

Ancient 521

Chapter 521 Green and Red, Candle Dragon and Qilin

Gu Jianlin had never seen such a peculiar expression on a young girl before. He tried to reach out his hand but couldn't do it.

Tang Ling sighed faintly and raised the handwritten script with both hands.

This gesture even seemed a bit innocent and cute.

"What ugly handwriting."

Gu Jianlin commented with a blank expression. Yet when he quickly scanned the contents of the script, his pupils contracted like a cat struck by blinding light, his body tensed abruptly, and a chill ran down his spine.

Because the first sentence on the script read: "My dear disciple, if you've found your way here one day, then I regret to inform you, you're in serious trouble. I hope you haven't come here in your true form, because chances are high you won't make it out alive. The reason is, I've uncovered an earth-shattering secret."

"Based on my investigation, I'm almost certain I wasn't among the first batch of cheaters to enter here. After the Gatekeeper completely vanished, two individuals arrived here before me. These two must be from the outside world, from modern society. I'm not sure whether they're Ancient Gods or humans, but they are far stronger than me."

"If my guess is correct, one of them might have even reached the deepest part of the Qilin Immortal Palace."

Those three sentences were enough to send Gu Jianlin's blood running cold.

At this point in time, he had yet to become the Second Generation Qilin.

The Pharmacist and the others hadn't yet ventured into the depths of the tomb.

However, some unknown existence had already reached the deepest part of the Qilin Immortal Palace ahead of time.

That person must have witnessed the true Qilin Venerable!

What on earth had transpired back then?

Who was that individual, and with what purpose did they arrive there?

And what was the state of the Qilin Venerable at that time?

How had that mysterious mask ended up in his possession?

He had always believed that the person who gave him the Qilin Mask was his father.

Yet, upon further thought, something seemed off.

After all, if Old Gu had truly orchestrated all this, why would he remain completely silent about it?

They had at least several hours during their escape.

Moreover, that mysterious delivery had been addressed to Old Gu.

It didn't make sense.

The more he thought about it, the more it felt like tumbling into an abyss, his body turning ice-cold.

"Though I couldn't identify the first individual, I am certain of the second person's identity. This is why I must explicitly warn you—because that individual turned out to be the enigmatic strategist from Dusk! This person entered the Qilin Immortal Palace as a cheater, just as I did, to explore the Sea of Eternal Life."

"As for how I know this? Haha. Because I encountered him. I initially wanted to capture him, but the dimensions here simply wouldn't allow for any physical confrontation. Although he seemed frail, I wasn't confident about winning."

"This strategist is incredibly mysterious. No one knows when he first emerged; there had never been any mention of such a person before. Yet, the feeling he gave me wasn't inferior to the Netherworld."

"This strategist wasn't hostile toward me and even sat with me to discuss many things. He told me he had returned from the Sea of Eternal Life, where time and space remain frozen. Candle Dragon Venerable had established a time-space domain lasting over two thousand years, one impenetrable even for Ninth Rank Zhu Yin Gods."

"I understood, of course. Candle Dragon Venerable commands the authority of time and space, a domain under His sovereignty, impossible for anyone to violate. We spoke further, and I found him immensely knowledgeable, his insights into the Ancient God Clan on par with mine. We both agreed that Candle Dragon Venerable is conducting an experiment capable of shattering the rules of the real world."

"And the key to this experiment lies within the Sea of Eternal Life."

"Logically speaking, Candle Dragon Venerable should have already reached the Qilin Immortal Palace, given He is the master of time and space and could open a temporal tunnel in an instant. Could it be that He is wary of something? If it's the Qilin Venerable He fears, that wouldn't make sense. After all, Candle Dragon remains at His peak, while Qilin has been in slumber for a thousand years."

"Just as I was pondering, the strategist suddenly smiled with an air of mystery—and solved the riddle for me!"

"Because of the Vermilion Bird! Candle Dragon Venerable foresaw the awakening of the Vermilion Bird and became extremely vigilant! The Vermilion Bird has already returned, nearing its ultimate Nirvana, yet the Fusang Divine Palace and the real world remain silent. This is simply absurd; hasn't the Vermilion Bird already been exiled?"

"It's been just a few decades, so how could the Vermilion Bird Venerate return so quickly? I am profoundly uneasy, for the curse upon our clan originates from the Vermilion Bird Clan."

"In other words, Candle Dragon Venerable feared the Vermilion Bird Venerate, which is why He has yet to descend upon the Qilin Immortal Palace. Could this imply that Candle Dragon Venerable is particularly vulnerable during His metamorphosis?"

"Thus, Candle Dragon Venerable is making preparations, ensuring nothing goes wrong!"

"That was all the strategist shared with me. Then, to my surprise, he asked if I wanted to join Dusk. Naturally, I declined. Though I'm an Evolver myself, the last thing I want is to associate with these secretive individuals."

"I asked him why he'd invited me, and he merely laughed, saying it was because I was investigating the Order of the Hidden and had nearly uncovered the truth. This sent a chill down my spine, as even I had no idea what I'd discovered. During this visit to the Qilin Immortal Palace, I indeed encountered control from the Order of the Hidden, though I managed to resist."

Chapter 522 Green and Red, Candle Dragon and Qilin_2

"In the Sea of Eternal Life, I found the Returning Ruins, glimpsed a fragment of destiny, and saw the person trying to control me. This person holds a very high position in the Order of the Hidden; people

call him Mr. Solomon. It seems like an odd alias, but reviewing and profiling my past experiences, I vaguely feel I might know him."

"As part of a trade of information, I shared this revelation with the Think Tank. Unexpectedly, the Think Tank openly disclosed their organization's plan to me. My god, Dusk actually plans to kill the President!"

"Alright, that statement might be debatable. To be precise, the Dusk Organization is steadily draining the President's lifespan. For over a century, this organization has been orchestrating various incidents, all with the goal of forcing the President into action again and again. The Think Tank told me that the President possesses the Heavenly Person's Wedge, an incomprehensible level of power."

"Even Dusk, whose members are all Holy Land Level Evolvers, dare not appear before her. Ha! What a joke. With the Heavenly Person's Wedge in her hands, the President is practically the mother of all Evolvers in the world. Otherwise, the conflict between Qing and Chi from before would have long annihilated this world, how else could it have ended with one death and one injury?"

"But the Think Tank said the President is not invincible. Though she is the pillar of the Human World and immensely powerful, her body is failing. Every time she takes action, it chips away at her lifespan."

"The Think Tank hopes she dies soon; otherwise, their plans may fail. Moreover, the Think Tank said it's not just them who want her dead—even the King of Qing hopes for her demise."

"Madmen! I smell another conspiracy between Qing and Chi. Both of them are lunatics!"

"The Think Tank told me he admires me and was willing to share this intelligence with me. He also warned me that six months from now, someone very important to me would meet with disaster here, and I would be powerless to prevent it."

"Wait a minute, I just realized something. I've already completed the ascension ritual in the Sea of Eternal Life and can break through to the Holy Land at any moment. Zijin's timeline aligns roughly with six months from now. What is Dusk planning? As for that kid Lin Lan staying here, he's so infatuated with Zijin, won't he go mad at that time?"

"To stop all this, I've decided to kill the Think Tank here."

"Damn, there's something strange about the Think Tank—I can't even inflict actual harm on him. My dear apprentice, if you're reading this, remember this well. Beware of the Think Tank—this man is far from normal!"

The cursive writing abruptly ended there.

The bonfire still burned, the crackling of firewood resounding intermittently.

The shelter was actually very warm, yet Gu Jianlin felt as if he had plunged into an ice pit.

"Finished reading?"

Tang Ling asked softly.

Gu Jianlin remained silent for a moment, then gave a slight nod: "It's truly terrifying."

First of all, Old Gu's message confirmed their speculations about the Sea of Eternal Life.

The most horrifying part was that this incident involved three Supremes at once.

Candle Dragon, Qilin, and Vermilion Bird.

This meant that if not for Vermilion Bird holding Candle Dragon in check, the latter would have descended long ago.

At that point, Gu Jianlin might have been in grave danger.

"What about Mr. Solomon—have you ever heard of him?"

Gu Jianlin asked softly.

Tang Ling shook her head silently, indicating she had never heard of him.

"It seems that the waters of the Order of the Hidden run far deeper than we imagined."

Gu Jianlin said calmly: "And finally, there's the Think Tank."

Tang Ling leaned against the Extreme Thunder Great Sword, gazing at the young man resting on her lap. She spoke softly: "The Order World has always been at odds with the Dark World—the President is the Guardian of Order. Dusk wanting her dead is no surprise. That said, this is the first time I've come across information about the Think Tank. Your father really is incredible."

