

Menu 1191

Chapter 1191: My Xin is at peace! (3)

It was because of this drawing that Hu Qiandai remembered its contents.

However, deep in her heart, Hu Qiandai didn't quite believe it.

She was a member of the "Inside World."

She had seen monsters.

Although monsters were incredibly powerful, even the most fearsome among them could never reach such a hyperbolic level.

After all, this was destruction on a world-ending scale.

A flood destroying the world?

How could that be possible!

That was her thought from a thousand years ago.

But now?

Her face changed dramatically as she stared at the water, which had in mere moments risen to the height of an ordinary person's thigh, and terrifying scenes began flashing through her mind.

"Get to higher ground!"

Hu Qiandai shouted loudly.

But it wasn't to warn the people present.

It was—for the people down the mountain!

"Commander?"

Urashima looked at Ryosuke.

"Listen to the girl!"

Ryosuke said without hesitation. His experience told him that she was worth trusting.

However, the next moment, the middle-aged officer was stunned.

They were currently at the mountain's base, and moving to higher ground meant heading toward the mountain peak.

And up there, a fierce battle was raging.

Going up meant a certain death.

Not going up?

That seemed like a certain death as well.

There were many others in the same predicament as Ryosuke. The members of the Inside World in the Kinki region found themselves in a similar position.

Hiding in the corners far away from the battlefield, they exchanged helpless glances.

Completely at a loss.

Strangely, it was the ordinary people in the city who acted with urgency, packing their belongings and fleeing with their families at once.

They didn't know if Hu Qiandai's warning was true.

But the massive serpent with its eight heads was undeniably real.

So, they chose to believe Hu Qiandai's words.

Still, it was too slow!

Just one minute later—

Rumble, rumble, rumble!

A towering wave surged down from the mountain peak.

In an instant, it was a hundred meters high.

Everyone cried out in shock.

Husbands clung to their wives, while wives quietly sobbed.

Mothers held their children close, shielding the little ones' eyes, and fathers embraced their families with all their strength, as if trying to protect them in this final moment.

Even though they knew it was futile.

Ryosuke, Urashima, and the other members of Zero Section stared at the impending wave with despair written across their faces.

It was over.

That was what they all thought.

Ryosuke was no exception.

Silently, he pulled out another cigarette.

At that moment, there was truly nothing else he could think to do but light his cigarette.

Snap!

The flame flickered to life.

Rumble, rumble, rumble!

The massive wave crashed downward.

"Die!"

"You ants!"

"The world will return to the ocean!"

The immense monster declared in a booming voice.

Its words were like proclamations.

Irrefutable.

Unquestionable.

In the face of absolute despair, everyone could only choose to surrender to this fate.

What could they possibly do in the face of such a calamity?

They could only await death.

Or...

Pray!

Pray that someone might save them!

But even as they prayed, they understood how slim the chance was.

It was impossible!

No one could possibly save them!

The despair deepened further!

The world, shrouded in night, seemed to sink into darkness in that moment.

The overwhelming negativity felt almost tangible.

As though inhaling this despair, the enormous monster laughed uproariously.

"Haha!"

"Ants!"

"This is what ants are!"

The world itself seemed to be reduced to nothing but this unbridled laughter, which only made the monster even more smug.

But in the next moment—

Step, step, step.

Clear and steady footsteps resounded in the night.

A figure emerged, walking through the crowd frozen in despair.

Wearing a tattered monk's robe, he seemed utterly out of place in the bustling nighttime city.

Even more incongruous was the faint golden radiance.

The golden light that emanated softly from within his body, shining outward.

Bathed in this golden glow, the terrified people quickly calmed down. Their eyes instinctively fixed on the elderly monk who stepped forward, one step at a time.

Step by step.

He walked through the city.

Step by step.

He traversed the outskirts.

Step by step.

He climbed the mountain peak.

Step by step.

He approached the massive wave.

The old monk stared at the towering wave in front of him, his heart filled with overwhelming fear. He had no idea why the wave had suddenly stilled—he had only come to do what little he could. How could something like this occur?

But he knew that everyone was watching him, those who had just moments ago been comforted were all looking at him now.

And so, he could only press forward.

Not for himself.

But for all living beings.

Do not despair!

Instead... hold on to hope!

With this thought, a sudden calmness washed over the monk's heart.

If death is inevitable, so be it.

If it means being swallowed by the wave, so be it.

Hadn't he already foreseen this?

He continued to stride forward, his palms coming together lightly in prayer—

"Namo."

Chapter 1192: Hollow Shell!

A Buddhist chant echoed.

Hands came together in prayer.

The elderly monk of Tongshou Temple, who had long accepted his fate, calmly faced death.

Yes.

He was prepared to die.

In the monk's mind, his death was inevitable.

And it would be one of utter annihilation.

"I imagine it will hurt quite a bit?"

The old monk thought to himself with a hint of self-mockery.

However, the next scene made him slightly freeze in disbelief.

The raging tidal wave ceased its advance.

It was as though it had been frozen in place, suspended before his eyes.

No!

To be precise, time had stopped.

The tidal wave stood still like a sculpture.

Then...

It slowly abated.

As the monk had calmed the hearts of many, the massive wave, too, was pacified, transforming into a gentle stream and flowing downstream.

Under the faint golden radiance, a calming power soothed all.

Humanity.

Animals.

All living beings.

Harmony and serenity replaced chaos.

