logically speaking, any normal person witnessing this would have fled in terror, as the opponent, an evolver, had advanced to an unfathomable stage.

But they were not normal people.

They were fanatical followers of the Red King.

Their very existence was to crush the ideals of the King of Qing.

The Gun Ghost raised his sniper rifle, amassing a massive blood-red flash—a clear sign the Void Dog Cannon was charging!

Can Jian gripped his sword with both hands, continuing his sword momentum and preparing for a devastating strike!

Lastly, the Poison Scorpion, accompanied by his wolf-headed spirit, descended with a beastly roar!

"Impressive, your courage is commendable."

Gu Jianlin chose not to use the Ancient Divine Language because what he sought was an exhilarating battle. His ritual only required the final materials to ascend to the Fourth Rank!

With the sound of catastrophic crashes, the ghostly mask spirit shattered under overwhelming pressure.

Gu Jianlin took a step forward, planting his foot ruthlessly on the woman's head.

The ground beneath exploded with a ferocious crack, spiderweb fractures spreading rapidly, threatening to collapse!

Four golden ghost hands burned to near transparency, summoned back. Their palms pulsed with a dark Ghost Curse as an immense field of darkness flickered around them, resonating with waves of power!

"Die!"

The Poison Scorpion leered, his wolf-head spirit amassing unfathomable amounts of black negative energy.

A collision!

The darkness exploded, the horrifying whirlwind ravaging the Golden Temple!

In the howling storm, the Poison Scorpion's bloody, mangled body knelt on the ground, his eyes void of emotion.

Gu Jianlin gripped his neck in one hand, golden flames blazing in his palm!

Can Jian's sword energy surged like a torrent, ready to erupt!

And at that moment, the Gun Ghost completed his Void Dog Cannon's charge, releasing a brilliant blood-red shot.

For an instant, a peerlessly elegant phantom flashed by, holding an ancient dagger.

The Dimension Slash, prepared and unleashed in an instant!

With a thunderous crash accompanied by reverberations of destruction, countless fragmented lines intertwined. The Void crumbled like a fragile mirror, collapsing entirely in a deafening racket.

Both the sword energy and the cannon fire were utterly consumed!

To Can Jian and Gun Ghost, the scene was beyond terrifying!

But they had no time to react, for four colossal golden ghost hands bellowed and descended upon them.

One punch!

Even though the Gun Ghost conjured a Rectangular Domain, it could not block the assault, resulting in him being struck and sent flying!

Can Jian managed to wield his blade in defense, but the impact was overwhelming. His sturdy blade fractured, even his defensive Sword Bone shattered, his chest caving in, blood spewing violently!

The Shadow teleported before them, seizing their heads in both hands and smashing them into the ground!

Bang!

The stones splintered, skulls shattered!

At that moment, Jiang Hanyi bit down hard on a secret medicine stashed in her molars. Overflowing vitality surged through her body as she wriggled up like a feral beast, pouncing directly at the youth!

But Gu Jianlin had anticipated this, locking her throat in a counter-grip!

Boom!

The Divine Sacrificial Fire ignited!

Jiang Hanyi issued an anguished roar, raising her mangled hands to claw desperately at his wrists. She too ignited the Divine Sacrificial Fire, attempting to siphon his precious life force!

The Poison Scorpion, seeing her plight, clung onto the youth's arm, summoning pale Ghost Fire!

The Divine's internal conflict returned to its primal form—a battle to drain one another's life force!

Gu Jianlin clasped both their throats, golden Divine Fire burning silently.

Though only of the Third Rank, he faced two Fifth Ranks simultaneously.

But he was fundamentally driven by Dual Core Drive while in Ancient God Transformation.

"How is this possible?"

The two Fifth-Rank Star Lords, feeling their life force deplete at alarming speed, realized in terror that they held no advantage, even two against one—they were the ones being drained!

"Who... are you?"

A terrified voice rasped from their throats.

Crack!

Their necks snapped.

"Who am I?"

Gu Jianlin smashed the two heads together without hesitation!

"I am the Qilin Venerable!"

Bam!

Like shattered watermelons, blood splashed everywhere.

Crack.

The hearts of the Gun Ghost and Can Jian were pierced, hearing an arrogant, detached voice in their ears.

It was genderless, yet distant.

"I am the Candle Dragon Venerable."

Faced with such an absurd answer, Can Jian and Gun Ghost shut their eyes, falling into eternal darkness.

The headless corpses of the Star Lords collapsed powerlessly, devoid of life.

Gu Jianlin retracted his Shadow indifferently, raising his head to gaze at the quivering Divine Temple, feeling the surge of spirituality in his mind.

As if breaking through a certain shackle.

Ritual complete!

Chapter 492 The Legacy of the Qilin Venerable

Dawn City, Combat Command Center.

The black and white chess pieces on the board were locked in a fierce battle, black pieces overwhelming the board while the white pieces crumbled in disarray.

Commander Lu sat with a stern expression and said coldly, "Huai Yin, something's happened."

Not long ago, he had received reports from the front lines, stating that Balensa City had seen the emergence of a large number of Corpse Ghost Ancient Divine Species. The Eastern Front was engaging them in combat amidst intense and escalating conflict, requesting immediate reinforcements.

This confirmed that Gu Jianlin's judgment was correct.

Originally, these Ancient Divine Species, upon resurrection, could do nothing but roar furiously in place.

Because they'd been transformed into Corpse Ghosts, they were destined to die off on their own after a period of time.

Now, however, the Eastern Front had approached, unwittingly offering their vibrant life force.

"Why bother telling me? My student said this would happen, but they refused to believe it,"

Huai Yin picked up a white chess piece, idly toying with the board: "Let them sort it out themselves."

Commander Lu shot him a frosty glare. "You knew something would happen? Then why didn't you say anything?"

Huai Yin paused for a few seconds.

"I knew something would happen, but I didn't know exactly what."

A faint smile crossed his face as he placed a piece on the board. "You must understand, though Chi is no longer here, he was my rival. Even in death, he still has the power to influence this world. We don't know how he achieved this, but to this day, I'm still engaged in a battle with him, with no clear victor yet."

Commander Lu's face turned exceptionally grim. He had lived through that era, witnessing firsthand the earth-shattering battles between those two brothers, where each move wielded unimaginable power, claiming countless lives in collateral damage.

"But the style of my match with him is somewhat different. That guy had an overwhelming desire to control, always intent on manipulating the world in his hands. Unfortunately, he focused too much on surface matters,"

Huai Yin remarked coolly, "While I prefer to go with the flow. Oftentimes, just the slightest change can trigger a butterfly effect that reshapes the bigger picture, pushing massive currents to work in my favor."

Commander Lu's expression was dour; suddenly, a memory struck him.

Years ago, while stationed at Buzhou Mountain, his son sent him New Year wishes via text.

The network there was poor, and messages trickled in sporadically.

"Happy New Year, Dad."

"Wishing you great fortune and good health!"

"Send the red envelope!"

"What kind of lousy network is this? Can't send this message?"

"Idiot."

The first two messages and the fourth couldn't go through, leaving the third and fifth in reversed order.

The final result turned into:

"Idiot!"

"Send the red envelope!"

Afterward, Lu Zicheng was subjected to family discipline and spent seven days kneeling at the ancestral shrine.

"What are you even doing?"

Commander Lu asked irritably.

Huai Yin chuckled faintly, "I told you, my apprentice is over there. Nothing will go wrong."

But in that instant, a distant thunderous roar could be heard, as if the sound of a world-shaking dragon's cry reverberated, accompanied by the thunderous growl of a Qilin!

The chess pieces on the board shattered instantly.

The teacups on the table trembled, their waters rippling frantically.

"Damn it! Something's gone wrong!"

Commander Lu bolted upright, his expression shifting drastically: "What the hell is that?"

But for a fleeting moment, he glimpsed a trace of satisfaction on his old friend's face.

"You were smirking just now, weren't you?"

He demanded, "Huai Yin, do you know what's happening?"

Huai Yin appeared utterly serious, replying, "What? What are you talking about? I don't understand a word."

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Dawn City, Observatory Tower.

Taihua stood at the railing of the rooftop, gazing out over the desolate Ancient God Realm. Her expression was slightly dazed, unable to discern whether it was a dragon's roar or the Qilin's growl that seemed to shake one's very soul.