Gu Jianlin responded with an inaudible chuckle.

"I envy you for having such a great father," Tang Ling murmured. "Even though he couldn't protect you by staying at your side, he did everything he could."

Within her eyes, Gu Jianlin saw a deeply concealed envy and longing.

Indeed.

Though he often teased Old Gu, he had always thought of him as the best father in the world.

Or perhaps, every parent who deeply loves their child is the best parent in the world.

Tang Ling, on the other hand, had her freedom betrayed by someone she deeply valued, someone who turned their back on humanity.

"You're changing the subject," Gu Jianlin suddenly said. "But what you really wanted to talk about earlier was Qing and Chi, wasn't it?"

Tang Ling cast him a glance, her eyes unreadable: "I know the King of Qing is your mentor, so I avoided bringing it up in front of you. Because while he seems to lie dormant, he undoubtedly has his own agenda."

Gu Jianlin was well aware of this too.

Every trial, every lesson the King of Qing gave him was an opportunity to make a choice.

But why offer him a choice?

Because the King of Qing was a good person, willing to let him choose his own fate.

Because becoming the King of Qing's student likely came with a heavy burden.

"The President probably knows deep down that many people in this world want her dead."

Tang Ling said softly: "Sitting in that position—betrayal and isolation are her inevitable fate."

Gu Jianlin hesitated for a long time. "What kind of person is the President, anyway?"

Tang Ling tilted her head to look at the ceiling above, the firelight illuminating her elegant profile: "Having spent over a decade with her, I've always felt she's a domineering and cold person. Yet sometimes, she seems profoundly lonely."

Those who stand atop great heights are always cold and distant. How could they not be lonely?

"I see," Gu Jianlin remarked.

"The President's health is truly poor; she's been relying on medication recently. That's why you rarely see her go all out—she's saving her life and strength to protect humanity."

Tang Ling toyed with her hair as she explained: "Many people fear her because she truly does kill without hesitation. But everyone also knows she won't go on a killing spree, for both her body and her unwillingness to harm the foundations of the Order World. Humanity's future is far too bleak to risk that."

Gu Jianlin pondered in silence—this was, after all, the root cause of infighting within the Ether Association.

"So why did the Think Tank target Minister Lu?"

He muttered to himself. "Why Minister Lu, of all people?"

Wait!

Suddenly, Gu Jianlin came to a realization, struggling to sit upright.

"What's wrong?"

Tang Ling quickly helped him. "What happened?"

A flicker of unease glinted in Gu Jianlin's eyes. "I know why it's Minister Lu now."

Tang Ling froze, puzzled.

"Because Minister Lu once shielded Uncle Mu and the others, and even helped my father's student escape. My father just mentioned something—Lin Lan, that bastard, has feelings for Minister Lu? What's his current status?"

Gu Jianlin whispered.

Tang Ling narrowed her alluring eyes. "A Fallen, a descendant of the Lin Family, the keeper of the Penglai Ascension Array, and a fugitive."

"I now suspect that, since the Think Tank encountered Old Gu here, he may also have run into Lin Lan."

A dark expression overtook Gu Jianlin's face. "The Think Tank clearly knew Lin Lan was here. If, during Minister Lu's pursuit, she happened to meet Lin Lan, wouldn't he intervene to save her?"

The fiercest rivalry within the Ether Association lay between the Night Watchers and the Judgement Court.

Minister Lu undoubtedly supported the former, and this trip was also for her Holy Land Level ascension.

But the issue lay in her vulnerability.

"I get it now—the Think Tank wants to stage this scene, allowing Ether Association members to witness it."

Tang Ling murmured: "This Think Tank wants to throw the Ether Association into complete discord."

Gu Jianlin felt a cold dread spreading within him.

Because the Moon Princess was right next to Minister Lu.

All of this was orchestrated in advance.

Beyond the conflict among Supremes in the Sea of Eternal Life, there was the trap laid by the Dusk Organization.

In other words, it was the Red King's snare.

As for the King of Qing, whether he was aware of this or not, he might choose not to interfere.

Because no one truly knew what his ultimate goals were.

Bang!

The bronze palace doors swung open.

Ah Yue and Ah Lan entered, panting, with large bundles of materials in their arms.

No one followed behind them.

Chapter 523: Gu Jianlin, Who Are You Really?

Gu Jianlin saw that there was no one behind the two sisters and knew something bad had happened.

According to what Ah Lan and Ah Yue said, Lin Lan sensed danger while out gathering materials and ventured into the snowstorm alone, instructing them to return to deliver medicine and pass on the warning.

"Bah."

Tang Ling scoffed but said nothing.

Gu Jianlin sighed. Sensed danger? More like went to meet her old flame.

Tang Ling leaned close to his ear and whispered in a low voice: "This woman actually dated Minister Lu before? With so many wives already, she's still clinging to her white moonlight. Should I call her devoted, or call her a player?"

Gu Jianlin shook his head: "You can't entirely blame her. After all, it's an overt setup. Back then, I interrogated Director Li and Councilman Zhang, and the conclusion was that The Order of the Hidden is currently adjusting the balance of this world, aiming to gradually dismantle the power of the Order World. To achieve that, they'll continue to collaborate with the You Ying Group."

"In fact, the vulnerability of Minister Lu may have been discovered long ago. They were likely only waiting for the right moment."

He paused: "That moment would be when the internal conflicts within the Ether Association were at their most intense."

Tang Ling contemplated for a moment: "You mean after the King of Qing escaped Heaven's Punishment?"

"Exactly. The Judgement Court lost two Saints at once, Li Qingsong was severely injured, and Councilman Zhang was killed. I don't fully understand the factional struggles within the Ether Association, but I imagine this must be the most critical period for the Judgement Court. They urgently need an opportunity to mitigate their losses; otherwise, during the upcoming competition, they will become increasingly disadvantaged."

Gu Jianlin placed a hand on his forehead and sighed: "Director Chen's concerns back then were valid. Minister Lu secretly supported my father's student, which already constituted her fatal flaw. Similarly, if Lin Lan went to rescue her, she would also be seen as an accomplice. What's more, Minister Lu had always been secretly helping Uncle Mu and his group to evade the Judgement Court's pursuit. If the Judgement Court had set its sight on dealing with Minister Lu, then guess what they would do?"

Tang Ling softly replied: "The Blood Moon Slaughter Incident."

"Precisely."

Gu Jianlin took a deep breath: "The Judgement Court would identify Minister Lu as a collaborator of my father."

"And that's not even the worst part."

Tang Ling seemed to think of something, her expression turning serious: "Do you know who Minister Lu's father is?"

Gu Jianlin instinctively uttered nonsense: "The old Family Head of the Lu Family?"

"The Commander of the First Combat Zone in the Dawn Combat Sequence, commanding fifteen thousand nano warriors."

Tang Ling said grimly: "He's one of the senior leaders who wields real power. If something were to happen to Commander Lu's daughter..."

"It's hard to imagine what would come next."

Gu Jianlin felt a shiver run down his spine.

If something truly happened to Minister Lu, it would stir up a major storm.

"We've been in here for quite a while already. The Ether Association must have entered as well, and I'm sure the You Ying Group is no exception. We need to determine their current positions, who's present, and their combat capabilities."

Gu Jianlin firmly stated that the plan was to relay the information they had obtained. If they could get it to the President, she would find a way to handle the situation and prevent it from spiraling out of control. Additionally, they needed to ensure Minister Lu wasn't immediately captured and had a chance to escape first.

They had to stop this from happening, or else everything would collapse.

Tang Ling fell into deep thought: "But our combat strength is limited; there's so little we can do."

For a moment, the atmosphere grew heavy.

"Drink the medicine first."

Ah Lan and Ah Yue walked over carrying a wooden bowl.

Gu Jianlin froze for a moment, then saw the swirling blood slurry in the bowl: "What's this?"

Tang Ling turned her head away, her cheeks faintly flushed, muttering: "You're better off not knowing."

Earlier, for convenience, she had squeezed a substantial amount of so-called virgin blood from her fingers.

The remaining ingredients consisted of crushed insect corpses and wood shavings scraped from timber.

If Gu Jianlin knew, he'd probably quip something along the lines of "clean and sanitary."

In the face of urgency, Gu Jianlin didn't dwell on it. He tilted his head back and gulped down the blood slurry.

He felt a warmth spreading throughout his body, even the sensation of tearing in his mind diminished significantly.