Yet, the enormous monstrous creature remained unaffected.

Aside from one head swaying, the other seven heads glared at the old monk intensely, with malice burning in their massive eyes.

"A detestable presence!"

"How can there still be such an abhorrent aura here?"

The thickest of the seven heads muttered in a low voice.

Though low-pitched, to the monster itself such a tone seemed mild.

To the people nearby?

It resembled deafening thunder.

Did a prior generation of Tongshou Temple's Master have a grudge against this creature?

The surrounding spectators weren't fools and quickly deduced such a possibility.

Then, Hui Lijing leapt directly into action, placing herself in front of the old monk.

"Master, be cautious."

The female detective wielded her dandelion weapon, her vigilant gaze fixed upon the colossal beast before her.

"Thank you."

The old monk smiled.

His gratitude came from the depths of his heart, and after a long exhale, a fleeting hint of curiosity flashed in his eyes.

What just happened?

Where did the tidal wave disappear to?

Was someone aiding me?

Or did something occur that I'm unaware of?

This golden radiance?

Am I about to reach nirvana?

The monk was filled with bewilderment.

Nonetheless, one thing the old monk did understand.

He had come to do his utmost.

And so, seating himself cross-legged on the muddy ground, he began reciting the Buddhist scriptures softly.

Peace and solace remained.

Yet, an unbidden sense of battle readiness and inspiration began to rise.

As the scripture was chanted, an intangible force belonging to the heart emanated outward.

The dispelled fear in everyone's hearts gave way to renewed resolve and fighting spirit.

"Stop it!"

"You wretched fools, stop it!"

"I demand you stop!"

The massive creature bellowed in rage.

Unlike ordinary beings, the soothing sound, which inspired courage within humans, was sheer torment to it.

It felt akin to being surrounded by three thousand incessantly buzzing flies—hum, hum, hum!

The aggravation was unrelenting.

An indescribable fury boiled within the creature.

Which drove it to launch an attack on the old monk.

Its gigantic snake head lunged downward swiftly.

The attack was brute and straightforward, as always.

Because, in the creature's eyes, for these insignificant ants, no method of attack was simpler or more effective.

And in truth, it was.

Aside from Hui Lijing, not one person present could withstand such an assault.

Hanakaiin Itsuki couldn't.

Hanakaiin Haru couldn't.

Tsuchimikado Motoharu couldn't.

Hu Qiandai couldn't.

Perhaps Hanakaiin Tōru had the power to resist, but during this critical moment, Hanakaiin Tōru was already gravely injured and being guarded protectively by Hanakaiin Ra.

As such, the only one who could confront the monster's attack head-on was Hui Lijing.

"Back off!"

With a low roar, Hui Lijing swung the dandelion in her hand.

Boom!

With an explosion akin to several tons of dynamite detonating, the massive snake head was struck away and plunged into short-term dizziness. Yet only one head was repelled—excluding the swaying one, six heads remained.

The six snake heads surged toward Hui Lijing almost simultaneously.

Teeth clenched, Hui Lijing braced herself.

In previous battles, she had faced similar dire situations.

Every time, she relied on her quick reflexes and agility to evade danger.

But this time!

She chose not to dodge.

Because the elderly monk of Tongshou Temple stood behind her.

"Get out of the way!"

Faces turned pale as shouts erupted from the crowd, with everyone rushing to her aid.

Especially the three individuals—Hui Lixiang and her companions—who had just arrived from afar.

Yuli and Kaoru were gripped with anxious worry.

Oddly, Hui Lixiang's face remained remarkably calm.

"Kaoru, aren't you worried at all?"

"Isn't she your sister?"

Yuli and Kaoru inquired curiously.

"Do you remember what I told you?"

"Lijing has a unique constitution. All those who appear around her are extraordinary individuals—this occasion is no exception."

"That old monk is the preceding Master of Tongshou Temple."

"And the current Master is none other than the newly crowned Sword Saint."

"Although I've only had limited contact with him, his strength is truly unfathomable in the truest sense of the word."

"Moreover, he adheres to principles and is benevolent."

"Therefore, I'm certain Lijing will be fine."

Hui Lixiang spoke with utmost confidence.

Her faith in the old monk was unwavering.

And the monk?

Though outwardly composed, his heart felt heavy.

Was I, who wished to aid, now reduced to being a burden?

What, what, what should I do?

This isn't what I wanted!

If possible, I would gladly exchange my own life for the safety of this young benefactor.

The old monk's mind was chaotic, rendered utterly frazzled.

All he could do now was recite scripture.

As he always did in moments of tension and helplessness, the old monk chanted softly.

Yet, without realizing it, his mind began to recall the secret techniques he had studied, searching for one that could resolve the predicament before him.

Chapter 1193: Empty Shell! (2)

[Substitute Technique], [Silence Technique], [Boat Traversal Technique], [Vajra Palm], [Great Majestic Heavenly Dragon Technique] flooded into his mind.

But will they be useful?

Useless.

In an instant, the old monk's mind went blank.

No!

Not entirely blank.

The old monk held onto a single conviction: to save lives!

The heart is the origin.

Heart, move.

Thought, arise.

Golden radiance appeared once more.

When the old monk unconsciously recollected these secret techniques, realizing their futility, leaving only his original intent in the void, the golden radiance appeared again.

This time, the golden light overflowed from his body and condensed behind him.