Though there wasn't a strong spiritual fluctuation, an inexplicable unease still pervaded her senses.

At this moment, whether it was the plight of the Eastern Front or the inexplicable disturbances a moment ago,

The entire Ether Association erupted in chaos, convening yet another emergency meeting.

As the President, she stood here, lost in thought.

"Can you feel it? What is that thing?"

She asked softly.

A figure in a black robe stood behind her, also gazing intently at the boundless wasteland.

If Gu Jianlin were here, he would undoubtedly recognize this person.

This was the one who had appeared at Forget Sorrow Grocery Store and claimed he would deal with the President.

Unrecognizable as either male or female, their face possessed a divine beauty that seemed to transcend humanity, with jade-like skin and eyes that carried profound depth.

An otherworldly aura as though unfit for this mortal realm.

"I don't know."

The black-robed figure's voice was ethereal and calm: "My instincts tell me this matter has nothing to do with me."

Taihua scoffed lightly, "Such immense power and yet you do nothing. I still don't understand what you people are thinking. Before I die, I truly want to visit the Lishan Tiyan Pavilion and get some answers."

"To understand all things and know Heavenly Destiny, yet perfection is unattainable."

The black-robed figure's gaze remained as still as an ancient well, carrying the weight of millennia.

Taihua fell silent.

"Though you are human, you rival the Supreme in stature. We hold you in respect."

The black-robed figure said coldly, "We hope that you will uphold your end of the bargain."

"To receive such reverence from you lot—this life would be worth dying for."

Taihua suddenly laughed, "The last person to enjoy such treatment was likely none other than the Emperor."

The black-robed figure remained quiet.

"If I die, as part of the bargain, you will gain everything you desire. But ultimately, the one to take control of the order must be the person I designate. Soon, I will send that girl to Lishan."

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Taihua spoke softly: "That child's talent far surpasses mine. Her temperament is still lacking maturity, but given time, she will undoubtedly outshine me. If the Heavenly Person's Wedge is placed in her hands, it could truly shine."

The figure in black robes replied calmly: "We're naturally aware of her talents and eagerly anticipate her arrival."

Taihua suddenly seemed to recall something, hesitation flickering in her gaze: "Recently, I discovered another remarkable child. Within an instant, he grasped the rhythm of the Heavenly Realm."

The black-robed figure turned toward her, his eyes showing the first hint of emotion: "You're changing your mind, aren't you?"

"Not exactly."

Taihua gazed into the distance: "Are you truly not going to intervene?"

The black-robed figure shook his head and said, "The divine mandate we received involves only two matters. First, to thwart Candle Dragon Venerable's plans. Second, to ensure your remains are properly handled."

Taihua sneered coldly.

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Inside the colossal Golden Temple, Gu Jianlin exhaled a turbid breath from his chest. This time, he had virtually drained all the Ancient God's Breath within a radius of several kilometers, using both his true form and shadow avatar.

The energy consumption was immense.

Luckily, this was the Qilin Immortal Palace and not the real world. Even after battling for so long, he could continue maintaining the Ancient God Transformation for at least another three minutes.

He stretched his muscles, the snapping and crackling of his joints echoing throughout: "That fight was genuinely satisfying. Although it was still a dimension-reducing strike, it was ultimately one against four—or rather, two against five, considering how powerful this shadow avatar has grown. It even managed to achieve Ancient God Transformation. At this rate, could it one day cosplay as Candle Dragon Venerable?"

Bending down, he picked up the near-shattered ring.

This seemed to be a growth-oriented Mythical Weapon, capable of repair.

Four icy corpses lay within the temple, and he pulled out the Soul Comforting Bell, casually imprisoning their souls.

Sure enough, only Twilight Candidates of this caliber could push him toward true ascension.

Whether it was their madness or battle intelligence, these four were exceptional.

They even saw through many of his techniques.

Moreover, these four likely weren't the strongest among the Twilight Candidates.

As a black halo shimmered around them, four numb souls floated mid-air.

"Your rankings among the Twilight Candidates."

Gu Jianlin inquired.

"Ninth."

"Seventh."

"Tenth."

"Fifth."

Jiang Hanyi ranked the highest.

Gu Jianlin was surprised; he didn't expect this crazy woman to be so strong, yet only rank fifth.

It seemed there were even stronger individuals further up the ladder.

He didn't waste time on small talk and continued asking: "How did You Ying Group pinpoint Minister Lu's location?"

The answer was unexpected. Jiang Hanyi replied blankly: "The Red King's diary, combined with Old Master Si's divination abilities, allowed them to precisely determine Lu Zijin's whereabouts."

Gu Jianlin's eyes narrowed suspiciously: "What is the Red King's diary?"

"It's a diary left by the king before his death, rumored to foresee events three hundred years into the future. So far, everything recorded in the diary has been accurately fulfilled. You Ying Group bases most of their plans on its contents. The diary is in Lord Youming's possession; only the Think Tank can access it besides him."

Jiang Hanyi explained, "Lord Youming doesn't handle the group's planning; most responsibilities are delegated to the Think Tank."

Gu Jianlin found it horrifying—an uncanny notebook left by a dead man capable of foreseeing three centuries ahead.

It was simply terrifying.

After all, the Red King wasn't a Divination Master or Spirit Medium.

Even a demigod following those paths couldn't achieve such feats.

"Are you trying to kill Lu Zijin? Is it just out of revenge?"

Gu Jianlin frowned.

"Not entirely. This is because the Think Tank is orchestrating a scheme based on the diary."

Jiang Hanyi said, "Few know what he's planning. It's likely only a portion of You Ying Group's senior figures are aware. These individuals are mostly the six directors and the family heads behind them."

Gu Jianlin had already heard the Think Tank's name multiple times: "Who is the Think Tank?"

"Unknown. No one has ever known his origins, name, inheritance path, or exact rank. He appears and disappears unpredictably. The only certainty is even the Dusk Organization follows his commands. And he is a fanatical believer in the king."

Jiang Hanyi said numbly, "His level of madness is no less than Lord Youming's."

"Go on."

"I know very little about the Think Tank; I've only interacted with him once. It was during my first encounter with the Moon Princess at You Ying Group. Relying on my Guardian, I severely injured that bastard and tried to kill her. In the end, it was the Think Tank's people who stopped me and demanded I spare her."

Bastard.

Golden fury flared in Gu Jianlin's pupils, molten lava seeming to swirl within.

The fragile souls imprisoned by the Soul Comforting Bell nearly shattered under the pressure.

"Why such hostility toward the Moon Princess?"

Gu Jianlin asked coldly.

"The Moon Princess's mother was from the Jiang Family, a member of Dusk; a Holy Land-level Evolver. She was once the Jiang Family's promising heir and a contender for the position of Family Head. However, she is now an unerasable shame for the family. According to family traditions, any illegitimate child or descendant whose bloodline strays must be killed."

Jiang Hanyi explained, "But the Moon Princess's mother is very powerful. The Jiang Family needs her strength and influence, so they compromised slightly. The Jiang Family allowed the bastards to live but stopped them from becoming Ascenders, while demanding permanent loyalty from their mother."

Gu Jianlin understood: "And the Moon Princess became an Ascender?"

"Yes, breaking the family rules, which is why I aimed to kill them—to cleanse the family's disgrace."

Jiang Hanyi replied.

Gu Jianlin paused for a moment. "So the Jiang Family must have been a product of inbreeding."

A parrot peeked out from the bag and squawked:

"Is the Jiang Family's brain filled with trash?"

Gu Jianlin asked coldly: "So the Think Tank stopped you because of the Moon Princess's mother?"

"Presumably."

Jiang Hanyi replied, "But we still intend to act under the radar."

Gu Jianlin's voice turned icy: "Reveal your plan."

"Most of the Twilight Candidates participating in this operation are our people. Once inside the unknown regions of the Ancient God Realm, we'll find an opportunity to kill the Moon Princess. The team leader this time is Old Master Si, a Sixth Rank Divination Master. He'll help me and cover up all traces, ensuring no one knows it was my doing."

Jiang Hanyi continued, "Old Master Si is ruthless. His nephew, Si Wei'an, has always wanted to eliminate that bastard, whether due to the Returning Burial Forest feud or to weaken Third Master's influence."

Gu Jianlin thought it fortunate he had dealt with these four Twilight Candidates.

Otherwise, Youzhu would have been in real danger.

