

## King Hall 481

Chapter 481: The Angel Appears!

"So, is the 'Omniscient' prediction actually true?!"

Xiang Mantang stood upon the roaring waves, looking at the uncertain Barlow and Leon, beginning to recall the old man's warning.

"It's possible that the old man deceived me, but why did he want me to come here to find the Garden of Eden in the first place? And why did he change his mind about me coming?"

"Could his prediction of the future be true?"

Xiang Mantang pondered, finding it difficult to deduce which faction might be trying to deceive him.

Or were they plotting against him together?

"Enough, even if 'Omniscient' did not deceive me, their predictions may not be accurate. After all, the matter with the Old Dragon King is a lesson from the past!"

"Even if a great terror arises because of me, I am willing to bear the sin to save my brother. No matter the outcome, I shall shoulder all the karma!"

Xiang Mantang was after all a mortal, how could he see through what sort of scheme lay between 'Omniscient' and Paradise Lost that involved him?!

After not being able to think it through, he finally made a decision, no longer to ponder it further. He simply cut off all the various speculations in his mind, and moved forward resolutely!

Afterward, Xiang Mantang's expression became serene, his eyes glittered with sharp light, now devoid of the suspicion, doubt, probing, and uncertainty he had when conversing with Barlow.

"Let's go!"

Xiang Mantang moved his legs, striding swiftly across the tumultuous waves.

And Barlow and Leon, frightened to a pallid complexion, involuntarily followed his lead, their legs moving as if pulled by strings, keeping close to Xiang Mantang.

Xiang Mantang, leading the two of them, ran constantly through the lost river.

Half a day went by.

Or perhaps longer.

At the end of the river, there finally appeared a world teeming with flowers and grass, where butterflies danced and bees flew.

"This... This is the Garden of Eden!"

"We have finally found the lost Garden of Eden!"

Barlow and Leon, looking at the world before them, and standing atop the waves, were unable to contain their excitement, hugging each other and jumping for joy on the crest of the waves.

Xiang Mantang, however, frowned slightly, not feeling as elated as they were.

After all, according to the scriptures, the Garden of Eden should have four rivers; the first one should have gold, the second one pearls and carnelian, while the third and fourth are the two rivers of the outer world, but without any particular mention of possessions.

Yet now, as he followed the river, running into the world suspected to be the Garden of Eden, he saw neither gold, pearls, nor carnelian...

Xiang Mantang glanced at the excitedly dancing Barlow and Leon and silently shook his head, "Never mind, it's useless to think too much. After all, we have reached this place; let's take it one step at a time."

With vigilance, Xiang Mantang took Barlow and Leon and stood in this lost beautiful world.

Smelling the fresh scent of earth and flowers in the air, Barlow and Leon couldn't help but spread their arms wide, as if embracing the world.

While Xiang Mantang remained on guard.

After all, if this really was the lost Garden of Eden, according to the scriptures, an Archangel guarded this place!

"Thump!"

At that moment, a strange noise came.

Xiang Mantang immediately turned his head alertly.

It was Barlow and Leon, who had collapsed on the ground like drunkards, their faces flushed, bodies convulsing uncontrollably, and foam beginning to emerge from their mouths.

"Is there poison in the air?!"

Xiang Mantang instantly judged that there was an odorless, colorless poison in the air causing the two of them to suffer.

Quickly, he sealed his own respiratory tract, no longer breathing the air of this place.

Just as he was about to remove his mask, his action suddenly paused.

Could their affliction be because they were not wearing this mysterious mask?

And not because the air was poisonous?

Xiang Mantang held his right hand level in mid-air, struggling with hesitation, unable to reach a conclusion.

Amidst his indecision, Barlow and Leon stopped convulsing, completely expired.

In less than a moment, their complexions turned from red to white, then to a purplish black.

It truly seemed as though they had died from being poisoned.

"Ah, what a pity, to die just like that!"

Xiang Mantang watched the two of them pass away and sighed with regret in his heart.

He wasn't mourning the loss of two lives, but their deaths meant that it was impossible to prove whether they were just cannon fodder from Paradise Lost, which made it even harder to predict if the aims of Paradise Lost were as simple as they seemed!

"To die before one's skills are shown!" Xiang Mantang withdrew his gaze from their corpses and turned to look around, sealing his airway and began to check carefully.

Without finding the Archangel who guarded the gate, and with two people who could have scouted ahead now dead, this was certainly not a good start.

Just as Xiang Mantang was looking for traces of the Archangel and cautiously stepping forward.

The two corpses behind him suddenly opened their eyes with an eerie glare, their pupils gleaming a blood-red, filled with endless malice and malicious intent, fixing their gaze on Xiang Mantang's back.

Xiang Mantang's Divine Sense was extremely sharp, and he instantly felt it when their eyes fixed on him. He spun around sharply to face them.

And the bodies of Barlow and Leon also appeared very strange; the moment Xiang Mantang turned, they closed their eyes once more.

"Just now, I felt like I was being watched by some malevolent presence; was it them?!"

Xiang Mantang stared at the corpses of Barlow and Leon for a few moments, then shifted his gaze around, muttering, "Or is there some creature, hiding in the shadows, spying on me?"

Xiang Mantang wasn't quite sure.

Amidst his suspicions.

Xiang Mantang dared not face this direction continually and turned back once again toward the front.

To prevent being stealthily attacked without realizing it.

And as Xiang Mantang turned away.

Barlow and Leon's corpses once again opened their eyes and then closed them once more.

At that moment, their corpses began to undergo a terrible transformation, with intricate Curse Marks spreading from their chests to the rest of their bodies.

Their corpses were rapidly decaying, with rotten flesh and guts falling to the ground, emanating a foul stench.

"Hmm?"

Xiang Mantang, having sealed his breathing, couldn't smell anything, but his Divine Sense was too sensitive; he still felt the commotion behind him and turned once more to look at the two corpses!

"Decaying so fast?"

Xiang Mantang watched the corpses' transformation with a look of surprise and suspicion.

Wondering whether to leave this place and stay away from these two corpses.

But, it was a bit too late.

While Xiang Mantang hesitated, the flesh on Barlow and Leon's faces also decayed away, and what should have been empty eye sockets began to flicker with a strange red light.

Like skull lanterns with a light inside, but that light gave off a very unpleasant feeling, filled with malice, despair, murderous intent, resentment, ferocity...

And all other kinds of negative emotions!

Whoosh!

Three pairs of Bone Wings suddenly grew from the backs of the two skeletons!

They hovered in the sky, looking down at Xiang Mantang!

Xiang Mantang's expression changed instantly.

Seeing their appearance with three pairs of Bone Wings, although they were like undead creatures, didn't it mean that they were the Archangels guarding the Garden of Eden?

But not angels radiating light and righteousness, but Skull Angels, Fallen Angels...

Chapter 482:

An eerie world, the two people who suddenly died, the Fallen Angels resurrecting from their corpses...

All of this made Xiang Mantang realize that this place was probably not the Garden of Eden at all, but another even more mysterious world.

"Crack crack!"

Amidst Xiang Mantang's shocked uncertainty,

The arm bones of those two Fallen Angels, emitting a strange white glow, suddenly made a cracking sound, and then the bones started to distort and stretch, with a one-meter-long Bone Spur growing out of the hand bones as if it were a sharp sword.

"Whoosh!"

As soon as the eerily glowing white bone spurs appeared, the two Fallen Angels flapped the three pairs of Bone Wings on their backs and pounced toward Xiang Mantang.

They then encircled him from left and right, and with a wave of the Bone Spur, a Dense Sword Qi suddenly surged forth.

Xiang Mantang, noticing their assault on him and feeling the chilling malice on the Bone Spurs, got goosebumps and hurriedly pulled back at full speed.

"Boom!!"

Xiang Mantang instantly retreated thirty meters away.

At his original position, and within a thirty-meter range of the Fallen Angels' attack, several large trees crumbled into dust as if they were rotten wood, and countless flowers, butterflies, and bees wilted and died instantly under the sweep of the Sword Qi.

The ground which was once covered in lush greenery turned into a land of death in an instant, with thick black-gray gas emanating and curling upwards.

"What the hell is this thing?"

Xiang Mantang, looking at the dead land before him, truly felt his scalp explode.

Such techniques were definitely not something that Divine Realm Warriors, stepping into Innate Psychic abilities, could exhibit.