A golden Buddha mirage, towering over a hundred meters tall, emerged.

The Buddha sat cross-legged, one hand pointing to the heavens, one hand to the earth, its face serene with compassion.

The six attacking serpent heads paused.

Although each of them was unquestionably larger than the golden Buddha's mirage, the inherent power contained within made them shudder.

"What are you afraid of?"

"He's just one person, with only two hands!"

"And you have six heads!"

"Crush him!"

The most massive serpent head, still partially dazed, roared loudly.

The six serpent heads hesitated for a moment.

That's right!

We, the serpents, have strength in numbers!

Attack!

The six serpent heads moved again.

Simultaneously, the golden Buddha mirage also moved.

No grand gestures—just pressing its palms together, and then... within the golden radiance, the Buddha grew even larger. Its gentle smile remained unchanged, but thousands of arms sprouted from its back.

Some formed palms.

Some clenched fists.

The next moment

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A thousand arms struck in unison, knocking the six descending serpent heads upward.

This time, it wasn't just the serpent heads that rose.

The immense serpent body followed, soaring upwards.

The colossal monster was sent "flying" into the sky by the golden Buddha mirage.

"Is... is that the Master Tongshou Temple?"

Tsuchimikado Motoharu murmured under his breath.

He had interacted with the old monk countless times before.

He always felt the old monk was merely pretending, but that pretense had seemed to him naive and unworthy of attention.

Naturally, the truth behind the facade appeared equally trivial.

Just raw strength.

What else could it possibly be?

Strength—he had it too.

And he even believed he wouldn't lose to the Master Tongshou Temple.

Tsuchimikado Motoharu had once been so confident, but now, facing the attacks unleashed by the golden Buddha with its thousand arms, he could do nothing but let out a bitter chuckle and shake his head.

He'd been deceived!

How could the old monk's childish pretense not also be another layer of disguise?

Wasn't it precisely tailored to deal with people like him who thought themselves clever?

Truly worthy of being a Master of Tongshou Temple!

Tsuchimikado Motoharu sighed.

The surrounding people sighed as well.

They didn't harbor as many designs as Tsuchimikado Motoharu—they simply recognized the unfailing brilliance of the Master Tongshou Temple.

Especially Hui Lijing.

The female detective blinked as she held her dandelion, then scratched her head lightly.

"Turns out, the Master can handle this easily without me!"

The female detective spoke awkwardly.

The old monk folded his palms together and said nothing.

What could he say?

At this moment, he was still bewildered.

Even more bewildered than before.

Perhaps, maybe... could it be that I am quite strong?

This thought flickered in the old monk's heart.

But he quickly shook his head, discarding such notions from his mind.

This isn't the time to dwell on that.

The question was: What next?

The Buddha's mirage was immensely powerful.

The old monk admitted it, but he could also sense that after this round of attacks, the mirage would dissipate.

Once the mirage disappeared, the giant serpent would inevitably fall back.

The situation would revert to what it was before.

As for conjuring another Buddha's mirage?

The old monk certainly wished he could.

But he didn't know how.

He had no idea how the mirage had even appeared.

Thus, only one option remained: asking the others to leave.

At least they needed to preserve their lives.

As for anything else?

Right now, the old monk couldn't formulate a plan.

"Everyone, please leave immediately!"

The old monk said this resolutely.

Everyone was taken aback.

"Is it because of our presence that you cannot unleash even stronger secret techniques?"

Tsuchimikado Motoharu asked softly.

Though anxious inside, the old monk kept his smile and palms folded together.

Witnessing the monk's demeanor, everyone instantly understood.

They were dragging him down.

The situation couldn't continue like this.

None of them wanted to be a burden.

So, they all bowed and quickly retreated.

I actually wanted to leave with them...

The old monk watched their departure, silently thinking to himself.

But he didn't call them back.

Because he had to maintain the golden Buddha mirage behind him to buy them time.

He slightly raised his head, gazing at the Buddha mirage continuously striking with its fists and palms, his eyes filled with foggy amazement.

Was this really something I could do?

It felt unreal, like being inside a dream.

When did I acquire such power?

It doesn't feel real at all.

The old monk thought as he inhaled softly, then firmly resolved himself.

Now that I have such strength, it's time to let loose and do my best!

The old monk made up his mind with unyielding determination.

Then

Snap!

The golden Buddha mirage vanished.

As soon as the monk was about to let loose, it disappeared without a trace.

Even the golden radiance seemed to fade, as if it had never existed.

Boom!

The huge serpent fell right before the old monk.

Fourteen enormous eyes glared at the old monk—cold, poisonous, hateful.

The old monk instantly broke out into a cold sweat.

What?

What's going on here?

Why so sudden?

I was just planning to create a memorable moment before I died!

The old monk, confronted by those fourteen massive eyes, produced a faint smile and clasped his hands together.

This was instinctive for his body.

As for saying a word?

He couldn't manage that.

He feared that as soon as he spoke, he'd burst into tears.

Yet, despite the old monk's demeanor, the massive monster hesitated, puzzled.

The monk before it was undeniably powerful!

Strong enough to surpass most beings it had ever encountered!

Certainly among the elite few!

Such a person would never abruptly end their attack and relinquish their advantage.

There must be an even bigger advantage lurking.

Or... a hidden gambit!

Hmm?

A gambit?

Suddenly, the thickest serpent head seemed to realize something. It twisted its gaze toward a head swaying left and right—the one that had been “out of sync” since the battle began, contributing nothing at all.

