

Ancient 591

Chapter 591: Candle Dragon Forbidden Curse, Golden Phoenix Feather! (Free for a Limited Time!)

In that instant, Gu Jianlin drew the blood-red ghost knife, his right hand gripping the sword scabbard tightly.

"Be careful, something's happening."

He stepped back half a step and said in a low voice, "The thing inside the coffin is about to wake up!"

In truth, the warning was redundant, as the black stone coffin was already trembling. The eight iron chains binding the coffin were frantically shaking and snapping apart, while the lid was covered with terrifying, jagged cracks.

"Aunt Zijin, hurry up!"

Su Youzhu was just about to activate the evolutionary state of the Candle Dragon Clan but had second thoughts since they were within the Heavenly Person Realm. Instead, she abandoned the idea, pulling out the Demon Extermination Sword from her back and holding it in front of her.

Lu Zijin used telekinesis to extract the bone that resembled jade and handed it to the boy in front of her, speaking calmly, "If my guess is correct, whatever we get here should be taken out. Xiao Gu, keep it safe. This thing is of no use to us—it's only suitable for disasters of your teacher's level."

To everyone's surprise, the urgency and greed previously visible weren't for herself.

The bone, crystal-clear like jade, emanated a mesmerizing fragrance, as if it were the world's purest gemstone.

Gu Jianlin tucked the Eternal Bone into his pocket, while the shadow behind him silently condensed.

Boom!

The lid of the black stone coffin shattered abruptly, releasing endless dark energy in a mist-like burst!

Though Gu Jianlin reacted swiftly, summoning the Skeleton Giant for defense at once, he was still blown away by the raging dark energy. The two girls behind him were swept off their feet as well, tossed like leaves in a violent storm.

It was the first time he had ever encountered such ferocious dark energy!

This was the power of the Divine Path.

No, more accurately, it was the power of the Qilin Clan!

Suddenly, he spat out a mouthful of blood, feeling his body rapidly deteriorating and vitality draining away!

Even his shadow was affected, trembling wildly.

It was a curse!

Ghost Curse Technique!

Legend had it that the combat instincts of the Ancient God Clan were terrifying.

The opponent had targeted the strongest among them first for the assault!

At the critical moment, Lu Zijin's superiority in the Heavenly Master Path emerged. She unleashed a terrifying psychic force, forcibly negating the impact of the explosion, stabilizing herself mid-air, and even counterattacking with a punch!

"Follow me!"

She shouted.

As the blade hummed, Su Youzhu streaked forward like a fractured shadow and slashed, tearing through the void!

Crack!

Suddenly, a blood-red Qilin Spirit Body materialized out of thin air, forcefully resisting the slash. The sound of its body shattering—like golden stone breaking—was terrifying, followed by a burst of dense black light and a thunderous roar!

"Youzhu, watch out!"

Too late.

With a deafening boom, Su Youzhu's platinum hair fluttered as a horrible blood hole pierced through her heart. Her petite and delicate body seemed partially destroyed upon first glance, spraying blood everywhere.

Her eyes were hollow and pale, her expression frozen in despair as she fell like a butterfly.

For a brief moment, Lu Zijin felt a chill run through her veins.

Gu Jianlin could almost hear the sound of the world collapsing. Though a shred of rationality reminded him that the girl before him was merely a clone, uncontrollable rage ignited in the depths of his heart, blazing like thunder caught among dark clouds.

At that critical juncture, space and time warped, dimensions misaligned, and everything spun violently!

"Focus on me, I'm fine!"

A cold, indifferent voice called out from above.

Su Youzhu stood unharmed where she was, the Demon Extermination Sword in her hand trembling faintly. It emitted countless ghostly cries like anguished wails from hell, interfering with the enemy's spiritual fluctuations in madness.

It was as though it wasn't her who had charged forward earlier.

The blood-red Qilin Spirit Body hadn't shattered either; rather, it was amassing terrifying dark energy.

In a strange turn of events, it seemed as though time had been reversed.

Lu Zijin was dumbfounded—what had just occurred before her eyes was nothing short of a miracle.

No, it wasn't a miracle.

Gu Jianlin vaguely sensed something, for as space-time twisted, he heard a faint song.

A song—or perhaps a dragon's chant!

It reverberated like a deity softly humming at the edge of time.

Time reversed, and karma changed accordingly!

This was... the Candle Dragon Forbidden Curse!

Beautifully executed!

Throughout the history of human Ascenders, those who could grasp Original Forbidden Curses were incredibly rare. Such individuals without exception were disaster-level—chosen ones, provided they didn't perish prematurely.

Of course, this was no time for celebration.

As the black mist spread, the Ancient God within the coffin had awakened, now hovering mid-air.

The blood-red Qilin radiated black light, on the brink of collapse!

Luckily, the shadow's preparations were complete.

In an instant, the shadow grabbed a broken tachi from the ground and darted forward like an ethereal ghost. Its long-prepared Dimension Slash rippled through the void, mercilessly delivering a strike!

Boom!

The void shattered like a mirror, collapsing into whorls that swallowed the nearly-exploded blood-red Qilin, obliterating it completely.

Gu Jianlin had been conserving his strength all along, dark energy flickering at his fingertips like flames yearning to extinguish.

But suddenly, a terrifying gust of wind rushed toward him.

A black shadow lunged from the mist, swinging a punch directly toward his chest!

Its speed was beyond comprehension!

Bam!

The Skeleton Giant, known for its resilience, was punched through. Gu Jianlin felt as though his chest had been struck by a siege hammer, launching him like a cannonball into the tomb wall, burying him beneath falling debris.

"Xiao Gu!"

Lu Zijin's beautiful eyes trembled, and she decisively summoned her Golden Core.

A streak of black light pierced through, striking her Golden Core head-on, and exploded!

With a loud boom, she spewed blood, hurtling back.

The shadow in the mist turned, its eerie blood-red pupils brimming with a bloodthirsty killing intent.

In that instant, Su Youzhu felt locked in freezing terror as its gaze fell on her.

The mysterious Ancestor didn't opt for close combat; instead, it clasped its hands tightly. Towering dark energy erupted like detonating explosives, shaking the entire tomb chamber and spraying cracks everywhere, threatening collapse.

The tsunami-like shockwaves roared thunderously as they rolled forward!

Even as Su Youzhu blocked with her blade, she was still sent flying, her lungs rattled, blood dripping from the corners of her lips.

Such was the power of an Ancestor-level Ancient God evolved to the Primordial stage!

The true combat prowess of the Ancient God Clan!

Before anyone could react, only the shadow remained in the fray.

But as it finally saw the figure's appearance clearly, it froze.

Because it was a nude girl, with blood-red Dragon Horns growing from her head, an armor-like dark-red bone mask, her body covered in crimson Dragon Scales, sharp, curved nails on both hands, and a red dragon tail protruding behind her!

Through the profile, her flickering phantom shadow could be discerned.

One moment, she appeared as half-human.

The next, she'd transform into the blood-red Qilin.

Her evolution was still ongoing, faintly resembling an Original State!

So that's what it was—this Ancestor was evidently newly awakened, not likely to recover much power. Still, her overwhelming dominance was apparent because she had undergone Ancient God Transformation and was striving for Primordial Return!

How could this be? Within the Heavenly Person Realm, how was she able to wield such formidable Ancient God Power?

But in an instant, Gu Jianlin understood what was happening.

Because his Life Perception told him.

This Ancestor's life was burning furiously, marching toward death from the moment she revived.

But that wasn't her true means of evading the realm's suppression.

When Gu Jianlin gazed at her, he saw two faces forcibly stitched together—a haunting sight.

The left side showed the serene sleeping face of a human girl; the right side held the solemn and majestic visage of an Ancient God.

This was the same eerie visage Tang Yun once bore.

This, too, was an artificial Ancestor, created with methods identical to those of Lishan Tiyan Pavilion!

"I understand now."

Gu Jianlin finally realized why, since the Ancient God Realm's challenges began, no Qilin Clan had been encountered.

They must have all been buried here, transformed into experimental subjects.

Whether it was Qilins or Candle Dragons trying out experiments, these Ancient God Clans were ultimately left here.

"So it's not just Lishan Tiyan Pavilion conducting such tests—the Ancient God Clan has been seeking ways to break through the Heavenly Person Realm barriers. No wonder Senior Ji once remarked on evolving the Heavenly Person's Wedge, and my teacher sought the Evolution Path as well." Gu Jianlin thought to himself, this suicidal method of breaking through the Heavenly Person Realm was far too terrifying—it was not a path he could replicate.

In a flash, this Ancestor leapt up, crashing down like a meteor toward him, dark energy accumulated like a bomb!

If he took this blow head-on, it would surely kill him.

Gu Jianlin's spirituality surged wildly, and the Skeleton Giant condensed again, its four Ghost Hands intertwined!