"Did you anticipate the presence of numerous Ancient God Seeds here?"

He asked, "How did you avoid their attacks?"

"The King's diary and the Soul-snatching Fragrance provided by the Think Tank."

Jiang Hanyi explained.

Gu Jianlin contemplated for a moment. The greatest immediate threats had been neutralized.

Si Wei'an hadn't followed them.

But it didn't matter; Gu Jianlin had a plan for dealing with him.

The real trouble now was another figure—Old Master Si.

From all accounts, this old man proved extremely formidable.

Both his teacher and senior brother had previously critiqued him.

If Youzhu intervened today, there was a significant chance Old Master Si would notice.

A solution needed to be devised to eliminate him.

All of a sudden, the Golden Temple began to rumble violently. Both the ground and the dome lit up with blazing crimson patterns, as if a hidden alchemy matrix had been activated.

"What's happening?"

Gu Jianlin retrieved the Soul Comforting Bell, astonished.

The enormous Qilin Divine Statue atop the Golden Divine Seat opened its slit-like, vertical pupils!

Boom!

The kneeling sculptures faintly emitted echoing sounds, seemingly welcoming someone's return.

The massive Qilin Divine Statue fixed its gaze on the void, gathering countless golden specks of light that coalesced into a crimson golden scepter—a spectral creation that paradoxically appeared tangible!

Gu Jianlin froze, recalling the knowledge stored in his mind.

Old Gu murmured into his ear: "What's there to be surprised about? Didn't I already tell you this was Qilin Venerable's city? This is His throne. In the boundless epochs past, He should have sat right here, holding the scepter, punishing traitors within this grave-like city."

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Gu Jianlin vaguely understood something. This was originally a dead, silent city, but only when its Monarch descended would it awaken from its long slumber.

As if compelled by some unseen force, he walked toward the gigantic Golden Divine Throne and sat upon it.

His frame was far too small, as though he were seated on a Giant's throne.

The illusory Golden Scepter hovered in mid-air and quietly descended before him. Everything felt so natural, as if the Black Supreme of the Ancient Era had returned, sitting on the throne and grasping the Authority.

A nebulous, golden barrier materialized out of thin air. Countless ancient, cryptic lines interwove like writhing live snakes, strange symbols flickered erratically—some resembling planets with their rings, others like flowing galaxies, and yet others as bottomless black holes, deep and inscrutable.

Who am I?

Where am I?

What am I doing?

Old Gu was dumbfounded, his eyes wide open and his face blank with confusion.

This proved that the knowledge Gu Jianlin had absorbed from his father was completely insufficient to comprehend what this was.

The Ancient God Clan, after all, hailed from the Deep Space of the Universe, wielding unique methods of conveying information.

It was simply beyond the understanding of ordinary people.

In truth, many modern scientists spend their lives searching for aliens, not realizing they had already descended upon Earth during the Ancient Times. In those times, ordinary people were aware of the gods' existence. But as millennia-long wars persisted and the Ascenders deliberately obscured the truth, fewer people came to know this secret.

All that remains are fragmented myths, distorted historical tales, and faint traces of lost civilizations.

Now, Gu Jianlin found himself in quite an awkward position.

Because he couldn't understand.

Yet, as it turned out, he didn't need to understand.

For when he gazed at the patterns and symbols on the golden barrier, he began to hear the ancient, cryptic whispers.

Not just whispers—but also the sound of bells.

Darkness surged in his mind like a sea tide, accompanied by the resonant, ancient bell chimes. The entire world shattered in his consciousness, as if he had plunged into the desolate depths of the Universe, surrounded by chaos and void.

Faint light emerged within the darkness—better described as a tide of radiance rather than light itself. It was dazzling and incandescent, far more radiant and fiery than the Sun. Yet on the opposite side lay profound chaos, a void capable of consuming everything, akin to a dim, undulating ocean with lurking undertows.

The two forces faced each other, entrenched in the tranquil, barren depths of the Universe.

If a modern astronomer were to witness this, they would surely collapse in ecstatic madness, as these unprecedented cosmic phenomena would completely overturn all existing research.

Until light and darkness gradually merged, the cosmic starscape contorted and inverted with violent intensity.

It was as if a bottomless whirlpool.

In the silent abyss of space, a planet suddenly imploded and collapsed, with gigantic Dragon Horns bursting forth from within.

They forcefully tore the planet apart.

It was an enormous Black Dragon, coiled within the dark reaches of the Universe. Its rugged Dragon Scales were grating into a fiery red hue, scorching hot like burning meteors—so majestic and grand.

A second planet was engulfed in flames and reduced to ashes; the crimson Vermilion Bird bathed in fire dashed across the starry rivers. Its wings were so immense, they seemed to shroud all darkness.

A third planet split in two, as a snow-white creature bathed in resplendent light descended upon the Universe. It bore a pair of massive horns and radiant wings behind its back—so noble and splendid.

A fourth planet disintegrated into dust as a colossal entity silently erupted skyward. Its body was covered in horrifying scales that resembled heavy armor, adorned with eerie and grotesque human faces!

The final planet withered and decayed in silence, as a black Qilin emanating sinister ghost energy spread through the tranquil depths of space. In this ostensibly silent domain, its roar could be faintly heard.

This was the history of the Ancient God Clan!

The birth narrative of the original five Ancient Supremes!

The Candle Dragon Venerable, the Vermilion Bird Venerable, the Bai Ze Venerable, the Xuanming Venerable.

And the Qilin Venerable—surprisingly the last Ancient Supreme to be born.

Yet, in the barren abyss of the Universe, faintly trembling planets still existed.

They were enveloped by indistinct fog, struggling desperately.

Their aura was exceedingly feeble!

A surge of overwhelming terror exploded in Gu Jianlin's mind. Witnessing this scene, he abruptly realized that the five Ancient Supremes on Earth were not necessarily the entirety.

That's right, if there were only five Ancient Supremes, then the Inheritance Paths should likewise number only five.

But the truth is, the Inheritance Paths are quite numerous.

More Ancient Supremes exist.

Yet they have not been born.

It seemed as though some force had prevented their emergence.

Next, he heard fragments of ancient whispers—disjointed and fleeting.

Gu Jianlin unexpectedly comprehended the meaning of these whispers. It was akin to the chants of a religious Priest, reciting during grand ceremonies of the Ancient God Clan to extol their history in the form of hymns.

The general meaning was:

The Ancient God Clan is a high-level civilization wandering in the depths of the Universe. They are supremely exalted yet possess no home of their own. Only the Supremes have independent worlds capable of hosting their Clans.

Endless time, interminable wandering.

The five Ancient Supremes roamed through the cosmos, seeking the long-desired haven of their dreams.

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Countless galaxies were destroyed because of Them, and innumerable civilizations bowed to Their will.

The Ancient Supremes followed the guidance of the Primordial, seeking redemption in the darkness.

Until one day, They descended upon Earth.

Boom!

As if awakened from a nightmare, Gu Jianlin gasped for breath, overwhelmed with terror.

"Incredible."

Old Gu murmured, "Kid, you've stumbled upon something extraordinary."

Gu Jianlin finally began to understand; the history of the Ancient God Clan was obsessively compelling. Even someone like him couldn't help but feel an endless longing and curiosity, let alone the man before him.

Though Old Gu was no longer around, mapping his personality profile felt as if he was still by his side, providing a subtle sense of comfort and dispelling loneliness.

"The number of Ancient Supremes wasn't small, but it wasn't limited to just five. Yet, the others never came into being, consumed instead by some mist-like presence. How peculiar."

Gu Jianlin panted, muttering to himself, "What was the light and darkness I initially saw? And what is this so-called Primordial? That the Ancient Supremes lacked a habitat is understandable, given that They are lifeforms born from consuming entire planets. A normal planet surely couldn't provide the energy needed for survival."

"So what's so special about Earth? Why are They fixated on it?"

He paused to ponder, "The five Ancient Supremes searching together for a habitat implies that They hadn't turned on each other yet. Instead, the infighting began only after They descended on Earth. But why?"

It seemed Earth wasn't the only civilization the Ancient God Clan had discovered.

Countless civilizations were destroyed by Them.

"Terrifying."

Gu Jianlin exhaled deeply, seated on a Divine Seat.

Suddenly, the golden light screen before him began to quiver, its light and shadow shifting.

A tide of light and shadow swept past, vanishing in an instant.