At this moment...

Huh?!!!

The thickest serpent head froze when it saw the swaying head.

Among the eight heads, it was undoubtedly the strongest and sturdiest.

While the other seven heads were relatively similar, this swaying head now appeared visibly diminished—a size smaller, its hollow eyes emitting whistling noises as air passed through, almost as if... its brain was missing.

What is this?

The other heads looked equally perplexed.

Then, instinctively, they began to assess the situation.

The very next moment

Roar! Roar! Roar!

"Insects! Vermin!"

"Unforgivable!"

Furious roars erupted like never before.

They had sensed it.

The swaying head was hollow.

Not just its brain—its neck and flesh were ninety percent devoured, leaving only its outer skin, a thin layer of muscles under the scales.

The missing flesh...

Had been eaten!

Devoured by a tiny insect that had invaded their body!

They thought nothing of this intruder.

They knew full well the lethal nature of their toxic gases and corrosive fluids.

Any creature venturing inside would die!

Yet, this intruder hadn't merely survived—it was eating them alive.

It ignored their poisons.

It ignored their churning acids.

It kept eating.

Kept eating.

Not dying!

Even if it died, it would revive shortly after and continue consuming.

Like some ghoul reborn out of starvation.

No!

Even calling it a ghoul was a compliment.

It was an insatiable black hole!

The wrath was overwhelming!

Such a situation ignited their fury!

They reared their massive bodies, revealing their rotting bellies, and instantly enveloped Jason in a pool of acid and toxic gas.

Jason had faced similar situations before.

But the acid and toxic gas presented here were tenfold as lethal.

In a fleeting moment, Jason was melted away.

Not even a trace remained.

Chapter 1194: Death and Eating

In the thick acid, there had been nothing just a moment ago.

The next moment, Jason's body remnants started to materialize out of thin air.

It was a formation of finer detail.

Invisible to the naked eye.

Undetectable even to divine senses.

However, as soon as they appeared, the remnants melted again.

The speed was slightly slower than before.

Jason's flesh was "diluting" the Great Snake's acid in a special manner.

After repeating this process over a dozen times, the remnants finally stopped vanishing and began reassembling his body.

By the time his body reappeared in a more complete sense, Jason had already died over a dozen times.

Jason was long used to this.

Ever since stepping into the Great Snake's body, aside from an initial unscathed feeding within its brain, the corrosion of acid and the invasion of poison gas never ceased.

Simply put, from then till now, Jason had been eating and dying simultaneously.

In fact, he had died more times than what he had managed to eat back.

[Satiety: 498]

...

Jason glanced at his remaining satiety and couldn't help but narrow his eyes.

His satiety wasn't rising; instead, it had fallen below the 500-point mark. However, Jason didn't feel distressed.

Because—

[Excitement of Feast: 75]

...

The recent devouring had increased his Excitement of Feast by a full 60 points.

Should he continue?

The question barely needed asking; the answer was self-evident.

Yes!

Faced with such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, how could he let it slip by?

After all, the time left to him was running out—

[Special existence invading the real world, judgment in progress...]

[Judgment passed, main quest updated!]

[Main Quest: Survive within the Great Snake's rampage for 1 hour; Remaining Time: 00:39:52]

...

The quest prompts had appeared the moment the Great Snake emerged.

Jason wasn't seeing them for the first time.

He understood exactly what they implied.

Thus, in the very next instant, Jason opened his mouth wide once more and surged forward.

On all fours, mouth agape, Jason barreled ahead like a bulldozer, crazily shoveling the flesh in front of him into his gaping maw.

Wherever he passed,

The ground lay "bare"!

The Great Snake's muscular body inexplicably developed a crevice in his wake.

After a few laps to and fro, the crevice grew somewhat larger.

This transformation provoked furious roars from the remaining seven heads.

Acid and poison gas assaulted him once again.

But this time, it wasn't an unconscious release.

When the acid and poison gas became targeted, Jason was dissolved once more.

Though he reappeared instantly, the acid lingered, and so the dissolution carried on.

Just as before.

After dozens of cycles, when the acid's concentration finally diminished slightly, Jason's dissolution slowed and he could truly revive.

His whole body convulsed, shaking off the acid.

Then he swiftly moved out of the poison's range.

Jason furrowed his brows.

[Satiety: 480]

...

His satiety had plummeted by another 18 points.

It wasn't just from dying six times; the satiety gained from devouring flesh earlier had all been consumed too. Although the Excitement of Feast increased by another point, if things kept going like this, he wouldn't last long.

He had to replenish his satiety!

This was an absolute priority!

Instinctively, Jason glanced into the distance.

Over there lay the Broad Blade Cleaver, the mask, and the Soul-Collecting Gourd.

The acid had long dissolved his clothes and destroyed his pack, so Jason had deliberately placed the cleaver, mask, and gourd far from the acidic corrosion to prevent accidents.

At this moment, the Soul-Collecting Gourd was emanating a rich aroma of alcohol.

The intense fragrance of liquor gave him pause.

What if he got drunk?

Though he'd used strong liquor for "disinfection" before,

That was only superficial—it had never gone this deep.

"Wait a little longer!"

"Until there's no other choice!"

With this thought in mind, Jason reorganized his “gear” and moved forward once more.

This time, however, Jason didn’t ravage the Great Snake’s flesh as he had before.