After a brief respite, he found he had regained his mobility. He stood up and surveyed the dimly lit palace: "Something's not right. These coded texts were left by my father. Even if the Ancestor couldn't

recognize them, wouldn't Tang Zijing have identified them? Even if they couldn't, they should've tried wiping them out; they shouldn't have left them for us."

He strode toward the throne but stumbled, nearly collapsing.

Tang Ling hurriedly stood up and grabbed his arm, frowning: "Lin Lan also mentioned this point because he thought something was off as well. Tang Zijing might not have been able to recognize the content, but he certainly knew these were Night Watcher coded texts. No matter what, these writings shouldn't appear here—that's the oddity."

She paused: "Unless he's certain that we won't survive."

Gu Jianlin pondered for a long time: "Indeed, either Tang Zijing left them here intentionally, or he never planned for us to make it out alive. Judging by the previous battle, I lean toward the latter."

"Knowing this doesn't help us either."

Tang Ling pressed her lips tightly: "There's nothing we can do."

Gu Jianlin swiftly processed his thoughts: "We're not at the point of giving up yet."

Tang Ling looked at his resolute profile: "What other plan do you have?"

Chapter 524: Gu Jianlin, Who Are You Really?_2

Gu Jianlin turned to examine the bronze throne and suddenly said, "Do you remember that the Ancestor mentioned earlier said we are merely pitiable pioneers, in other words, cannon fodder? Then, how did He know that there are others far stronger than us entering as well? How did He anticipate our arrival in advance?"

The two sides of the throne lacked armrests, with only two pitch-black bronze scepters positioned there.

At the tips of the scepters were gemstone-like objects as dark as ink, seeming to absorb all light.

Tang Ling silently shook her head.

"This is Qilin Venerable's world."

Step by step, Gu Jianlin ascended the stairs, struggling to seat himself on the throne.

He raised his hands and pressed them against the scepters on either side.

Tang Ling's eyes widened in shock.

Rumble!

Gu Jianlin looked up, and the bronze palace seemed to be half-activated. Countless golden patterns lit up in the darkness, and golden specks of light floated like fireflies, gathering before him.

It was evident that he had awakened the Ancient God Clan's legacy, seizing control of this palace!

The golden screen of light reflected a boundless blizzard and a vast army marching through the icy wilderness.

"So, I wasn't wrong after all."

Gu Jianlin murmured softly, "This is an outpost of the Ancient God Clan!"

But Tang Ling wasn't astonished by the images shown in the golden light curtain.

She merely stared at the youth, her gaze growing increasingly complicated.

Gu Jianlin.

Just who exactly are you?

The cold mist of Balensa City was dispelled by dazzling sunlight.

Though underwater, a scorching artificial sun hovered above the Sky Dome.

Wherever the sunlight reached, ice and snow melted.

It wasn't that this blazing sun had an extreme temperature, but rather that it emitted the force of the Heavenly Person Realm, driving out the domain of the Ancient Gods.

"An artificial sun."

Netherworld sat amidst the ruins, gazing up at the blazing sun overhead and remarking with awe, "The Golden King's methods are indeed extraordinary. Even such a terrifying thing could be created by him."

The Think Tank waved a hand with a smile and said, "The King once said that the Golden King was truly unparalleled, but after all, he merely stood on the shoulders of giants. The Golden King does not possess

the power to wield the Heavenly Person's Wedge. Without the unmatched abilities of the President, this so-called artificial sun project would have been nothing but a pipe dream."

Netherworld chuckled, "Indeed."

He gazed into the distance, where space-time seemed to warp violently.

In the snowy wasteland ahead, a convoy of snow vehicles tore through the storm, speeding madly.

"To be honest, I don't quite understand why you insisted on having Old Master Si handle this task."

Netherworld squinted his narrow eyes and said with a laugh, "That old man has plenty of schemes."

The Think Tank smiled faintly, "Of course I know Old Master Si is full of schemes. Otherwise, why would I send him? Jiang Hanyi and the other three are already dead. Naturally, this old thing has to take the fall."

"Speaking of which, was Jiang Hanyi really killed by that student of the King of Qing?"

Netherworld suddenly asked, "If that's true, then I'd be quite interested in meeting him face-to-face."

The Think Tank clasped his hands behind his back, as snow fluttered down onto his youthful face, his white hair frosted with ice. "What else could it be? The apocalypse is approaching, and the person chosen by the King of Qing in the end must have an unparalleled talent beyond our imagination. I thought he was just a fledgling, but he's already biting back, turning into a top-tier predator so quickly."

"Although it's uncertain if he used other special methods, merely based on talent, very few in this era can match him. Only a scant few could stand shoulder to shoulder with him."

He sighed and said, "How envious."

Netherworld said with great interest, "What about the Moon Princess?"

The Think Tank said lightly, "She's doing quite well. She's Gu Ci'an's student, and if Gu Ci'an sees talent in her, that's enough. No one can question Gu Ci'an's wisdom; the whole world must believe in his judgment."

Netherworld said with a meaningful tone, "I'm referring to the fact that you must know her loyalty doesn't lie in the Dark World. Didn't you observe that this girl is escorting Lu Zijin, heading for the Sea of Eternal Life?"

The Think Tank chuckled faintly, "First of all, loyalty is the most useless thing. The underlying logic of this world is always driven by interests. As long as interests are aligned, I don't care what she's thinking. Besides, if Jiang Hanyi could collude with the Si Family to secretly target the Moon Princess, why can't she collaborate with the Ether Association to eliminate Jiang Hanyi?"

Netherworld commented, "Makes sense."

"Back then, the Moon Princess survived the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident all thanks to Lu Zijin's help. Now she wants to repay that favor, and I allow it. This precisely shows that her character and ambitions far surpass those of the other trash."

The Think Tank said leisurely, "Moreover, I need her presence to help me complete my plan."

"The trash you're referring to, that wouldn't happen to mean Jiang Hanyi, would it?"

Netherworld burst into laughter. "Think Tank, you're truly biased."

The Think Tank shrugged, "The King left a dying wish for me to protect the Jiang Family. He didn't specify whether that meant the main line or a branch line. In the current Jiang Family, you won't find anyone better than those two sisters, so why wouldn't I choose them? Bloodline purity doesn't matter; strength determines true worth."

It's like a piece of pure iron without any impurities—indeed pure.

But no matter how pure, it still doesn't compare to a piece of gold that's 70% pure.

"Of course, how far those two sisters can go ultimately remains to be seen."

The Think Tank turned, his tone becoming melancholy. "I just hope they won't disappoint me."

Netherworld raised an eyebrow, smirking faintly. "Then why did you hand over her information to Zhang Xuzhi?"

The Think Tank shook his head, saying helplessly, "Zhang Xuzhi only knows that the Moon Princess is Gu Ci'an's student but has no clue about her true identity. After all, that particular family is untouchable. Jing Ci promised to protect their safety, and that means no one in this world can touch them. Nobody wants to see another Catastrophe appear."

He emphasized, "You've fought him before. You should understand his true strength."

Netherworld's eyes gleamed with a peculiar light, though he said nothing.

"Furthermore, if that family's life is disturbed, those two sisters' birth mother might come looking to kill me."

As the Think Tank spoke, he suddenly felt a sense of awareness and lifted his head. "Huh?"

Netherworld turned around, looking into the endless depths of the snowstorm.

"How interesting, someone's watching us."

The Think Tank waved enthusiastically, greeting with a smile. "Hi."

A military helicopter hovered amidst the snowstorm, its engine's roar thunderous.

Nightmare sat silently in the cabin, wearing a specially designed remote-communication helmet. He constantly emitted his mental thoughts, manipulating radio waves as if enduring immense pain.

This was the function of the Spirit Medium Path.

When modern technology couldn't handle communication, supernatural powers were used as a support.

Li Hanting carried a Sword Box on his back, his expression indifferent as he asked, "How is it? Any word from Lord Rhein?"

He paced around the cabin, visibly impatient.

"Relax, Lord Rhein won't refuse."

Someone said coldly.

This was a rather stern young man. His short black hair was neatly slicked back, and his sharp features, though not traditionally handsome, radiated severity. A brown trench coat fluttered in the wind behind him, with a Sword Bag strapped to his back.

He flipped through the intelligence documents in a sealed bag and said indifferently, "I don't know who sent me this information, but it's obvious that it's enough to prove Lu Zijin has a problem. Now, at this critical moment of power transition, Lord Rhein won't allow accidents to happen. He will certainly approve my request and authorize this operation."

Violent Qi surged within him, boiling and erupting.

The blizzard dissipated around him.

