

## Ancient 80

Chapter 80 - 41: Code Name, Thunder!

In the remote outskirts of Peak City, there was an old villa, hidden deep within a mountain ravine, dark and tranquil.

Nie, the Deacon, stood respectfully in front of the bedroom, lowering his head and saying, "My Lord, the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident is nearing its conclusion. The Joker is dead, and the two Mythical Weapons have been successfully recovered. However, the person behind the Joker has yet to be found. In the near future, we'll launch a full-scale manhunt in Peak City."

The door to the bedroom was ajar, faintly revealing a figure lying on a sickbed.

"Who killed the Joker?"

An aged, frail, yet commanding voice emerged.

Nie, the Deacon, remained silent.

"Gu Ci'an's son, right?"

The voice continued, "And he took those two Mythical Weapons as well."

Nie, the Deacon, scowled and murmured, "It was my incompetence."

The elderly man, however, seemed lenient, replying calmly, "Since he's Gu Ci'an's son, having some talent is to be expected. Successfully defeating targets above his rank twice in a row—he's a promising young man. What a pity."

"Indeed,"

Nie, the Deacon, echoed, "Truly a pity."

In the Transcendent world, the Gu Family's descendants were undeniably gifted, yet tragically cursed, their lives often short.

It had reached Gu Ci'an's generation.

Where certain issues arose.

Such as the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident.

Sigh.

"For someone like me with little time left, even the greatest Mythical Weapon holds little significance. Losing them isn't something I'll hold you accountable for. Even if that child is Gu Ci'an's son, rules must be observed. If he's taken them, we'll find another way—trade them back for something else in time."

The elderly man seemed to sip some tea before saying, "The real problem is why did he join the association? What is his goal?"

Nie, the Deacon, said nothing.

"Today, I received Minister Lu's report—a compilation of intelligence gathered by that child."

The elderly man said indifferently, "That child insists someone else was responsible for the Blood Moon Slaughter Incident. According to him, Gu Ci'an was trapped in the lowest level of the Qilin Immortal Palace at that exact time. That's supposedly what the Joker himself admitted."

Hearing this, Nie, the Deacon, scoffed, "Empty words. Does he have proof?"

"He doesn't yet,"

The elderly man replied, "But he said he'll gather evidence bit by bit. You must realize, if certain factions within the association hear of this, they might start searching for this illusory evidence to undermine the Judgement Court faction. That child cannot be brought to our side; he is beyond our use."

Nie, the Deacon, placed a hand to his chest and replied sternly, "Understood, my Lord."

"Go, find the mastermind behind the Joker,"

The elderly man commanded, "And quickly."

Nie, the Deacon, bowed deeply once again.

At this moment, a young man in a white suit approached, softly closing the door and gesturing with a polite hand. Coldly, he said, "Deacon Nie, the Saint needs to rest."

Nie, the Deacon, nodded slightly and asked again, "Councilman Zhang, how much longer can the Saint's body hold out?"

In the Ether Association, the Judgement Court was the core power structure.

As a Deacon, Nie had just managed to edge into the circle of power.

Above the Deacons were the Councilmen.

And above the Councilmen, at the apex of the pyramid—

The Saints.

"At most three months,"

Councilman Zhang said coldly.

Nie, the Deacon, paused and let out a sigh, "Got it."

With that, he turned and left.

Councilman Zhang watched him leave when suddenly the aged voice echoed again from the room.

"Shouheng."

The elderly voice sounded, "Help me with something..."

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Today was a rare beautiful day, with bright sunshine and a clear blue sky.

The bustling commercial street was teeming with people. Commuters hurried across the streets during the morning rush, while girls in short skirts strolled lightly by the roadside. Accompanied by the morning news broadcasts on large building screens, everything felt wonderfully serene.

A jet-black Range Rover sped through the district, like a ferocious beast, barreling through the traffic recklessly.

"Where are we going?"

Gu Jianlin asked curiously.

After finishing breakfast, he had been taken out and was still dressed in a hospital gown.

Lu Zicheng, wearing sunglasses, responded coolly, "Deep Space Technology Building."

At this, Chen Qing turned from the front passenger seat, handing over a bag of clothes. "Put these on."

Gu Jianlin took the bag, finding a black shirt and gray tailored pants inside.

He sized them up and found they fit perfectly.

"I measured your body proportions while you were sleeping yesterday."

Chen Qing glanced at him, her red lips curling slightly, "Nice physique."

Gu Jianlin was silent for a moment, then said, "Sister Chen Qing, I'm male."

"You're not 'male' yet. You're three months away from adulthood—you're a minor."

Chen Qing turned back, replying calmly, "What's there for kids to be shy about? Just change already."

Gu Jianlin sighed faintly, "Then can you move the rearview mirror?"