Though brief, information still flowed through.

Black Supreme sat solemnly on the throne, judging sinners kneeling in the Judgement Temple.

A colossal monster was pierced by an obsidian sword, its blood dyeing the sea crimson, its corpse sinking into the ocean depths.

The boundless sea boiled, dense with life force rising like vapor.

All People cheered, bowing to the ground.

Praising the greatness of the King.

Each fleeting scene was nothing short of overwhelming.

Gu Jianlin's heart quivered, as if grasping a truth—he knew that obsidian sword all too well. A fragment of the Qilin Wedge bore a perfect resemblance to it!

The Qilin Venerable would pierce clan members guilty of heinous crimes with the Qilin Wedge and sink them into the ocean.

As for the name of that sea, it was the Sea of Eternal Life!

So that is the origin of the Sea of Eternal Life. If this miraculous place exists in every Ancient God Realm, it proves this was a shared tradition among the Ancient Supremes.

Or rather, a hallmark of Ancient God Clan's civilization.

Of course, some absurd visions appeared as well.

A black Qilin crouched on a desolate sea, as countless massive black shadows descended from the sky.

This Black Qilin suddenly raised its golden vertical pupil, and the entire world collapsed amidst the annihilation of countless black shadows.

Witnessing this, Gu Jianlin was seized with an uncanny sense of familiarity.

It felt disturbingly like a trap.

The Ancient Supremes feigned weakness, inciting rebellious desires within Their clan.

Only to slaughter them in turn.

Their corpses were cast into the Sea of Eternal Life, to serve as a restorative pool.

"No way. The Ancient Supremes wouldn't be so reckless, would They?"

Old Gu was aghast, "Such behavior is utterly unethical."

Gu Jianlin's gaze turned hollow, "Old Gu, do the Ancient Supremes even possess ethics?"

Old Gu was silent for a moment, "It's clear They don't adhere to such concepts."

"And for some reason, I feel like if it were the Qilin Venerable, it would absolutely make sense."

Gu Jianlin muttered.

The Qilin Venerable, the most enigmatic of the Ancient Supremes, was painted in his mind as insane, brutal, and cruel.

Now, it seemed, there was even an element of dark humor.

If you wished to slay your clan, you could have done so directly.

But to act weak, provoke rebellion, and then eradicate them in retaliation—

It was absurd.

Yet, considering the madness of the Qilin Venerable, somehow it also felt plausible.

Rumble!

At that moment, a thunderous crash shook the Golden Temple from outside. It was as if some colossal beast was rampaging through the city, toppling countless buildings, with smoke billowing to the skies and roars echoing like thunder.

"Damn it, Youzhu and the others are in danger."

Gu Jianlin's pupils shrank slightly; this many Corpse Ghost Ancient Divine Species would overwhelm anyone.

And even his Ancient God Transformation was barely holding on.

As if in response, the ethereal Golden Scepter radiated light again.

This time, the golden light screen transformed and coalesced, revealing a map.

The map of Balensa City!

On the map, a blood-red marker stood out—it was the altar he had seen earlier!

The altar that had been tampered with by the Kui Dragon Ancestor.

As Gu Jianlin's gaze fixed on that point, the surrounding Golden Temple warped like mist, as if traversing time and space, descending upon that very altar.

Scalding blood flowed like molten lava, streaming along the Blood River.

The stench of blood was thick and suffocating.

One couldn't deny the eerie ingenuity of Ancient God Clan's civilization. Though Gu Jianlin was within the Golden Temple, he could feel everything within the altar—its temperature, its warmth, even the cutting chill of the wind.

Chapter 496 The Conspiracy of the Ancient God Clan_3

He caught a whiff of that bloody scent, recalling the brief clash he had with this creature back in the underwater palace.

Yes, it was the same smell.

The blood of the Kui Dragon Ancestor.

"Wait a second."

Gu Jianlin suddenly realized something.

This was the city of an Ancient Supreme.

The world of Qilin Venerable.

These Corpse Ghosts were also created by Qilin Venerable.

They were simply modified and controlled by the Kui Dragon Ancestor.

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Within Balensa City, the chaos was overwhelming, countless enormous Ancient God Seeds rampaging and howling.

"Retreat immediately!"

"We've already lost over seventy-two units of super-heavy armor—casualties are devastating!"

"The Seventh Combat Squadron has taken severe injuries! Immediate medical attention from Priests required—requesting support!"

As soon as the Eastern Front forces arrived at Balensa City, they were ambushed by an enormous swarm of Ancient God Seeds. Even the seemingly invincible Dawn Combat Sequence suffered tremendous losses due to the lack of preparation.

Fortunately, thanks to Gu Jianlin's timely warning, the Dawn Combat Sequence soldiers were somewhat prepared. While there were no fatalities yet, injuries were countless, and numerous weapons and equipment had been destroyed.

The accompanying Omega team had already sprung into action but was still unable to stabilize the situation.

"Nightmare! Why didn't you foresee the crisis beforehand?"

Li Hanting yelled through the communication channel, maneuvering his sword amidst the endless barrage of fire; the blazing sword light shredded through the body of an Ancient God Seed, spraying foul-smelling green blood everywhere.

"How would I know? This is most likely the work of an Ancient God! If I could have foreseen it, I wouldn't just be here playing Omega! Don't shove every blame onto me—I won't take it!" Nightmare shouted back amidst the crowd, desperately interfering with the thoughts of the Ancient God Seeds, buying precious time for the nano warriors.

Dawn and the Pharmacists were also risking their lives to save people.

Of course, the only reason the situation hadn't completely spiraled out of control was thanks to the presence of a Seventh-Rank Holy Land wielder.

Xuanming Saint, following the Priest's path, single-handedly stabilized the situation. Bathed in radiant Holy Light, he healed the nano warriors, which was why not even a single life had been lost thus far.

But his face was pale to the extreme, his gaze fixed deep into Balensa City.

His eyes quivered, filled with terror.

An unimaginably horrifying aura.

It was almost as if an Ancient Supreme was awakening.

But the aura wasn't strong.

It flickered faintly.

Utterly terrifying.

Balensa City was crumbling, and amidst the ruins, young girls were frantically fleeing.

"Are we really going to die here?"

Lu Zijin shouted, "Also, when your brother carried me away, he did it princess-style!"

Though she shouted as loud as she could, her words were drowned amidst the monstrous roars.

Su Youzhu, carrying her while darting like a spectral shadow, replied, "Since when did you become so talkative?"

"Hahaha, die for me!"

Ji Xiaoyu hoisted a rocket launcher, spraying toxic fog like mad. Her carefully crafted poisons demonstrated their devastating effectiveness at this moment, as not even the frenzied Ancient God Seeds could withstand the venom!

Some were even temporarily paralyzed due to the stench!

"Stop laughing, run faster!"

Lu Qingqing shot her a glare, gripping dual pistols and unleashing a storm of bullets to cover the auxiliaries' retreat.

Boom!

Chen Qing had just leaped onto a higher platform and turned back to pull his companion up.

"Thanks."

Lin Wanqiu had just clambered up, only to turn and see two Alchemists being chased by a grotesque monster.

From the crevices in the rocks emerged a hideous creature resembling a dinosaur, its gaping maw dripping with blood!

A terrifying energy converged in its mouth!

The group turned back, their faces as pale as ghosts.

Chapter 497: Kui Dragon Ancestor, Incoming!

The deformed giant beast opened its bloodied jaws, with scorching breath gathering in its throat.

Accompanied by a deafening roar!

These Ancient God Seeds were artificially cultivated using the corpses of the Ancestors. Their appearance closely resembled Earth's dominant species from hundreds of millions of years ago—the dinosaurs—enhanced further by the bloodline of the Qilin and Kui Dragon, making their aggression extraordinarily intense!

The burning light illuminated the despair written across everyone's faces.

Because there was nowhere left to escape. If they were hit by this blast, even their ashes would be obliterated!

In the nick of time, Lu Qingqing recited the Forbidden Spell once again, blood pouring from her seven orifices. Dust and stones surged to form a massive Sandstone Shield before them, standing in their defense!

Boom!

The colossal scorching breath slammed into the Sandstone Shield with force, causing her to stumble backward, her face pale as a ghost.

"Are you sure this is an Ancient God Seed? Not Godzilla? Why is it this powerful?"

She shouted, "I'm holding the line here; you all retreat quickly!"