Zhang Xuzhi, one of the thirteen division leaders, ranking notably high among them.

His power was securely top-five, vying for top-three.

"Perfect. I also need an outlet for my hatred. Having already advanced to the Holy Land Level, taking the position of Divine General is inevitable."

Zhang Xuzhi remained calm and emotionless. "I'm curious, since everyone says my younger brother was a member of The Order of the Hidden, then does everything Lu Zijin has done also count as the actions of a member of The Order of the Hidden?"

Chapter 525: Turning the Tables in a Desperate Situation!

The snowflakes shattered in the wind.

With a flash of the blade, the giant collapsed onto its altar, the one that belonged to him. The heavy iron armor fell away inch by inch, revealing a thin, bony frame. Its flesh had long since dried up, and its bones stood starkly defined.

A gaping hole had been torn into his abdomen, and blood like molten lava gushed forth.

There was an almost imperceptible cut on his heart—that was the fatal wound.

No growls nor roars, only a sigh of loneliness built over thousands of years.

"Worthy of being a warrior who once roared in the Ancient Times."

The Moon Princess sheathed her Tang Blade and bowed deeply. "I honor your indomitable fighting will."

This was an Ancestor from the Ancient God Clan, a mighty warrior who once thrived in the Barbaric Era tens of thousands of years ago. Fortunately, his peak strength and status were not terribly high, and his recovery state was poor—he could not even utilize Primordial Return. Only because of these factors were the group able to kill him by combining their might, burying him forever in the Abyss of Death.

The group stood stunned, speechless.

They had fled all the way here from Balensa City, exhausting themselves utterly.

Old Master Si from the You Ying Group had been relentlessly pursuing them with several Twilight Candidates.

Although they had shaken off their pursuers a few times along the way, they were quickly caught up again each time.

Encountering an Ancestor now, they had thought their fate was certain death.

Unexpectedly, the Moon Princess showed not even a shred of hesitation, drew her blade, and charged in.

And miraculously, they won.

Of course, Ji Xiaoyu, known as Duobao Child, also contributed greatly. She was covered head to toe in countless Mythical Weapons and, being a sturdy Ancient Martial herself, could serve both as damage output and as a tank.

Lu Qingqing, walking the Overlord Path, contributed extremely high damage as well. The gaping hole in the Ancestor's abdomen was her doing.

"Well done."

Lu Zijin, her elegant face pale, acknowledged how dangerously close they had come to losing the battle. If not for her observations and pointers on the Ancestor's patterns and weaknesses, the team likely would have faced annihilation.

Yet, the one who had contributed the most might be someone else entirely.

"Captain Lin, are you alright?"

Chen Qing's pupils glimmered with an eerie pure white as he supported the trembling shoulders of the woman beside him, speaking in a low voice, "Take a break now. If you keep going like this, you won't make it to the Sea of Eternal Life."

Lin Wanqiu's eyes glimmered with a menacing blood-red hue, but she gritted her teeth and continued casting Holy Light Skill for them.

The sacred beams of light danced across the girls, healing their injuries and dispelling the icy chill.

If not for the Holy Light Skill Lin Wanqiu provided every step of the way, the group would have long been frozen stiff, losing their combat effectiveness.

"Aren't you going to ask when I became infected?"

Lin Wanqiu's pale face turned upward to gaze at the group.

Due to the overload of her power usage, she was already teetering on the edge of Deformation.

This time, however, her teammates failed to show any signs of wariness or contempt.

Only concern.

Because her efforts throughout the journey had completely won them over.

Previously, people had perceived her as someone who curries favor and behaves vainly and opportunistically—a true green tea personality.

But now they realized that beneath the façade, she harbored an unbelievably resilient inner strength.

"Captain Lin, take the medicine."

Two Alchemists earnestly presented the secret medicine they had just concocted, scratching their heads awkwardly. "This is the secret medicine supervised by the Little Princess. Though everyone says she's unreliable, the formula she found in Buzhou Mountain, after years of study, turned out to follow some logic—at least it's somewhat effective."

"This medicine can genuinely delay your mental pollution, but sadly, there's only one bottle."

They added, "For now, you should use it."

Lin Wanqiu froze for a moment, then smiled brightly. "Thank you."

Ji Xiaoyu had no objections either, only crossing her arms with a rather smug attitude.

"Wait a second."

Lu Qingqing suddenly alerted the group. "Have you noticed? The You Ying Group hasn't caught up with us for quite some time now."

The Moon Princess took a deep breath, her ample chest rising and falling faintly as she gripped her blade. "We've been fighting for three hours."

Chen Qing suddenly sensed something, his head snapping upward.

"The Ether Association is here."

Lu Zijin spoke softly.

Being in the Ice Field, she was wrapped up tightly and even had facial disguises on. Her Life Rhythm had been altered using medication, allowing her to pass off as someone else and avoid exposure.

The group felt as if they had been granted salvation, believing they had found reinforcements.

After all, having come this far, the team was on the brink of collapse.

Who knew if there were still slumbering Ancient God Seeds nearby...

Or Ancestors resurrected from the Ancient Tombs...

Or if the You Ying Group caught up, they'd all face annihilation!

However, at that very moment, Lu Zijin's voice grew urgent. "Careful, don't approach!"

A military helicopter burst through the swirling snowstorm, its icy voice echoing across the frozen expanse: "The people below, pay attention. Immediately drop your weapons, kneel on the ground, and place your hands behind your head. You have been designated as hostile targets. Should you show any resistance, I will adopt all necessary measures to enact severe punishment."

The voice continued coldly, "You have three seconds to consider."

Each person was either associated with the Ether Association...

Or had once been part of it.

They could recognize whose voice this was.

Minister Zhang Xuzhi.

The helicopter unleashed a cannon below, as terrifying lightning converged together.

It nearly pierced through the snow-filled skies.

This was the vehicle's modified Alchemy Weapon—the high-voltage Super Electromagnetic Cannon.

A weapon once banned for its inhumanity, reserved only for battlefields against the Ancient God Clan!

Chapter 526: Turnaround in a Desperate Situation!_2

If hit, probably only those in the Ancient Martial Path among the Fifth Rank Ascenders could survive.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Three seconds had already passed.

Thunderlight descended from the heavens!

A triple barrage!

The thunderlight illuminated the despair on the girls' faces.

This squad had just endured a bloody battle. Their spirituality hadn't yet recovered, and their stamina was completely drained.

Even the Moon Princess could only passively accept the fate of her clone's death.

At the critical moment, Lu Zijin raised her hands, and bright crimson spells abruptly lit up on her palms!

Everyone was slightly startled. A Transcription Matrix!

A special Alchemy Matrix capable of storing one's abilities within and activating them later!

BOOM!

A terrifying surge of mental Thought erupted like a tidal wave, instantly solidifying into substance!

It formed a natural barrier, forcibly withstanding the descending Super Electromagnetic Cannon!

Amid the terrifying roar, the three Super Electromagnetic Cannons exploded with devastating blasts.

Inch by inch, they pushed forward!

This was because the ability Lu Zijin released lacked endurance.

It couldn't sustain its power.

It could only delay briefly.

"Run!"

Lu Zijin shouted commandingly.

This was supposed to be her ultimate trump card for survival, yet now she had no choice but to use it to protect her teammates.

However, not a single member of the team moved. Instead, they fished out Blue Blood from their pockets.

They had already reached their limit for consuming Blue Blood.

Although they didn't know why the Ether Association was targeting them,

they clearly weren't the kind to sit idle or abandon their comrades.

"Let me give it a shot."

The Moon Princess hefted her Tang Blade and walked forward coldly.

In this team, she was the unquestionable primary damage dealer. She had an understanding of the Qilin Immortal Palace far greater than anyone else, with incredibly rich combat experience and astonishingly powerful fighting prowess.

Even though that boy was absent, the girl he left behind was simply phenomenal.

RUMBLE!

The three Super Electromagnetic Cannons had nearly torn through the barrier formed by the telekinetically condensed Thought!

However, in that moment, someone shouted, "Everyone retreat! Leave this to me!"

A ghostly figure burst through the snowstorm, advancing as swiftly as a gale, leaving countless shattered afterimages. The figure gripped a Tachi tightly in both hands, slicing through the blizzard with a mournful wail!

"Ghost Swordsmanship: Phantom Sword Dance!"

No one had any idea what absurd catchphrase he was shouting, but he teleported right in front of the roaring triple Super Electromagnetic Cannons. The domain he released froze Space-Time abruptly, plunging the world into a bog-like silence.

Blades of light flashed like a torrential storm, each slash capable of tearing through dimensions.