Wait... they were already dead, definitely not human anymore, which made this all the more eerie and frightening!

"Swoosh!"

While Xiang Mantang was contemplating, the two Fallen Angels once again raised their bone arms, with the glinting Bone Spurs shining brilliantly under the sun.

Seeing this, Xiang Mantang guessed they must be preparing a major attack, and the next wave would likely be far more terrifying than the previous one.

Looking at the two rivers blocked by them, Xiang Mantang no longer hesitated and turned to run into the dense forest.

Xiang Mantang could travel ten meters in a single step, practically "Shrinking Ground into Inches"; in just three seconds, he covered a distance of thirty to forty meters.

At that moment, a thunderous explosion roared from behind him.

Xiang Mantang didn't dare look back, but ran wildly with all his might, charging desperately forward.

"Is this the 'Absolute Horror' Omniscient spoke of? I can't die here, I haven't yet found the Treasure Medicine that could awaken my senior brother, I can't die here!!!"

Xiang Mantang ground his teeth and raced through the forest, too preoccupied to be wary of potential dangers within the thick foliage.

After all, the two Fallen Angels behind him were already a life-or-death threat.

While running, Xiang Mantang continually speculated about their existence.

"How on earth did they appear?"

"Are they the so-called Guard Angels of the Garden of Eden without concrete forms, taking over their corpses to manifest themselves?"

"Or do they truly have such forms and are the real weapons of Paradise Lost, and I fell right into their trap?"

Xiang Mantang wasn't sure if Barlow and Leon were aware of the situation here, but judging by the countless probes they made upon entering, if they weren't acting, they were probably just pawns to be sacrificed.

Because he speculated that Paradise Lost might have known the situation here all along, just that Barlow and Leon were clueless.

And as one of the world's Top Ten Organizations, how could Paradise Lost's members be just ordinary people?

"Damn it, I had factored in everything, but I never expected such a thing!"

Xiang Mantang cursed out loud.

"Boom!"

Xiang Mantang was just about to turn around and look for an opportunity to run towards the riverbank when he saw a Bone Arrow explode on the ground around him, instantly blasting out a pitch-black deep pit.

It was a near miss; it almost hit Xiang Mantang.

Turning his head, Xiang Mantang glimpsed the two Fallen Angels undergoing another transformation. The bone spurs in their palms hadn't disappeared, and now, bone crossbows had grown out of their wrists.

The attack just now seemed to be a warning shot they fired using their bone spurs as arrows.

"Damn it, are they forcing me to keep moving forward!"

As Xiang Mantang kept running forward, he cursed incessantly in his heart.

He believed that the Fallen Angels could kill him with a single arrow, but, like a cat toying with a mouse, they didn't kill him outright. Instead, they launched attacks to destroy the environment around him, seemingly intent on annihilation, yet forcing him to keep running forward.

"No!"

After running another dozen meters, Xiang Mantang's complexion suddenly changed drastically, and he hurriedly stopped, no longer running forward.

"They're pushing me to go forward; there's a huge problem. I can't continue, I'd rather die than move on!"

The moment Xiang Mantang realized they were toying with him, an idea flashed through his mind, reminding him of the dead Barlow and Leon, whose bodies had been possessed in the same way by these eerie Fallen Angels.

And now, they were forcing him to rush forward, seemingly with a clear purpose, which was that there might be an even more dangerous, unpredictable Spiritual Body waiting for him ahead.

If they were Fallen Angels, then the entity up ahead could very well be a super Demon God like Satan!

If he were to go there, wouldn't he release this terrifying existence?

Barlow and Leon were just ordinary people. Once possessed by them, they could unleash attacks far beyond those of the Divine Realm.

So what unspeakable horror would he, a Divine Realm Warrior, unleash if his body were possessed by the even more terrifying entity ahead?

The goal of Paradise Lost also became clear; they probably knew of the terrifying presence here and had contrived to trick him into coming.

The reason must be that the fearsome entity ahead couldn't possess the body of an ordinary person, which wouldn't withstand the Evil Spirits. Only a Divine Realm Warrior might barely serve as a vessel for the resurrection of the Evil Spirits?

Paradise Lost, if I survive to get out of here, I will definitely not let you off!

Xiang Mantang cursed in his heart.

It was just unclear if Omniscient had teamed up with them.

If they had, he would definitely not spare them either!

With that thought, Xiang Mantang turned to face the two Fallen Angels head-on!

However...

It seemed to be too late!

As Xiang Mantang wanted to turn around, he suddenly found that his legs were not obeying him.

"What's happening?!"

Xiang Mantang cried out in astonishment and confusion.

"Hiss, hiss, hiss!"

At that moment, he felt his cheeks burning hot as if the ceramic mask had been put back into the fire to bake before being placed on his face again.

"It's the mask causing this!"

Xiang Mantang immediately understood that he had still been too careless.

But now, understanding was too late; his body was already under the control of this strange mask.

It simply wouldn't obey him!

Xiang Mantang felt immense regret. When he saw Barlow and Leon die so violently, he should have thrown away the mask. But at that time, not sure if their deaths had anything to do with not wearing the mask, he hesitated and didn't take it off.

Who would have known that this cautious move would make it impossible for him to even die now!

And so, without any control, Xiang Mantang was compelled step by step towards the depths of the eerie forest.

Chapter 483: Can't Leave!

Xiang Mantang could not control his own body as he stiffly walked deeper into the dense forest.

The two Fallen Angels that had been chasing him no longer pursued him.

"Indeed, their intention from the start was to force me to go deeper, but what exactly is there inside?"

Although Xiang Mantang felt desperate and unwilling, he was no ordinary person and did not lose his sanity in this situation.

He was still trying to find a way to regain control of his body and to escape from this place. Even if he couldn't get away, he definitely wouldn't fall into the hands of the entity deep within the forest.

"Hmm? The ceramic mask is getting hotter, as if it's about to fuse completely with my face?"

Xiang Mantang felt the changes on his face and thought unwillingly.

But he couldn't stop this change, and since he couldn't see his reflection in a mirror, he also couldn't see how the change on his face differed from what he imagined.

If someone else were present at this time, they would definitely be able to see that the ceramic mask that originally covered Xiang Mantang's face had already shattered, revealing a Human Skin Mask twisting and covering his face...

By looking at the changes in Xiang Mantang's facial features, one could guess that this Human Skin Mask intended to erase Xiang Mantang's features like an eraser, replacing them with its own.

If it actually succeeded, one could hardly imagine what kind of change would occur.

However, just as Xiang Mantang's facial features were distorting, about to align with the features of the Human Skin Mask, suddenly...

Rows of intricate, flame-like crimson patterns suddenly appeared on Xiang Mantang's face.

Instantly, a hissing sound arose, and the Human Skin Mask on Xiang Mantang's face let out a silent shriek as it desperately tried to pull away from his face, but it was too late.

Just like dry grass falling into fierce fire, the bizarre Human Skin Mask was completely incinerated, leaving only the intricate patterns on it to be devoured by the crimson runes.

Upon closer examination, the fiery crimson Curse Marks that burst forth on Xiang Mantang's face resembled a Fire Phoenix spreading its wings in flight.

This was the strange Curse Mark that had appeared when Xiang Mantang previously used the Blood Phoenix Slaughter Art, working together with Mu Jinyu to ambush the Lord of the Killing Realm...

And after these phoenix-like Curse Marks devoured the runes on the Human Skin Mask, they emitted a faint crimson glow before gradually receding and completely disappearing from Xiang Mantang's face.

"Hmm?!" Xiang Mantang noticed the change on his face right away, realizing it no longer felt hot.

"What happened?"

After reflexively walking a few more steps forward, Xiang Mantang realized he was able to move freely again.

He quickly stopped walking and reached up to touch his face.

"The mask is gone; when did it disappear?"

Xiang Mantang couldn't feel the mask and knew that it was because the mask was gone that he could move again, but when exactly had it disappeared?

He saw no trace of the ceramic mask left behind nearby.

"Did it disappear earlier, or has it already fused with my face?"

Xiang Mantang's expression fluctuated uncertainly, not daring to determine where the mask had gone.

"Forget it, I need to get out of here quickly! This place is definitely not the Garden of Eden!"

After his expression changed a few more times, Xiang Mantang decided not to waste more time thinking about it and prepared to leave quickly.