Bang!

The tomb's floor was smashed through. Gu Jianlin's vision fell into darkness, his ears drowning in a sharp buzzing. It felt like an asteroid had slammed into him, shattering his bones and leaving his lungs bleeding internally.

He felt disoriented as if his soul had been jolted out of his body.

The Ancestor-level Ancient God before him was likely above Fifth Rank. After Ancient God Transformation, the overwhelming strength it unleashed was unparalleled.

Gu Jianlin felt utterly frustrated.

Frustrated like never before.

How dare you beat your ancestor like this.

It was only because at this moment, he couldn't undergo Ancient God Transformation.

But suddenly, he felt something in his pocket trembling, emanating a radiant glow.

It was the Golden Phoenix Feather!

The Golden Phoenix Feather given to him by the President.

The Golden Phoenix Feather modified by Senior Ji!

In an instant, Gu Jianlin felt the suppression of the Heavenly Person Realm vanish completely!

Chapter 592: Containment of the Qilin Wedge

The bronze palace was originally shrouded by the powers of the Heavenly Person Realm, which imposed absolute restraint on the Ancient God Clan. It not only suppressed their combat capacity but also, under such restrictive rules, directly disrupted their life structure.

Jing Ci once remarked that there was an Ancient Ancestor stubborn enough to not believe in these powers and forcibly fought within the Heavenly Person Realm. It didn't take long for his body to collapse, and even his soul dispersed into an unstable state. Although he survived by sheer luck, he had to sleep for tens of thousands of years, and even upon awakening, he likely wouldn't recover his peak state. For a god, this was an unbearable humiliation.

As for individuals like Gu Jianlin, who were amphibious beings, he could freely transition between human and Ancient God states.

Yet he still couldn't escape the binding of the Heavenly Person Realm.

Even though he carried a Supreme position, his rank was just too low at the moment. If he attempted to break through by force, his body would implode in an instant, his consciousness would suffer severe damage, and he might even perish.

Of course, he wasn't entirely certain whether he was truly immortal.

At the very least, he had no understanding of the Ancient God Clan's methods for resurrection.

But when the Golden Phoenix Feather began to radiate light, he faintly heard a distant, cold, and authoritative voice!

It was Senior Ji's cold snort.

Gu Jianlin watched as the Golden Phoenix Feather emitted a brilliant divine glow. Golden specks of light materialized spontaneously, seemingly constructing a realm that could only accommodate him, shielding him from the rules imposed by the Heavenly Person Realm!

This was not a mechanism that evolved his life structure to bypass the Heavenly Person Realm.

Rather, as the manipulator of the Heavenly Person Realm, Senior Ji granted him special access.

She created a small independent space that moved with him!

This was a gift from Senior Ji, not the promise of a distant future.

It was a gesture of care from an elder.

Senior Ji understood he was an Evolver and didn't want him to suffer under the Heavenly Person Realm, so she gave him a preferential treatment.

With a resounding boom, a maiden already plunged down in front of him. The scarlet Qilin enveloped her body, using no flashy techniques, only the most primal application of the Dark Shock Burst—a fist hammering toward his head!

At the critical moment, the Skeleton Giant reassembled, four ferocious Ghost Hands crisscrossed to block, and dark energy flickered!

Darkness exploded, resonating with a sound like a tolling bell.

The spiritual body condensed by Gu Jianlin disintegrated again, pushed back by the overwhelming force, sliding along the slate ground.

Twisting his waist, his hand supported the ground to dissipate inertia, frantically absorbing the surrounding Ancient God's Breath.

In an instant, the scarlet Qilin Spirit Body charged forward, its blood-red maw gathering black flashes of light, ready to bite down!

Gu Jianlin had no choice but to lean back to evade, gripping its upper and lower jaws tightly, entering a pure test of strength!

The bite force of this Qilin Spirit Body was astonishing, its raw power rivaling Fifth-Order Ancient Martial strength.

This was the power of an Ancestor!

Even in his berserk state, Gu Jianlin could only hold out with difficulty, retreating step by step until his back pressed against the cold wall.

His heart pounded wildly, spirituality surged, sweat soaked him, and his bones creaked under unbearable pressure.

His expression contorted into something increasingly twisted and ferocious as his breathing grew heavier.

The bloodthirsty scarlet Qilin roared violently, and the black flash of light in its mouth intensified, about to erupt!

Suddenly, a chilling wind howled through.

A dexterous and striking maiden abruptly flashed into the air, raising a slim finger that gathered pitch-black flashes of light at its tip!

It was a perilous, kill-or-be-killed confrontation.

Yet just as the maiden unleashed dark energy, she suddenly bled from seven orifices, her body riddled with dark Ghost Curses.

Pain like divine punishment made her wail, and the released black flash of light veered off course!

With a thunderous crash, the wall was shattered by dark energy, debris cascading down.

Gu Jianlin tilted his head aside nonchalantly to avoid the falling rubble, the fiery rage ignited in his golden eyes. His face was hidden behind the pitch-black Qilin Mask, and fresh, bloodied black Qilin Horns grew atop his head, menacing and terrifying!

Ancient God Transformation!

A vast and primal force expanded the structure of a human body, uniting anger and ferocity burning deep within his soul to forge an immortal divine form. He tightened the muscles in his arms, applying force to his left and right hands, and forcibly tore the blood-red maw of the scarlet Qilin apart!

A fearsome explosion sounded, and the scarlet Qilin was violently torn apart and shattered.

The accumulated dark energy suddenly collapsed, black mist billowing forth.

When the young man condensed his spiritual body again, the chilling Skeleton Giant had mutated, its bones sprouting warped spikes, its spine reconstructed amid cracking sounds, mimicking a monstrous Qilin beast in dark gold, ablaze with blazing Divine Sacrificial Fire, roaring up at the sky.

The golden Divine Sacrificial Fire gathered into the form of a Qilin, its roaring sounds echoing through the darkness.

He leapt powerfully, riding his transformed spiritual body, channeling dark energy, and punched forward!

The maiden suspended in mid-air was slammed by his punch, crashing into the ground as if fired from a cannon.

Gu Jianlin landed in front of her, harboring no trace of mercy or concern. His four Ghost Hands unleashed punches like a torrential storm!

Each punch struck like a thunderous hammer blow, producing terrifying reverberations!

The maiden curled into a ball, trying to defend against his onslaught, but her bones were shattered inch by inch.

Even so, she gritted her teeth and remained silent, still seeking an opportunity to counterattack!

High above, faint and terrifying starlight blossomed, quickly converging into a dreadful Star Cluster resembling a supernova on the verge of eruption!

Gu Jianlin couldn't care less, but his Qilin Skeleton abruptly raised its head, its golden eyes swirling with pitch-black thunder. It was as if massive destructive lightning hovered within the depths of black clouds, brewing terrifying divine punishment!

Ancient Forbidden Curse, All Heavens Divine Thunder!

Boom!

An apocalyptic strike erupted, piercing through the darkness and obliterating the Star Cluster above!

The terrifying shockwaves caused the underground palace to tremble violently.

Gu Jianlin locked the maiden's throat with one hand and raised his right hand.

Black lightning danced through his fingers, crackling like the chirps of a thousand birds!

The sudden burst of light illuminated the maiden's blood-masked face, and his lightning-wreathed hand struck down, shattering her arm bones like blades, ripping open the dragon scales on her chest, tearing through blood-streaked flesh, and piercing the heart.

Almost instantaneously, the lightning extinguished.

Gu Jianlin seized her heart.

Consuming it was replaced by the frenzied burning Divine Sacrificial Fire, absorbing her life force.

The maiden howled skyward, only to have her throat constricted tightly, the blood-red mask on her face peeling off inch by inch.

This was an internal battle within the Ancient God Clan.

Both sides had their advantages.

Gu Jianlin's rank was lower by one level.

But his positional superiority exceeded hers by two full tiers.

On raw combat instincts and technique, however, he was far inferior to this Ancestor.

But hey, isn't the point of hacks to overcome that?

A boy who didn't know martial arts could easily beat a martial arts master who had trained for years, all thanks to his cheats.

In truth, as an Ancient Supreme, Gu Jianlin hadn't even utilized all his advantages.

After all, an Ancient Supreme's true strength lay more in limitless potential. Legends spoke of the Qilin Venerable effortlessly draining entire seas of life force, invoking catastrophic disasters of annihilation.

For now, however, Gu Jianlin had only demonstrated considerable superiority in low-level capabilities, and that was it.

"Who... who are you?"

When the blood-red mask fell from the maiden's face, her pitch-black eyes reflected an expression of bewilderment, and she stopped struggling.

The fury and madness of the Qilin Clan faded, replaced by the gentle humanity of mankind.

In that moment, Gu Jianlin faintly sensed the fragments of the Qilin Wedge stirring.