At last, Space-Time collapsed with a thunderous crash, swallowing up the three raging Super Electromagnetic Cannons!

BOOM!

The frozen Space-Time domain shattered, and the snowstorm howled across the sky.

Lin Lan appeared on the ground in a flicker, his long hair rippling in the wind as he sheathed his blade expressionlessly.

He thought this was the coolest moment of his life.

"How was it?"

He turned his head and asked, "Was I cool or what?"

"Lin Lan?"

Lu Zijin's beautiful eyes widened. The moment she recognized his face, she was filled with disbelief, murmuring, "You? How are you even here? Wait, you're still alive?"

Lin Wanqiu saw that familiar face that she hadn't seen for so long and instinctively covered her mouth.

Her eyes instantly reddened, tears welling up as her bangs fluttered lightly in the wind.

"Zijin, you're bundled up so tightly I almost couldn't recognize you."

Lin Lan turned around and smiled. "Sis, you've grown prettier, and slimmer too."

Lin Wanqiu pressed her hand tightly to her mouth, trying not to cry. She had never had any family from her childhood. The Lin Family that adopted her were a group of crazy maniacs. She had only one younger brother, who relied on her as much as she relied on him.

To save him, she didn't even know how she had survived all these years.

Sometimes, she thought he was already dead.

But no body had been found, neither alive nor dead.

As long as she didn't see a body, she wouldn't give up. She wanted to keep looking forever.

How did that saying go?

If someone important is missing from your life, you might not even know how to talk about yourself to others.

Lu Zijin, after many years, finally met this clingy little brat who used to stick to her.

But instead of being touched, she just shouted, "Behind you!"

Lin Lan spun around sharply.

From the helicopter above, someone jumped down, drawing an iron blade from their Sword Bag and slashing downward!

BOOM!

The surging Qi Force was torn apart.

Lin Lan countered with a backhand Dimension Slash, ripping through the chaotic Qi and severing the unyielding blade!

With a deafening crash, he instantly entered Virtualization, allowing the shockwaves of the Qi Force to pass harmlessly through him.

"Lin Lan, former Night Watcher member, suspected of involvement in some kind of bizarre corrupt ritual. Went missing nine years ago during the mission to explore the Returning Burial Forest, accused of harming teammates and betraying order."

"Moon Princess, former student of Gu Ci'an, an ex-member of the Ether Association. Defected during the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident. Later killed multiple Ether Association investigators and was once at the top of the most-wanted list."

"Lin Wanqiu, Peak City District Branch Minister. Her mind has been corrupted and is teetering on the brink of collapse."

"Lu Zijin, Peak City District Branch Minister. There is now evidence that you abused your position to shelter former Night Watcher members Mu Feng and Lin Lan, as well as assisting former Ether Association member Moon Princess in her defection. At the same time, I strongly suspect your involvement in the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident. I now need to take you all into custody for an investigation."

Zhang Xuzhi was a Sixth Rank Ancient Martial practitioner. His Qi Realm was fully expanded, and his mastery of this power had reached a high level, allowing him to condense and concentrate his aura densely around his body's surface.

Chapter 527: Desperate Turnaround!_3

"You can resist, but it won't change anything."

He drew his blades calmly and said, "Let's begin."

From the military helicopter's cabin, someone leaped down.

Li Hanting rose in mid-air, standing on his sword with both hands behind his back, looking down at them as he said lightly, "Those uninvolved can surrender on the spot. You'll be taken to the Investigation Bureau for questioning, and your lives won't be at risk."

Countless flying swords circled around him, like swimming fish.

"Support from the association is just twenty kilometers away. You have no chance."

A long-haired woman wielding telekinesis floated midair. She was one of the newly ranked top ten Omegas, with a background in the Judgement Court, a Fifth Rank refiner on the Heavenly Master Path, powerful and formidable.

A Sixth Rank Minister Level.

Two Fifth Rank Omegas.

Even Lin Lan wasn't confident about this, shouting, "I'll stay and hold them off. You all run!"

Lin Wanqiu was just about to charge forward but was picked up and thrown over someone's shoulder, who then turned and fled.

Lu Qingqing stayed remarkably composed, knowing that if they didn't retreat now, everything would be over. They had to withdraw first.

Lu Zijin glared intently at his retreating figure, only to be abruptly grabbed around the waist and carried away.

The Moon Princess carried her away at full speed.

Ji Xiaoyu, also realizing this was no time to hesitate, led Chen Qing and two alchemists in a frantic run.

In the dark bronze palace, Gu Jianlin's hands left the staff.

The golden screen before his eyes dimmed.

Through the observation matrix of the palace, he surveyed the situation within hundreds of kilometers and murmured, "Around the Sea of Eternal Life, there are a total of twelve similar outposts, each guarded by an Ancestor. The one we've encountered seems to be the strongest. Now, Minister Lu and his team have already taken down one Ancestor."

He paused for a moment. "The Old Master Si of the You Ying Group has been relentlessly pursuing them, forcing them into a dead end. In about five minutes, Zhang Xuzhi and the Judgement Court members should catch up to them."

What truly unsettled him, however, was the Think Tank!

When Gu Jianlin attempted to observe this person, they somehow noticed and even greeted him.

It sent shivers down his spine.

Tang Ling stood at the bottom of the steps, gazing at him. She tucked a strand of hair behind her ear and said, "Do you know? When you were sitting on the throne just now, you really looked like an Ancient God Clan member."

Gu Jianlin remained silent for a moment. "Is that so?"

"Yes." Tang Ling's voice was soft. "If you weren't from the Ancient God Clan, how could you possibly activate this thing?"

Gu Jianlin let out a quiet laugh. "Do you want to know who I am?"

Tang Ling shook her head. "No."

Gu Jianlin became slightly curious. "What if I really am an Ancient God Clan member?"

Tang Ling spoke calmly. "The President taught me that humans and the Ancient God Clan aren't necessarily incapable of peaceful coexistence. Throughout history, there have been many Great Sages among humans who became friends with the Ancient God Clan, gaining invaluable knowledge."

Gu Jianlin was taken aback.

"Even if you are truly an Ancient God Clan member lurking in the Human World, I wouldn't see you as an enemy until you actually try to destroy the world. Besides, I don't think you're that kind of person."

Tang Ling stared into the young man's eyes. "So, regarding Minister Lu's situation, do you have a plan?"

"The Think Tank meticulously designed this setup, but it's not without a solution."

Gu Jianlin reflected for a moment and said seriously, "But you shouldn't come with me this time. If we go to rescue them, there's a high chance we'll both end up labeled as traitors. If we fail to overturn the situation, it will lead to utter ruin. You still have to find your great-grandfather. There's no need to risk everything with me."

This Princess from headquarters had a bright future ahead of her.

There was no need for her to join in on such a dangerous endeavor.

"Without you, how am I supposed to find my great-grandfather? I don't have a talent for profiling."

Tang Ling adjusted her attire, slung on a heavy backpack, and said coolly, "I believe in you—not purely in your character, but because I believe you can uncover all the answers and show me the truth."

Gu Jianlin fell into a brief silence, then adjusted his clothes and shouldered his bag.

He picked up the once-again dormant Jiuyin, looked at the girl beside him, and asked calmly, "You're my partner. Even if you don't join me in this reckless plan, I can still find the truth for you on my own."

"If you don't survive, how will you help me?"

Tang Ling suddenly leaned in close, then smiled unexpectedly and asked, "Who was the one that fainted earlier?"

She rarely smiled, but when she did, it was like ice rivers thawing and snowflakes swirling.

Gu Jianlin kept a straight face, inwardly grumbling that it was an old monster's lower-dimensional attack.

Not valid.

"This time, there's a real chance we might die."

He spoke calmly. "You need to think it through."

"Whether it's floodwaters or an abyss, I'm already prepared."

Tang Ling linked her arm with the boy's, saying, "The real question is, can your body handle it?"

Gu Jianlin exhaled deeply. "I'll be fine."

"Good. If anything does happen, I'll protect you."

Tang Ling suddenly took out her phone, opened the camera, and pulled his head closer.

Click!

The two of them leaned together and took a photo.

Gu Jianlin blinked in surprise.

"Have I ever mentioned that I've always been quite rebellious?"

Tang Ling, looking satisfied at the photo taken by the firelight, smiled a smile that carried an unexpected allure:

"Let's go, Gu Jianlin."

Her voice was gentle. "Show me how you'll turn the tide."

Chapter 528 At this moment, He is the Candle Dragon Venerable!

Amidst the raging snowstorm, a group of people trudged arduously through the snowy terrain, fleeing desperately.