However, just as he was on guard against the two Fallen Angels and ready to turn back, he suddenly discovered that the surrounding environment had undergone tremendous changes.

At first, it was just wisps of black mist emanating from the surrounding forest, but then the mist grew denser and turned into a thick dark fog that enveloped the entire forest.

Immediately, Xiang Mantang's vision grew blurry, creating the sensation that he couldn't see his own hand in front of his face.

This was still the vision of a Divine Realm Warrior of Xiang Mantang, and it was so obstructed. If Barlow and Leon were still alive and standing here now, they probably wouldn't be any different from blind men.

"Damn, what kind of ghost place is this?"

Xiang Mantang couldn't see his own expression, but he knew his face must be terribly dark right now.

Cursing under his breath, Xiang Mantang dared not waste more time here. He followed the path he had just seen and groped his way forward.

As he walked, the surrounding dark green fog became thicker and thicker. Xiang Mantang didn't know if the fog was poisonous and kept holding his breath, not inhaling these gases.

He felt somewhat relieved at this moment, thankful that he had stepped into the Divine Realm and was no longer a normal person. He could live without breathing for half a day; otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to last long here.

At that time, Xiang Mantang's vision was hindered, but he could vaguely see glimmering lights flickering ahead and heard several sounds like wood crackling from a campfire.

"This..."

A sudden bad feeling surged in Xiang Mantang's heart.

Although he hadn't approached yet, such sounds couldn't possibly be from the route he had taken; they were more like the sound of the tide.

Then, Xiang Mantang recalled another description from ancient texts.

Around the Tree of Life, swords were placed, capable of rotating in all directions and igniting flames.

Could it be...

He had taken the wrong path earlier and was not heading back but had mistakenly walked forward and was now close to the Tree of Life?!

"Impossible! This isn't the Garden of Eden, and that can't possibly be the Tree of Life, turn back!"

Without any hesitation, Xiang Mantang didn't want to explore what that firelight ahead actually was.

He immediately turned around and walked back the way he had come.

A few minutes later.

Xiang Mantang stopped in his tracks, his face growing so grim it almost dripped with gloom.

Because ahead of him, he saw the firelight becoming clearer.

That meant he hadn't taken the wrong path earlier, but no matter which direction he walked—forward, backward, left, or right—the end destination would always be that firelight.

"Is it because of this dark green fog?"

Xiang Mantang looked at the fog, unable to decide.

After a few changes in his expression, he simply stopped walking.

Damn it, no matter how he walked, he would always end up heading toward that firelight. If he didn't move, could it be that he would still be shifted there?

As it turned out, he really would be.

Xiang Mantang stood still, thinking about how to leave this place.

Then, he noticed the firelight in front of him becoming clearer and brighter.

Realizing this, his face suddenly changed, looking terribly ugly!

Damn it, the ground beneath his feet was like an elevator, subtly shifting him forward!

"Damn it, since I can't escape it anyway, let me see what kind of ghost you really are!"

Xiang Mantang's breathing became rapid, both nervous and angry!

Chapter 484: The Dark Shadow Under the Bone Tree!

Xiang Mantang made up his mind and, with a grim expression on his face, started walking towards the location where firelight flickered.

After a few steps, he could clearly see clumps of leaping, rising flames, scorching the grass, the trees, and even the air.

This was a world of flames, with fire burning everywhere, but not consuming anything completely.

The fire that reached the sky also dispelled the almost viscous dark green fog surrounding it.

Xiang Mantang's vision became much brighter.

"Could it be that I guessed wrong?"

Watching the fog gradually disappear, and the darkness behind him still thick as ink, Xiang Mantang felt uncertain whether the world inside the firelight harbored the great terror he initially surmised.

After all, despite the flames reaching high, they did not destroy anything, only providing him with warmth, driving away the icy coldness from his body, as if this were the only beacon of light in the area.

"Could it be that the great terror is hidden within the fog, while this place in the firelight holds the only lifeforce of this world, leading me away from the fog on purpose?"

Xiang Mantang's eyes flickered as he kept guessing.

But no matter what, he had already been forced to come here, unable to leave along the two lost rivers; he could only take it one step at a time.

In the end, Xiang Mantang took a deep breath, reached out a hand, and waved it tentatively towards the firelight in front of him a few times.

His hand was not scorched.

Seeing this, Xiang Mantang stepped forward and walked in deeper.

In this period of firelight, it took him about five minutes of walking.

Finally, a clear space opened up before his eyes.

But...

The sight before him caused his pupils to contract, and he couldn't help but back up a few steps.

Even though the sky behind him was lit with flames, it seemed unable to offer Xiang Mantang any warmth, leaving him feeling a chill throughout his body.

Before him stood a tree so bizarre it was enough to make one's scalp explode; it wasn't a wooden tree, but a Bone Tree made up of white, ghastly skulls.

The branches were various arm and leg bones, with plenty of bloodstained human skins, black long hair, beating hearts that had been gouged out, and brains that were still wriggling...

Below the tree sat a humanoid black shadow, but where the eyes should be, flashed a piercing red light.

"Having waited for endless ages, someone has finally arrived..."

While Xiang Mantang was racked with uncertainty, a strange voice sounded directly in his mind.

This voice spoke in what seemed like an unintelligible language, yet Xiang Mantang understood its meaning.

"Are you... the black shadow under the Bone Tree?"

Xiang Mantang forced himself to calm down and asked the question.

"Yes."

The voice resonated once more, eerily echoing in Xiang Mantang's mind.

"Who are you? And where is this place, the Garden of Eden?"

Xiang Mantang asked.

"Who am I? It's been too long, far too long; I've forgotten my own name. This place is Paradise Lost, not the Garden of Eden..."

The shadow explained.

'Paradise Lost? As expected!'

Upon hearing the words of the dark shadow, Xiang Mantang felt a surge of anger rising within him.

He had indeed been careless, deceived by the people of Paradise Lost!

Of course, it was also because he was too impatient, unable to wait for the slow search for the traces of the Garden of Eden, otherwise he wouldn't have been tricked!

"What is Paradise Lost?"

Suppressing his anger, Xiang Mantang asked.

The dark shadow explained, "Paradise Lost is Hell, the Nine Serenities, the Netherworld, used to imprison the Great Demons who once caused chaos!"

"Do you see the tree behind me?"

"This tree harbors the most terrifying demons, and the hair, hearts, brains, skin, and nails hanging on it also belong to countless rampaging demons..."

"Every one of them released could trigger the end of the world!"

Upon hearing the dark shadow's words, Xiang Mantang's scalp tingled and his hair stood on end.

Indeed, his Divine Sense had not erred, the boundless fear he felt at the sight of the tree was a genuine intuition, not a false premonition.

Regaining some composure, Xiang Mantang then asked, "Are you one of the oppressed demons as well? What is your purpose for bringing me here, and how can I leave?"

Although he knew that the dark shadow could very likely be a demon, and might not reveal how to leave,

He had no choice, since the dark shadow could send words directly into his mind, obviously not an entity to be coerly questioned. Asking repeatedly was pointless, it was better to just ask directly.

"I am not a demon, I am the hero who once suppressed them..."

A voice that could not be distinguished as male or female echoed in Xiang Mantang's mind, filled with age and loneliness.

"The Gods suppressed the demons, and naturally someone had to guard them to prevent their escape and wreak havoc on the mortal realm. I am that Guardian, but as time passed, my solitary Strength struggled to suppress them, and eventually, I began to assimilate with them. Thus, in the end, 'Using the Body as the Seed,' I became the last line of defense, intercepting them here..."

"But I myself can never leave again."

Upon hearing this, Xiang Mantang glanced at the surrounding flames and said, "Is it ... this world of flames?"

"Yes."

The dark shadow replied.

Xiang Mantang's eyes flashed, and he continued asking, "Then, what's the deal with the cyan-black haze outside, and those two winged creatures with white bones?"

The dark shadow answered, "Those were a few demons that escaped back when I hesitated. However, their power is relatively weak, unable to escape from all of Paradise Lost, so they have been wandering within Paradise Lost ever since..."

Xiang Mantang felt something wasn't quite right, especially since those two Fallen Angels had just forcefully pushed him to walk this way.