He raised his hand, summoning the Qilin Wedge Fragment, which instantly appeared in his grasp as the broken sword pierced through the maiden's abdomen!

—The Qilin Venerable's Authority, Swallow!

For that brief instant, the maiden wailed in unbearable agony as a pitch-black void spread out from the hole in her abdomen, distorting the surrounding time and space into a whirlpool that swallowed her whole!

Having completed this, Gu Jianlin let out a long breath as the Qilin Wedge fragments returned to his consciousness.

Anyhow, the fragments were previously in Youzhu's possession.

When they vanished from her side earlier, it didn't particularly matter.

If necessary later, he could easily use his identity as the Qilin Venerable and secretly return them to her.

But as his consciousness entered the space within the Qilin Wedge, he froze.

Because the Ancestor hadn't disappeared.

Within the pitch-black void, a black stone coffin had unknowingly appeared, housing the slumbering Ancestor inside.

It was as if she had been sealed.

What was happening here!

There was no time to dwell on this, as the maiden's voice called out from above him.

"Xiao Gu, are you alright?"

Lu Zijin descended, using telekinesis, grumbling, "It seems like that Ancestor just unleashed the Corpse Ghost Skill. Countless Corpse Ghosts are climbing out of the Blood River—it's no longer safe here."

Su Youzhu softly landed on the ground, gazing at the boy's back with a flicker of surprise.

This wasn't her first time seeing Gu Jianlin in such a form.

It wasn't just an ordinary evolutionary state.

It was something akin to the King of Qing—a form surpassing conventional logic.

As Gu Jianlin tried to say something, he once again heard the elderly voice in his ear.

"Such powerful Heavenly Person inheritance; this is actually the core of the Candle Light Law..."

Chapter 593 Transplantation

Gu Jianlin was rather surprised as he took out the Golden Phoenix Feather, his eyebrows slightly furrowed.

Xu Fu's astonishment was indeed beyond his expectations. This Great Taoist from the Qin Dynasty was not only a master in the field of alchemy but had also delved into the taboo mysteries of the Ancient God Clan, possessing insights far beyond what modern people could comprehend.

What was even more shocking was that Xu Fu didn't seem surprised by the Ancient God Power within him.

Instead, what stunned him was the power emanating from the Golden Phoenix Feather.

"Child, tell me, where does this power of yours come from?"

Xu Fu's aged voice sounded once more.

Gu Jianlin pondered for a moment: "A real-world Eighth Rank Ascender."

Unexpectedly, Xu Fu dismissed this decisively: "Impossible, absolutely impossible. Such extraordinary craftsmanship is far beyond the capability of an Eighth Rank cultivator. I cannot discern the nature of the object in your hand, but its owner must undoubtedly be one of the rare pillars of human history. No, this person perfected the core of the Candle Light Law, a talent unmatched across the ages. There were none like them before, nor will there be any after!"

"Even the Ancient Supremes would marvel at their brilliance—this is truly someone born at the perfect time for greatness."

He sighed: "Eighth Rank? Do not try to deceive me."

Gu Jianlin felt a ripple of doubt deep within, realizing that the Golden Phoenix Feather in his hand was becoming increasingly enigmatic.

The pillar of human history.

Even the Ancient Supremes would bow to their genius.

The first person that came to his mind was the President.

Only the President deserved such a title.

After all, Qing and Chi weren't Heavenly Persons, and they were arguably among the craziest figures in human history.

"If Senior Ji was using the President's power, it would be understandable. But the problem lies in Senior Ji herself. As an elder of the Ji Family, Ji Xiaoyu apparently doesn't recognize her. Wait a second, didn't Aunt Zijin just say that both the Longevity Bone and Eternal Bone require a Demigod-level being at minimum? How has an Eighth Rank Divine General survived for so long?"

Gu Jianlin realized things weren't right—Senior Ji's identity was far too suspicious.

Piecing things together from the information he recently obtained.

The personality profile he newly developed painted her as none other than a commanding figure with unparalleled majesty.

Although he had not interacted with the President personally, he felt a strange sense of familiarity.

That said, Senior Ji had explicitly stated her disdain for the President.

What kind of mess is this?

Xu Fu's aged voice echoed once more: "I once heard that there are already people in the human world who can wield the Ancient God Power without succumbing to the control of the Ancient God Clan. It seems to be true. You have the potential for evolution and are also favored by the Heavenly Persons, under the protection of the Candle Light Law. Otherwise, just by performing the Ancient God Transformation earlier, you would've suffered fatal injuries."

Gu Jianlin was surprised once again—Xu Fu hadn't seen through his actual rank.

He merely mistook him for a typical Evolver.

Perhaps due to the Lock of Nonexistence.

Of course, an even larger possibility was the Golden Phoenix Feather!

"What is the Candle Light Law?"

Gu Jianlin frowned and asked.

"Your elders haven't told you?"

Xu Fu paused briefly before letting out a deep sigh: "The Candle Light Law is the essence of the Heavenly Persons and the supreme taboo scripture of the Ancient God Clan. As for the details, I do not know much—I am, after all, just an ordinary mortal."

With that single sentence, Gu Jianlin felt a chill run down his spine. Up to this point, he had only known that the Heavenly Person's Wedge was a creation of the Ancient God Clan.

He had never guessed its standing was this high.

His previous understanding was that it was an ultimate weapon created by a certain Supreme to combat their peers.

But now it seemed his comprehension had been far too superficial.

In truth, it was likely an Ancient Supreme who had unlocked a certain taboo within the Ancient God Clan, thereby creating the system.

Eventually, it came to be used by humanity.

This was truly odd—the Ancient God Clan's creations were unusable for themselves.

Yet humanity could wield them.

Xu Fu spoke again: "Your group's combat strength is quite formidable, but your progress lags behind another group. They are clearly more prepared. If this continues, they'll reach me first."

Gu Jianlin thought about the importance of the entity that existed in this place—it couldn't be allowed to fall into the hands of the You Ying Group.

"The pseudo-ancestor you just banished into the dimensional rift is named Heavenly Fox! They were supposed to qualify for evolution into a Primordial but angered the black Supreme and became a sacrifice. Otherwise, with your current strength, you would have struggled to defeat them. And the pseudo-ancestors here in slumber are not limited to just Heavenly Fox—they are used either to suppress me or to guard the ultimate secret."

Xu Fu rasped: "Relying solely on brute force may not get you all the way. Tread carefully!"

As his sigh faded away.

Gu Jianlin was stunned and hurriedly asked, "Wait, what did you just say? Qilin Venerable turned them into this state? Isn't this supposed to be a method from the Bai Ze Clan? The Qilin Venerable knows how too?"

Xu Fu seemed to find this question hilarious, laughing darkly: "Transplantation—is the Qilin Venerable's signature skill. The other Supremes are merely imitators at best. Even with Qilin Venerable's god-like abilities, they've never succeeded once over the past tens of thousands of years. So-called pseudo-ancestors must endure the constant conflict between two souls, making it nearly impossible to achieve Primordial Return, haha."

Gu Jianlin's pupils contracted: "One last question—why is there power from the Heavenly Person Realm here?"

The eerie wind echoed through the underground corridors.

Xu Fu sighed: "You are not the first to come here. Someone once tried to rescue me from this place, but they failed."

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Silence descended, and the aged voice vanished without a trace.

Gu Jianlin's thoughts swirled like a storm, meticulously savoring the old man's final words.

Transplantation!

He first heard this term mentioned by the mysterious man in the Destiny Mud Tablet, though he didn't understand its meaning at the time.

Later, when he heard about the so-called Transplantation Plan, he began to harbor suspicions.

Now, he understood.

The so-called transplantation was essentially the process of grafting the spiritual genes of the Ancient God Clan onto human bodies.

This was Qilin Venerable's expertise—or rather, the so-called pseudo ancestors so far were all experimental creations. Unfortunately, all these experiments ultimately failed, as they could not truly escape the constraints of the Candle Light Law.

Even the two souls within their bodies would mutually influence each other, leading to conflicts.

No, perhaps Qilin Venerable's methods had indeed succeeded.

Gu Jianlin felt his scalp tingle, as he himself was the ultimate evidence.

Unlike other pseudo ancestors, he, as this experimental subject, didn't suffer from soul conflicts. However, he did not know how to achieve Primordial Return, leaving him unable to verify whether it was actually achievable.

Additionally, he was still unable to escape the constraints of the Candle Light Law, though he could sense the frequency of Heavenly Person's Breathing.

Does this imply that, at the last moment, Qilin Venerable truly forged a new path?

However, the original Qilin Venerable did not walk this path themselves.

Everything now fell on Gu Jianlin to verify.

Xu Fu hadn't detected the fragments of the Qilin Wedge either.

That pseudo ancestor was caught tightly within the space of the Wedge, leaving an uncertain future purpose.

"Heavenly Fox, hmm?"

