

## **Apocalypse 174**

### Chapter 174: Baptism by Fire for the Golden Buddha

"First, find the survivors!" After the fire at the Buddhist Temple, Lin Yuan said to the few people behind him.

Just as he finished speaking, a team member behind Han Kun spoke up, "I know where the refuge in Tang City is, I've carried out missions here before."

Having someone who knows the way is certainly the best outcome, much better than searching aimlessly.

Thinking of this, Lin Yuan immediately instructed, "Lead the way."

The refuge must be the safest place in all of Tang City. If even there couldn't find survivors, then the situation would look bleak.

The team member who had been to Tang City before came to the front to lead the way, and the group weaved through the streets.

After the supernatural intrusion, almost all the cities' survivors relied on refuges to survive.

Therefore, these houses on the outskirts of the city had been abandoned for a long time, a desolate scene everywhere.

"Woof."

"Woof, woof."

As they walked, a dog's bark suddenly echoed around them.

The sound suddenly echoed all around them, and Lin Yuan and his group looked around to assess the situation.

Lin Yuan looked in the direction of the barking to see if there were evil spirits present.

"A dog?"

"Boss, it's a dog!" Zhang Zhen's voice rang out.

A large golden retriever sprang out from the alley ahead, extremely gentle and not afraid of strangers at all.

Upon seeing the group, it stopped barking and wagged its tail as it trotted over to them.

In the dog-keeping circle, there's a saying that in the eyes of a golden retriever, all people are good and all dogs are bad dogs.

This means that golden retrievers are incredibly friendly towards humans.

"Chase it away!"

"How could a dog suddenly appear here?" Lin Yuan frowned and said cautiously.

On the surface, the golden retriever seemed harmless enough.

It looked like an ordinary dog, with no aura of evil spirits. It even wore a flea collar around its neck.

It was likely a dog abandoned by its owner after the supernatural intrusion.

Moreover, dogs have a much better knack for finding food than humans do, so it's reasonable for this golden retriever to have survived until now.

Besides, the chances of evil spirits eating humans are much higher than eating dogs.

Zhang Zhen stepped forward to chase the dog away, but golden retrievers tend to think you want to befriend them when you try to shoo them off.

The golden retriever was so friendly it started rubbing its head against Zhang Zhen's leg.

As the saying goes, you don't hit a smiling dog.

This dog is so friendly; you just can't hit it.

Zhang Zhen reached out to pet the golden retriever's neck and turned to Lin Yuan, "Boss, this dog has a collar, nothing seems wrong."

As he spoke, Zhang Zhen raised his hand to pet the golden retriever again and suddenly noticed his palm was golden, as if he had rubbed something off onto his hand.

What did Zhang Zhen rub off?

Gold powder!

What was now on his hands was exactly the same as the gold powder rubbed onto the Buddha statues in the Buddhist Temple.

If it were Lin Yuan, he would have immediately reacted.

Unfortunately, Zhang Zhen was really quite thick-headed.

For a moment, he simply saw his palm was yellow but did not realize what it was.

Suddenly, Lin Yuan's pupils contracted abruptly.

Something was amiss!

Lin Yuan finally realized something was wrong. If this golden retriever was abandoned at a supernatural place and survived until now,

even if it managed to survive, its fur should be tangled, even filthy!

After all, while a dog can find its food, it won't bathe or groom itself, will it?

Clearly, this golden retriever was being looked after by someone.

In this world, if someone has the ability to care for a dog when people can't even survive, they must not be just anyone.

Understanding this, Lin Yuan quickly shouted, "Zhang Zhen, be careful, there's something wrong with this dog!"

As Lin Yuan shouted, Zhang Zhen's hand, which was reaching out to pet the golden retriever, froze in mid-air.

Zhang Zhen still trusted Lin Yuan's judgment.

There was something wrong with the golden retriever. His hand was stuck in mid-air, hesitant whether to retreat or not...

Right after Lin Yuan shouted this, the golden retriever's face suddenly revealed a bizarre, human-like smile.

Then, it opened its blood-red mouth and bit towards Zhang Zhen's hand.

In an instant.

Just as the golden retriever was about to bite Zhang Zhen's hand, a sound like a sword cut through the air, and a streak of blood flashed by.

With lightning speed, Lin Yuan hurled Zhong Kui's Demon-Slaying Sword like a spear.

The sword flew out beautifully, piercing through the golden retriever's body and pinning it viciously to the wall.

"Roar."

"Roar, roar!"

The golden retriever, its belly pierced and pinned to the wall, still didn't settle down.

Its body twisted and struggled, baring its teeth and emitting low, menacing growls.

At this point, the friendly golden retriever was gone, replaced with a terrifying, fierce creature.

"Damn it!"