Time suddenly sank into a quagmire of silence, with tranquil shades of black and white bleeding outward like ink. The world along the way seemed frozen, paralyzed, with only a blood-red flash of a blade shining—slashing horizontally and vertically!

Crack—

The silent space-time shattered, and the rampaging dinosaur was sliced into pieces by the blade light.

Blood cascaded like a waterfall!

Su Youzhu unleashed a Master-Level Sword Skill, dispatching the Ancient God Seed within mere seconds.

"Who exactly is this girl?"

The two Alchemists stood dumbstruck, feeling as though this young lady was like an elf—elegant yet coldly fierce.

Lu Zijin smirked and said, "She's Xiao Gu's..."

"I'm his wife!"

The Moon Princess's blood-red vertical pupils remained devoid of emotion. "What are you standing around for? Move quickly!"

Everyone was shocked beyond belief. Xiao Gu was clearly a minor, yet he already had a wife?

Chen Qing performed a quick divination and thought to himself that she was clearly declaring her territory here.

Lin Wanqiu felt a bit conflicted. No wonder that boy always dismissed her advances. Despite her mature and seductive charm as an older sister, she had been overshadowed by a young girl—a fact that made her feel deeply defeated.

But she couldn't deny that the Moon Princess was breathtakingly stunning; one glance would leave anyone unable to forget her.

"Hey, can you guys look behind you?"

Ji Xiaoyu suddenly murmured, "Is it still possible for us to surrender now?"

Because beyond the ruins, countless Ancient God Seeds were converging from all directions, howling fearfully toward the heavens, exuding eerie ghost energy, with scorching power swirling in their blood-red mouths.

These Ancient God Seeds were already abnormal in their combat capabilities and had been further modified using Corpse Ghost Skill, bearing traits from two different clans. Even fighting them one-on-one would be a struggle, let alone facing so many of them at once.

Their towering shadows swallowed everyone's hope and filled their hearts with despair.

Even the Moon Princess was stunned. It was uncertain whether her Space Jump could carry this many people away in a single attempt.

Yet, at that moment, the Ancient God Seeds, ready to unleash their fury with jaws wide open, suddenly ceased roaring. The scorching breath within their throats dissipated gradually, as if they were mechanical dolls that had wound down, frozen in place.

The Moon Princess's blade trembled visibly; she was even prepared to sacrifice this body to ensure the safety of the others.

But when her gaze landed upon this scene, she froze completely.

Beings as ferocious as these Ancient God Seeds would never suddenly show mercy and spare them.

There was only one plausible explanation—they had been stopped by someone!

The Moon Princess swiftly turned her head and peered far into the distance.

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At the central altar of Balensa City, chaos erupted—Blood River churned, scorching and thunderous.

Yet the crimson blood suddenly became stained with a noble golden hue, as though it were being corroded. The radiant golden color crept outward, engulfing the red entirely, unleashing a towering wave of blood!

"What's happening?"

Tang Zijiang half-knelt on the towering bronze pillar, staring at the scene before him in utter astonishment.

Because the divine statue standing tall on the altar seemed to awaken from an eternal slumber stretching back billions of years. Its body, adorned with the intricate Qilin Pattern, emitted golden radiance, its ancient, majestic presence escalating rapidly, resounding like thunder!

The colossal golden eyes gleamed radiantly, filled with rage and dignity!

Boom!

Tang Zijong locked eyes briefly with the golden pupils, as if he had gazed upon an Ancient God!

Surpassing even the Primordial!

"Tang Zijong."

Though no person could be seen, a youthful voice filled with cold authority broke through.

Like rolling thunder, it echoed in his ears!

Tang Zijong recognized this voice—it belonged to the young boy who appeared with his great-granddaughter. But no living being was present nearby; he didn't even know how this voice was transmitted.

"Why did you betray humanity? If you wished to escape the Order of the Hidden's control, why not share the truth with your grandchild? Tang Ling suffered much injustice in the Ether Association for your sake."

The cold, indifferent voice sounded once more, its origin unknown, yet it carried an icy chill.

Tang Zijong drew the iron sword from his back, his white hair billowing as he responded coldly, "Quit pretending to be a god here. If you want answers, why not come see me face-to-face?"

Blood mist spread; the iron sword trembled as though weeping.

"I will meet you, and I will find a way to make you reveal the truth."

The boy's voice was devoid of warmth, icy as frost. "If you are controlled by the Ancient God Clan, I will grant you release. But if you truly betrayed humanity, betrayed your children, you must pay the price you deserve."

Tang Zijong glanced around before letting out a laugh. "I see," he said. "You're questioning me because of her. Borrowing the power left behind by the Qilin Venerable to act like a god. I suggest you leave while you still can. This is not a place for you—here dwell magnificent beings you could only dream of in your lifetime. And one such being is about to awaken."

After a brief silence, the boy calmly replied:

"Then let's wait and see."

Boom!

The entire city of Balensa shook violently.

For one fleeting moment, Tang Zijing's pupils contracted sharply.

Because he saw that all the Ancient God Seeds buried within the ancient city had stopped moving entirely.

This was impossible. These Ancient God Seeds buried beneath Balensa had slept for countless ages. Only after being fed the blood of the Kui Dragon Ancestor could they awaken, but they could not be controlled—they could only attack indiscriminately.

Yet in this moment, these Ancient God Seeds had all been brought under control, halting their assault.

This should have been achievable only by the Qilin Venerable!

The ancient statue towering above the altar grew ever more awe-inspiring.

Tang Zijing realized it was best to leave at once, leaping forward as the blood mist engulfed him in swift retreat.

But just then, he heard an enraged roar from deep within his soul!

The roar of the Kui Dragon Ancestor!

Tang Zijing's expression shifted slightly, but slowly, a smirk emerged on his face.

"Heh, such an ignorant child."

He chuckled and said, "You will pay the price."

Inside the Golden Temple, Gu Jianlin sat silently upon the Divine Seat. "Tang Zijing, Tang Ling's great-grandfather. Since he's also here, this confirms this place as the hiding ground of the Kui Dragon Ancestor. While Tang Zijing is already under the control of the Kui Dragon Ancestor, if familial affection remains within him, he might offer some clues."

He murmured to himself, "At least Tang Ling wouldn't have to feel as saddened then."

Unless it was a direct order from the Kui Dragon Ancestor, forbidding him to reveal anything.

This was truly troublesome.

In truth, Senior Ji Zhou called him a scoundrel for using people and then forgetting them.

But he had never forgotten.

He simply wasn't someone skilled at expressing emotions.

Before uncovering the truth, he was reluctant to give anyone too much hope.

People despair because they have too much hope.

Old Gu pondered for a moment before suddenly saying, "Actually, I suspect that compared to the Ancient Supreme's Mind Control, the Primordial's control over its Divine Servants is not always as absolute. Historically, many who were under the Primordial's control outwardly served it but secretly had room for maneuver."

Gu Jianlin froze. These insights were left within that secret archive.

Indeed.

The Supreme and the Primordial belonged to fundamentally different levels.

Though it was merely speculation, the possibility was very high!

Simultaneously, he dwelled on the final words left behind.

"—You will pay the price."

As the words fell, he caught onto something amiss.

He could feel it.

A terrifying pressure locking onto him from afar.

Almost simultaneously, the Void was forcibly shattered, countless web-like cracks spreading outward. Surrounding space collapsed inch by inch, revealing a faintly visible and horrifyingly massive face.

Damn!

It was yet another space-time forceful breach!

Gu Jianlin's pupils contracted violently—this time, it looked like things had escalated beyond control!

Chapter 498: The Ancient Divine Language of Candle Dragon Venerable!

Within the muffled roar, as time and space gradually collapsed, a massive terrifying face seemed to emerge. Its left eye was a fiery cavern, its right eye an icy abyss. Gigantic horns seemed ablaze, stern and fearsome beyond measure.

Even before it fully descended, the breath of extreme cold had already surged forth, howling and rampaging like a blizzard!

The city of Balensa, on the verge of revival, was once again pushed to the brink of freezing.

Extreme cold descended, frost blanketed heaven and earth.

Gu Jianlin sat upright on the throne, the golden light in his eyes blazing fiercely.

This was the Kui Dragon Ancestor!