Though his mouth remained open, it was now more for “clearing the way”!

Clearing a path to the next of the Great Snake’s heads.

The flesh was indeed delicious.

But the brain was even more delectable.

Compared to the ordinary flesh of the Great Snake, the brain promised far greater satiety and a higher boost to Excitement of Feast.

If he could avoid it, Jason naturally wouldn’t want to waste food like this. But at this moment, he had no other choice.

"Sorry."

Jason murmured an earnest apology as he widened his mouth, devouring as much as he could to make up for his guilt.

And then...

He pressed forward relentlessly.

Where was the Great Snake's brain?

Though inside the creature's body, it was absurdly simple for Jason to locate.

That "aroma" was unmistakable.

A guiding beacon of scent.

At the same time, the pain caused by Jason's advance made the seven remaining heads fully grasp his intentions.

"Vermin! Vermin!"

Six heads roared in fury.

"Stop him! Stop him!"

The closest head bellowed urgently.

Even with a severed head, they could slowly regenerate over time.

But none of them wished to experience that pitch-black slumber.

And moreover, severing a head was one thing; having one's brain consumed was quite another.

The former was quick and decisive.

The latter?

Even the Great Snake felt chills run down its spine at the thought.

Just look at the severed head whose brain had been devoured.

Swaying in the wind like a seaweed drifting aimlessly with the tides.

None of them wanted to end up like that.

Chapter 1195: Death and Eating (2)

Thus, more acid and poison gas manifested inside the ‘giant serpent.’

The ‘giant serpent’ possessed countless powerful abilities and secret techniques.

But those were meant for external threats.

For internal?

Powerful acid and poison gas—for them, that should be enough.

In fact, it wasn’t the first time some insignificant pest had entered their bodies, only to become nourishment.

But encountering someone like Jason—this was their first.

A creature that could resurrect after death? Not entirely rare.

They could do that too.

And plenty of others they knew could as well.

However, to be completely melted into water and then bounce back, alive and energetic within a breath? This was definitely a first.

And dying more than once but still reviving? Another first.

Truly...

A monster!

This word inexplicably surfaced in their minds.

The insignificant pest before them—a monster that was far beyond any monster they had ever known!

And this plunged them into a dire situation!

They couldn't stop Jason from advancing.

Even though the acid and poison gas killed Jason again and again.

The resurrected Jason kept pushing forward, step by step.

Finally, they watched helplessly as Jason barged into the second head.

"Ahhhhhhhhh!"

"His mouth

The head of the 'giant serpent' being consumed screamed miserably.

Pain?

For the 'giant serpent,' such pain was something it could endure; more dominant was a peculiar sensation of 'fear.'

Jason opened his mouth wide and took a deep breath.

Slurp!

His immense lung capacity powered his consumption.

Within just one round, a tenth of the brain inside the serpent's head was gone.

Simultaneously, this act robbed the serpent's head of its ability to speak.

It began to wobble, resembling the previously devoured head.

The remaining six heads were startled, as though facing a fearsome enemy.

Jason?

Currently savoring a delicacy.

The 'giant serpent's' brain had no hint of gaminess or fishy saltiness. All it possessed was a faintly sweet and sour taste, akin to the softest tofu drenched in tomato sauce and cherry syrup.

[Devoured 'Giant Snake' (Brain)]

[Physical Strength, Energy, Injuries restored beyond maximum capacity!]

[Satiety +1000]

[Satiety: 1420]

[Excitement of Feast +25]

[Excitement of Feast: 101]

...

The 'giant serpent's' brain was utterly delicious.

The satiety and delight from the Feast brought Jason immeasurable satisfaction and joy.

Especially the Excitement of Feast—its level reached an unprecedented height after this consumption.

101 points!

As Jason gazed at the stat, his lips twitched upward involuntarily.

Then, he turned around to continue.

But as he turned, he suddenly realized the 'route' he 'ate' through was blocked.

More 'tendons' had jammed the area.

Unlike the flesh he'd previously consumed, these 'tendons' were far tougher.

Without even touching them, Jason could tell just by looking.

He could even discern that these 'tendons' were exceptionally chewy.

But...

This wasn't good news.

Jason turned back, his mind piecing together the situation, and through the crystalline spheres formed by the eyes of this head, he vaguely saw the oozing black shadows outside.

They belonged to the remaining six heads of the 'giant serpent.'

The heads had gathered outside.

They were waiting for Jason to exit.

Once he left their body, they had countless ways to make his life a living hell.

As for how they'd force Jason out?

Splash!

A wave of acid, far more concentrated than before, appeared inside the brain of this 'giant serpent' head.

It was akin to turning on a faucet and inflating a balloon.

Rapidly, the area was about to be filled.

Clinging to the inner ceiling of the skull like a gecko, Jason observed the accumulating acid.

This level of concentration—even he would have to die hundreds of times to dilute it.

But with only 1420 satiety, truly dying hundreds of times would place him in grave danger.

However, simply escaping?

It wasn't about the reluctance to part with the 'delicacy' before him.

It was the clear hostility from the six heads of the 'giant serpent' waiting outside.

Once he left, death was certain.

Jason never doubted the 'giant serpent's' capabilities.

Even though he appeared to have the upper hand now—it was only illusionary.

Jason remained calm.

He knew clearly how he had managed to gain this supposed upper hand.

Purely by catching them off guard.