Before he could question further, the dark shadow explained, "To escape from Paradise Lost, they would not kill you. After all, that would not allow them to escape. Thus, they hoped to bring you here, to unseal the Demon Tree I am suppressing and release all the demons. With numbers comes Strength, and then they might seize the opportunity to leave Paradise Lost!"

"Is that so?" Xiang Mantang muttered skeptically, not entirely trusting the words of the dark shadow.

The dark shadow spoke again, "You came here to seek the Fruit of Life from the Tree of Life to save your friend, right?"

Xiang Mantang felt a stir in his heart, realizing that this creature seemed to be able from needing a dialogue at the beginning, to later hearing his unspoken thoughts, and now it seemed to be able to directly search his memories?!

Was this the revival of the demon's power?

"Don't worry, I won't harm you. Later, I will even send you away to prevent you from disrupting the arrangement here and allowing demons to run rampant!"

In the midst of Xiang Mantang's concerns, the dark shadow spoke again.

"However, the Fruit of Life that you seek, I do not have, because this place is Paradise Lost, not the Garden of Eden. But I do have a way to awaken your friend..."

Just as Xiang Mantang was about to ask the dark shadow to send him away from this place, he was intrigued by the words, and asked, "What price must I pay?"

Chapter 485: Leave!

"You don't want anything in return?"

Upon hearing Xiang Mantang's words, the shadowy figure began to explain, "I just want to know if the gods' promise still holds, whether my progeny is still being protected..."

Xiang Mantang heard this and kept silent.

If the shadow was truly as he said, appointed by the gods to guard this place and imprison endless demons, a hero, then his descendants deserved to be taken care of.

Yet, in the outside world, he had heard of no such family.

Or perhaps, they were staying in Kunlun Ruins?!

He was uncertain and could only wait quietly for the shadow to continue.

The shadow went on, "I would very much like to send a wisp of my spirit to reside within you, so I could venture out and see the world outside, as well as check on the well-being of my progeny, but I am not certain whether I would still be able to confine these demons if I did so. Therefore, once you leave, all you need to do is write a letter for me, and deliver it to my child..."

"Is that all?" asked Xiang Mantang doubtfully.

If the shadow had said he wanted to send a wisp of his spirit to reside within him and have him go out to see the new world's scenery, he definitely would have refused, for who knew whether he was a hero or a demon?

If he were let loose, who could imagine the trouble it would cause? Without even thinking, Xiang Mantang knew he couldn't possibly let him out.

And if he had said to take a letter written by himself to the outside, Xiang Mantang would have been reluctant to do so either.

After all, who knew whether anything from here was tainted with bad omens.

But if the task was merely to go out and help him write a letter... perhaps there wouldn't be any problems, right?

After hesitating for a moment, Xiang Mantang finally nodded in agreement.

Seeing Xiang Mantang's consent, the shadow said, "Good, I will tell you how to awaken your friend. He is only severely injured and not truly dead. All you need to do is this and that, such and so..."

"Mhm..."

Xiang Mantang listened intently, taking note of every detail, and, whenever the shadow asked if he remembered, would nod his head and acknowledge.

"Alright, that's all. If nothing unexpected happens, your friend will certainly awaken. Now, let me tell you the contents of the family letter, which you can write for me once you leave, and then pass it on to my descendants."

After finishing, the shadow began to dictate the contents of the letter to Xiang Mantang.

Having memorized it, Xiang Mantang asked, "How will I find your family members?"

The shadow said, "If I let you take an object as a token, you would be too afraid to carry it. So, here's the thing: my bloodline is quite special. If my descendants still exist in the world, their blood will surely be golden-red..."

The shadow detailed the unique characteristics of his progeny to Xiang Mantang.

"Understood, if I can find your descendants, I will deliver the letter to them," Xiang Mantang nodded and said.

"Then now, it's time for you to leave this place. Let me send you out..."

Without further ado, after having made everything clear, the shadow intended to send Xiang Mantang out.

And as his voice fell,

the Sea of Fire in front of them automatically parted, revealing the two rivers that Xiang Mantang had traveled upon when he had come.

"Go now, I can't maintain this for too long, and they're coming too, I need to hold them back..."

As the rivers appeared, the shadow warned Xiang Mantang in an urgent tone.

Xiang Mantang then noticed that with the parting of the Sea of Fire, the azure-black haze that had previously dispersed was showing signs of encroaching again.

At the same time, he heard the sounds of wings flapping; it seemed that the two Fallen Angels were also approaching.

Xiang Mantang wasn't certain whether letting this azure-black haze into the Sea of Fire would cause any change to the Bone Tree. After a moment of hesitation, he still decided to run toward the rivers!

Xiang Mantang moved swiftly, soon escaping the boundaries of the Sea of Fire, and then he stood on the riverbank, looking back just once. The Sea of Fire that had parted to create a path had closed again, confronting the azure-black haze.

The haze, seeing no opportunity to exploit, after a standoff, finally slowly dispersed and faded into the darkness.

Xiang Mantang eased up a lot upon seeing this.

"There shouldn't be any problems, right?"

Xiang Mantang muttered to himself, uncertain.

He actually knew that the shadow might not be any hero, but more likely the only demon that had escaped, and the deal he made with it could very well be a deal with the devil.

But there was no choice; under those circumstances, he couldn't leave this damned place and could only try to trust that shadow.

Adding to that, since he hadn't taken anything from this place, the possibility of something going wrong had greatly diminished.

"Huff... huff..."

While Xiang Mantang was deep in thought, he faintly heard the sound of wings flapping.

"Hm?"

Xiang Mantang guessed it might be those two fallen angels coming over, wondering if they were intent on finishing him off, or forcing him again to lead the way so they could take advantage of the opportunity to enter the Sea of Fire and deal with the endless demons on the Bone Tree?!

Xiang Mantang let out a light sigh, thought no more of it, and instantly turned around to leap from the riverbank into the river, running atop the waves.

"Tap, tap, tap..."

As Xiang Mantang skimmed over the waves, he sprinted for hundreds of meters before looking back towards the riverbank.

He saw the two fallen angels standing by the bank, their six bone wings flapping while pulling the tendons of their bone bows at their wrists, attempting to shoot arrows at him.

However, they were too far away, and eventually, they gave up, slowly retreating backward, their pale figures gradually disappearing into the darkness.

It seemed that they indeed could not leave this place.

"It seems I can trust a few things that shadow said."

Xiang Mantang retracted his gaze and continued to run forward on the waves, muttering softly to himself.

Of course, he still wouldn't fully trust the words of the shadow, and he was also uncertain whether the shadow had surreptitiously placed something on him.

Xiang Mantang planned to destroy all his clothes, along with all his hair when he left the river, just to be safe.

He intended not to bring anything from that Paradise Lost with him.

Soon, Xiang Mantang left the lost rivers, and upon his departure, he had burnt all his clothes and hair before going ashore.

As he returned, Xiang Mantang looked back again to find that the rivers that were once there had gradually faded from view.

It was as though they vanished into the long river of time.

"It's better if this cursed thing never appears again!"

Xiang Mantang cursed, and then took advantage of the darkness where no one could see him, and hurried to find a set of clothes nearby to put on.

Otherwise, if people found out that he, the Azure Dragon Guard of the Dragon King Hall, was in such a shabby state without a stitch on, and if word got out, he would become a laughingstock.

Quickly, Xiang Mantang made use of the dark, windy night to find a set of ordinary clothes to put on.

After that, he began to sort out his thoughts on what to do after coming out of that hellish place.

Firstly, the method to wake Mu Jinyu and to pass a message to the possible descendants of that shadow.

"Hm?!"

Xiang Mantang suddenly realized that his memory of the words spoken by that shadow in Paradise Lost was gradually feeling forgotten.

"This... could it be that some power does not allow me to know everything within? So it's erasing my memory?"

Xiang Mantang's face became grave as he spoke to himself, not quite sure.

Then, while his memory was still intact, he hurriedly found some paper and pen nearby to record those words!

Chapter 486:

Xiang Mantang found paper and a pen, only to realize that the words of the black shadow were becoming increasingly blurry in his mind, as if he was about to forget them completely.

This hazy feeling made Xiang Mantang feel urgent.

Not to mention Mu Jinyu's awakening method, he had to remember, even the black shadow's family letter. With his reputation for keeping promises, as long as the black shadow had not deceived him, he would certainly try his best to deliver it.

Once forgotten, how could he handle that?