"The 'Classic of Mountains and Seas·Great Wilderness East Classic' once said: Its form resembles an ox, its body is azure without horns, it has one leg. When it enters and exits the waters, wind and rain follow, its radiance like the sun and moon, its voice like thunder, and it is named Kui!"

Having crossed paths countless times, both openly and in the shadows, this ancient monster had finally reappeared. Moreover, its aura was clearly more powerful than last time. If another clash of the Ancient Divine Language were to occur, he would most likely be the one to retreat defeated!

In this moment, countless thoughts raced through his mind.

The Kui Dragon Ancestor belonged to the clan of the Candle Dragon, so naturally, it should be a master of the powers of time and space.

For so much of its strength to recover at once, it was certain that it must have been resting in the Sea of Eternal Life to regain its power.

Tang Zijing had previously mentioned that a great being was about to awaken.

The Kui Dragon Ancestor was about to return to its peak!

Gu Jianlin's reckless use of the Qilin Venerable's power, forcibly taking control of this graveyard-like city and purging the Kui's corruption of the Ancient God Seed, must have alarmed it.

What he didn't expect was how swift and thunderous its response would be this time—it was truly a strike of lightning!

No, that wasn't right.

In truth, the Kui had no other choice.

If Gu Jianlin had been the true Qilin Venerable, and had recovered even part of his state, the Kui Dragon Ancestor would have no chance at all. Whether killed or devoured, its fate would be utterly tragic.

However, if the Qilin Venerable's state wasn't as formidable, then the Kui's thunderous strike would buy it enough time—whether to flee this world or recover its strength to return and hunt, both would work in its favor!

Amid the terrifying roar, ancient murmurs echoed.

A voice seemed to whisper: "Qilin..."

This scene was like the resurrection of a primordial giant. The extreme cold gales poured through the fissures of time and space, surging and raging like a blizzard. The entire Golden Temple froze over, as if it had fallen into an abyss.

The monster in the blizzard opened its wild, savage eyes, its voice booming like thunder.

It seemed as though it would tear through time and space to forcibly descend!

Gu Jianlin felt the frost pierce into his bones, his entire body covered in thick layers of ice, his eyelashes frozen solid.

He could barely move.

His mind raced to devise a strategy, but no matter what, he could only see a dead end.

And yet, in that instant, an absurd and fantastical thought surfaced in his mind.

But it was also his only straw to grasp at for survival.

The shadow behind Gu Jianlin trembled violently, dissolving like mist.

An ethereal, unparalleled silhouette coalesced once more. Though a creation of the Qilin Forbidden Curse, its source of power was the devoured Candle Dragon Bone, making its beauty otherworldly. It bloomed like an unrestrained Mandala Flower, exquisite and enchanting, every glance and smile enough to topple all creation.

A beauty without equal, a seductive allure unrivaled.

A magnificence unmatched in the annals of history.

Even due to Gu Jianlin's influence, it carried an additional air of frosty solitude and austere detachment.

She bore dignified crimson dragon horns, her visage a peerless masterpiece in the mortal world. A touch of crimson at the corner of her eyes was bright as blood, her gaze majestic and stern, as though spanning eons of time to behold something profound.

Blood-colored mist danced around her like a flowing dress, swirling violently in the cold winds.

Her inky black hair swayed in the storm.

Her garments fluttered in kind.

"Kui!"

She spoke softly.

There was no overwhelming spiritual fluctuation, merely a detached glance, yet the world itself seemed to tremble.

Boom!

Time and space trembled madly. The terrifying face poised to shatter the void dramatically shifted, as if it had seen an impossible existence. It let out a roar of extreme rage and terror, trembling in awe and dread!

"Venerable One!"

The Kui roared toward the heavens, its ancient, chaotic dialect rumbling like thunder.

"Impossible! How can you possibly appear here! You actually succeeded! You truly succeeded!"

Gu Jianlin understood this archaic language.

Even the Ancient Ancestors could not comprehend the spectacle before their eyes. The Kui sensed overwhelming shock and fear, the entire fabric of time and space quivering on the verge of collapse, teetering towards retreat!

This was exactly the effect Gu Jianlin wanted.

And now, he sought to stoke the flames further!

Good sister, I'm counting on you!

Boom!

The Candle Dragon's ethereal form gradually came into focus. Twin blood-colored vertical pupils ignited, brimming with endless lightning and thunder. In this moment, the heavens and earth seemed to plunge into the Netherworld, with a single black dragon soaring skyward.

It seemed as though it would tear both heaven and earth apart!

Ancient Divine Language!

This was no bellow, but an ethereal, ephemeral melody, as if sung from the very edge of time itself. Someone was softly humming in the silence, yet it carried the weight of divine wrath, concealing the origins of the universe, the essence of creation and destruction, the genesis of all things, the cycles of fate, and the disintegration of karma and order—all unraveling!

Amid the thundering roar, the time and space torn by the Kui Dragon Venerable twisted violently. Like a collapsing vortex, it exploded with a deafening boom, distorting even spatial coordinates and plunging dimensions into chaos!

If the Qilin Venerable's Ancient Divine Language was a forced decree of death upon life,

Then the Candle Dragon Venerable's Ancient Divine Language was the annihilation of causality!

This wasn't Gu Jianlin's power affecting a Primordial Ancestor's time-space travel.

It was the Ancient Divine Language of the Candle Dragon Venerable shattering it from its very foundation!

Like a levee crumbling under the onslaught of ants.

A minuscule deviation creating a vast disparity!

This ability, unique to the Candle Dragon Venerable, had now been flawlessly replicated by him!

With a thunderous explosion!

The spirituality of both his true form and his avatar was completely depleted!

"Candle Dragon, Qilin!"

The collapsing space disintegrated and vanished. Amid it all, the colossal terrifying visage plummeted into the abyss, letting out a furious and panicked roar, spewing blizzard-like breaths that tore through the void!

Boom!

At the final moment of his Ancient God Transformation's dissolution, Gu Jianlin raised his hand to shield himself.

In an instant, he was struck head-on by the raging blizzard crashing down!

In the terrifying explosion, the entire Golden Divine Throne was overturned, smashing through the vast temple and buried under the storm of snow and frost.

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Boom!

Above Balensa City, the snowstorm howled. The terrifying aura, like that of a god, manifested out of nowhere, only to disappear as swiftly as it arrived, leaving behind a flurry of falling snow. The temperature plummeted to minus fifty degrees!

If not for the alchemically-enhanced vehicles of the Ether Association, they would have been rendered inoperable.

"Attention all departments. An ancestor-level fluctuation has been detected! Upon analysis, the source of the spiritual fluctuation matches that of the Underwater Palace event. Temporarily identifying it as the Kui Dragon Ancestor. All units are to enter the highest state of combat readiness."

"Report to headquarters immediately and request Divine General support!"

"Over and out."

Ying Changsheng flew the helicopter with a stone-cold expression. The eldest grandson of the Golden King, heir to the family clan, and the most promising genius to inherit the next "Catastrophe," now bore a resolute yet grim demeanor.

The swords in the sword box trembled violently, uneasy and restless.

"Hush, do not fear."

He said faintly: "Nothing will happen."

"Fifteen minutes ago, we received news of a large-scale disappearance of three thousand people in the real world. All of them Ascenders with established identities within human society. According to the Horus Eye Satellite, traces of sword marks and blood mist were found at the scene."

Mu Qingyou, wearing a headset, reported: "Divination by spirit mediums detected Divine Servant-level fluctuations at the scene. The likely culprit is the missing former heir of the Sword Tomb, Tang Zijing."

She hesitated: "Now with the Kui Dragon Ancestor's appearance and the Ancient God Seed's upheaval in Balensa City, it's highly probable these events are connected to Tang Zijing. Otherwise, the Eastern Front wouldn't have so easily fallen into an ambush."

The top ten Omegas exchanged uncertain glances, sensing that something wasn't right.

For the tone seemed to hint at something unsaid.

Everyone knew who Tang Zijing was.

But no one dared speak further.

For inside the cabin, someone else was present.

Tang Ling sat in the farthest corner of the cabin, deliberately distancing herself from her teammates. Listening to the reports on the communication channel, her heart felt hollow, an indescribable sensation taking hold.

Whether it was the ominous aura flickering in and out within Balensa City,

Or the roars of the Kui Dragon Ancestor.

It should have been terrifying.

But none of it mattered anymore at this moment.

For before embarking with the support squad, she had already received the news.

