Farmhouse 831

Chapter 831: Reaching the Summit

Gu Youyou's face looked rather pale. On her side, a few monkeys rushed towards them, and by accident, one scratched a gash in her arm, causing beads of blood to immediately appear.

The sensation was both cool and painful, with a tingling comfort that made it quite bizarre.

This feeling should have been a sign of poisoning, yet it wasn't entirely poison.

Gu Youyou's expression grew stern as the monkey that had scratched her appeared even stranger.

Staring at its own claws in shock, moments later, it started hopping around, chattering and calling out to the other monkeys.

The other monkeys also stopped, cocking their heads as they looked at Gu Youyou.

Seeing this, all three of them were stunned.

What were these monkeys doing?

After a while, the monkeys continuously chirped, and then suddenly dispersed in all directions.

The monkeys moved quickly and soon vanished without a trace.

If it weren't for the blood droplets hanging from the rocks and vegetation, it would have seemed as though the monkeys had never been there.

"Why did they run off?" Searcy asked curiously.

She had bled too, with a scratch even on her face, marring her beautiful features.

For a woman, a facial injury was serious, yet she seemed totally unaware.

"I don’t know!" Gu Youyou was still somewhat bewildered.

It seemed she had thought of something; something flashed through her mind but she couldn’t grasp it.

"We should not stay here long, let’s head up first."

All three of them had injuries to different extents and got up slower than before, taking almost another hour to reach the mountain’s peak.

The summit looked as if its top had been sliced off, completely flat like a knife had cut it.

Yet in the middle of this flat peak, there was a seemingly bottomless hole.

Standing on that summit, whether looking into the hole or out at the deep blue sea, caused dizziness.

Having heard that the summit had been smashed into the mountain’s belly, Gu Youyou was prepared mentally, but she hadn’t expected the cavern in the mountain belly to be so deep.

The entire mountain’s interior was like a deep pit, with rocks being the most abundant feature, amid which grew a scarce amount of vegetation.

They sat down on the flat top of the mountain and treated the wounds.

As Aunt Gu had mentioned the presence of wild beasts in the mountain, she had prepared lots of emergency medicine in advance.

The injuries on Gu Youyou and Jin Ziyuan were managed and became no big deal, but Searcy, unusually somber, said, "This is a severe cold poison. Even my constitution can’t suppress its toxicity."

Gu Youyou and Jin Ziyuan looked at each other with shock on their faces.

They didn’t feel the severe cold poison in the parts injured by the monkeys.

Could it be because they both are medicine people?

"How do you feel?" Gu Youyou asked, already reaching for Searcy’s wrist.

Searcy pushed Gu Youyou’s hand away, saying, "Don’t worry, it’s just a bit troublesome, but I know what I’m doing. When it comes to poison, I’m an expert."

Given that she herself had said it wasn’t serious, her condition must be okay.

She looked at Gu Youyou and Jin Ziyuan in surprise and asked, "Are you two alright?" Focusing on their wounds, she thought given their inferior constitutions, their condition should be more serious. But seeing their appearance, it didn’t feel like there was anything wrong.

Gu Youyou glanced at Jin Ziyuan, then turned to Searcy and said, "Both of us have had cold poison before. It seems that the poison on the monkey’s claws is of the same kind as the cold poison in our bodies, and we absorbed it."

Chapter 832: The Blue Grass

"This is weird," the three of them felt something was amiss, but none spoke further; instead, they hurried to attend to their wounds.

Once they had dealt with their injuries and rested a while to regain their strength, they all walked over to the edge of the vast pit.

Jin Ziyuan glanced down into its depths, a pitch-black abyss seemingly without end.

"I'll go down and take a look. Wait here for me," he said.

Gu Youyou shook her head, "We won't know until we see for ourselves, I must go." Then, turning to Searcy, she added, "Maybe you should stay up here with the luggage, and we'll go down."

However, Searcy protested, "How can that be? It was so hard to climb up here; would it not be a waste if I didn't go down to have a look?"

The back-and-forth went on until none of them was willing to stay up top, ultimately deciding to descend together.