Thus, Xiang Mantang quickly clenched the pen and began to write Mu Jinyu's waking method on the paper.

Soon after he finished writing, Xiang Mantang saw no change occur, and the tension in his heart dissipated significantly.

During the writing process, Xiang Mantang also wondered, what if this memory blurring was a trap left intentionally by the black shadow, meant to make him write it down?

Or perhaps, the memory blurring wasn't caused by the black shadow's mischief, but the information it left had severe issues, and the will of the world didn't allow it to emerge, thus leading to these results?

Xiang Mantang wasn't quite sure, but since it concerned the method for Mu Jinyu's awakening, he ultimately gritted his teeth and wrote it down reluctantly.

Now, seeing that everything was fine, Xiang Mantang realized that the memory of the family letter the black shadow had asked him to deliver was fading even more.

He hurriedly picked up the pen and continued writing.

While Xiang Mantang wrote, he failed to notice that his surroundings were gradually changing.

Streams of black smoke and clusters of purple-black flames rose quietly around him as he wrote.

And within this shadow and gloomy fire, one could faintly discern a human-shaped black shadow, continuously condensing its form.

It was becoming clearer.

At this moment, deep into the night with everybody else asleep, Xiang Mantang, preoccupied by the blurring of his memories, desperately kept recalling and writing, completely oblivious to this change.

After a long while,

Xiang Mantang finally managed to write out an ordinary family letter from his memory.

"Phew..."

Xiang Mantang threw down the pen, feeling that he could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

But then he looked down at the paper, and his expression suddenly changed drastically.

The densely written text he had originally penned was now beginning to twist and change on its own,

rearranging itself into a new string of text.

This was a kind of text Xiang Mantang originally couldn't understand, yet oddly, he could vaguely make out the general meaning of the words.

"I am willing for my life to be the price, to release... eternal disaster, the Tide of Chaos... from now on, to become the vessel of the adult, I am willing to bear this sin..."

The text hadn't fully formed yet, but from just this short segment, Xiang Mantang knew it was a bizarre contract.

In the end, he had still been calculated by the black shadow.

"Tss!"

Xiang Mantang reacted and hurriedly reached out to tear the paper.

But it was useless, he couldn't tear the paper at all.

It seemed that with the appearance of that contract, the initially fragile paper now contained a terrifying power, indestructible!

"Tss, tss, tss..."

At that moment, Xiang Mantang heard the sound of crackling flames and felt a sinking feeling in his heart. He forcefully tore at the paper while turning around swiftly to look behind him.

He then saw that unknowingly, a boundless dark blue haze had appeared behind him, along with clusters of rising purple-black ghostly flames. And within this terrifying demonic atmosphere, a nearly two-meter-tall black shadow now stood behind him.

What made Xiang Mantang's heart sink even more was the fact that the black shadow was standing exactly where his own shadow should be, while his shadow was nowhere to be seen, as if it had been devoured by the black shadow.

"Is it you?!"

Xiang Mantang immediately recognized that this dark shadow was the person trapped in the Sea of Fire within Paradise Lost, unable to move beneath the White Bone Tree.

The shadow didn't speak, but as soon as Xiang Mantang noticed it, it began to reach out, pressing its hand toward Xiang Mantang's shoulder.

Xian Mantang's complexion changed drastically, and he stopped tearing the contract papers, quickly swaying his body while stepping forward, trying to leave the place.

But in the end, he despaired to find that no matter how he tried to escape, the shadow had already completely merged with his own shadow, and he couldn't shake the other off.

In the end, all he could do was watch helplessly as the shadow pressed its arms heavily onto his shoulders.

Then, it began to prepare to surge into his body...

"This is..." Xiang Mantang's forehead broke out in a cold sweat, watching the shadow's movements, thinking of the words written on the contract papers, the vessel that would host it...

"Damn it!!!" Xiang Mantang was filled with hatred, not knowing what destruction the shadow would cause to the world once it merged into his body. He began to regret taking chances.

He should have committed suicide right away in Paradise Lost when he realized something was wrong, or he should never have trusted the devil's words from the start, which led to such changes now.

Xiang Mantang tried to commit suicide but found it was too late; his entire body was tensed and rigid, entirely not his own, preventing him from even moving a finger.

"Damn it, damn it!!"

Xiang Mantang cursed inwardly.

Afterward, he noticed his consciousness gradually blurring.

Xiang Mantang knew this must be the shadow surging into his body.

"Senior brother, I don't know if the method left by this demon can awaken you... Unfortunately, there's no chance to try..."

Xiang Mantang's consciousness completely collapsed, this final thought emerging in his mind.

And then, Xiang Mantang's will was completely suppressed.

"Xiang Mantang" just stood there on the street, motionless.

The contract paper he was originally holding, having taken effect, spontaneously combusted into ashes, which dispersed with the wind!

Who knows how much time had passed.

"Xiang Mantang" suddenly opened his eyes, his pupils initially blood-red, just like those of the shadow he saw in the Sea of Fire world.

But soon, the bloody color of those eyes faded like a receding tide, vanishing.

"I... am finally out again..."

"Xiang Mantang" spoke, his initial words harsh and raspy, like fingernails scraping across a chalkboard, but by the end, his voice was normal, indistinguishable from how Xiang Mantang had once spoken.

However, if someone familiar were listening, they could discern the difference, for Xiang Mantang's voice was cold, carrying a murderous aura, like a sword drawn from its sheath, whereas this "Xiang Mantang's" voice contained no emotion, as if it were that of a robot.

"Boom!"

As "Xiang Mantang" began to speak, waves of dark blue haze began to ooze from his body, dispersing into the surrounding town in all directions.

In no time at all, it had filled the entire town.

"Sss, sss, sss!!!"

With the siege of darkness, the buildings in the town seemed to age instantaneously, starting with mold growth, then plaster peeling off, followed by a release of a foul smell, and finally the walls collapsed and weathered...

And the people who were sleeping inside, in the midst of pleasant dreams, quickly decayed, turning into mere piles of stark white bones!

Naturally, there were also those who were not asleep, people working overtime at night, and security guards on watch, all of whom noticed something was wrong.

But when they saw this bizarre situation, they couldn't shout for help or escape, and ultimately, they all died in despair.

Chapter 487: Despair!

"What's going on?!"

"Ah!!!"

The darkness kept spreading, moving from a small town, gradually reaching a large city.

The urbanites, naturally included those who spent all night in festivities and work.

They screamed in terror when they saw a thick foggy darkness, like inky water, invade and erase from view the street lamps, stores, and roads.

Some security guards immediately rang the alarm bells and then took to their heels.

But it was futile; except for those who had sensed something wrong early on and had driven away, others who tried to escape by car or on foot couldn't outrun the spread of darkness, erased in an instant without a trace.

Not even a sound made it out.

The endless darkness continued to spread and erode...

At Xiang Mantang's location, as his consciousness sank, the darkness continued to spread.

"Buzz!"

All of a sudden, a struggle appeared for the first time in the cold and merciless eyes of Xiang Mantang.

Soon after, his face began to be covered with Curse Marks resembling the Fire Phoenix.

Those were the bizarre Curse Marks that had devoured the Human Skin Mask when it had tried to erode him.

With the emergence of these Fire Phoenix Curse Marks spreading from his face all over his body, the struggling in Xiang Mantang's eyes grew more intense.

It seemed as though his consciousness was fighting back, on the verge of waking up.

"Hiss, hiss, hiss!!"

An even more fierce black fog emanated from Xiang Mantang, not seeming to erode the world deliberately, but rather as if it was being expelled.

The eyes of "Xiang Mantang" began to transition from struggling to shining a creepy, blood-red.

Afterward, Xiang Mantang's eyes flickered between dark and a demonic red, erratic like a faulty traffic light.

It seemed as if two wills were fighting, using Xiang Mantang's body as the battlefield.

"Get out of me!!"

Suddenly, Xiang Mantang spoke, letting out a dull and furious roar.

Instantly, a vast shadow burst out of Xiang Mantang's body, staggering a few steps before attempting to surge back towards him, but it was like a real person hitting a wall, unable to break back into his body!

"Hmph!"

Xiang Mantang snorted coldly, full of disdain.

He didn't understand why his consciousness, after being suppressed and sinking, had suddenly awakened, and his strength kept growing stronger until he was finally able to expel the shadow from his body.