A great number of people had disappeared in the real world.

Many innocent people.

And those people were probably already dead.

Because of her great-grandfather.

How vexing.

Tang Ling glanced at the mirror on her lap. The reflection showed a face of stunning beauty, radiant and alluring.

That woman with red hair remained as bewitching and enchanting as ever, her voice a devil's whisper: "What are you still hoping for? After everything Tang Zijing has done, do you still expect him to be as he once was? All you've done so far has only ended up dragging yourself down."

This voice echoed solely in her mind, unheard by anyone else.

Tang Ling fell silent.

"You should've listened to me long ago, giving up on all these meaningless pursuits. Go to Lishan Tiyan Pavilion obediently at year's end to cultivate. You'll become the first human in history to be trained by the Ancient God Clan."

The seductive voice persuaded her: "At that point, surpassing Rhein would be all too easy, wouldn't it? You could even release me completely from Extreme Thunder, and then anyone who displeases you could be dealt with at will. But instead, you pinned your hopes on that Gu brat, got dragged into chaos

alongside him, got reprimanded by your teacher, held accountable by the President—and what was the result?"

Tang Ling looked down at her phone, her icy, exquisite eyes devoid of emotion.

The devil in the mirror whispered: "That person didn't even send you a single message."

Tang Ling was silent for a moment. Back when she helped him, she hadn't given it too much thought.

She had simply seen someone stubbornly seeking the truth, alone and isolated—

He had reminded her too much of her old self.

So she did her best to lend him a hand.

For him.

And for herself as well.

But in the end, it turned out she'd been nothing more than a tool.

"If he doesn't reply, so be it. I wasn't expecting anything in the first place."

Tang Ling put away the mirror, curled herself up in the cabin corner with her backpack in her arms. Her frost-white hair cascaded down like snow, disordering her pale, delicate face as she murmured to herself: "Tiyang Pavilion it is, then..."

But just in that moment, the roar outside the cabin abruptly vanished.

The endless thunder of artillery also ceased.

The Ancient God Seed no longer roared.

Silence and freezing cold descended, akin to an abyss.

Chapter 499: Senior Brother Is Extremely Worried

The frozen Golden Temple. A massive black hole suddenly tore open in midair, and someone stepped out.

Jing Ci had uncharacteristically abandoned his suit, opting instead for a thick woolen coat and a lambswool scarf. Stepping out of the black hole, he murmured softly, "Kui Dragon Ancestor, the one who wields the Authority over temperature control. Truly terrifying. If its Breath were to be unleashed a few more times, even the gates of spatial transportation might be impossible to hold open. Thankfully, we arrived in time."

Four corpses, frozen into blocks of ice, knelt motionlessly on the ground, braving the howling wind.

"All four Twilight Candidates—dead?"

He glanced down at the four kneeling corpses, a faint smile curling at his lips, and said softly, "So Jiang Hanyi is dead as well. It seems that after the matters in the Sea of Eternal Life are resolved, things are going to get... rather interesting."

The combat strength displayed by his junior brother had breached all known limits.

No wonder the teacher said there was no need to worry—this was like unleashing a fish into the sea.

No, a Qilin into the sea.

At the end of the frost-covered Divine Path was the shattered Golden Divine Throne, which had been punched into a massive crater.

Bloodstains still dotted the golden steps.

Even the temple itself had been broken through, icy gusts roaring from the gaping hole.

These were all relics of an ultra-ancient civilization, treasures of incalculable worth.

And just like that, they'd been smashed through.

The Golden Temple itself was a prized heritage of the Ancient God Clan, yet it had suffered the same fate.

Young people these days—they have no sense of artifact preservation.

Jing Ci roughly estimated that this fight had resulted in losses totaling at least several billion.

Oh well, he'll let the Ether Association mourn over it; it had nothing to do with him anyway.

He raised his right hand, each of his five fingers adorned with a dark red ring.

The rings were embedded with gemstones that resembled unnerving eyeballs, emitting an eerie glow. He traced the air with them in one deft motion.

Now, no matter how skilled the Spirit Mediums and Divination Masters, they wouldn't be able to perceive what had transpired here.

He then walked over to the pool of blood and wiped it away with deliberate force.

The blood Gu Jianlin had coughed up vanished without a trace.

After finishing all this, Jing Ci pulled out his phone for a quick check, only to see it had already shut down under the low temperatures.

He paused for a second, then retrieved a Polaroid camera from his pocket. He snapped a photo of the four frozen corpses.

Content, he turned and stepped back into the black hole, disappearing into the void without a trace.

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The city of Balensa was encased in icy fog, its expansive Divine Path buried beneath thick layers of snow and ruined remnants, with only the fierce, bitter winds howling, laden with an aura of relentless frost.

Moon Princess tilted her head back and drank a bottle of Blue Blood, feeling its spiritual energy fill her. She spoke in a low voice, "Aunt Zijin, are you ready? Things will move fast—very fast."

Within her clear, luminous eyes, not a trace of emotion could be found; only faint undercurrents swirled ominously.

"How many times do I have to tell you—call me sister!"

Lu Zijin couldn't help but glare at the younger girl, though her gaze remained unusually calm. She replied evenly, "Don't worry about me. Just focus on the task. The reason I let you bring me along is to ensure you're safe. If it truly comes to it, even if it costs me my advancement, I will bring both of you out alive."

The crowd watched the two women in silence, saying nothing.

"Don't worry. I'll protect this spot!"

Ji Xiaoyu, standing with hands on her hips, had already escaped harm and was confident she'd manage on her own.

Lu Qingqing seemed hesitant to speak but, remembering that the group had survived so far thanks to that young man, kept quiet. Instead, she said calmly, "You go first; we'll catch up soon."

The two Alchemists handed over a box containing secret medicines.

"Be careful on the way."

Chen Qing gently reminded them.

Lin Wanqiu added a layer of Holy Light protection, speaking solemnly, "Since I won't be with you, this will last only fifteen minutes. Within that time, any injuries you sustain will heal slowly, and most poisons will be neutralized. Even so, exercise caution—Balensa City is far too close to the Sea of Eternal Life. Who knows what dangers lie ahead."

After hesitating briefly, she added, "This place is not just under the jurisdiction of the Qilin Venerable; there are traces of the Candle Dragon Clan here, too. This guide contains survival strategies—stick to it, and above all, stay safe. Bring him back alive."

Everyone was taken aback.

This woman had a guide?

Lu Zijin narrowed her beautiful eyes, clearly surprised.

Moon Princess glanced at the guide, her sharp intuition grasping Lin Wanqiu's true identity. In that moment, her opinion of her subtly changed. She murmured, "Thank you for helping me. I'll repay you someday."

She said no more, turning away to leave.

On the surface, she seemed calm, but her hand gripping the sword scabbard trembled faintly.

Just moments ago, the Stone Bead on her wrist had lost all resonance.

This could only mean one thing—he was in trouble.

But suddenly, a massive black hole appeared ahead, and someone stepped through.

"No need to go. He's fine."

The newcomer's voice was faint, like it could be swallowed by the wind at any moment.

Lu Zijin was startled to see him and asked, "Mr. Jing?"

For Moon Princess, this wasn't the person she had the strongest desire to see in this moment. Yet, when the familiar figure emerged from the black hole, an overwhelming sense of relief and safety washed over her.

Her tightly strung heart finally eased, her burdens lifted.

Gu Jianlin had once remarked:

"Jing Ci is someone who brings immense reassurance to those around him."

As long as he was present, nothing would go wrong.

Now Moon Princess finally understood why.

Jing Ci exhaled a frosty breath, gazing at the icy fog engulfing the city. From his pocket, he pulled out a photograph and handed it over, saying, "Junior Brother has already killed those Twilight Candidates and seized control of Balensa City's Ancient God Seed. You may proceed forward without concern. As for his safety, you don't need to worry for now."

He lied without flinching: "Junior Brother is with the teacher now, perfectly safe."

At this moment, the group collectively froze in shock.

Some were left utterly speechless at the news that the four Twilight Candidates had been killed.

Others could scarcely process that he had taken control of Balensa City's Ancient God Seed—it sounded like pure fantasy.

"Mr. Jing, you're not joking, are you?"

Lu Zijin asked skeptically, "Xiao Gu, on his own, killed four Twilight Candidates?"

Moon Princess took the photograph, the wind teasing her hair and partially obscuring her alluring eyes. "Dead, all of them?"