This seemed like an honorific title—no wonder it qualified them for evolution into Primordial.

"Are you okay?"

Su Youzhu leaned closer to him, stretched out her pale fingers, and poked his mask.

Gu Jianlin snapped out of his daze, having been lost deep in thought: "Sorry, Xu Fu was conversing with me again just now."

"Xu Fu came looking for us too. It's true that we've fallen behind significantly," Su Youzhu lifted her snowy, exquisite face and said softly, "Your evolution path has come so far already, hasn't it?"

Lu Zijin crossed her arms, glancing at him with a complicated expression and couldn't help but tease: "When I saw your current state earlier, I thought another Ancient God Clan had emerged. Scared me so much my heart almost stopped."

Gu Jianlin was slightly taken aback. It turns out even they hadn't noticed the Ancient Supreme aura he inadvertently released.

Apparently, it wasn't solely the effect of the Lock of Nonexistence.

It was the Golden Phoenix Feather.

However, the radiance emitted by the Golden Phoenix Feather was gradually dimming, suggesting that its effect had a time limit.

Gu Jianlin raised a hand and wiped away the Ink Jade Mask from his face, which then shattered and disappeared, along with the horn and scales atop his head.

As expected, the brilliance of the Golden Phoenix Feather faded suddenly, leaving only traces of lingering shimmer.

Good, this confirmed that undoing Ancient God Transformation would automatically revoke the protective privilege granted by the Golden Phoenix Feather.

Truly ingenious.

Senior Ji's methods were indeed masterful.

"Let's leave this place first. We've indeed fallen behind and can't let the You Ying Group beat us to it. They're likely well-prepared, but it doesn't mean the Ether Association is without shortcuts. Clearly, the You Ying Group has somehow learned the secrets of this place in advance, but that doesn't mean the Ether Association hasn't responded." Gu Jianlin looked upward, his gaze profound.

The brilliance of the Heavenly Person Realm reflected in his pupils.

"Are you saying someone from the Ether Association has been here before?"

Lu Zijin narrowed her beautiful eyes: "The Heavenly Person Realm—did that person leave it behind?"

Su Youzhu scanned the surroundings but then noticed writing in the dark corner again: "Come look at this."

Gu Jianlin raised his hand, igniting a pale Ghost Fire that illuminated the mottled stone wall.

Crossing sword marks surfaced once again in his field of view.

"We shouldn't stay here long. Sadly, aside from reaching the deepest part, there seem to be no other ways out. We cannot ascertain what power drew us in, but if we die here, we're likely to turn into living dead. Along the way, we saw many such half-dead people being devoured by monsters on the ice field!"

This time, the message left behind was considerably longer, probably because the writer had escaped immediate danger and had time to record their words.

"We?"

Gu Jianlin pondered for a moment—it seemed there wasn't just one person.

Unfortunately, this place was an illusion, not a tangible space in reality, leaving no actual trace.

It offered nothing he could profile.

The only thing here was this writing, which he couldn't understand how it had been left.

Through profiling, the writer seemed to be a gentle, reliable, composed, and mature man.

Someone steady with a pioneering spirit and the character of a martyr.

Given that there were more than one pseudo ancestors in this bronze palace, they needed to plan anew.

After all, pseudo ancestors were frighteningly powerful.

Even if Gu Jianlin could forcefully invoke Ancient God Transformation under the protection of the Golden Phoenix Feather, his strength wasn't unlimited. The previous battle alone had drained the spirituality within him completely, leaving him with only the Breathing Technique to slowly recover, since they were out of secret medicine.

If they encountered one of the hardcore enemies among the Ancient God Clan, even as a Fourth-stage Qilin, he might not stand a chance.

Thus, they decided to proceed covertly, navigating the dark passageways.

The Shadow took the lead, tasked with clearing traps.

Gu Jianlin held the Jiuyin sword, glancing around warily.

The ancient ruins around them were filled with artifacts. Su Youzhu even took the trouble to find a beautiful golden mask to wear.

"Why aren't you two scared? All three of us have nearly drained our spirituality, and without an Alchemist or Priest by our side, we're in big trouble if we run into an ambush," Lu Zijin inspected the dog-couple duo under the faint firelight.

Gu Jianlin stated expressionlessly, "I'm only here via a doppelganger, so I reckon my true body shouldn't be harmed."

Su Youzhu turned to face them, her voice icy: "What a coincidence. I'm here via a doppelganger too."

"Get lost."

Lu Zijin rolled her eyes, her anger almost visibly flaring.

Gu Jianlin remained silent, his thoughts preoccupied with the subject of transplantation, weighed down by an inexplicable heaviness.

Thunder came to mind.

Clearly, this was a mad plan. What did her future hold?

Suddenly, Su Youzhu reached out and held his hand, her touch soft and delicate.

Gu Jianlin froze.

"Something on your mind?"

Su Youzhu's clear eyes shimmered faintly, her voice soft: "You don't need to tell me, but try to stay happy."

Clearly, the Destiny Reflection had deeply affected her.

She viewed herself as the rightful girlfriend, reasoning that if he wasn't happy with her, it must be because she lacked charm.

Hmm. She needed to learn to be forthright.

The girl silently gave herself a pep-talk.

Gu Jianlin chuckled quietly, feeling her hands wrap around his, their fingers interlaced.

The nauseating scent of their lovey-dovey antics nearly suffocated Lu Zijin.

Her expression sharpened suddenly, her gaze fixed ahead: "Who's there?"

The Shadow abruptly unsheathed its blade, slashing toward the shadow lurking in the corner. The blade sang a piercing, shrill whistle!

"Damn zombie, I'll fight you to the death..."

A rotund man charged out holding an enormous axe-halberd, Qi Force surging around him!

Swish!

The blade stopped short at his throat, almost beheading him!

With a loud clang, Mr. Liu dropped the axe-halberd to the ground, raising his hands in surrender: "Spare me, heroes!"

"Third Master?"

Gu Jianlin looked at him in surprise.

"How come you're here?"

Su Youzhu's voice rang with reproach.

Lu Zijin noticed two people lurking behind the plump man.

Mr. Liu hesitated for a long time. Once he recognized the newcomers, his terrified expression vanished, giving way to uncontrollable laughter: "Hahahaha! Truly, heaven never seals off all paths; I knew I was the Child of Destiny! Alright, come out, my allies are here to save us!"

A voice speaking Japanese emerged from the shadows, gibbering away.

Roughly translated: Thank heavens we're saved.

The first one to step forward was a Ying Province girl, her lightly made-up face radiant and adorable, her waist-length black hair cascading freely. Despite being bundled up in a heavy down jacket, her graceful figure was evident, accentuated by a pair of knee-high boots.

Holy Light gleamed in her eyes, revealing her as a Priest.

Huddled furthest back was the same deranged Ying Province man they had encountered before, looking to be in his thirties yet with prematurely silver hair. His face contorted with fear, clutching a massive sniper rifle in his hands.

Evidently, he walked the Overlord Path.

"No need to panic. I ran into them here; they're friends like us, disguised as prisoners. This girl is called Yuuki Yocchi—believe it or not, she's a disciple of the Great God Judith!"

Chapter 595: The Secret Weapon at Dusk

Gu Jianlin felt a foreboding the moment he heard the words "Great God."

"Judith, senior?"

The strand of hair atop Su Youzhu's head stood on end in the chilling wind, and a trace of astonishment flickered in her beautiful eyes. "Her student?"

Only Lu Zijin knew what those two scoundrels were really thinking—it was guilt!

"Senior Judith is a world-renowned Priest, a Ninth Rank Great God. The line begging her for treatment could stretch from Iceland to Rome. She no longer sees patients publicly, having already stopped long ago. However, she's taken a few students worldwide. This Miss Yuuki happens to be one of them, here at the Qilin Immortal Palace specifically for training and to seek a promotion opportunity—she's a Fifth Rank Pope."

Mr. Liu introduced with a wide, cheerful grin, "The other one is Da He Wang, a member of Ying Province's Eightfold Shrine, and a Fifth Rank Fate Player."

He rubbed his hands together. "All familiar faces!"

Yet, deep down, even he was secretly alarmed.

They had initially come to rescue Miss Moon Princess, but it seemed that she was quite alright.

The most surprising part was that the "Chair Killer" was here too.

Alright, maybe he should now be called the Qilin instead.

Anything else would seem disrespectful.

Admittedly, this teenager was incredibly reliable.

When his girlfriend got into trouble, he rushed over immediately.

Not bad!

With successors of Qing and Chi in the party, survival was certain!

Mr. Liu suddenly felt his back straighten with confidence!

Yuuki Yocchi bowed deeply. "Hello, nice to meet you all."

Da He Wang also bowed deeply, shouting, "I'm Da He Wang, a Fifth Rank Fate Player, thrilled to meet you all!"