Gu Youyou had prepared a full set of climbing equipment in advance; she took everything out of her backpack, which mostly contained ropes, while Jin Ziyuan's pack was entirely filled with ropes.

"We need to prepare first; the rocks in this cave might not be stable, and it may not be easy to descend," she said.

After tying knots in the ropes, she remarked, "Let's get some sturdy branches, about as thick as a forearm and this long."

Busy at work, the three of them cut down branches, which Gu Youyou then tied to the ropes, creating an extended ladder leading downward.

Jin Ziyuan smiled, "This ladder should work fine for you, but be careful; this pit is bottomless, and it could be dangerous."

"Don't worry, we'll tie ourselves to ropes."

Seeing that they had secured safety ropes around their waists, Jin Ziyuan nodded and said no more.

He didn't need Gu Youyou's ropes and simply leaped down along the cliff face.

Gu Youyou and Searcy couldn’t help but admire him; it was a pity that such agility was not something they could envy into acquisition.

"If I had known I would be cast out by the Lu family and become a wanderer, I should have gone to the military camp for training when I was younger," Searcy lamented.

"Hey, come down quickly; there are many special plants here!"

Below, within view, Jin Ziyuan was already calling out to them.

Gu Youyou descended the ladder first, followed closely by Searcy.

Reaching the level Jin Ziyuan was on, Gu Youyou exclaimed in surprise.

These beautiful plants were strikingly similar to the Youying Grass.

Only they were not as blue or as purely intense.

"What is this grass?"

Full of curiosity, Searcy plucked one and sniffed it close to his nose.

At that moment, Gu Youyou’s emotions were complex.

She had a feeling that the secret they had long pondered over might unravel here.

"Let’s just put them in the backpack for now; we can research them slowly once we get back," she suggested.

The grasses in the stone crevices were not only those that resembled Youying Grass but other varieties as well. Some, even common grasses that grow in deep rock fissures, yet they differed from those on the outside, their leaves less green and more blue. The deeper they ventured, the more intense the blue became.

Later on, they were even bluer than the Youying Grass.

Each of them sensed the extraordinary nature of this place, and their expressions turned solemn.

Jin Ziyuan took the lead in scouting ahead, with Gu Youyou and Searcy following behind, occasionally picking some unique flora and stowing them in their backpacks.

The cave began to narrow like an inverted funnel, and their prepared ladder had reached its end, so they had no choice but to untie the ropes around them and lower another rope to continue their descent.

Chapter 833: The Answer Is Right Here

Such terrain was only accessible to Jin Ziyuan, with Gu Youyou and Searcy unable to descend.

For all three of them to reach the bottom, he went down first to scout the area and quickly arrived at the base of the funnel.

After confirming there was no danger, he kindled a fire pit at the bottom.

With the fire pit for illumination, Gu Youyou and Searcy could see him and made out the terrain around the fire.

Jin Ziyuan soon climbed back up and said to them, "I'll take you both down."

Gu Youyou nodded, and Jin Ziyuan hooked around her waist, quickly descending with her using the long rope and his qinggong.

Then he went back up to fetch Searcy.

The deep pit had the shape of an hourglass, narrow in the middle and wide at both ends, oddly formed by a fallen meteorite.

At the bottom was an irregular circle, more than thirty paces in diameter, indeed not small; it was even larger than the pit’s mouth.

It was bald and smooth. Jin Ziyuan lit a torch, and they quickly examined the area.

The plants that grew here, unlike those above the funnel, all had red leaves that deepened in color further down.

The fleeting answer that had brushed her mind earlier suddenly became clear to Gu Youyou.

She exclaimed in surprise, "This is where the Zhuzhao and Youying Pearls come from, so the things here... they’ve been influenced by them to become like this."

Jin Ziyuan nodded and said, "Zhuzhao is yang, and Youying is yin. It should be yang at the top and yin at the bottom, but this funnel is the opposite; it has become yin above and yang below."

Gu Youyou continued, "That’s why the yang energy here doesn’t leak out, which is why the monkeys on the cliff had such severe yin energy."

Searcy also understood and said, "So, the cold poison afflicting you is related to the yin and yang energies here?"