Every second was a race between life and death.

"Don't look back!"

The Moon Princess stumbled deep into the snow, her petite stature proving to be a disadvantage. Even though her proportions were flawless, the snow had already engulfed her thighs. Luckily, she possessed Divine Speed Force, and her movements were swift.

Lu Zijin gritted her teeth and refused to glance back. She knew that if she did, she might lose her will to move forward. She'd abandon her opportunity to ascend and break through, constrained by her emotions.

But such an action would accomplish nothing, as the Ether Association's reinforcements were still en route.

Even if she regained her strength, it wouldn't change the situation.

It would only make that person's sacrifice futile.

To be honest, she didn't even like that man. Lecherous, greasy, dramatic—a complete lack of charisma.

By comparison, she preferred someone younger, colder, and more dependable.

Xiao Gu fit the ideal perfectly.

But why did this feel so painful? She clenched her teeth, her palms almost breaking under the pressure of her grip.

"Let me go! Let me go back! That's my brother! Let me go back to him! He's my brother!" Lin Wanqiu broke down in desperate tears. This woman, who had been resolute as stone since stepping into the ice field, finally crumbled, sobbing like a child who'd lost everything. Her hair was in disarray, her dazzling beauty long gone.

Lu Qingqing carried her without a word, determined not to let this helpless woman take unnecessary risks.

It was then that the others understood her true reason for venturing into the Sea of Eternal Life.

She was here to protect someone precious to her.

In that moment, those who had once doubted or misunderstood her couldn't escape the pangs of remorse in their hearts.

Ji Xiaoyu carried two alchemists ahead of the group.

She suddenly recalled something her grandmother had said once.

In this world, some people were hopelessly foolish.

Always ready to lay down their lives for someone else—why bother?

Back then, she'd thought her grandmother was mocking such foolishness.

But the elder's sigh that followed carried another weight.

—Everyone envies those who still have the privilege to be foolish.

Chen Qing looked back for a fleeting moment.

The terrifying muffled roar sounded like thunder!

As a Sixth Rank Domain King, Zhang Xuzhi's displayed strength was beyond comprehension. Like a cannonball, he burst through the blizzard, his surging Qi Force roaring like a tsunami as he launched a devastating punch.

That single punch was enough to reduce anyone to pulp!

But Lin Lan flashed before him, tattoos of boys and girls covering his body silently roaring, as though transforming into dragons, granting him incomparably formidable physical strength. His Extraordinary Ability surged to its peak!

He raised both hands as ripples appeared in the void like a mirrored surface, unleashing an endless flood of Qi Force himself!

Boom!

Qi Force exploded, snowflakes fluttering in the chaotic air.

"So, you and my brother have the same tattoos. Are you also a member of The Order of the Hidden?"

Zhang Xuzhi sneered, unleashing another wild punch!

A muffled groan was heard as Lin Lan was blown away, his face suddenly changing.

Because Li Hanting commandeered his Flying Sword, propelling himself forward, suddenly summoning a wave of Flying Swords in the sky, spraying forth Sword Qi!

Lin Lan once again teleported into mid-air, forcibly freezing the surrounding space-time and slashing with storm-like fury!

The clash of blade and sword resonated like the roar of thunder.

Each strike ripped through space with Dimension Slashes, countless Flying Swords snapping in half as fragments scattered wildly!

His spirituality evaporated wildly, and his stamina was depleting rapidly.

"How long can you last?"

Li Hanting spoke indifferently.

Accompanied by Elemental Turbulence of earth, wind, water, and fire, the Heavenly Master named Zhou Hanye dove toward him!

Lin Lan teleported again, his blade trembling mournfully as if weeping, while countless resentful souls from the depths of Hell roared!

Soul Blade Sound!

Zhou Hanye's spirituality was disrupted, and the Elemental Turbulence collapsed violently, forcing him to retreat using Telekinesis.

He even unleashed terrifying psychic thoughts, trying to destroy the troublesome man in front of him!

Bam!

Lin Lan spat blood as he fell onto the snowy ground, planting his blade into the earth to halt his decline.

His muscles alternated between relaxation and tension, the steam rising from his body diffusing into the icy landscape. His presence felt like a taut drawn bow or a tiger calmly facing danger.

He had intercepted countless attacks from the enemies by now. Facing a Sixth Rank and two Fifth Rank elites—resilient warriors not reliant on drugs or sheer luck—victory wasn't even a consideration. He simply aimed to delay them.

When Xiao Gu shared recent events with him, Lin Lan had already suspected something.

The air reeked of conspiracy.

After all, as a member of the Night Watchers, he'd seen the intrusions within Ether Association's factions.

Zhang Xuzhi had come today with murder on his mind.

Even if he didn't succeed, he'd collect enough evidence to destroy Minister Lu beyond salvation.

That outcome was already inevitable.

Lin Lan's priority was simply ensuring the women weren't killed on the spot.

"Run, hurry up and run!"

He leaned against his blade, glancing back at the snowstorm that had swallowed their figures.

That was his white moonlight from youth.

And his sister, who had been his sole companion for years.

How could he let them suffer after reuniting after such a long time?

Lin Lan raised his blade, roaring fiercely as his figure vanished once more!

Boom!

His Qi Force tore through the storm like raging waves.

Lin Lan's blade shattered under a powerful attack.

Flying Swords descended from heaven, only to be sliced apart. His broken blade revealed terrifying cracks.

The monstrous Elemental Turbulence was severed with a single slash. His cherished Tachi, the blade that accompanied him through countless battles, crumbled into mere fragments!

His body flickered wildly, wounds erupting all over him, spilling blood.

The strain wasn't just from the Penglai Ascension Array.

Even his mental fortitude was nearing its limit, teetering on the brink of deformation!

Qi Force surged around Zhang Xuzhi, who was both shocked and angry. Despite his three-against-one advantage, so much time had passed, and he still hadn't broken through the defensive line. Yet he dared not forcefully charge forward.

Because his opponent was on the Ghost Slayer Path.

The ability to instantly kill was too potent.

Even in a self-sacrificing gambit, Lin Lan could take at least one of them down!

"This man is at his limit—kill him now!"

Zhang Xuzhi lowered his stance, channeling Qi Force into his palms, merging it with the swirling snowstorm. His demonstration of ancient Martial Arts Extreme Intent showcased masterful skill!

"Understood!"

Li Hanting gripped an Iron Sword, the concentrated momentum of the blade growing to its peak, ready to explode forth.

Zhou Hanye unleashed tidal waves of Telekinesis, echoing through the void!

The snowstorm churned violently under the pressure of Qi Force, Telekinesis, and an impending streak of sword light from above.

Kneeling in the snow, Lin Lan let his consciousness sink deep.

At that moment, his mind wandered.

If he completely lost control, his fighting strength would elevate dramatically.

By the time Xiao Gu arrived, he could collect Lin Lan's soul.

Lin Lan had always known he was destined to die—there was nothing to fear.

Yeah.

Everything Old Gu entrusted to him had been completed.

Everything else could be left in that boy's hands.

Just as he was about to embrace his fall, he heard a familiar cry echo through the storm.

Lin Lan instinctively turned his head.

Through the storm, he saw Lin Wanqiu, somehow having broken free from the others' restraints. Who knew how this Priest had summoned such strength? She ran through the snow, her tears freezing in the air.

Gone was the beguiling charm of her gaze; her blood-red eyes reflected her plunge toward collapse.

"No, no, no! Sis, don't come here!"

Lin Lan realized something, enhanced his Divine Speed, and rushed away.

Just then, the Ether Association's reinforcements arrived, countless helicopters hovering in the air. Many saw these siblings rushing toward each other, yet no one issued attack orders.

Some recognized them.

Some wished them death.

Others hoped they'd sprout wings and embrace.

For a brief moment, Lin Wanqiu's body began to shine with holy light. She burned her spirituality to the extreme, forming radiant matrices. It was the culmination of her years of tireless research—not a world-changing invention, but just enough to suppress deformation.

Her hair flew wildly, and her long legs trudged through the snow.

Like an ethereal spirit.

Now she brought her life's work to the man teetering on the edge of deformation before her.

"Sis, drop down!"

Lin Lan flung his arms wide, shielding his sister with his back as he heard the approaching roar!

Boom!

Explosions reverberated as piercing Sword Qi, raging Qi Force, and tidal waves of Telekinesis unleashed their fury.

A massive mushroom cloud erupted, scattering the snowstorm into oblivion.

Lu Zijin suddenly leapt off onto the snow, sprinting forward!

"Stop her!"