It was said that Yingzhou people used to be quite arrogant, especially in the early last century when their President led the human Ascenders in resisting the Vermilion Bird Divine Palace's invasion. Even the President herself suffered severe injuries and underwent a period of weakness lasting over fifty years, enticing opportunists from around the world.

However, just when the Yingzhou people were scheming, the Heavenly Person Realm descended from above and killed their Susano.

That Susano was also a Demigod.

From that point on, people realized that the Heavenly Person Realm not only suppressed the Ancient God Clan but was also effective against human Ascenders.

As is well known, the President is inherently suspicious, and after that, she would occasionally wander around Yingzhou.

Whenever she was in a bad mood, people would die.

To the point that now, when Yingzhou people encounter our citizens, they are utterly subservient.

It was as if they could feel the suppression in their very bloodline.

They had been worrying about having no supplies here, but right on cue, a perfect support class walked through the door.

Encounters with teammates in a place like this were enough to wake your spirits, but before anyone could exchange pleasantries, they heard tremors from the underground tunnel—the creaking of coffins being opened, accompanied by a terrifying aura!

Mr. Liu pulled out a quaint Jade Mirror. Its sleek surface reflected swirling black mist pouring out and ominous shadows emerging from the coffins, their blood-red eyes glowing in the dark—a resurrection of Hell's demons!

And it wasn't just one—there were eight coffins in total!

"Run!"

Their expressions changed instantly, and they bolted!

A skeleton giant, aflame with Divine Sacrificial Fire, materialized out of thin air, blocking the tunnel's end and gathering Dark Energy.

Gu Jianlin leaned on past lessons, resolutely avoiding an entanglement with these Pseudo Ancestors and opting solely for guerrilla tactics!

"Strange, theoretically, the awakening of these Ancestors should require specific triggering conditions. Why would they all wake up spontaneously?" Su Youzhu gripped the Demon Extermination Sword, swinging instinctively with what little spirituality she had left to unleash a Dimension Slash. It split apart the overhead stone wall, sending rubble tumbling down.

"Ha, leave it to an academic strategist to still be analyzing the why at a time like this!"

Lu Zijin clapped her hands together. The scattered rubble coalesced with a boom into a sturdy stone wall.

Da He Wang gritted his teeth in frustration. "I know what's going on—it's Old Master Si from the Youying Group! I don't know what methods he used, but he's leveraging the lives of those candidates to activate some kind of Alchemy Matrix here. That caused all these Pseudo Ancestors to awaken prematurely—they weren't supposed to wake up for a while yet! We barely escaped being caught in the process."

While running and catching his breath, he growled, "Yet they have ways to completely avoid these attacks!"

"That's how the Si Family operates. I've heard the candidates they train are usually controlled using spiritual toxins. When it comes time for sacrifices, they have no choice but to die. And yet, despite this blatantly exploitative style, people still choose to work for the Si Family." Yanai Yuki, sprinting on long strides, released a gentle Holy Light that enveloped the group.

Exhausted spirituality gradually rejuvenated—that's the benefit of having a support class healer!

"Impressive."

Su Youzhu stared at her expressionlessly.

Lu Zijin cast a cold glance in her direction. A true healer indeed.

"This is exactly why I can't stand the Si Family. They engage in Ascender loan schemes worldwide, not limited to financial resources or protection services—it's basically fraud and abduction. They control the families of these Ascenders, forcing them to work while feeding them spiritual toxins for coercion." Mr. Liu panted heavily.

Gu Jianlin thought, "So that's how it is," and then asked, "Third Master, long time no see. Where are your companions?"

Su Youzhu also glanced over, her gaze calm.

"We were ambushed by Old Master Si and got separated!"

Mr. Liu's face darkened as he gritted his teeth. "I fear they're in grave danger!"

Though it might not be as dire as he made it sound.

Gu Jianlin could still sense the presence of both the Butcher and the Scholar; however, their life force had undeniably weakened significantly.

Chapter 596: The Secret Weapon at Dusk_2

The terrifying roar echoed from the pitch-black corridor behind them.

It felt like Godzilla was furious.

Eight Pseudo Ancestors—more than enough to annihilate them multiple times over.

As such, they had to come up with every possible way to escape.

The cracks in the stone walls above their heads cascaded with glorious light—this was where the power of the Heavenly Person Realm was most concentrated.

Whatever the case, heading in that direction was the only option.

The denser the Heavenly Person Realm's power, the more harm it would inflict upon the Ancient God Clan.

If they managed to reach the very center of the Heavenly Person Realm, the Pseudo Ancestors would likely collapse outright if they tried using the Ancient God Power.

The underground structure of the bronze palace was an intricate maze, and they could only rely on the golden light spilling from the cracks in the stone walls to find their way forward. The ground, paved with green stone bricks, was scattered with eerie white bones.

It was impossible to tell whether those bones belonged to humans or the Ancient God Clan.

"Run! Those things are catching up!"

Mr. Liu fled desperately, glancing at the terrifying black shadow reflected in the mirror.

He could feel their relentless approach!

In that fleeting instant, dark Qi began to swirl around his forehead.

With a loud thud, he fell flat on his face.

That fat man was a Fourth Rank practitioner of the Ancient Martial Path—there was no way he should make such a clumsy mistake.

"You've been affected by fortune!"

Su Youzhu immediately discerned the situation: "This is the ability of the Divination Master Path!"

Almost simultaneously, she realized something was off, clutching her abdomen, her eyes filled with shame and frustration.

"What's wrong?"

Gu Jianlin instinctively pulled the slender shoulders of the girl close to his side, unaware of what was happening.

"It's my period, at the worst possible time. I must have been affected as well."

Su Youzhu said coldly: "That bastard—Old Master Si!"

The misfortune wasn't limited to them—almost everyone in their group was showing signs of bad luck.

For instance, Yuuki Yocchi stepped on a bone spur while fleeing, piercing her ankle. Initially, it was just a minor injury.

But the bone spur carried spiritual toxin, which even she struggled to purge.

Then there was Da He Wang, who suddenly became nauseous and dizzy, reigniting an old spiritual affliction he had suffered from years ago—one that was incurable.

As for Lu Zijin, who was covering the rear, her eardrums were ruptured by the furious roaring, and blood streamed relentlessly from her ears.

Yet even more horrifying was the fact that the narrow corridor began to tremble violently; cracks spiderwebbed across the walls in all directions, dust crumbled and fell. Clearly, it could no longer bear the weight and was on the verge of total collapse.

If several thousand tons of debris came crashing down, they would all be buried alive.

"This is definitely Old Master Si's ability. He wants to trap us here and take the Heavenly Plain treasures for himself."

Yuuki Yocchi's fair face turned pale with anger, her disdain evident as she clenched her fists.

"That despicable old bastard!"

Da He Wang gritted his teeth and said venomously: "We were the ones who shared the intel with the You Ying Group!"

Gu Jianlin turned abruptly toward them, his voice grave: "What intel? Spill it."

With their lives hanging by a thread, there was no point in keeping secrets now.

Yuuki Yocchi bit her cherry lips and explained softly, "There's a saying going around about how our Ying Province culture originates from the renowned alchemist Xu Fu of the Qin Dynasty. That rumor happens to be true. Over two thousand years ago, our ancestors accidentally discovered the Qilin Immortal Palace beneath the East Sea and became its cheaters, hearing of Penglai Fairy Island."

"We refer to Penglai Fairy Island as the Heavenly Plain. Legend has it that it holds the ultimate mystery of evolution."

Lowering her voice, she added, "The You Ying Group negotiated a deal with the Orochi Shrine this time, trading precious ancestral records from the Qilin Immortal Palace. To avoid tipping anyone off, Old Master Si led the expedition while we infiltrated as candidates."

Da He Wang ground his teeth bitterly and said, "Who could've guessed they'd betray us, aiming to kill us too."

For a fleeting moment, cold fury glimmered in Lu Zijin's eyes. Her voice was like ice: "The Ether Association is an ally of the Orochi Shrine, and yet you secretly collaborated with the You Ying Group? Are you courting death?"

The Orochi Shrine was part of the established order, making such actions betrayals of loyalty.

Yuuki Yocchi's beautiful eyes sank, but she remained silent, offering no defense.

Da He Wang's expression turned awkward, realizing his foolishness, and he muttered sheepishly, "It's because the President purged this generation's heirs of Susa no O. That's why dissatisfaction arose."

Lu Zijin's gaze grew even colder.

"Stop squabbling. Focus on the problem at hand!"

Mr. Liu hurriedly stepped in to mediate, speaking soothingly. "Look, I've heard some rumors myself. My aunt mentioned that the Ether Association has been conducting a groundbreaking experiment recently—one that, if successful, could disrupt the equilibrium of the world. Supposedly, the method originated from the legends surrounding Penglai Fairy Island. That's all I know!"