Gu Youyou nodded, saying, "Moreover... for a pit this deep, the bottom should be filled with water, but it’s very dry here, not a drop of water. But with the amount of rainy weather around these seas, it’s impossible there’s no rain."

Jin Ziyuan also nodded and added, "Yeah, there was a heavy rain the night before last, the soil outside the mountain is soft and obviously wet. With yin outside and yang inside, when the rain falls, it’s evaporated by the yang energy here. Don’t you all feel very hot?"

Neither Jin Ziyuan nor Gu Youyou usually felt heat, but now, they did find it quite warm here.

And Searcy, being a normal person, should have felt overly hot, but because she had just been afflicted by the cold poison, she only felt the cold poison evaporating from her body, which was quite a relief.

She said, "I hope the monkey's cold poison lasts a little longer. Once the cold poison in my body is gone, I fear I'll suffer."

The scene before her amazed Gu Youyou.

After observing for a while longer, Gu Youyou said, "Perhaps uncovering the secret of this place will be the key to neutralizing the Youying Grass poison. If the Youying Grass loses its effect, the other cold poisons won't be a problem."

"If that's the case, let's quickly search for the secret here. Uproot some of every plant; it may be useful."

Each of them took a torch and began to work separately, which would be faster.

...

Gu Youyou and the others had already descended to the lower layer of the deep pit, while Jin Zijin's party also reached the island.

Selecting several skilled individuals to accompany them, it was only upon seeing the monkey corpses at the base of the mountain that they frowned.

"These monkeys look so peculiar, with fierce faces. I've never seen fur like this before," Xiao Jinyan commented.

Chapter 834: Do You Dare to Step Up?

During the conversation, Jin Zijin had already bent down to examine the bodies of the monkeys.

A local sailor spoke up, "When I first joined the navy, I came to this island once. Out of curiosity, I and a few comrades planned to climb the mountain, but we encountered these monkeys halfway up.

A few of my comrades were knocked off the cliff by the monkeys and fell to their deaths, and several others were injured by the monkeys. Those wounds wouldn't heal and they froze to death. I was lucky to escape."

"Froze to death?" Xiao Jinyan grasped this key point, "How did they freeze to death?"

The sailor explained, "Indeed, they froze to death. These monkeys have poison on their claws, the poisoned person's wounds gradually get frostbites, and once the poison enters the body, the whole body freezes and then they die."

Gui Yunxi, who had been forcibly brought here as a coachman, turned pale with fright and hurriedly said, "Officials, I'm just a coachman. I can't climb such a high mountain. Please spare me, I'll wait for you on the ship."

Xiao Jinyan chuckled, patted Gui Yunxi's shoulder, and whispered, "Are you afraid?"

Gui Yunxi nodded hastily. He was just a common man, honestly earning a little money by driving; who had he provoked to deserve this?

"You have to go though, don't forget the woman who poisoned you has already gone up. She used to be a proper young lady from a good family, they can climb up, and you, a fully able-bodied man, dare not? If that's the case, then don't bother getting the antidote, just jump into the sea and drown yourself, it would be less of an embarrassment for men."

Ever since Gui Yunxi complained to these officials about how Searcy had been poisoning him along the journey and coercing him to drive incessantly, Xiao Jinyan had scorned him immensely.

A grown man being bullied by a young lady like this, how pathetic.

"A woman?" Gui Yunxi was utterly shocked.

He thought, "Could the woman he’s talking about be Searcy?"

So fierce, how could she be a woman?

Xiao Jinyan scoffed and stopped paying attention to him, instead, squatting down to inspect the monkey corpses with Jin Zijin.

"Cousin, can you tell anything?"

Jin Zijin looked solemn, "The cold is intense; the blood is much colder than that of normal corpses."

Xiao Jinyan was slightly startled and reached out to touch the blood.

"Don’t touch!" Jin Zijin grabbed his hand, "The blood is also poisonous."

"Can’t touch it?" Xiao Jinyan asked in surprise.

Jin Zijin gently shook his head, saying, "If there are no wounds on your body, it won’t be deadly, but it’s best not to make contact since it’s poisonous."