Lu Zicheng shrugged, reaching to adjust the mirror, only for his hand to be swatted away.

"The young master didn't sleep well last night, and his attention lapse might make adjusting the mirror unsafe."

Chen Qing said indifferently, "Just change like this."

Left with no choice, Gu Jianlin ducked into his seat to change, muttering under his breath, "And Ancient Martial Path practitioners can still have sleepless nights?"

Among the oldest paths, the Ancient Martial Path's Qi energy not only attacked enemies but also sustained self-healing and vitality. As long as they were alive, their bodies were typically robust beyond measure.

"Ahem!"

Lu Zicheng cleared his throat heavily, as if issuing a warning.

Chen Qing fell silent.

As Gu Jianlin glanced over, curious, the green-feathered parrot in the cage next to him suddenly wriggled free of its muzzle.

"Tastes like a ghost lady—delicious!"



Gu Jianlin turned his head incredulously and locked eyes with the parrot.

Suddenly, the screech of sharp and urgent brakes pierced the air.

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8:30 AM, Deep Space Technology Building.

Gu Jianlin, now dressed in a black shirt and gray tailored pants, stood at the foot of the building's street in silence.

He had heard of this company before, knowing Uncle Su's multinational firm collaborated with them.

He didn't expect this to be a subsidiary of the Ether Association.

"Are you ready?"

Lu Zicheng asked, his tone calm.

Chen Qing stood beside him, a bald, listless parrot perched on her shoulder.

"Ready for what?"

Gu Jianlin asked, turning his head.

"The next task might be difficult and dangerous."

Lu Zicheng's lips tilted up with a faint trace of a smile. "If you're afraid, now's your last chance. Go home, focus on your studies, and leave your father's matters to Chen Qing and me."

Without hesitation, Gu Jianlin replied, "I thought you didn't waste words."

Lu Zicheng shrugged, tapping on his tablet.

Just then, Gu Jianlin's phone buzzed.

"Deep Space Network notification: A-Rank Investigator Lu Zicheng invites you to join his team. Accept or decline?"

Gu Jianlin accepted without hesitation.

"As of today, D-Rank Investigator Gu Jianlin is officially in service to the Thirteenth District."

"Access upgraded. Mission module unlocked. District rankings unlocked."

Gu Jianlin opened the team interface displayed by the Deep Space Network.

Team Leader: A-Rank Investigator, Lu Zicheng.

Ancient Martial Path: Fourth Rank, Mad King.

Deputy Leader: B-Rank Investigator, Chen Qing.

Spirit Medium Path: Third Rank, Great Wizard.

Team Member: D-Rank Investigator, Gu Jianlin.

Divine Path: Zero-tier.

Gu Jianlin paused in surprise. He had already advanced ranks today, yet the Deep Space Network didn't log it.

When he leveled up to Zero-tier on the Divine Path previously, it was immediately recorded by the network.

Even after consuming the Spiritual Secret Medicine, his monitoring bracelet logged it instantly.

This time, however, nothing.

Wait, he suddenly understood why.

The Lock of Nonexistence!

When advancing today, he still wore the monitoring bracelet—and the Lock of Nonexistence.

This Mythical Weapon not only erased his presence but also bypassed detection by monitoring devices.

Hesitant for a moment, he opened the district ranking system.

The first section was the Team Rankings.

The second section was the Individual Rankings.

These rankings seemed limited to new young investigators, ordered by Merit Value from highest to lowest.

To his surprise, Gu Jianlin discovered he was ranked tenth with a Merit Value of 3,100.

Moreover, he was the only Zero-tier among the top ten.

Well, not exactly. Technically, he had already advanced ranks.

"You killed the Joker—he was Second Rank, possessed severe Deformation abilities, and wielded two Mythical Weapons. Granting you 3,000 Merit Value points was a modest reward. You probably don't even realize the magnitude of your accomplishment. Ordinarily, your achievement would've shaken the entire district."

Lu Zicheng said nonchalantly, "But for certain reasons, the information was suppressed."

"Why?"

Gu Jianlin asked, raising an eyebrow.

"To maintain confidentiality for the upcoming operation. The exploration of the Qilin Immortal Palace is imminent, and the secrets and treasures within are immensely valuable. It'll attract contenders from across the globe. The Ether Association intends to mobilize all district investigators to eliminate criminal elements."

Lu Zicheng smiled faintly, "By the way, in the Peak City District rankings for young talents, your rank is the lowest, and the top nine are all prodigies—monsters, really. Particularly the top three..."

Penetrating these criminal elements—how about dealing with that Kui, too?

Gu Jianlin glanced at the rankings displayed on the screen.

At the very top, conspicuous and unmistakable, was a single name.

NO.1:

Tang Ling, B-Rank Investigator, Sword Sect Path.

Third Rank, Sword Obsession.

Code name, Thunder!