But that wasn't important anymore, it was a good thing after all.

What he had to think about now was how to completely suppress and confine this shadow back to its original place, Paradise Lost.

"Hm?!"

Xiang Mantang then realized that even though he had expelled the shadow, he maintained a connection with it, as if it had truly become his own shadow.

And he couldn't sever this linkage no matter what!

It was only then that Xiang Mantang noticed the changes in the environment around him.

"This is? Did I do this?!"

Xiang Mantang's face changed in an instant as he looked upon the ruined town and the ashes that drifted within.

"Was it the demons who took control of my body and did this?"

Xiang Mantang's hands trembled as he realized the disaster he had wrought by making a deal with the devils.

And what he found even harder to accept was that the validity of Mu Jinyu's Awakening Method was still uncertain!

"Thud, thud, thud!"

Xiang Mantang lunged forward, running toward the still brightly lit city, ready to warn the people there to stay away from this dark-covered area.

However, after running for a few minutes, he suddenly realized that something was wrong.

The world, thick as ink, seemed to be the domain of the shadow following him. Wherever Xiang Mantang ran, it would follow.

"I... am completely finished..."

Xiang Mantang stood still, surrounded by endless darkness, hands outstretched, looking at the flickering red curse marks with a look of absolute despair.

After regaining his freedom of movement, he had thought of reporting the situation to alert the world that demons were going to cause chaos.

At the same time, he also considered whether to try the Awakening Method he traded from a demon on Mu Jinyu.

But now, in his current state, he simply couldn't do it.

Wherever he went, everything, whether flowers, grass, trees or stones, and dirt, would crumble and disintegrate. One could say that just being alive was a sin...

"Ah!!"

After a moment of stunned gaze,

he remembered what the omniscient old man had once said to him.

Indeed, by being so stubbornly headstrong, he had ultimately brought about a catastrophe, harming others and himself!

The great terror that would make the world fear was none other than himself!

"Hehehe... hahaha..."

Xiang Mantang laughed at himself and then, without any hesitation, clenched his hand into a claw and plunged it towards his chest, ready to dig out his heart and thus achieve the goal of suicide.

Because by now, he really didn't know if an ordinary suicide would allow his corpse to be possessed by the shadow demon again.

Only by destroying his heart, making his body's functions stop, perhaps his corpse wouldn't be taken over by demons, perhaps this would resolve the disaster!

However...

"Dong!"

When Xiang Mantang's claw touched his chest, it made a dull sound as if a flesh palm was striking a steel plate.

"Huh? It's not working?!"

Xiang Mantang was shocked.

With the strength of a Divine Realm Warrior, that claw should have been able to burst a tank, yet it couldn't even pierce through his own body?

Had he become a zombie? A Drought Demon?!

His face changed expressions rapidly, and then he tried again, attempting to smash his own head.

If this were before, a swipe of his powerful hand would have caused his head to explode like a watermelon.

But now, it only resulted in a muffled sound.

No injuries at all.

"I can't even commit suicide now! What am I, a human or a ghost?!"

Xiang Mantang murmured with a blank look in his eyes.

Afterward, Xiang Mantang continued to make various attempts, to mutilate himself or to suppress the shadow behind him.

But none of them worked.

"This shadow doesn't seem to speak, probably isn't the demon from Paradise Lost, that might be the only good news so far."

After all his research, Xiang Mantang finally let out a melancholy sigh.

Then, Xiang Mantang looked at the Dark Realm, estimated to be ten thousand miles in radius and still slowly spreading. He thought that simply letting it spread slowly was out of the question.

So, with a flicker in his eyes, he finally mustered the courage to try to pull the shadow back onto himself.

He found that if he was willing, the shadow could merge into his body.

And he could also use the power of the shadow to shrink the Dark Realm, which had spread a distance of ten thousand miles, back in.

After discovering this change, Xiang Mantang was ecstatic and hurriedly tried to shrink the Dark Realm.

But in the end, he found that he could only compress it to an area of a thousand miles in radius before he could no longer shrink it any further.

Chapter 488: Video!

"Can it only shrink to a size of a thousand miles?"

Xiang Mantang tried repeatedly several times, but the final result was still the same, which left him utterly disheartened.

Although shrinking from ten thousand miles to a thousand miles was a significant improvement, as long as he couldn't fully control it and retract it back into his body, there was essentially no difference between ten thousand miles and a thousand miles for Xiang Mantang.

As long as this Dark Realm still enveloped him, wherever he went, he would bring devastation and barrenness...

He even thought about using a phone to call someone and alert them to his situation to increase their vigilance, but he couldn't do it because the phone would be destroyed before he could even touch it, just like the surrounding houses.

Xiang Mantang did not want to harm anyone; the only solution for now was to confine himself and never meet anyone again.

Xiang Mantang immediately thought of that Paradise Lost.

He planned to confine himself there.

But when Xiang Mantang arrived at the original location of the two rivers, he could no longer find the other two rivers that led to Paradise Lost.

And Xiang Mantang had only stood there for a moment when the two rivers also quickly dried up.

In an instant, it became a wasteland.

"Unable to return to Paradise Lost, head to Kunlun Ruins?"

Xiang Mantang didn't bother about the drying up of the two rivers and frowned as he thought about his path.

"No, it's alright if I contributed to misfortune among foreigners, but I cannot return to Huaxia, I cannot harm my own people!"

Xiang Mantang shook his head, dismissing the idea of hiding in Kunlun Ruins.

Afterward, with lost eyes, he slowly walked towards a sparsely populated area.

As much as possible, he avoided harming people, and then sought a place where no one had ever set foot, to see how long he could survive.

...

The failure and retreat of Xiang Mantang are still unknown to the world.

Inside Dragon King Hall.

Huddled in a corner, with a pale face and a sudden bout of heart pain, Jian Ruyan suddenly felt less pain and started to breath heavily.

"What happened? Why did I suddenly feel so awful? Was it a whim that something big happened? No, did my cousin have an accident?!"

Leaning on her sword, Jian Ruyan climbed up from the ground, finally able to think without the hindrance of pain.

In just a second, she guessed that the unbearable heart pain she had just suffered was definitely because something had happened to Xiang Mantang.

For people at their level of power, if someone important to them had an accident, they would generally have a whim and sense it.

"However, my cousin must be alright if I recovered so quickly from it."

Jian Ruyan calmly thought about the sudden heart pain that had appeared and disappeared quickly.

After all, Jian Ruyan did not witness Xiang Mantang's mishap; otherwise, she would have known that the sudden heart pain emerged just when the shadow demon completely suppressed and submerged Xiang Mantang's consciousness.

And as the bizarre Cursed Vermilion Phoenix Mark appeared on Xiang Mantang's body and expelled the shadow demon from it, the situation gradually improved, which made her nearly fainting heart pain gradually disappear.

"My cousin must have encountered some danger. Although it seems he has managed it for now, who knows what else he might encounter? No, I must go help him!"

Jian Ruyan's expressions fluctuated, and finally, she made up her mind to defy Xiang Mantang's wishes and go help him.

For her, Xiang Mantang was the most important person, surpassing everything, the so-called Dragon King Hall, the safety of Huaxia, were of no importance to her at all.

However, Jian Ruyan was still unclear about where Xiang Mantang was now, so she hurriedly took out her phone and called Mu Hongchen.

"Hello? Ruyan? I was just about to call you to tell you that something has happened in the Mesopotamian Plain!!"

As soon as the call connected, Mu Hongchen's anxious voice rang out first.

The Mesopotamian Plain?

When Jian Ruyan heard Mu Hongchen's words, she was stunned for a moment. That place... wasn't that where Xiang Mantang had gone?

Thinking of this, her heart sank, knowing that her prediction had not been wrong. She hurriedly asked, "What happened? How is my brother?"

Mu Hongchen was about to say what had happened when she heard Jian Ruyan's words and was taken aback.

Her brother?

Since when did Jian Ruyan have a brother? Why didn't she remember?

Oh, Mu Hongchen then realized, Jian Ruyan always got along well with Xiang Mantang, and since Xiang Mantang had always been unable to find his sister, she probably had privately recognized Xiang Mantang as her sworn brother, right?

However, Jian Ruyan had never referred to Xiang Mantang that way before, probably because she didn't want others to know, right?