Repeating this feat?

Impossible!

So, only one option remained!

Devouring the 'tendons' blocking the path!

Using as much of the serpent's flesh and blood as possible to offset the depletion of satiety!

Perhaps it was akin to pouring a cup of water onto a burning cart, but it was better than nothing!

With this thought, Jason took action.

He didn't leap down into the rapidly forming acid pool; instead, he clung to the skull's inner ceiling and climbed upward toward the thick 'tendons,' opening his mouth for a bite.

Rip!

The crackling sound of tearing filled the air as a large chunk of 'tendon' was bitten off.

Just as he suspected—

A chewy delight.

And incredibly tasty.

Juices flowed generously, and the meat had a rich texture.

But the toughness of the 'tendons' meant he couldn't devour them as easily while running like he did before with ordinary flesh.

Still, it wasn't all bad news.

The 'tendons' offered substantially more satiety than regular flesh.

This made Jason's eyes gleam.

He lunged forward, beginning to tear and bite with frenzy.

The remaining six heads of the 'giant serpent' sensed this scene and sneered coldly.

An ant is just an ant.

Only capable of acting for immediate gain.

Once the acid filled the pool, it'd surely be his end.

They refused to believe Jason could tear through their 'prison.'

No matter how sharp his teeth seemed or how ravenous his appetite appeared.

His stomach couldn't possibly be bottomless.

Perhaps ordinary flesh could be digested quickly.

But in the face of their specialized internal formations—the 'walls' they condensed within him—it was bound to overwhelm his ability.

He would be left no choice but to tear and tear endlessly.

Unable to swallow.

Forced to watch acid slowly invade his body.

Until he completely drowned within the acidic pool.

This time, they planned to keep pouring acid into the pool relentlessly.

They wanted to see if Jason could revive again.

Time passed, moment by moment.

Five of the six heads focused intently on Jason.

The remaining one turned its attention to the old monk.

It stared at the old monk; the old monk calmly met its gaze, his expression serene.

"Is he your trump card?"

"Looks promising."

"But ultimately, he will die too."

The head jeered.

Him?

The old monk was confused.

However, his tranquil expression remained, and he even replied calmly to the serpent's head: "Everyone dies. Some deaths are weightier than the mountains, others lighter than feathers."

"You think his death will be weightier than the mountains?"

"He's just an insignificant pest like you... Uh, his death will mean nothing."

The head had intended to liken Jason and the old monk to insignificant ants.

But upon recalling Jason's monstrous nature—and the Buddha that manifested behind the old monk—those words came to a halt. Instead, it opted for the term 'meaningless' to generalize.

"No one's life is meaningless."

"Even the younger version of myself, who became a hero out of sheer interest, did so because I cared—not because it was meaningless."

Suddenly, a voice interjected into the conversation.

The massive serpent head froze.

It turned its focus, noticing a bald figure had somehow appeared beside it.

Another bald figure, just like the old monk.

This newcomer looked younger than the old monk but not exactly young. To compound matters, the yellow body-tight suit and white cape he wore made him appear absurdly amusing, exuding an odd, mismatched vibe.

The serpent head couldn't contain itself.

It laughed.

A hearty, mocking laugh.

"Another insignificant pest."

It said this.

And that was all it could say.

Because the bald man raised his hand and landed a punch.

Boom!

The massive serpent head exploded instantly.

"A normal punch."

Chapter 1196: The Food of Obsession

The voice was indifferent.

One might even say there was a hint of coldness to it.

Yet, the explosion of the enormous serpent's head left the old Monk of Tongshou Temple utterly shocked.

This... this kind of strength?!

He widened his eyes, staring at the crucial moment before him.

An aura of stern coolness, sharp eyes, a body emanating an inexplicable terror—it was as though... he was a Demon King!

Yes!

Exactly a Demon King!

Like the final boss of an RPG game.

One of those hidden bosses players could only encounter under stringent conditions, yet upon meeting them, would likely be instantly obliterated.

How could such an existence appear?

The old monk was completely stunned.

Perhaps he wasn't a qualified member of the 'Inside World,' but in an effort to seem more competent, he had worked hard to understand various histories and secrets of the 'Inside World.'

But...

None of the histories or secrets he studied mentioned a figure like this.

And yet, such a figure now stood vividly before him.

Were they hidden?

The old monk's heart stirred suddenly.

History, after all, is written by the victors.

Or perhaps with some embellishment thrown in.

How could the history here possibly be truthful?

Maybe parts of it were true.

But nine parts truth with one part falsehood—such “truth” is even more terrifying than outright fabrication.

Deception!

Comprehensive deception!

All for the convenience of those in power, of course.

And the so-called secrets?

Aren't they the same?

At this thought, the old monk let out a sigh.

"As expected, my understanding was too shallow."

"I thought I was reasonably qualified."

"But now?"

"Far from it."

"I've still got much to learn."

With a slightly self-deprecating smile, the old monk's heart became clearer, and an inexplicable sense of relief washed over him.

Instantly, a faint golden glow began to radiate from his body.

Brighter and purer than before.

Cherry's grandfather looked at the old monk before him and blinked.

Not an unpleasant aura.

In fact, it seemed somewhat familiar.

As though he'd seen it somewhere before.

After a brief moment of thought, Cherry's grandfather clenched his right hand into a fist and lightly knocked it against the palm of his left hand. He finally remembered—

"Have you been to the White Bear Café?"