"Then why did you touch it?"

"My physique is different, I’m not afraid of the poison."

Xiao Jinyan was speechless.

The marines, seeing the bodies scattered all around, were intimidated, yet they couldn’t speak up in front of Jin Zijin and Xiao Jinyan.

They had been told by the Great General to obey their commands during the sea voyage. They were afraid to climb the mountain, but if Jin Zijin and Xiao Jinyan insisted on going up, what could they do?

Someone gently nudged the sailor who had spoken boldly before, having witnessed how terrible those monkeys could be, he once again summoned his courage to speak.

"Generals, the monkeys don’t come down below halfway up the mountain. We are safe at the bottom, but going up there..."

Xiao Jinyan laughed, "That’s exactly where we want to go."

Everyone’s bodies jerked sharply.

"But no one has ever dared to go up, the fisherman who rest on this island only ever rest at the base, never daring to climb the mountain."

Chapter 835: They Have Also Arrived

"We are not fishermen," Xiao Jinyan continued with his sardonic smile.

The others had no choice; they were soldiers and naturally understood the principle that military orders must not be disobeyed.

Since Xiao Jinyan insisted, they could only bite the bullet and go.

They only hoped that should they die, their families would be given more Silver in compensation.

Xiao Jinyan was also a leader who knew how to win hearts. Now that they were preparing to climb the mountain, he declared, "All soldiers, heed my command. Follow me up the mountain. Those who return alive will be rewarded a thousand taels of Silver; those who unfortunately perish will be rewarded two thousand taels, ensuring their families need not worry about food and clothing. I do not like to threaten others. Those willing to climb with me, come; those unwilling, may return to the ship to wait."

A thousand taels, two thousand taels? Such amounts were more than they could ever earn in a lifetime as marines. Who wouldn't take the offer? Everyone jostled to take part. Moments ago, no one had been willing, but now not a single person wanted to leave.

Even Gui Yunxi, who had been dazedly intent on escaping, began to climb up with ropes tied around her.

Xiao Jinyan laughed and said, "That's more like it. Before us, three people have already ascended, among them two weaklings and two delicate young ladies. You cannot let them outdo you."

The crowd: "..."

How confusing did that sound? Three people, two weaklings, two delicate young ladies?

Several marines were motivated by the Silver and their pride, but Gui Yunxi was there to see with her own eyes if that malevolent healer was indeed a woman, as Xiao Jinyan had claimed.

Recalling the sight of the bellyband she saw that night, she felt that it was very likely Xiao Jinyan was telling the truth.

The mountain was not a perpendicular climb but was inclined at an angle, and there were plenty of rocks and trees to grab onto. In fact, for these agile marines, climbing such a mountain was not difficult, and they were much faster than Gu Youyou and her companions.

As they had predicted, they encountered a troop of monkeys halfway up the mountain.

The monkeys, having gathered here not long ago, arrived particularly quickly and soon surrounded them.

Gui Yunxi, who did not know martial arts, was in the center, while the others formed a circle, cutting down the monkeys that charged at them from all sides.

However, after a while, the monkeys seemed to increase rather than decrease, and that's when they started to feel something was wrong.

The monkeys weren't formidable; the problem was their sheer number.

Continuing like this was no solution; they would be exhausted to death, considering human energy is finite.

"Cousin, we need to find a quick solution. There is still about half an hour's journey to the top, but the number of monkeys is growing," Gui Yunxi announced.

Jin Zijin naturally understood, furrowing his brow deeply.

Looking at these monkeys, severely affected by the chill, he seemed to have guessed something.

So formidable—how could Jin Ziyuan not know about his own abilities? He managed to get up there with two defenseless women, how could it be just on his own strength?

He had pretty much figured out the problem.

Therefore, he made a significant decision.

He retracted the red dagger in his hand and moved it close to his arm. With a hiss, he sliced a cut on his arm.

The hot and bright red blood sprayed out, startling Xiao Jinyan.

"Cousin, what are you doing?" he exclaimed.

Jin Zijin replied, "We cannot set fire to the mountain, so I must use my blood."