Su Youzhu narrowed her alluring eyes: "A groundbreaking experiment?"

Gu Jianlin had a vague sense of what was hidden within this place.

"Enough arguing. Find a way to get out of here."

He spoke in a low voice: "We still have a chance."

The main hall of the bronze palace shimmered with resplendent specks of light. Intersecting roots of immense golden rhizomes snaked throughout the structure, their trunks illusory yet unbearably real, faintly radiating black runes imbued with terrifying energy.

Candles flickered in every direction within the hall, their red wax melting into oil.

Chapter 597: The Secret Weapon at Dusk_3

The candlelight flickered in the eerie wind.

Old Master Si held a magic artifact in his hand, muttering incantations like a spiritual medium, as black mist churned and spread in all directions.

In front of him, gray fog converged, faintly reflecting the silhouettes of a group of people fleeing within the corridor.

"Thank goodness for the ancient books left to us by the Think Tank."

He laughed grimly, saying, "With this, these people won't be able to stir up any trouble."

Si Wei'an's eyes flashed with a trace of cruelty. Although the Think Tank had ordered not to harm the girl, he didn't care much for commands—when the time comes, whoever holds the treasure and the power will dictate the rules.

"As expected, the Think Tank's plans are flawless. Never underestimate the Ether Association's President. The followers of Order must have discovered this place long ago, or else traces of the Heavenly Person Realm wouldn't be here. However, even they haven't been able to retrieve Xu Fu."

Xia Yu remained elegant, her loosely tied long hair flowing as she gently twirled it, her white dress fluttering lightly. "Still, I can't help wondering about the nature of the Heavenly Person Realm here. Could it have been left as trials for subsequent strategists?"

The barrier left behind by the Heavenly Person Realm serves to prevent the evolvers of the Dark World from entering.

It seems quite logical.

"We've reached the deepest point, but we have yet to see Xu Fu."

Old Master Si snorted coldly, "And those two Divine Servants—they managed to slip away as well."

"No matter, I can chase them down."

Si Wei'an licked his lips, his gaze chilly and sinister.

Xia Yu, however, commented meaningfully, "The Think Tank already warned against unnecessary action. Compared to the ultimate mysteries of evolution, everything else is trivial. You might as well look at the murals and understand the weight those murals reveal!"

On the golden root of the Golden Tree within the main hall, black runes shimmered with astonishing, divine brilliance.

They were about to encompass the entire Golden Tree Root.

No one knew what would happen then.

On either side of the main hall, blood-soaked murals adorned the walls of bronze.

The first mural depicted the history of the Qilin Clan.

Under the Golden Tree that blotted out the sky, an immense god overlooked its people as they knelt in agony beneath it. Their faces were grafted with two different human visages, seemingly howling in frantic despair, ultimately pierced and sealed with an iron sword within coffins.

They were buried beneath the tree, becoming its nourishment.

The immense god fed its own bones and blood to sustain the Golden Divine Tree.

The second mural illustrated the history of the Candle Dragon Clan!

An immense god fell, entombed at the end of time, its spirituality surging from the Sky Dome, saturating the desolate Ancient God Realm, eventually nourishing soil to cultivate the Golden Tree's growth.

Faintly visible was a Black Dragon that blotted out the sky, releasing its spirituality in an attempt to nourish the Ancient God Realm as well.

Its bones and blood also served as sacrifices, devoured by the Golden Tree.

"I cannot decipher these murals."

Old Master Si's gaze turned dark as he spoke softly.

"Of course you can't, because they pertain to Supreme-level secrets."

Xia Yu smiled faintly and said in a soft voice, "When the runes maturing on the Divine Tree reach fruition, you simply need to insert the item the Think Tank gave you into the root of the Divine Tree. Then, the young mistress will naturally comprehend the structure of this power."

At that moment, Si Wei'an seemed to sense something and swiftly turned around!

Boom!

The bronze wall suddenly shattered under a single punch!

Accompanied by the scattering haze, a man surged forth like a streak of black lightning. His left eye burned a stern gold, while his right eye gleamed a grotesque crimson. His pitch-black trench coat billowed in the wind, rippling like flowing water.

The blade's cry echoed sharply, akin to a dragon's roar, resounding throughout the hall!

"Gu Jianlin?"

Old Master Si's body stiffened in stark terror upon seeing the man. "No! You're..."

Crack!

His head flew high into the air as a frigid gleam vanished in mere moments. The blade's mournful resonance reverberated endlessly.

An instant kill!

With the ground quaking violently, an iron coffin burst forth from beneath the surface.

The Sorrowful Corpse Cycle.

The Si Family's unique secret technique, granting each individual three opportunities for life.

How powerful!

Si Wei'an's eyes nearly burst with shock. This man, clearly only at Fourth Rank level, exhibited strength inexplicably overwhelming!

The man spun mid-air, his jet-black bangs swaying, a gaze fixed upon Si Wei'an resembling one aimed at a corpse.

He snapped his fingers!

Boom!

Si Wei'an had no chance to dodge. A surge of pitch-black lightning descended from above, exploding into blinding chaos, engulfing him entirely!

"Old Master! Quickly, retrieve that item!"

Xia Yu, aghast, discarded all semblance of grace as her gorgeous pupils widened in fright. A radiant Golden Core emerged above her head.

Crucial moments arrived. The man pointed casually, unleashing streams of jet-black light!

With an earth-shattering explosion, Xia Yu was blasted forcefully against the wall, spat out a mouthful of blood, and her pristine, white dress scorched until revealing large swathes of snowy skin. Her long hair scattered uncontrollably.

Even with Golden Core defenses, the explosive shockwave gravely wounded her.

The iron coffin had barely opened when the man pivoted to glance at it, gripping his tachi unperturbed.

The blade's edge faintly shimmered with lightning energy.

With a streak of intense lightning that flickered briefly yet strikingly, the iron coffin was split in two!

Crack.

Old Master Si, upon regenerating from his revival, lost his second life instantly, the terror on his aged face frozen in a grimace.

A thread of blood trailed from his forehead down to the bottom of his body as blood sprayed forth like a cascading waterfall.

If this scene were recorded, it would undoubtedly be the epitome of a nightmarish tale—the enigma of how the youth before them suddenly grew into an adult and became so unfathomably powerful defied understanding. Call him the combined incarnation of Qing and Chi in their youth, and they'd believe it.

Utterly surreal.

In the dying perception of Old Master Si, this man's essence bordered on absurdity.

A Ghost Slayer one moment.

A Divine the next.

Flexible employment, is it!

Fortunately, in the instant he was slain for the second time, he managed to reach into his pocket and retrieve that item.

It was the hilt of a broken blade.

The shining blade reflected the face of a person into view.

"Young Mistress, please spare us!"

Another iron coffin emerged from the earth, and an aged voice echoed from within.

Only the Young Mistress could quell this man before them.

Because the Young Mistress was Dusk's secret weapon.

Invincible in battle!

The man clutched his forehead, his existence teetering on the brink of dissolution. Yet, upon seeing that face, a trace of a dreamy expression flickered across his features as he softly murmured, "So it's you. Been a long time."

Chapter 598: Traces of the Vermilion Bird Venerate!

The man's gaze revealed an expression as if encountering an old friend after many years.

In the solemn and somber main hall, a chilling murderous intent permeated the air. It seemed that the moment the broken blade appeared, the gates of time and space had already been opened. Across such an immense distance, the girl cast a cold glance that carried an air of puzzlement.

Yet to Old Master Si, this seemed impossible, as this young lady had never interacted with the outside world. Since joining Dusk, her strikes had been few and far between, each time killing from afar without ever showing her true face.

Her nobility, her strength, her arrogance—beyond the reach of anyone.

Ranked last within Dusk, yet the most enigmatic ultimate weapon, the girl codenamed Skylark had her true identity shrouded in mystery. No one knew from whence she came. This enigmatic figure was hailed as the throne sustaining the entire Dark World, and the Chosen One prophesied by the former king before his fall.

How could she possibly have any connection with this man before her!

Wait, the old man suddenly realized!

This was a reflection of destiny!

The unmistakable resemblance—it was undoubtedly Gu Jianlin in his grown-up form!

Which meant that Qilin and Skylark would inevitably cross paths in the future!

"I don't know you."

An emotionless voice resounded in the void; the broken blade vibrated faintly.

From the shadow-filled emptiness, a pitch-black hole seemed to open up, as if someone was about to step out.

In an instant, time and space sank into a stagnant silence.

The man unfolded the domain of Space Freeze but didn't act immediately. He merely gazed silently at the black hole, his expression one of solitude—it resembled fallen leaves in an ancient temple, or a mournful wind on a frigid night, gradually giving way to a murderous intent.

When the girl's voice appeared in his world, everything else became irrelevant.