Cherry's grandfather asked.

"I have. Ms. Hui Lijing and Ms. Hui Lixiang are very nice people,"

The old monk replied with a smile.

"The pudding there is also quite excellent. I often bring my granddaughter there."

Cherry's grandfather also broke into a smile.

In an instant, the sense of sternness, indifference, and oppressive majesty all vanished, leaving only an air of foolish simplicity, as though he'd transformed from a hot-blooded anime protagonist into a stick figure casually sketched with the simplest of lines.

It was so simple it defied belief.

Still, the old monk didn't question anything and continued his peaceful conversation with Cherry's grandfather.

"Oh, you like games?"

"I do, too."

"Handheld consoles, home consoles—I like them all."

"Same, same."

"I'm especially good at fighting games."

"Me too! Want to schedule a match sometime?"

"Absolutely. But first, let's take care of the trouble before us."

The old monk and Cherry's grandfather seemed to share an unexpected number of common interests.

Then, the two of them turned their eyes to the sky.

By this point, the 'monstrous serpent' was already coiling tightly, attempting to 'retreat' back into the void as much as possible.

It was afraid.

It was terrified.

If it could sweat, it would surely be drenched right now.

Monsters!

Why were there monsters again?!

Could it be that this old monk was hiding something else?

Gazing at Cherry's grandfather, the 'serpent' felt the presence of death.

The same presence it had felt the last time it died.

But what horrified it even more was that, within its body, it detected...

The smell of alcohol!

A strong, overwhelming smell of alcohol!

Instantly, its least-wanted memories came flooding back.

Memories of its drunken state, when its heads had been severed one by one.

Just thinking about it made its neck ache.

Spurred by this pain, the 'serpent,' which had displayed unrelenting greed for the 'current world,' finally came to its senses.

A trap!

This was a trap set for them!

Otherwise, how could any human willingly open a 'barrier' to let them enter the 'current world'?

They were disasters!

They came here to destroy!

Deep down, they were enemies of everyone living in the 'current world'!

But they had let their guard down.

Believing themselves invincible, they had ignored these dangers!

No, wait!

The mistake wasn't theirs—it was those humans!

Those humans had exploited their thoughts!

Despicable!

Bastards!

Shameless!

The remaining five serpent heads roared wrathfully, retreating faster than ever.

Even so, some matters needed resolving.

The thickest of the serpent heads suddenly lunged toward the second head, where Jason had taken refuge, its massive jaws snapping shut in a single bite.

Shhhhhlack!

The head shattered instantly, and its neck was torn apart.

Jason tumbled out from within.

In midair, Jason twisted his body and landed solidly on the ground.

But in the next moment, he staggered unsteadily.

"Jason?!"

The old monk exclaimed, quickly shrugging off his tattered monk robe to drape it over Jason's body.

"Huh? He's familiar too."

"Isn't he the tenant renting the room above the White Bear Café? Something like 'Mask X Blade X Meat'?"

"Yeah, that's the one."

Cherry's grandfather also recognized Jason, and upon seeing him, he immediately remembered.

Then, Cherry's grandfather sniffed the air.

"Is he drunk?"

"He might be, I suppose?"

The old monk wasn't entirely sure either.

At that moment, Jason was reeking of alcohol, the smell unmistakable even at a distance.

Chapter 1197: Obsession with Food (2)

"No!"

"I didn't drink alcohol, I ate, ate."

Jason struggled to keep his voice clear.

He really hadn't drunk alcohol.

He had only eaten part of the 'Soul Summoning Gourd'.

Just now, after he began tearing at the 'muscles of the giant serpent', because the acid rapidly increased, the 'path' he tore quickly got flooded with acid. Although his fast tearing speed prevented it from flooding his entire body, the more the acid released, it directly turned into a gas with strong corrosive effects.

The 'Soul Summoning Gourd' showed some signs of corrosion under such acidic gases.

And over time, such corrosion began to intensify.

Obviously, if this continued, this 'food' would be destroyed.

Treasure food!

It's one of Jason's life mottos.

This time was no exception.

Since it would be ruined, he might as well eat it to increase his satiety.

Especially under the premise of extreme lack of satiety.

However, to be on the safe side, Jason didn't eat it all.

He resisted the urge to swallow the entire 'Soul Summoning Gourd' and only ate a portion—initially about one-tenth. After feeling no drunkenness, he ate another tenth.

In this way, Jason ate about half of it.

Then...

It went bad!

The alcohol surged!

Drunkenness is never immediate; it relies on blood circulation to gradually show itself.

Jason misjudged the speed at which the 'alcohol' was released.

By the time he realized, he had already fallen from the 'muscle' wall he was clinging to into the acid.

Instantly dissolved.

The fortunate thing was, at the moment of the fall, he wrapped his mask around the knife handle, and the short-handled Broad Blade Cleaver stabbed into the 'muscle' wall.

"Eat alcohol?"

The old monk was taken aback; what difference does it make from drinking alcohol?

But then, the old monk put his palms together and did not pursue the question further.

Based on his understanding of Jason, Jason wasn't someone who drank for no reason, especially in such a combat situation; he must have his reasons for drinking.

Could it increase combat effectiveness?

The old monk pondered.

Meanwhile, Jason shook his head vigorously.

He wanted to wake up quickly.

However, it hardly helped.

Immediately, he saw the lake in front of him.