Now, having heard that Xiang Mantang was in trouble, she had revealed their sworn sibling relationship in her rush.

Thinking this way, that seemed quite normal.

Mu Hongchen didn't think about it too deeply and said over the phone, "In the Mesopotamian Plain, we recently had intelligence personnel stationed there send us a message, informing us that the town there had turned into ruins and both rivers had dried up, with no known cause."

"Afterwards, Gao Yu informed me that the reason Dragon King had decided to go there that day was because he had encountered an Omniscient member on the roadside. The exact status of that old man within the Omniscient is unknown. He had divined for the Dragon King and predicted that the Treasure Medicine that could awaken the former Dragon King was hidden in the Garden of Eden on the Mesopotamian Plain..."

"However, at the end of the divination, the old man's face drastically changed and he recanted, warning of a great terror there. He thought that if the Dragon King went there, it might trigger a catastrophic change not seen in a thousand millennia, and hoped the Dragon King would not go. But in the end, the Dragon King still went."

"Now, the custom satellite communicator of the Dragon King has lost its signal; he can no longer be found. The ruins and desolation there might be related to what that Omniscient old man had predicted."

After listening to Mu Hongchen, Jian Ruyan's expression fluctuated several times, and she said in a deep voice, "Do you mean that after the Dragon King went to the Mesopotamian Plain, contrary to the Omniscient person's prediction, he didn't find the Treasure Medicine that could heal the former Dragon King, but instead unleashed some great terror, leading to devastation in the area?"

Mu Hongchen said, "Yeah, that's roughly it, but these are all just speculations. If we could find the Dragon King, then we would be able to figure out what exactly happened."

While speaking, there seemed to be some noises coming from Mu Hongchen's end, and after a few inquiries, she then said to Jian Ruyan, "Ruyan, I've obtained a satellite surveillance video, about what happened in the Mesopotamian Plain half an hour ago. I'll send it over for you to take a look now."

"Good," Jian Ruyan responded gravely.

She knew that with the situation being so bizarre, she couldn't just rashly venture out; she needed to first understand exactly what had occurred before making plans to rescue Xiang Mantang. Google search NOvelFire.net

Soon, Mu Hongchen sent the video over.

As Jian Ruyan opened the video, she saw sudden darkness descending over the entire town, shrouding it and swallowing all light, and wherever the darkness devoured, animals and plants withered, and buildings decayed and crumbled!

This kind of power was simply beyond the reach of any mortal.

Jian Ruyan immediately understood that the great terror divined by the Omniscient person was likely unleashed by Xiang Mantang.

But then...

Where was Xiang Mantang?

He couldn't have met with misfortune, could he?

Jian Ruyan was filled with anxiety and concern, but she also realized that Xiang Mantang likely hadn't met with a severe mishap, otherwise she wouldn't have recovered so quickly.

Thus, she watched the video intently, hoping to catch a glimpse of Xiang Mantang's figure.

Chapter 489: The Strange Sound of the Ice Coffin!

The video played, and Jian Ruyan dared not even blink as she kept her eyes fixed on the screen.

She watched as the despair-inducing darkness spread incessantly, slowly creeping out of the small town and sweeping toward the nearest city, watched as the people on the night shift were devoured by the darkness in despair, turned into skeletons, and finally reduced to scattered bone ash, her heart sinking continuously.

"What on earth is this thing? Where is my older cousin?"

Jian Ruyan, watching the video, couldn't help clenching her fists, her beautiful eyes full of fear and anxious worry.

She could hardly imagine how Xiang Mantang would survive this terrifying darkness that inexorably ate everything in its path.

Suddenly, the spread of darkness in the video abruptly stopped.

And after a few minutes, the darkness began to retract.

Jian Ruyan's heart shook, knowing that this must be the turning point of the events. Otherwise, the Mesopotamian Plain would not now only have ruins, with that peculiar darkness having disappeared.

As time slowly passed, the darkness, which originally expanded its domain without end, was successfully restrained and reduced to one-tenth of its size...

Even though its range had shrunk by ninety percent, the force of the darkness was still vast, spanning a thousand miles.

Then, Jian Ruyan saw the dark world moving slowly in the video, heading towards the two rivers of the Mesopotamian Plain.

By then, the two rivers had dried up and depleted. The darkness changed direction again and left towards the barren mountains.

Jian Ruyan kept her gaze fixed on the center of the darkness in the video, where she vaguely saw a figure.

"That... Couldn't that be my brother?"

A thought suddenly sprang up in Jian Ruyan's mind, and after that, it spread uncontrollably.

She immediately called Mu Hongchen, asking her to bring in a professional to magnify the figure in the darkness that she had glimpsed in the video by a hundred times.

Soon, the enlarged video was sent back to Jian Ruyan's phone, and she saw the figure, much clearer now. Though she couldn't make out the specifics of the figure due to the shroud of darkness, she recognized the body shape - it was Xiang Mantang...

"Brother really had an accident!"

Recognizing Xiang Mantang, Jian Ruyan felt like she was on the verge of collapse.

She didn't know if it was Xiang Mantang himself who had come into contact with ominous forces, so he wandered around aimlessly, or if he had been possessed by evil spirits that were controlling his body to leave the area.

After thinking it over, Jian Ruyan felt somewhat relieved. If Xiang Mantang had truly been possessed by evil spirits, the expansion of darkness wouldn't have stopped and would have spread ceaselessly over the whole world.

Therefore, it must have been that Xiang Mantang had overcome the evil spirits, but his body was still tainted with ominous forces, which prevented him from staying among people. He had to avoid crowds as much as possible to prevent harming innocent people.

"What should I do now?"

Jian Ruyan had originally wanted to figure out what had happened on the Mesopotamian Plain and then think of a way to save Xiang Mantang.

But now that she discovered Xiang Mantang had become untouchable, she was at a loss about how she could help him.

"Ring-a-ling."

At that moment, Jian Ruyan's phone rang again.

Jian Ruyan answered the call with a sense of agitation, and Mu Hongchen's voice came through, "Ruyan, are you outside right now?"

"No, what's the matter?" Jian Ruyan asked, puzzled.

Mu Hongchen's tone was odd, with an undertone of inexplicable fear, "Then you can go outside now and look at the sky. Something about the world seems to have undergone some huge, unknown change."

"Oh, I'll go take a look."

As Mu Hongchen said this, Jian Ruyan also felt a surge of unease rising within her. She then walked over to the window and swiftly drew back the curtains.

Instantly, Jian Ruyan was stunned.

The sky, which had just brightened not long ago, now turned dusky. Above, layers of blue-black haze were continuously amassing.

There is a time difference between the Mesopotamian Plain and Huaxia, with Huaxia being five hours ahead.

Therefore, while it was just past three o'clock in the morning and pitch-dark in Mesopotamia, it was already past eight o'clock in the morning in Huaxia.

Originally, watching the video, Jian Ruyan saw how the terrifying darkness expanded in the dead of night, destroying villages and towns, merely sighing at the fragility of life without feeling much personal impact.

But now, seeing the once bright sky undergoing a gathering of haze similar to the darkness in the video, Jian Ruyan's heart sank abruptly.

Wasn't this an indication that although the truly life-devouring darkness was taken away by Xiang Mantang, the crisis had not been resolved and was still spreading across the world?

Not entirely sure and still harboring hope, Jian Ruyan asked Mu Hongchen, "Is this the haze of Capital City, or..."

Mu Hongchen's rather grave words shattered Jian Ruyan's illusion. She sighed, "It's not just in Capital City, otherwise I wouldn't have asked you to come and see. This strange blue-black haze is occurring all over the world, shrouding the sky and gradually darkening it."

With a complex mix of emotions, Jian Ruyan said to Mu Hongchen, "So now, what are the thoughts and actions of other countries and the various organizations?"

Mu Hongchen replied, "We just received a notification that, with the Dragon King of Dragon King Hall absent, we must immediately dispatch a Sub-hall Master to the Mesopotamian Plain to investigate the source of this dark abnormality and find out exactly what it is."

"I'll go then," Jian Ruyan said without hesitation.

Although Mu Hongchen was only a Sub-hall Master, in charge of intelligence and foreign affairs for Dragon King Hall, at such a time, it was clearly impossible for her to go over there to investigate.