He lowered his stance, adopting an ancient and fierce starting pose. His hands gripped the knife's hilt tightly, veins bulging as the blood-red blade erupted with jet-black thunder, arcs of black electricity sparking and leaping, echoing with the shrill cries of countless birds.

Facing such a wicked woman, he had to employ the Ghost Slayer Path.

He had to crush her within the domain she excelled in!

Bang!

The stillness of time shattered, leaving only a flash of lightning tearing through the void, forcefully shattering the black hole!

The girl who was about to step out of the black hole was sent plummeting into the abyss.

"Who are you?"

In her final moment, the girl cast a cold and piercing glance, as if committing the man's face to memory.

"You are merely an alchemical projection of her power. I won't waste words with you." Killing intent suffused the man's eyes as he emotionlessly swung the blade. His physical form began to turn illusory, collapsing abruptly!

He had long anticipated this outcome. His very existence had already exceeded the rule constraints of this ephemeral world, and executing such a formidable strike inevitably resulted in self-destruction, irreversible.

Initially, he had come to kill Old Master Si.

But upon seeing the broken blade, he realized he had to change his target.

Otherwise, Gu Jianlin and the others would face disaster today.

With a loud thud, his body disintegrated into a cascade of glowing fragments, vanishing without a trace.

The overwhelming murderous intent filling the main hall abruptly dissipated.

"Hahaha! Heaven does not forsake me—this damned thing is finally gone! I never imagined this person could become so powerful in the future. Even Qing and Chi weren't this strong in their youth. Luckily, I'd prepared contingencies long ago!" Old Master Si stumbled wildly out of the Iron Coffin, his aged face alight with clarity and mania after surviving calamity. He picked up the broken blade with the reverence of a treasure hunter.

The destiny reflection had been incredibly strong, but sacrificing himself to prevent the young lady's strike had cost him.

Suddenly, ancient whispers seemed to echo in his ears.

A hoary voice seemed to call out to him.

"Save me. Please, save me."

Mist began to unfold.

A bronze altar suddenly rose within the main hall, its surroundings aglow with eerie ghostly flames circling the matrix's four corners. Ancient array patterns, inscribed with Dragon and Qilin totems, shimmered with an ominous blood-red phosphorescence, solemn yet sinister.

So, this place truly was the creation of Qilin and Candle Dragon.

Xu Fu does not deceive me!

"I am sealed within frozen time, unable to escape. All you need to do is activate this alchemical matrix to rupture the barriers here. Once it collapses, the Divine Tree will complete its gestation, and I will break free from my prison and grant you treasures."

Xu Fu's ancient voice declared, "Strike down that eye, and it will be done!"

Clutching the broken blade tightly, Old Master Si stepped into the center of the alchemical matrix.

But as his gaze fell upon the eye, horror seized him.

His blood ran cold, as if plunged into an icy abyss.

Yet it was too late—the broken blade had already pierced the eye, its radiant light shattering into countless fragments!

Old Master Si did not regret his decision, but he was deeply terrified.

For the core array pattern of the alchemical matrix turned out to be a vermilion bird, radiating grandeur and nobility.

Its eye happened to be the focal point of the array pattern.

"Old Master, hurry!"

Xia Yu staggered to his feet, urging in a grave tone, "Delay will lead to disaster."

Si Wei'an saw for the first time a look of sheer dread on his uncle's face.

Old Master Si was 130 years old and had survived the Fusang Divine Palace invasion. Back then, when the Divine Race corroded the mortal reality, it was an apocalyptic catastrophe. At that time, he had merely been a novice.

This totem—he had seen it before in the Fusang Divine Palace.

No, not a totem.

But the totem's true form.

At the time, he had only caught a fleeting glimpse of the grand figure in the heavens, at full power, from a vast distance. Yet the mere sight had caused his spirit and will to collapse on the spot, requiring a decade of convalescence.

It was... the Vermilion Bird Venerate!

Gu Jianlin was still desperately fleeing within the underground palace, alone and taking up the role of rear guard because he was unaffected by misfortune.

Meanwhile, Shadow scouted ahead.

From the darkened corridor came sounds of writhing, as thick, viscous flesh poured in through cracks in the fractured walls, merging into grotesque, monstrous forms exuding dense deathly energy!

This was the Corpse Ghost Skill.

Moreover, it was a variant of the Ancient God Clan's Corpse Ghost Skill—a particularly disgusting one for reasons unknown.

Currently, his spirituality was brimming. The dark-golden Skeleton Giant materialized violently, and the four Ghost Hands condensed into darkness!

Good thing he hadn't brought the parrot along.

Or, upon hearing "Suzanohu" in front of the two Yingzhou people, the bird would have immediately social-died!

Taking a deep breath, he spread his arms and released surging dark energy, erupting like an ebony sun. It blasted the monsters into pulp; bits of shredded flesh splattered the walls, emitting a burnt stench.

"Boy! Keep up!"

Da He Wang called out from ahead.

Yuuki Yocchi didn't forget to cast a layer of Holy Light protection on him. She thought this boy was incredibly reliable—mastering the legendary Original Forbidden Curse, taking on the roles of scout and rear guard alone, tanking damage while dealing output.

Although the burst of Dark Shock was potent, the shredded flesh managed to recombine.

They seemed to be unkillable monsters!

Gu Jianlin's gaze flickered with determination. Luckily, he noticed that the more thoroughly the flesh was shredded, the slower the recombination process. After a brief moment of contemplation, he raised his right hand again, black thunder gathered and elongated!

Ancient Forbidden Curse, All Heavens Divine Thunder!

Forbidden spells had various applications, shaped according to the caster's abilities.

When lightning merged with dark energy, it formed such a Thunderbolt Spear!

"All Heavens Divine Thunder?"

Da He Wang stumbled, almost falling flat: "What sort of godly being is this?"

Yuuki Yocchi glanced sideways, her eyes filled with astonishment: "Such majestic power... so handsome!"

Su Youzhu shot this woman an icy glare, considering from which angle to chop her.

After all, healers aren't afraid of being slashed.

Only Lu Zijin understood why they were so shocked. The President's signature forbidden spell was All Heavens Divine Thunder—a spell that was said to kill living beings, wipe out death energy, and unleash boundless Heavenly Might.

It could even purify evil.

Several Holy Land Level beings in Ying Province had perished beneath All Heavens Divine Thunder.

Boom!

The black Thunderbolt Spear erupted, nearly collapsing the rear corridor. The flesh-formed monsters were obliterated into ash, with even fragments shrouded in faint thunderlight, burned into charcoal.

They could never recombine!

Gu Jianlin stared in awe at the scene before him—this was the power of All Heavens Divine Thunder.

"Senior?"

Yuuki Yocchi looked at her senior, noticing his conflicted expression.

Da He Wang's resolve firmed as he clenched his teeth and said, "Yang Cai, should we take a chance? It seems this team we've encountered is remarkably strong. Continued endless fleeing will only cost us opportunities."

Without waiting for a reply, he yelled, "We can't keep escaping like this. Let's take down the Si Family now!"

Chapter 599: Ninth Rank, Taiyi God!

At the very end of the underground palace, there was a blaze of fire as radiant as the sun, spreading out like countless strands of aurora. One could vaguely see ornate feathers swaying in the wind, and even fleeting silhouettes of birds appearing momentarily before vanishing.

This was like a sacrificial ground, a temple scattered with shattered pill furnaces and ghastly human bones.

Massive, ancient stone steps led upward—a staircase ascending to the main hall.

Su Youzhu felt a familiar aura surging through the air. It was the same godly might that had once left her breathless on the Haiqing Highway, as if transporting her back to that stormy night, forcing her to relive despair and rage.

"Youzhu."

Lu Zijin raised her hand and gently stroked her trembling back. In truth, she also recognized the source of this aura, for even though she had arrived late on that highway six months ago, she had still sensed that overwhelming divine might.

Now was a moment of peril; they had to calm down.

Because they both knew that the person most affected by this wasn't themselves.

The faint sound of footsteps came from behind.

Gu Jianlin initially didn't understand why they had suddenly stopped. But as he felt the golden brilliance washing over him, his chest seemed to clog with mud, his breathing turning labored, almost suffocating.

And not just that—his head felt like it was splitting open, and terrifying hallucinations flooded his vision.

A torrential stormy night, the highway signs drenched in rain, tree branches swaying in the gale, the world ablaze in a raging inferno.

The blinding, searing light of headlights pierced through the storm. A massive truck engulfed in fierce flames growled like a monstrous beast as it hurtled forward. Beneath the windshield, the driver sat as lifeless as a corpse, indifferent and cold. A terrifying ghost shadow loomed over the highway, bearing nine grotesque and horrifying heads, each with eerie human faces. Some seemed to cry, others appeared to laugh.

The Ghost Car Ancestor!

Darkness overwhelmed the skies as Gu Jianlin heard the rumbling of a collapsing world.