The crowd: "..." Why on earth is his blood so powerful?

Chapter 836: Something is Coming from Inside the Cave

Everyone had not expected that Jin Zijin's blood was truly magical and unbelievable. When his blood sprayed out, the monkeys that were splashed with the blood jumped high as if they had encountered the most terrifying thing in the world. They stared at the blood in horror and screamed as they ran away.

The other monkeys also slowed down their movements.

Jin Zijin shouted loudly, "Quick, climb up."

Taking advantage of this opportunity, they climbed several meters up.

But as soon as the monkeys snapped out of their daze, they charged up again.

This time, Jin Zijin didn't directly sprinkle the blood from his hand but stuck it onto a piece of yellow paper and quickly drew something on it.

Moments later, a talisman paper was completed.

He slashed the talisman paper with a red dagger, igniting fierce flames, and using his Inner Strength, pushed the burning talisman paper forward, making the monkeys on the path quickly move aside.

Xiao Jinyan exclaimed in surprise, "Cousin, it is said that the Dao Sect's techniques are extremely profound, and today I have really seen it."

Jin Zijin replied indifferently, "What's profound is not the Dao Family's technique, but these monkeys and this dagger."

"Dagger?"

"This dagger is forged from the Celestial Stone and has its unique quirks."

"And your blood?"

"I've told you, my blood is special!"

Xiao Jinyan: "..."

...

On Gu Youyou's side, they had collected various types of plants, filling a backpack to the brim.

The group was also tired and sat down in the middle of the cave, starting a fire.

It wasn't for warmth, but for light.

Because the cave was uniquely situated, except for a beam of sunlight that could shine through at noon, it was pitch black inside.

After the sun moved westward, no sunlight could enter, and the inside of the cave became eerily dark.

The cold poison in Searcy's body was almost gone, and her facial wounds had healed a lot, gradually turning into ordinary scratches.

Gu Youyou had applied some medicine to her face to prevent scarring.

Searcy fanned herself with her hand and complained, "It's getting hotter and hotter; no good, I need to take some cooling medicine."

After taking the medicine, she asked, "When are we going up? It seems there isn’t much else here."

Gu Youyou checked the plants they had pulled out from the backpack and, to be honest, felt somewhat disappointed.

She said, "Let’s rest a bit longer, then we’ll go up; climbing up is going to require a lot of effort."

With that said, she took out the prepared beef jerky and ginseng slices to share with everyone.

Jin Ziyuan ate unreservedly, while Searcy shook her head, "If I eat any more, I’ll get mouth sores, I’ll endure."

Gu Youyou smiled and gave her some water.

But just then, strange noises began emanating from the walls around them, rustling, dense, as if many small things were about to come out.

The noise grew louder,

and it was so disconcerting that not only Gu Youyou and Jin Ziyuan, who had good hearing, but even Searcy, who had ordinary hearing, could hear it very clearly.

"There is something around us."

Jin Ziyuan gripped his short sword.

Gu Youyou and Searcy readied their daggers used for chopping branches.

The noise grew louder, and soon, the sound of stones cracking the soil could be heard.

"They’re about to come out," Searcy shouted, grabbing a bag of poison powder.

The poison she carried was about to be used; hopefully, in this confined space, she wouldn’t end up poisoning herself.

"Let’s wait and see first," Gu Youyou said, grabbing her hand.

"I have the antidote, what’s there to be afraid of?" Searcy confidently said.

Chapter 837: The Mouse

After she finished speaking, she handed three pills to Gu Youyou and Jin Ziyuan.

"Here they come!" Jin Ziyuan swallowed the pill and spoke in a deep voice.

The three of them looked intently and saw a rat crawling out of the broken crack in the rocks.

The rat was covered in crimson fur, and it was somewhat larger than an ordinary rat.

Searcy’s eyes gleamed as she said, "Such a rat would be much more interesting to study than the ones we raise at home."

A few such rats would be manageable, but there were so many of them, and they seemed to be... wanting to eat people.

Before long, even more rats emerged, each with crimson fur, swarming towards Gu Youyou and her companions from holes all around.