And while Xiang Mantang had previously instructed Jian Ruyan to take over as the New Dragon King in case he encountered trouble, she naturally felt it her duty to go and inspect the site herself to search for a solution.

"Hmm, bring Wu Shisan along," Mu Hongchen suggested.

"Better not," Jian Ruyan thought about it and refused, "We don't know if there's still danger there. If Wu Shisan and I both went and both fell there, Dragon King Hall would be left with only you, and that would essentially be its end!"

Indeed, if Dragon King Hall were to lose its top-tier fighters, it would no longer qualify to be listed among the Top Ten Organizations in the world.

This would certainly make Huaxia's situation even more difficult.

Hearing Jian Ruyan say this, Mu Hongchen hesitated for a moment but then agreed, "Then be extra careful."

...

Jian Ruyan was springing into action.

In the sanatorium where Mu Jinyu was.

Mu Jinyu was lying tranquilly inside the Ice Coffin. As more and more blue-black haze filled the sky, plunging the world into growing darkness, his right hand began to tremble slightly.

And then...

"Bang!"

The Jade Pendant hanging around his neck, already showing many cracks, suddenly shattered!

"Why has it suddenly grown dark?"

Just as Su Zijin turned back from the windowsill, she muttered in confusion, only to hear a strange noise coming from the Ice Coffin.

Chapter 490: Victorious Buddha!

"Ah?!" Updates are released by NOvelFire.net

Su Zijin couldn't help but cry out in alarm, no longer concerned with what the haze was all about.

She hurried to the ice coffin to check whether the ice coffin holding Mu Jinyu had cracked or something else had happened.

After examining the ice coffin several times, Su Zijin found that there were no problems, so she looked through the hazy coffin lid at the condition of Mu Jinyu lying within.

She discovered that the jade pendant on Mu Jinyu's neck had shattered, turning into countless fragments scattered inside the ice coffin.

That sound just now must have been the noise of the jade pendant exploding, right?

Su Zijin thought, wondering why the jade pendant would suddenly burst. Could it not withstand the cold?

But that didn't make sense, if it couldn't withstand it, it should have cracked earlier, not just now.

"Hmm?!"

Then, Su Zijin saw Mu Jinyu's right hand trembling slightly.

"Is this? This is..."

Su Zijin, seeing Mu Jinyu's condition, was overwhelmed with a feeling of ecstatic joy, and she was about to run and find a doctor to perform a thawing surgery for Mu Jinyu.

But suddenly, she thought something wasn't right. What if Mu Jinyu's condition hadn't improved?

Since it concerned Mu Jinyu, Su Zijin dared not take it lightly.

With that thought, Su Zijin immediately made a call to Xiang Mantang, wanting to ask him what exactly was going on with Mu Jinyu's condition and whether it was time to let the doctors start the thawing surgery.

Oddly enough, she couldn't get through to Xiang Mantang, no matter how hard she tried.

"Strange."

The surprise in Su Zijin's heart gradually dissipated due to the unanswered calls from Xiang Mantang.

But she had no idea what Xiang Mantang was up to. He might have been on an emergency mission, right?

In that case, Su Zijin decided to call Mu Hongchen to ask what Xiang Mantang was doing.

Mu Hongchen, facing Su Zijin, the Old Dragon King's daughter and the former Dragon King's mother, did not dare to take the matter lightly. He informed Su Zijin about Xiang Mantang going to find medicine for Mu Jinyu, his subsequent disappearance, and the great changes in the world that followed.

"What?!"

Su Zijin had no idea that Xiang Mantang had done all this. While she worried about Xiang Mantang's situation, she also didn't know if Mu Jinyu's current improvement was the result of Xiang Mantang's efforts.

She asked Mu Hongchen, who naturally didn't know either, and he didn't dare to make a decision for her. He had many other matters to attend to, so after a few more words, he hung up the phone.

"What should I do now?"

Listening to the dial tone on the phone and then looking at Mu Jinyu lying quietly in the ice coffin, Su Zijin was unable to make a decision for a moment.

She had called Xiang Mantang originally to have a guiding force, to know how to handle Mu Jinyu's situation.

But with Xiang Mantang missing, how could she dare to make a decision on her own?

After some thought, the uncertain Su Zijin decided to initiate a video call with Gu Xiyan, Wen Rou, and Mei Yinxue.

"Hello, Mom, what's up?"

Gu Xiyan, Wen Rou, and Mei Yinxue, who had stopped training, answered Su Zijin's video call at the first opportunity.

"It's like this..."

Su Zijin didn't beat around the bush with them and quickly relayed Mu Jinyu's current situation to them in brief.

"Mom, do you mean Jinyu is waking up?" Gu Xiyan and the two other women, upon hearing Su Zijin's words, couldn't help but exclaim with overwhelming joy.

"Not necessarily, it's very likely that if this body thaws, and Mu Jinyu doesn't wake up, then re-freezing him could lead to unknown consequences..."

Su Zijin shook her head, her eyebrows knotted with worry and unease, "That's why I dare not make any hasty decisions, for fear of making a mistake that you would resent me for the rest of your lives, and I wouldn't be able to forgive myself either."

Upon hearing this, Gu Xiyan's eyes flickered a few times as she looked at Mu Jinyu, who was indeed trembling slightly in his right hand while lying in the ice coffin, also finding it difficult to make a decision.

Wen Rou then hesitated for a moment and suggested, "Shall we just wait and see, and make a decision after the junior master comes back?"

Mei Yinxue objected, "Haven't you seen the situation outside? And just now Mother also said that the junior master went to another place and is now missing, likely due to an accident. Given Jinyu's current condition, I think he's truly about to wake up."

Gu Xiyan also found it hard to decide but then said, "Yes, that's a possibility. Just now Mother also mentioned, someone omnipotent had said that Jinyu would wake up on his own, but the junior master couldn't wait and went to check the situation. Now it seems like Jinyu is about to wake up on his own."

"So, if we do nothing and don't thaw his body, I'm afraid something unexpected might happen..."

Su Zijin took a deep breath and said, "So it sounds like everyone is prepared to give it a try?"

"Hmm? Let's give it a try!" Gu Xiyan also took a deep breath and said, "Anyway, things can't get any worse, and if we don't wake up Jinyu now, and the junior master disappears forever, with our abilities, we won't be able to find the treasure medicine that can save Jinyu..."

Making this decision was extremely difficult.

Because no one knew whether Mu Jinyu would wake up after the body thawing, and if he didn't wake up, even if they promptly performed cryogenic surgery on Mu Jinyu again, this continuous freezing and thawing could potentially cause great harm to him.

No one could predict the consequences.

If it led to complete death.

It would be equivalent to them having killed Mu Jinyu with their own hands.

...

Leaving aside the sanatorium for now, Su Zijin, and Gu Xiyan made the difficult decision to try thawing Mu Jinyu to see if he was indeed waking up.

Meanwhile, elsewhere.

Jian Ruyan boarded the private jet and after a long half-day flight, she finally arrived at the Mesopotamian Plain.

Looking at the devastated scene in front of her, her heart went cold.

If Xiang Mantang had not come to his senses in time to suppress the demon within and contain the spread of the darkness, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Perhaps not a single living soul would have remained in the world.

No, maybe those hiding in the Kunlun Ruins would have had a chance at survival.

"Demonic Buddhas, monstrous monks, strange monks, all proclaiming the ghostly Tathagata!"

Just then, a clear and melodious voice rang out.

Hearing it, Jian Ruyan turned her head toward the source of the sound.

She saw a monk in a simple monk's robe walking towards her step by step, holding a Zen staff and an alms bowl in his hands.

This monk appeared to have ordinary features, purified and attractive, but the radiant Buddha's Light shining from behind his head clearly showed his extraordinary nature.

"Victorious Buddha, Tathagata?"

Jian Ruyan looked at the monk in Cloth attire and stated solemnly these five words.

Victorious Buddha was indeed the head of Buddha's Light Shines Everywhere, a powerhouse in the God Realm.

On par with the Old Dragon King in his prime, as well as the Lord of the Killing Realm from Slaughter Redemption.

It was unexpected that the major terror caused by Xiang Mantang had drawn him out.

However, Jian Ruyan thought it over and felt it was normal.

If the Old Dragon King of the Dragon King Hall were still alive or if this disaster had not been caused by Xiang Mantang, whether it was the Old Dragon King or Xiang Mantang, they would surely have come to investigate.