Someone held him tightly, warmth long lost seeping into the embrace.

"Don't be afraid..."

That person stroked his head and softly whispered, "It's just a nightmare, like when you had a fever as a kid. Once your mom gets you some cold medicine, you'll sleep it off, and everything will be fine when you wake up."

The man's voice was so ordinary, so casually casual.

Yet it brimmed with an unbearable tenderness.

As if he already knew his own fate.

Gu Jianlin barely opened his eyes, glimpsing the familiar silhouette suspended in midair. The elemental turbulence of Earth, Wind, Water, and Fire gathered above his head, and wings unfurled behind him, faintly shimmering with the ethereal tail of a phoenix.

His figure, too, began to burn, releasing a roar of fury.

Gu Jianlin desperately wanted to reach out, to call that man back.

Or perhaps run to him, to die alongside him.

But he could do nothing; this was just a hallucination.

That ferocious ghostly shadow seemed to shroud the entire world in its tempest and downpour, its overwhelming divine might filling the heavens and earth.

And yet, in the final instant, Gu Jianlin saw something.

The overwhelming divine might didn't come from the Ghost Car Ancestor!

It was a god standing tall atop the Sky Dome. No matter how the storm battered, its flames remained unextinguished. When it cried out, the world itself burned. Its wings blanketed the heavens, and its phoenix tail stretched to the ends of darkness.

Like the sun piercing the night.

Boom!

Gu Jianlin let out a rare roar of fury and agony. That beam of light was like thunder splitting the chaos, nearly tearing apart his memories. After six long months, he finally delved back into the recesses of his mind and beheld the truth of that fateful car crash.

His head throbbed with piercing pain, forcing him to his knees as he clawed desperately at his skull.

"Xiao Gu!"

Lu Zijin quickly grabbed his shoulders, her face paling in fright.

Su Youzhu couldn't bear to see him in such torment. She knelt beside him, enveloped him in her arms, pressing him tightly against her chest. Using her warmth and softness to ease his suffering, she raised her head and coldly commanded, "Where's the Priest? Yingzhou people, hurry!"

Yuuki Yocchi approached and gasped in shock.

For the boy's spirituality and mental state were in utter chaos—a condition he had inflicted upon himself.

The Priest pathway wasn't as simple as recklessly throwing around Holy Light. It required extremely delicate micro-manipulation, practically to the molecular level. A healer needed exceptional medical expertise; otherwise, they could do more harm than good. As a student of a Great God, Yuuki Yocchi's survival skills were, of course, impeccable.

But in the present situation, even she was at a loss.

"Save him!"

Su Youzhu held the boy tightly in her arms, gripping a blade to her own throat. "Do it now!"

When Da He Wang saw this scene, he thought to himself that this was classic behavior—how was it that the Great God's lineage, from teacher to student, always ended up being threatened at knifepoint to save lives?

"Hurry up already! Why are you just standing there?!"

Mr. Liu also grew anxious.

It wasn't the time to hesitate; they had to try anything to save him.

Da He Wang stood guard at the passageway, his sniper rifle roaring with incessant fire.

Yuuki Yocchi once again pulled out a Shinto talisman from her pocket. This was a medium combining Forbidden Spells and the native practices of Ying Province, enhanced with the power of the Priest pathway into a Combined Skill. She began to twirl and chant, "Flowers in the wind, reflections in water, may the gods above the Heavenly Plain shelter me with their blessing. I bestow this divine grace upon you, banishing the evil, driving away the demons!"

She pointed to the heavens with one hand, then to the boy. "Go!"

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A beam of holy light fell on the teenager's forehead, dazzlingly bright.

Everyone fell silent, feeling awkward to the point of tingling scalps.

Only Da He Wang roared angrily: "Even though we've just met, don't underestimate the power of our friendship, you bastard!"

Boom! Countless explosions erupted, completely collapsing the passage.

A moment passed.

Gu Jianlin felt the gentle holy light emanating from his forehead, alleviating his intense headache to a significant degree. And of course, there was the soft sensation on his cheek, equally sublime, pulling him from the abyss of despair.

"Are you okay?"

What met his eyes was the worried gaze of a young girl.

Su Youzhu gently caressed his hair. Six months ago, on that rainy night, she had been the first to arrive at his side. Seeing him covered in blood almost broke her heart. She knew all too well the deep shadow this incident had cast on him.

"I'm fine."

Gu Jianlin vaguely recalled that he'd been held this way before, with faint calls echoing in his ears.

In truth, this girl had appeared by his side long ago, but he had been too gravely injured to remember.

"Ghost Car, Vermilion Bird."

He held his forehead with his hand, enduring the agonizing headache, and murmured, "What happened back then wasn't as simple as it seemed. Old Gu wasn't just facing the Ghost Car Ancestor; the Vermilion Bird Venerate also appeared. I even suspect that Old Gu was in such a hurry to escape, not because he found out he was wanted after leaving, but to avoid the Vermilion Bird."

Su Youzhu trusted his abilities completely and didn't doubt him for a second.

However, the matter was beyond absurd.

"How's that possible? The Vermilion Bird Venerate was thrown into the dimensional chaos decades ago. Even if they've returned to Earth, how could such a Supreme Level entity appear in the real world without causing any commotion?"

Lu Zijin, incredulous, muttered under her breath: "Not even a Catastrophe sensed it."

Mr. Liu listened to the young ones discussing Supreme entities and Catastrophes. He felt his scalp go numb and advised, "Figure out what to do after we leave. You didn't hear anything, I didn't hear anything either."

Whether it was Yuuki Yocchi or Da He Wang, both understood the gravity of these taboo topics.

But this teenager before them was truly astonishing.

Possessing both the President's signature forbidden spell, All Heavens Divine Thunder,

and freely discussing the Vermilion Bird Clan,

he was likely a super genius cultivated by the Order World—undoubtedly an Omega Sequence talent, second to none.

Gu Jianlin knew the situation was indeed bizarre; what he'd seen earlier was undoubtedly the Vermilion Bird Venerate.

Yet, how could the appearance of an Ancient Supreme escape even his teacher's notice?

"In the past, Bai Ze warned the Candle Dragon to be cautious of the Vermilion Bird. Youzhu's destiny projection also mentioned that the Vermilion Bird is the ultimate terror. The battle at the Fusang Divine Palace at the end of the last century might not have ended the way humanity imagined." Gu Jianlin's thoughts spiraled in turbulence. He forced himself up, ignoring the pounding headache, and examined the sacrificial ground at the end of the underwater palace. The door ahead likely led to the main hall.

Something within the main hall seemed to have been activated, causing the entire world to feel as if it were on the brink of collapse.

For some reason, even though this realm was created by Qilin and the Candle Dragon,

Vermilion Bird's power lingered ominously in the air.

He mustered the strength to stand, staggering while surveying the sacrificial ground. His gaze fell upon shattered pill furnaces and skeletal remains scattered on the ground.

The bones were relatively small, seemingly belonging to individuals who hadn't reached adulthood, yet they all bore traits of the Ancient God Clan. Some had grown dragon tails, others had immense horns, and still others had scales lodged within their bone seams.

Their bones shimmered like jade—clearly not in a normal state.

With no Divination Masters or Spirit Mediums present, their profiles were the only way to deduce their characteristics in life.

Fortunately, their bones were surrounded by jade ornaments and even scattered strands of gold thread.

Likely embroidery from the garments they wore a thousand years ago.

Each pill furnace contained a single skeleton, creating an eerie and unsettling scene.

"Child Boy and Girl."

Su Youzhu, as a Cheater herself, instantly recognized the origins of these corpses and softly spoke: "These are the boys and girls who accompanied Xu Fu on his eastern expedition. The empty coffins found at the entrance to the underwater palace originally belonged to them. For some unknown reason, they abandoned their duties as Gatekeepers and came to Penglai Fairy Island."

Lu Zijin looked up with a stern expression: "Look over there."

At the end of the sacrificial ground stood a massive bronze sculpture, undoubtedly crafted in the Ancient God Clan's style. It radiated a profound religious mystique, depicting a figure draped in a divine robe seated cross-legged, head bowed, eyes filled with compassion.

"Xu Fu, this is Xu Fu!"

Da He Wang grew excited, falling to his knees before the statue, hands clasped together as he exclaimed, "We've seen sculptures like this in ancient Shintoist texts. The ancestors did not deceive us! The legend is true—Xu Fu truly reached Penglai Fairy Island and uncovered the Mystery of Immortality. It's all real! There's treasure here!"

Yuuki Yocchi, skeptical, asked: "Wasn't Xu Fu the Gatekeeper? Why would he be here?"

The answer was clear: Xu Fu was indeed the Gatekeeper.

But he abandoned his duties to enter this place.

"Because Xu Fu was practicing alchemy."

Gu Jianlin looked up at the two frescoes painted above and instantly understood everything.