Faced with such a hair-raising sight, Gu Youyou screamed in fright and held her head.

Jin Ziyuan pulled her to his side, his body became light, and he swung up onto a rope hanging in mid-air.

Gu Youyou breathed a sigh of relief, then cried out in shock, "Searcy is still down there!"

Searcy, with a pack of poison in her hand, stared dumbfounded at the red rats. Their target seemed not to be them, but the fire they had kindled.

The rat army circled around Searcy and rushed straight for the flames.

Unfortunately, with the way they threw themselves at it, the fire was quickly extinguished.

Without the fire, the rats became restless and furiously agitated.

With rats chaotically swarming everywhere, they finally began attacking Searcy, who was still standing.

Searcy screamed as she scattered a bag of poison powder on the ground.

Numerous rats began to move slowly, soon foaming at the mouth as they struggled before dying motionless.

Gu Youyou inwardly praised, "Impressive."

But killing those few rats didn’t make much of a difference, as more and more poured out.

They seemed disciplined, not causing any direct harm to Searcy, but instead lifted her up and ran towards the cave’s edge.

Gu Youyou had seen an army of ants carrying massive amounts of food. Now, the rats carrying Searcy resembled ants transporting food.

This thought gave Gu Youyou a fright. She clung tightly to the rope and urged Jin Ziyuan, "Hurry, go save her."

She had no idea where these rats were taking her.

It was way too frightening, and even the usually brave Searcy felt fear for the first time.

When Madam Lu had threatened to make her life worse than death, even using torture, she hadn't felt such fear.

Jin Ziyuan was initially indifferent to the life or death of others, but seeing the determination in Gu Youyou's eyes, and her anxious look as if she would jump down herself if he did not, he finally decided to go.

"Be careful, hold on."

He wasn't sure how long Gu Youyou could hang on to the rope by herself, but he would come back as quickly as he could.

Once he landed, the rest of the rats came at him, trying to carry him away in the same manner.

To the rats, Jin Ziyuan was a tougher prey; since they couldn't bring him down, they climbed up his legs, some even burrowed into his pants and bit him.

It wasn't painful, just a bit numb.

Jin Ziyuan's expression grew stern as he swung his short sword, ceaselessly slashing at the rats climbing up on him.

The corpses of rats piled up at his feet, but still more kept emerging from the crevices.

He tried to use his Qinggong to reach Searcy, but found his legs were incredibly numb and weak. He cursed inwardly, "Damn it, these rats are poisonous," and after being bitten, he could no longer muster his Qinggong.

Chapter 838: Jin Zijin Also Descended

Gu Youyou was hanging onto the rope and could barely hold on any longer when she saw Jin Ziyuan below, merely swinging his short sword to kill the rats but not moving an inch.

Desperate, she shouted loudly, "Jin Ziyuan, hurry, Searcy's voice is getting closer!"

Searcy shouted back through the darkness, "The rats are poisonous, I can't stand up, you all just run while you have the chance."

But Jin Ziyuan could no longer jump up to catch the rope. He did think about running, but he couldn't escape.

Gu Youyou turned pale when she heard this. Just perfect, she had also reached her limit.

Her hand let go of the rope, and she fell straight down from above.

The rats, seeing another person join the fray, swarmed toward her in an instant.

...

Thanks to Jin Zijin's burning blood charm leading the way, they were finally safe on the mountaintop.

Not a single person was missing, and everyone's face showed a glimmer of joy.

Especially Gui Yunxi, who felt like he had a narrow escape from disaster.

It astonished him that a woman had also gone through such an ordeal.

It’s just that the monkeys had also followed them to the mountaintop, but since there was someone among them that the monkeys feared, they didn’t dare get any closer. Still, they couldn’t bear to leave and just followed from a distance.

Jin Zijin and his companions watched the monkeys, which could pounce at any moment, while anxiously retreating toward the huge pit on the mountaintop.

Beside the giant pit, they found the rope ladder left by Gu Youyou and the others.

Xiao Jinyan exclaimed, "They’ve already gone down."

Right then, a woman’s scream echoed from the bottomless depths of the mountain.