Lu Qingqing scrambled to grab her wrist but was swiftly shaken off.

Ji Xiaoyu jumped up, attempting a grappling hold in response.

"Wait!"

Chen Qing felt something, speaking softly.

The Moon Princess suddenly turned back, gazing down at the Stone Bead trembling violently around her wrist.

As the snow and smoke dissipated, Lin Lan and Lin Wanqiu embraced tightly, the holy light healing their bodies, forming a divine matrix that suppressed deformation.

The siblings were alive.

Because a colossal golden skeleton shielded them, its four grotesque, terrifying Ghost Hands covered in dark Spells. From the black smoke glimmered blazing golden vertical pupils, burning brilliantly.

It stood like The Immortal of Colossal Spirit, unyielding against the onslaught of destruction.

Even with shattered bones, they reassembled instantly.

"Impressive."

Someone stood atop the massive skeleton's shoulder, his long coat flapping in the wind.

Whether it was Lin Lan or Lin Wanqiu, he genuinely admired their resolve.

"I think I once called you a scheming girl. Now, I retract that comment and apologize, Captain Lin."

Tang Ling glanced at the tightly held siblings and said indifferently, "And you—well done."

Rumble.

Dark clouds amassed on the horizon, the red-haired girl's locks dancing in the wind.

Sharp as blade and sword, captivating like a rose.

For a moment, the snowy landscape sank into a deadly silence.

Li Hanting gazed at the siblings, his eyes flashing with something razor-sharp.

Zhou Hanye asked in surprise, "So it's you?"

Through the prolonged silence, Zhang Xuzhi finally smirked. Killing those siblings hadn't been his true intention, and his animosity toward Minister Lu had merely stemmed from childish spite.

The ones he truly intended to kill were the boy and girl standing before him.

Now, they had arrived.

"I've been waiting for you two for a long time."

He spoke gently, "You actually walked straight into my trap."

With the snowstorm came a swarm of Ether Association helicopters—reinforcements in unimaginable numbers.

Tang Ling hoisted the Extreme Thunder Great Sword high and pointed it at him, saying coolly, "Apologies, but this isn't a trap."

Gu Jianlin smiled quietly, "But rather our heroic comeback."

Within the storm, the boy's figure shimmered like mist, indistinct yet present.

Facing a Sixth Rank, two Fifth Ranks, and the army of Ether Association members, to most people, this would be suicide.

But today's true battlefield strength didn't rest with mortals.

Zhang Xuzhi narrowed his eyes and raised a brow, "What did you just say?"

In an instant, he froze.

Through the snowstorm, someone appeared and placed a hand upon his face—long, ink-stained hair flowing in the wind, wielding a blood-drenched Tang Blade brimming with a pungent stench, breaking through the blizzard.

A faint but terrifying Dragon Roar echoed.

The snowstorm swirled violently.

"Are you certain you can unleash your full strength?"

Gu Jianlin asked calmly.

Now stood his true form.

Jiuyin trembled faintly, hissing scornfully, "Do you doubt my authority?"

"That's all I needed to hear."

Gu Jianlin crazily absorbed the surrounding Ancient God's Breath and murmured:

"From this moment forth, I am... Candle Dragon Venerable."

Chapter 529: Good Sister? Good Wife!

Since Zhang Xuzhi obtained that mysterious archive, he knew he was destined to succeed in his revenge, even Lord Rhein, one of the three giants, couldn't stop him.

Ever since the Bren Hill incident erupted, the Ether Association had been rife with undercurrents. The various factions were in a state of extreme tension, holding meetings almost daily to discuss topics ranging from the evolutionists to the threat posed by the strongest catastrophe, the King of Qing, and the dispute over the position of the next President.

In particular, the Night Watchers and the Judgement Court were now at the most crucial stage of their rivalry.

Until the very last moment, no one knew who would prevail.

Moreover, everyone was aware that the President was intending to forcibly prolong his life for a few years and directly pass the succession to Thunder.

Even at the cost of modifying the rule prohibiting catastrophes from inheriting the presidency!

But now, he was going to destroy everything.

So what if they were students of the King of Qing.

So what if they were the President's groomed successors.

They still violated the order and the rules all the same.

Since saving Lu Zijin came at a cost, sacrifices must be made.

Even if he couldn't kill the two of them, he would make them lose everything!

Fifteen minutes.

That time frame was enough.

His mood surged with exhilaration!

Yet, inexplicably, he suddenly heard a resounding dragon's roar, making his heart shudder for no reason.

Alongside the sound of crunching snow underfoot, someone emerged from the darkness only to instantly vanish!

Boom!

The blizzard was torn apart by a gust of wind. The long black hair of the figure fluttered in the storm, and beneath the swaying fringe was a pair of bewitching vertical pupils. His impossibly beautiful visage, breathtaking to the point of otherworldliness, exuded sheer arrogance, as if he were a celestial maiden descending from the Divine Country depicted in the murals, showcasing incomparable allure to the world while maintaining an aloofness that kept others at bay.

His long coat billowed in the wind, resembling the flowing black sea tide.

Evolutionary State.

Operating at full power without resorting to Ancient God Transformation.

"What terrifying speed."

Li Hanting and Zhou Hanye exchanged a glance, unable to fathom how this person had passed them by.

The fleeting beauty of that moment ignited ripples in their hearts.

At this instant, even Zhang Xuzhi, a Sixth Rank Domain King, felt shock and bewilderment.

Because he realized he was no longer standing in his original position but had been moved fifty meters forward!

The figure who had appeared seemingly out of nowhere also teleported across that fifty-meter distance.

The gap between them was now razor-thin!

The Ghost Slayer Path abilities, Space Jump.

After advancing to Fourth-tier Shura, the previously granted Space Jump ability had been greatly enhanced.

Boom!

The Qi Realm expanded fervently; no one wished to engage a Ghost Slayer Path user up close!

Surging Qi Force erupted in ferocity but was abruptly torn apart by the flashing slash of a blade. Within the void, the strike shattered the space itself, exposing countless terrifying fissures of primordial darkness before collapsing with a deafening roar!

One strike cleaved the void!

Zhang Xuzhi retreated like lightning, his shoulder nonetheless grazed and a chunk of flesh severed, bleeding profusely.

The Ancient Martial Path was reputed for its impenetrable defense.

But the Ghost Slayer Path's Dimension Slash ignored all defenses.

The battle could only be fought at long range!

In an instant, Zhang Xuzhi unleashed his Qi Realm within which countless clones, each formed purely of condensed Qi Force and imbued with a master's Martial Arts Extreme Intent, charged forward like an overwhelming sea tide swallowing a stubborn rocky shore, unleashing rampant Qi Force!

Baji Fist, Tai Chi Boxing, Xingyi Boxing!

Tongbei Boxing, Flipping Fist, Elephant Form Boxing, Yong Chun Boxing!

Such was the True Martial Domain wielded by a Sixth Rank user of the Ancient Martial Path!

Gu Jianlin stood amidst the domain, besieged by murder intent from all four directions, his Qi Force vibrating his lungs with intensity.

Under ordinary conditions, he'd last less than twenty seconds.

But he couldn't afford to lose this battle.

He couldn't afford to show weakness.

Even if it meant biting down until his teeth shattered, he'd endure it.

He must present the strongest front!

Now, it was time for Jiuyin to take over.

With a hum, the blade trembled!

Time plunged into a swamp-like stillness. The oncoming clones froze mid-air, the previously roiling Qi Force halted, and the blizzard's scattered snowflakes hung suspended, crystal-clear.

And then, everything was ripped apart by a single thread of frigid light.

Though Gu Jianlin had never trained in blade skills, at this moment he exuded the ancient Blade Technique Extreme Intent. The lonely blazes of the ancient blade, dormant for millennia, shone brilliantly amid the raging snowstorm—its piercing resonance reminiscent of a dragon's roar!

Unparalleled serenity, unmatched blade technique, supreme arrogance!

Silence enveloped time, leaving only the blade light galloping.

Jiuyin trembled joyously, slicing apart those clones with devastating ease!

Gu Jianlin flitted like a ghost and reappeared—the movement of his blade causing a Qi clone to detonate with a thunderous crash!

Within the frozen domain of Space Freeze, he was invincible!

Finally unable to bear further, Zhang Xuzhi sent forth countless Qi clones in a furious swarm!

With deafening roars, their Qi Force exploded outward in every direction, resonating with sonic waves!

Lion Roar!

Boom!

The Space Freeze domain shattered, and Gu Jianlin was violently hurled away.

"Hanting, Hanye, strike now!"