"Who knows what this thing feeds on to get this fierce!" Zhang Zhen cursed furiously at the golden retriever that nearly bit him.

Under the annihilation rules erosion from Zhong Kui's Demon-Slaying Sword, the golden retriever gradually lost its life, obviously now dead.

Lin Yuan retrieved the Demon-Slaying Sword, came over to Zhang Zhen, grabbing his hand to look at the gold powder in his palm, and slowly said, "The owner of this dog is likely the one who kills and turns them into Buddha Lamps."

"The gold powder on your hand is exactly the same as that on the hollowed-out dead bodies."

"Ah!"

Upon hearing Lin Yuan's words, Zhang Zhen was shocked, then furiously rubbed his hands on his clothes and pants.

"This..."

"Disgusting, absolutely disgusting!" Zhang Zhen tried hard to scrub the gold dust clean.

Lin Yuan stood in place deep in thought; when they first appeared here, they heard the sound of dogs barking.

The nature of dogs is that when you enter their territory, they bark and threaten.

So, does this mean this area is the home of the big golden retriever?

If the home is here, then its owner must be here too?

On this thought, Lin Yuan quickly walked towards the alley where the big golden retriever appeared.

The others didn't understand, but seeing Lin Yuan heading towards the alley, they quickly followed.

The alley was full of self-built houses with courtyards, each with tightly shut doors, looking abandoned for a long time.

"Zhang Zhen, fly up and check which house shows signs of life around," Lin Yuan instructed.

Zhang Zhen could fly, so he could check the fastest way.

Every second counts now, or the owner of the big golden retriever might escape at any time.

Zhang Zhen didn't hesitate, spreading his wings and soaring. Once in the sky, he fixed his gaze and quickly spotted the problematic courtyard.

"Boss, someone is in the seventh house on the right!"

"There's also a high furnace in the yard, and it's still burning," Zhang Zhen reported as he descended from the sky.

Upon hearing Zhang Zhen's words, Lin Yuan and the others immediately rushed to the target, their speed was unimaginable.

As soon as they approached the courtyard, they were hit by an overwhelming stench.

The smell was even more overpowering than a cesspool of old manure.

"Bang!"

Zhang Zhen, impulsive by nature, kicked open the door without a second thought.

Entering the courtyard, the first thing they saw was a large vat.

This vat resembled the clay vats used to store water in rural areas many years ago, before tap water was widely available.

The nauseating stench came from this vat.

Young people are curious.

Zhang Zhen was the first to approach, craning his head to look into the vat.

He wanted to see what was in there that smelled so overwhelming.

Even if it were a vat full of excrement, the smell shouldn't be this intense, right?

Zhang Zhen peered inside...

"Ugh!"

"Ugh! Ugh!"

He started retching immediately; he had vomited twice in one day, his bile nearly brought up.

With Zhang Zhen's precedent, everyone kept their distance and carefully peeked into the vat.

Just one glance was enough to almost make Lin Yuan gag.

It was so damn disgusting.

The vat was full of hearts, livers, spleens, lungs, intestines, brains, kidneys...

In short, the vat was filled entirely with human organs.

Previously, they found corpses made into Buddha lamps, hollowed out, with the organs missing.

Now, they've found those corpses' organs.

These organs had clearly been in the vat for a long time, fermenting, mixed with blood plasma, "bubbling and bubbling".

Beside the large vat, there was a stainless steel dog bowl.

It's evident what that big golden retriever ate on a daily basis.

"Search for any clues!" Lin Yuan instructed.

Since entering, Lin Yuan hadn't sensed any presence or aura of evil spirits here.

It seemed the owner of the big golden retriever had fled before they arrived.

Now, they could only hope to find some clues here.

The small yard wasn't large, making it easy to search.

The furnace in the courtyard still burning, suggesting gold was recently smelted.

The furnace fire still burning, and the container still containing bubbling molten gold.

Aside from that, they found no other clues.

Soon, Lin Yuan and others discovered a more horrifying scene in the meditation room.

One of the rooms had been converted into a subterranean furnace, atop which was a large pot about three meters in diameter.

A roaring flame burned beneath the pot, which was filled with molten gold.

A monk sat cross-legged within the pot, hands clasped in prayer, appearing exceedingly devout.

Under the boiling flames, the pot full of gold seemed to have gained life, continuously spreading over his body.

Even cycling through his seven orifices.

Was this the legendary practice of fire refining?

Fire refining oneself?

Turning oneself into a living Golden Buddha?

For a moment, Lin Yuan found it terrifying.

Who are these people?

Hollowing people to create Buddha lamps and arranging evil arrays was something Lin Yuan could still accept.

After all, it was about being ruthless to others.

But refining oneself in the flames was something Lin Yuan couldn't quite stomach.

This is truly being ruthless!

After all, being ruthless to others and to oneself are two different matters.