The voice was familiar—it was Gu Youyou’s. Jin Zijin recognized it instantly.

His face turned pale, and without a word, he leaped down into the abyss.

Xiao Jinyan’s expression was grave as he said, "There could be even greater dangers below. I won’t force you to come down. What I said before still stands. If I can’t make it out alive, you can take this to the Xiao Family to collect silver."

With that, he took off the jade pendant that represented his identity from his waist.

To his surprise, everyone shook their heads and said, "No, we’re going down too."

"Yeah, after all the trouble of getting up here, it doesn’t make sense not to go down."

"That’s right, I’ve been really curious about Fusang Island."

"Yes, General Xiao, better to go down quickly. People down there are in danger."

They quickly descended the ladder, these were all skilled individuals, only Gui Yunxi followed tremulously at the back, his scalp tingling more and more the further down he went.

Especially when he reached the lower half of the funnel where it was just one straight rope, he took a long time to decide, then finally gritted his teeth and went down.

...

Jin Ziyuan came down, killing a pile of rats, the only one who wasn't paralyzed.

The others who came down after him found that two had already been carried off by the rats, heading in the same direction, they guessed that Gu Youyou and her two companions must have been taken there too.

But now there was no sign of Gu Youyou and the others, just a ground full of rats.

In the darkness, only the red silhouette of Chixiao moved through the air. When Jin Ziyuan reached the rock wall, he struck the stone, and instantly a trail of fire ignited.

The cave was illuminated, and those giant crimson rats froze in place, all of them stopping to stare at the flame on the rock wall.

Then, like they had been injected with chicken blood, the rats abandoned their task of carrying food and suddenly pounced toward the burning rock.

Chapter 839: Corpse Dumping Ground

These rocks were particularly unusual, for even when set ablaze by Jin Zijin's Chixiao, they could not be extinguished.

The rats were even more peculiar; their fur caught fire rapidly, fully engulfing their bodies as they let out piercing squeals.

Yet, even so, they dashed towards the flames like moths to a flame, uncaring even as they burned to ash.

Xiao Jinyan and the others were so scared their teeth chattered, while Gui Yunxi, who was the last to descend, was still dangling in midair.

Seeing such a horrifying scene, his hand slipped, and he fell straight down.

"What... what's going on?" Xiao Jinyan asked through clenched teeth.

After a while, Jin Zijin noticed a large hole about the height of a person split open in a nearby mountain wall, from which an unending stream of crimson rats poured out and continually threw themselves into the fire.

He stared for a moment, then said, "We need to leave here quickly, this fire won't last long."

With that, he scratched a few more times on several rocks streaked with dark red veins, and the flames blazed up once again.

...

Gu Youyou and the others were carried into a cave by the rats, never expecting to find a completely different world inside.

A massive underground cave emitted a red glow from its center.

The environment here was comfortably cool, reminiscent of early spring in March.

Unexpectedly, after dropping them into the nest, the rats swarmed out and left.

The rats' poison temporarily affected certain central nerves in the humans, rendering Gu Youyou and the others immobile in the rat nest.

Among the three, Searcy, who had the highest resistance to the poison, recovered first. As the rats retreated, it didn't take long before she could move.

She sat up, her face deathly pale, feeling extremely stifled, and cursed, "Once I get out, I'll burn down this cave."

Gu Youyou turned her head and said, "That's if we can even get out alive. Quick, get the antidote pills from the backpack, it's unbearable."

After swallowing the pills and without any new toxins being injected by the rats, they were soon able to move, albeit clumsily.

There was a natural large hole in the cave, from which the red light emanated.

The three made their way to it, only to be stunned by the sight inside.

"Flame Pool?" Jin Ziyuan exclaimed. "There's actually a Flame Pool here."

Gu Youyou was also shocked; this large hole emitting red light was indeed the Flame Pool.

The water was red, and on its surface bloomed numerous lotus flowers, which were much redder and more vibrant than those in the Flame Pool at the Imperial Palace.

Searcy bent down and hooked something strange from the pool.

They all jumped as she lifted it out of the water.

It wasn't something ordinary, but rather the skeleton of a monkey.