The frozen Golden Temple, the four kneeling corpses sealed in ice and snow.

"I never joke about such matters."

Jing Ci looked at the girl before him and said, "The one you've protected for so long can now, in turn, protect you. Jiang Hanyi was just the beginning. Those who wronged you—he'll hunt them down, one by one."

Moon Princess stared at the photograph, dazed for a long while. Finally, she lifted her head, her voice tinged with disbelief.

"How... how did he know?"

She thought she had hidden it perfectly.

Lu Zijin's expression shifted slightly. She declared seriously, "Don't look at me—I didn't let it slip!"

Jing Ci smiled silently, turned away, and stepped into the black hole. Waving a hand, he called back, "Keep moving. I won't escort you to the Sea of Eternal Life. There's a big guy in there, and if it detects my presence, it's going to raise all hell."

He exhaled, watching his breath quickly turn to mist in the icy wind. "So cold."

With that, he stepped into the black hole and vanished once more.

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In the howling, frost-laden wind, an eerie veil of icy fog consumed everything in its path.

Zhou Yiming staggered through the ruins, his gravely injured body barely holding him upright as he coughed up thick clots of blood.

Not long ago, Balensa City's Ancient God Seed had clashed with the Dawn Combat Sequence head-on. Trapped between the mechanical tide and the monstrous legion, he had narrowly escaped death—scraping through by a hair's breadth.

It was only thanks to his origins in the Sword Tomb that he had survived; any other Omega would have perished long ago.

Even so, he was on the verge of collapse now.

Only the inexplicable halt of the Ancient God Seed's attacks had ended the brutal slaughter.

Yet no sooner had he escaped than an overwhelming frost descended upon him.

Curse his rotten luck.

He should never have agreed to this mission.

Just then, a massive black hole opened before him, and a man stepped out from the shadows.

"Still alive?"

Jing Ci said approvingly, "Good."

Zhou Yiming's face went pale. As he reached for his Iron Sword, he caught a glimpse of crimson flickering in the man's eyes.

"You don't know me, but you've met Gu Jianlin."

Jing Ci's eyes gleamed with a blood-red hue as he pulled a photograph from his pocket and handed it over, speaking quietly, "Gu Jianlin wants you to keep this photo safe and deliver it to your junior sister. If she asks, tell her Gu Jianlin ventured into the Sea of Eternal Life alone to investigate the Kui Dragon Ancestor and its Divine Servants."

"You must express regret, grief, guilt."

He paused. "Emphasize that Gu Jianlin took on extraordinary risks, braving certain death, all to uncover the truth. Do you understand?"

Zhou Yiming looked at the photograph. It showed an enormous bronze pillar surrounded by a crimson mist of blood.

Within the mist stood a faint silhouette—a man with white hair.

"I understand."

He murmured, "He took on extraordinary risks, braving death."

Jing Ci smiled faintly. "Good. Let's refine the details, shall we?"

Chapter 500 Tang Ling: I'm Going to Save Someone

Cold fog enveloped Balensa City as fierce winds howled through its streets.

A massive military helicopter hovered in mid-air. Chen Bojun, wrapped in a heavy military uniform, swept his sharp Eagle Eye across the surroundings. In his hands, he gripped an enormous bow seemingly formed entirely of flowing water, which emitted a furious roar.

This seasoned veteran of Holy Land Level strength had personally mobilized, surveying the area.

It wasn't just him.

The Judgement Court had dispatched three Saints simultaneously, meticulously scanning the area for any potential risks.

The cause? It had been confirmed that an Ancient Ancestor had appeared, prompting the arrival of an Eighth Rank Divine General who had been urgently sent from Dawn City to Balensa City to prevent any unexpected incidents.

This Divine General's codename was Xuan Shui. Upon arriving in this frozen city, he immediately deduced the corresponding Authority and forecasted that this cold fog would continue to drop in temperature. No one knew how low it might go, but it would certainly render the area uninhabitable for humans. Even the physical resilience of an Ascender wouldn't suffice to endure it.

The cabin of a transport aircraft had been temporarily converted into both a medical ward and a meeting room.

The Profound Yin Saint listened to admonishments from his superior, his expression shifting between dark and uncertain: "Yes, Lord Rhein, I understand. This was my oversight; I will do my utmost to rectify it and ensure I do not burden you further."

Around him, alchemical holographic projections flickered to life, showing several high-ranking members of the Ether Association watching on.

The crowd silently observed him.

Even the Saints present were quiet, let alone the Omegas seated nearby.

"We should've listened to Gu Jianlin."

Nightmare—who had participated in the rescue mission in the Returning Burial Forest—stated plainly. Despite being trained under the Judgement Court Faction, he had to admit that the young man was reliable: "A student of the King of Qing, how could his perspectives not be taken seriously? I have reminded you all time and again—even though I couldn't divine the outcome, his insights must be heeded!"

He, too, was gravely injured, his complexion pale: "And now, look what's happened!"

Dawn casually released a beam of Holy Light, speaking wearily: "Calm down. Now is not the time for mutual blame. The priority is to tally up the number of injured and to address..."

"Missing personnel."

Poison Master added, "The Third Squad is almost entirely missing—only one person made it back."

Li Hanting, with a sword box strapped to his back, turned to the pale-faced man lying on the stretcher and asked calmly, "Zhou Yiming, what exactly happened? Why is the You Ying Group relentlessly targeting you? What did you encounter in Balensa City? And why did Gu Jianlin suddenly warn us not to approach?"

The pressure on him was immense.

Because of this matter, he would also bear collateral responsibility.

Especially since the Third Squad included several members of significant importance.

Zhou Yiming lay on the stretcher, struggling to open his eyes, forcing himself upright.

He didn't look at anyone else; his gaze landed instead on the young girl in the farthest corner.

Tang Ling, carrying a massive guitar case on her back, crossed her arms and met his gaze coldly: "Why are you looking at me?"

"Gu Jianlin was right."

With an expression of deep regret, Zhou Yiming murmured, "It's all my fault. We should've listened to him. I never expected things would actually go wrong. Throughout this journey, his every judgment was saving our lives while we kept doubting him. The You Ying Group sent their Twilight Candidates to hunt us, forcing us to retreat into Balensa City."

"Gu Jianlin sensed the abnormality here ahead of time through some method—even detecting a ritual being performed by the Ancient God Clan to awaken the dead Ancient God Seeds to attack us."

He emphasized, "And the You Ying Group's Twilight Candidates had methods to evade the attacks of the Ancient God Seeds."

Upon hearing this, the Profound Yin Saint felt his face burn with humiliation.

The Omegas, led by Li Hanting, remained silent.

No matter how unwilling they were to admit it, the King of Qing's student undeniably had exceptional skills.

While the rest of the Eastern Combat Sequence remained oblivious, he had already foreseen the danger.

"To cover for us, Gu Jianlin single-handedly drew away four Fifth Rank Twilight Candidates, endured a brutal battle, killed them all, and prevented the Ancient God Seeds from initiating a riot." Zhou Yiming spoke softly.

Everyone was stunned by what they heard.

Alone, he had killed four Twilight Candidates!

Keep in mind—Twilight Candidates were of the same tier as the top echelon Omegas!

"Impossible."

Li Hanting challenged, "Unless the opponents were complete amateurs, such a feat isn't achievable."

Nightmare's pupils glimmered with pure white as he declared, "He's not lying."

Dawn and Poison Master exchanged uneasy glances.

The Profound Yin Saint's face twisted further. Although Gu Jianlin was the King of Qing's student—an undeniable super-genius—he was also a member of the Ether Association. That this had occurred in the region under his jurisdiction was a disaster.

If the President pursued accountability, even Lord Rhein would face scrutiny.

As for the Profound Yin Saint himself, he could be certain his head would roll.

Tang Ling's beautiful eyes flickered with a hint of surprise as she murmured softly, "Has he grown this strong?"

Zhou Yiming pulled out a bloodstained folding photograph from his pocket, speaking in a low tone: "This is what Gu Jianlin risked his life to capture while stopping the Ancient God Seeds from rioting. Before he entered the cold fog, he entrusted me to deliver this to you. No one else is allowed to view this photo—not even the President."

Tang Ling froze slightly, instinctively accepting the photo.

The Profound Yin Saint, sensing its importance, stepped forward to take a look.

"Get lost."