Zhang Xuzhi closed in, having already discerned his opponent's rank.

He aimed to kill the adversary in the shortest possible time!

Li Hanting nodded slightly, commanding his flying sword to dive down. His iron sword surged with cutting Sword Qi, targeting not the figure who had appeared out of nowhere, but the Lin siblings!

Zhou Hanye raised his hand and unleashed a terrifying Telekinesis wave!

Boom!

A golden Skeleton Giant forcibly resisted the blow, its bones shattering in response to the impact.

Chapter 530 Good Sister? Good Wife!_2

Gu Jianlin's avatar swayed slightly.

Lin Wanqiu desperately unleashed Holy Light. Listening to the terrifying sounds outside, she felt completely terrified.

Yet Lin Lan was still coughing up blood, and her injuries showed no signs of improvement.

While healing, she wept, gazing at the towering golden giant full of gratitude and guilt.

In her heart, she silently repeated countless apologies and thank-yous.

Because she had once stood on the side of the Judgement Court, investigating this young man.

And in her most helpless and desperate moment, it was this young man who protected her.

"Don't get distracted, keep saving lives."

Gu Jianlin's avatar spoke sternly: "Your brother said your dream is to become a good doctor."

Lin Wanqiu froze slightly, clutching her brother, who was coughing blood incessantly, tightly.

"Chase your dream."

The golden skeleton giant continuously repaired its injuries: "Until you give up, no one can touch you."

In the distant snowstorm, a petite figure rushed back.

Ji Xiaoyu!

She carried two Alchemists and commanded, "Why run? I'm not running today! Save them for me! Show me your best skills—I don't believe it, who dares to touch me?"

Lu Qingqing also returned. Under her sister's command, she tightly gripped two dark red pistols, expanded her Rectangular Domain to its maximum, and firmly protected the siblings with a highly vigilant expression.

Chen Qing hurried back as well. Since they were about to arrive at the Sea of Eternal Life, entering any further would serve no purpose; it was better to stay here, protect the area, assist her companions in battle, and share their senses.

As long as the Moon Princess sent Minister Lu to the Sea of Eternal Life, the mission would be accomplished.

In the vast snowfall, the Moon Princess was still sprinting wildly on the snow, with her speed increasing.

The icy mist grew thinner, and the sound of the sea could faintly be heard.

Lu Zijin, however, kept turning back to memorize the appearances of those people.

"You are seeking death!"

Zhou Hanye chanted under his breath, gathering a terrifying Elemental Turbulence.

"Such strong defense—try again!"

Li Hanting looked in surprise at the skeleton giant and swung his sword for another slash!

Almost simultaneously, blazing electric light roared forward!

Tang Ling leaped into the air, wielding blazing thunder, and delivered a strike downward!

Boom!

Sword Qi surged.

Li Hanting was nearly knocked off his Flying Sword, trembling uncontrollably.

His wrist was slightly numb, and his Iron Sword emitted a faint tremor, with half of its blade already scorched black.

"Thunder!"

Furious and shocked, he scolded, "What on earth are you doing? You are the successor chosen by the President—why are you behaving so recklessly? You could have allied with the Judgement Court—Vice President Lai Yin favored you so highly. If he ascends, you would naturally step into his position, eventually becoming the President after that!"

Tang Ling grew snow-white horns atop her head, and illusory wings churned up strong winds behind her as she hovered midair: "What are you? What is Lai Yin? Do I need his favor?"

She flicked her sword coldly and said indifferently, "Might as well take a closer look at the top three of Omega today."

Li Hanting's gaze turned icy.

At that moment, Zhou Hanye controlled the furious Elemental Turbulence overhead and rapidly approached!

Tang Ling's breathing suddenly shifted as her Boundary of No Distance opened up, rushing forward like a blast of wind!

The Extreme Thunder Great Sword pointed skyward, roaring ferociously!

Countless bolts of thunder crashed down, obliterating the fierce Elemental Turbulence.

In that fleeting instant, a breathtaking side profile flashed past like the wind.

Zhou Hanye shuddered in alarm, catching sight of that stunning face within arm's reach.

"So pathetic—do you dare challenge the Gods with this?"

Jiuyin laughed enchantingly, her voice melodious yet carrying an arrogance that seemed to scorn all existence!

As a Fifth Rank Heavenly Master, Zhou Hanye had to use her strongest ability—an illustrious Golden Core appeared behind her, its radiant light dispelling all falsehoods. Containing the essence of Earth, Wind, Water, Fire, and Spirit elements, it touted a destructive power of unparalleled magnitude!

However, that stunning side profile simply drew her blade, as if an ancient god had descended, and delivered a merciless slash!

Boom!

The Golden Core was cleaved into two.

In the critical moment, a golden armor of immense density lit up before Zhou Hanye, akin to a giant's plating adorned with golden runes. It radiated ancient grandeur and a divine brilliance of overwhelming potency!

This was a Growth Type Mythical Weapon—the Xuanwu Qilin Armor!

Yet, the solitary, piercing blade light ripped through the armor's defense!

Crack!

The blade streaked through Zhou Hanye, leaving a deep, bone-exposing wound!

Gu Jianlin's icy long hair fluttered as Jiuyin reveled in the blood's taste, laughing maniacally!

"A mere turtle shell—how dare you flaunt this?"

Amid the ethereal ambiance, a regal and majestic phantom seemed to overlay upon him.

Dominating with absolute supremacy!

"Hanye!"

Murderous intent surged in Li Hanting's eyes as he anxiously opened his Sword Box. A small green jade sword darted out, momentarily halting the howling blizzard.

The churning green light flickered wildly, accompanied by violent gusts of wind!

In an instant, an eerie red slit-pupil flickered—a rare sight both sinister and seductive.

So beautiful.

Even Li Hanting couldn't help but marvel.

"The Bai Ze Clan's Chasing Wind isn't meant to be used like this."

A cold, mocking voice came forth. As if seeing the end of time, Li Hanting witnessed a lonely yet magnificent girl humming quietly. One casual glance toppled the heavens, with desolate blade light engulfing everything!

Boom!

The wind shattered!

The Growth Type Mythical Weapon named Chasing Wind broke apart before it could even strike!

Though such weapons could repair themselves, this was undoubtedly a dimensional breach in power!

Frightened, Li Hanting retreated rapidly, clutching the broken sword!

Swoosh!

Gu Jianlin flashed to the skeleton giant's front, coldly shaking off the blood from his blade!

"Another strike, and your body will immediately collapse!"

Jiuyin's voice echoed in his mind.

Gu Jianlin understood his physical condition—the abilities Jiuyin borrowed from Candle Dragon Venerable unleashed supernatural sword techniques but inflicted immense strain upon him.

If he wasn't forcing himself upright, he'd already be bleeding and collapsed.

His spirituality had dried up.

Utter exhaustion.

Yet, he endured, his gaze filled only with cruelty and indifference.

As if a demonstration of strength at its peak.

"You are powerful."

Zhang Xuzhi walked over the snow as countless interlacing silver threads shimmered in the void, emanating an ominous icy glow: "I've never seen swordsmanship like this, akin to a ghost god."

Evidently, this was another extremely dangerous Growth Type Mythical Weapon, its presence ample with impending peril.

Zhang Xuzhi stared at the young figure before him, his expression cold yet perplexed.

Even as enemies, he couldn't help but admire this person's beauty.

Including the retreated Li Hanting and Zhou Hanye.

They had never witnessed such a stunning figure.

Even the Demon Hunters aboard the helicopter gazed blankly at this so-called young woman.

Their eyes filled with dazed fascination.

Crack!

Gu Jianlin knew they mistook him for a woman and couldn't care to explain.

He simply thrust his blade into the snow.

Long hair fluttered.

The golden skeleton giant stood steadfast amidst the blizzard.

"Can you hold on?"

Tang Ling turned to the boy and asked softly: "Zhang Xuzhi's preparing his final strike. Shall I handle this instead?"

Gu Jianlin shook his head, signaling to stick to the plan.

"Who are you? Why are you helping them?"

Zhang Xuzhi asked, "May I have your name?"

At that moment, Gu Jianlin's true self suddenly remembered something.

Jiuyin sensed his intention.

Though reluctant, she snapped fiercely, "Idiot! I'm his wife!"

Silence.

Everyone stared at the enigmatic and majestic young figure, their expressions absurd with disbelief.

Despite the dire situation, an absurd thought arose among them.

Jealousy.

Yes, they were jealous.

What right do you have to possess such a stunning woman?

They didn't need to doubt it.

Throughout all time, this young woman's beauty was unmatched.