"There are so many skeletons here!" Searcy exclaimed loudly.

Continuing to fish in the Flame Pool, they found it was filled with skeletons of various animals, mostly monkeys.

It turns out this place was a dumping ground; perhaps these animals accidentally fell into this deep pit and all ended up as food for the rats, accumulating over time into a full pool.

The sight was so nauseating that it made one want to vomit. Jin Ziyuan pulled Gu Youyou back and said, "Let’s first see if there’s any way out."

Gu Youyou was not just feeling nauseous; she actually started throwing up, her stomach churning unbearably.

Holding a monkey skeleton, Searcy pursed her lips, "I thought you wouldn’t be afraid of these things; I didn’t expect it to be this severe."

Chapter 840: The Mysterious Cave

Jin Ziyuan frowned and coldly said to her, "Get rid of it quickly, do you think everyone is like you?"

Searcy snorted and threw the skeleton into the Flame Pool.

Gu Youyou vomited relentlessly, feeling like there was nothing left in her stomach to throw up, but the discomfort was unbearable.

Jin Ziyuan sensed something was not right and anxiously said, "How are you? Do you want some Qingshui?"

Gu Youyou waved him off, saying, "No, it’s not that I’m disgusted with these things."

She had seen human skeletons in the ancient tomb and had not been so afraid, how could she be frightened by the bones of animals.

The reason she was vomiting was probably due to some other cause.

Not only did she feel nauseous enough to vomit, but there seemed to be something violently crashing inside her stomach, causing her so much pain that tears almost came out.

Searcy noticed her discomfort and quickly felt her pulse.

"What's wrong?" Jin Ziyuan asked anxiously.

Searcy shook his head, his expression grave, and said, "I don't know."

Meanwhile, Jin Zijin had finally killed a large number of rats to find his way into this cave.

His arrival wasn't as easy as the three, including Gu Youyou, who were carried in while lying down; Jin Zijin had walked in by himself.

The half-human-tall deep cave strained his waist so much that by the time he got in, he could barely straighten up.

The others, having been bitten by the rats and slightly poisoned, had more difficulty moving and remained outside to continue killing the rats.

Once Jin Zijin emerged from the rodent-infested cave, he saw the scene.

Gu Youyou was non-stop vomiting, while Jin Ziyuan stood beside her, steadying her and gently patting her back.

A surge of fury rose within him, and with a few leaps, he was beside Gu Youyou, pushing Jin Ziyuan away and staring at him with a forbidding gaze.

"You..."

He had only uttered a single word when a churning sensation in his stomach stopped the rest of his words in their tracks.

The next moment, he began to vomit madly just like Gu Youyou.

Something in his stomach seemed to be violently impacting him, causing not just discomfort but pain that made him grimace.

His symptoms were the same as Gu Youyou's, and he couldn't help but think she must be feeling just as miserable and in pain.

"Can you hold on?"

Seeing his condition, Gu Youyou was both shocked and pleased, but in the end, she rolled her eyes at him.

Thinking to herself: You're in the same state, yet you're asking if I can hold on.

"What in the world is happening to you two?"

Seeing them both in such a state, it was clear it was not due to being disgusted by the corpses in the pool.

Gu Youyou felt her stomach empty as something moved from the bottom up, reaching her esophagus, then her mouth; as she opened her mouth, that something shot out, and instantly, the feeling of nausea disappeared.

The object continued to fly up, hovering above the lotus pond, followed by a beam of ethereal blue light shining down from above the pond, overpowering the red glow.

The group watched in shock at the scene unfolding before them.

Looking up, they saw an upside-down pool of deep blue directly above the lotus pond, and the thumb-sized blue pearl Gu Youyou had just vomited was hovering and spinning in the center of that inverted circular space.

The surrounding stone walls were not ordinary stones; special runes rotated on them, like the veins of the stones.

The ancients among them thought it was a mystical Fairy's abode, only Gu Youyou, who had the soul of a modern, felt like she was watching a sci-fi movie.

Those rotating rune-veins traced the vastness of the universe, with the blue pearl representing an enchanting planet, around which the cosmos revolved in orderly motion.