The area that once belonged to the Hanakaiin Family had already turned into a lake due to the battle with the 'giant serpent'.

Without hesitation, Jason rushed to the lakeside and dunked his head in.

Drinking a lot of water can sober you up.

That's the experience from his hometown.

And here, it worked too!

Gulp, gulp!

With the sound of Jason gulping, the lake visibly drained quickly.

When Jason stood up again, his drunken state was significantly alleviated; now, he was just slightly tipsy.

He lifted his head, looking at the 'giant serpent' that had mostly withdrawn into the void, and without hesitation, rushed to the nearest head.

It wasn't because he couldn't resist the temptation of 'food'.

It was simply because his mask and short blade were inside the 'giant serpent'; he had to retrieve them and eat a bit while he was at it.

Just to have a bit while he was there.

No other intentions.

Rumble!

Before Jason could approach, a giant wave rose from thin air and came crashing down.

"Ant!"

"Did you think I would let you come near me again?"

The nearest snakehead sneered.

However, its main focus was still on Cherry's grandfather and the old monk from Tongshou Temple.

In this snakehead's view, the former posed a lethal threat to it.

The latter?

Was the mastermind behind everything, even more dangerous.

As for Jason?

He must be just a pawn among them.

Seemingly powerful, but just above average.

If it hadn't underestimated Jason earlier, he wouldn't have been a threat at all.

And now?

Even less so.

It controlled its power and created a giant wave just enough to knock down Jason and stop his advance.

Although it really wanted to kill Jason, upon seeing the two bald men in the distance, it hesitated.

In the end, it chose a more 'peaceful' method.

At most, Jason would end up with a full-body fracture.

Anyway, Jason can't die.

He'll just get resurrected.

The thoughts of this snakehead were shared with the remaining heads.

Unanimously passed.

The judgment on Jason was not wrong.

But they knew too little about Jason.

Or, to be precise, they misjudged the timing.

At this moment, the night was beginning to retreat.

Dawn had arrived.

Under the morning light, all things revived.

Everything originated from—

Light!

The light that pierces the darkness!

A 40-meter-long sword, completely composed of radiance, appeared.

Gentle, tenacious.

Yet unmatched in sharpness.

Slash!

The surging giant wave was cleaved in two.

From top to bottom, the cut was smooth, as if slicing through a block of tofu.

Jason's figure flashed as he charged through the giant wave, leaping onto the snakehead. The massive eyes gazed at this tiny ant, then...

Thump, thump-thump!

That was the sound of a heart beating like the pounding of a war drum.

He had heard it once before.

When this ant charged into the first snakehead.

And now, the sound of the war drum resounded again.

"No!"

The snakehead roared loudly, but no matter how loud, it couldn't stop Jason's charge.

Puff!

Under the intense heartbeat, Jason crashed into the snake's eye, and at the instant of impact with Jason's body, the huge crystal directly shattered.

And Jason?

Once again broke into the 'giant serpent's' brain.

However, before Jason could start absorbing, this snakehead was bitten off.

The thickest snakehead, without any hesitation, bit off this snakehead the moment Jason entered, shattering it together with Jason.

Blood mixed with body fragments fell from the sky.

"Jason!"

The old monk was shocked.

Cherry's grandfather frowned as well.

The thickest snakehead lowered its head to gaze coldly at the two of them, while pulling its body back into the void with increased speed, it spoke in a harsh tone—

"Ant, you think

Boom!

Before the snakehead finished speaking, Cherry's grandfather threw another punch.

Instantly, this snakehead also exploded.

Without any obstruction, nor the slightest resistance.

As if the 'giant serpent' were merely made of paper.

The other snakeheads were taken aback.

They clearly understood what their leader had intended to do.

It was just to say some harsh words, retain a bit of final dignity.

Moreover, to declare it would return.

That's all there was to it.

Nothing more.

How could it be dead?

The remaining three snakeheads were panicked and lost.

No longer sticking to any strategy, they stopped retreating.

Instead, they turned their heads and began to flee.

The immensely large form bent in mid-air, and sans their snakeheads, the necks drooped powerlessly. The foul-smelling liquid fell like rain, causing the lush grass and trees to wither immediately, even making the soil dry up.

This made Cherry's grandfather, who planned on throwing a 'serious punch', frown.

He originally intended to give this monster another punch to finish it off.

However, if its blood spilled and dispersed, it would cause irreversible damage to the entire Kinki region.

Now he was no longer the rash young man he once was.

Back then, he could fight monsters without concern for his surroundings.

And now?

Thinking of Cherry having to leave her familiar environment, reconnect with friends, and possibly create psychological shadows, and so on.

Cherry's grandfather withdrew his fist.

"Forget it."

"Going back to eat pudding sounds better."

Cherry's grandfather said.

The old monk at Tongshou Temple constantly watched the remains.

Only when Jason reappeared did he breathe a sigh of relief.

He was about to speak when he saw Jason charge at the massive monster once more.

Jason leaped onto the 'snakehead' he had first consumed, with no hesitation, diving in.

As if it wasn't him who had just been chewed up.

Then, the body of the 'giant serpent' slithered.

In the next moment, it disappeared from the 'world', completely retreating into the void.

Chapter 1198: Wait for me here, don't go away!

The reconstruction of the Kinki region began last week.

In fact, the riots that night didn't affect too many buildings in the Kinki region. Other than Hanakaiin Family, the damages were mostly minor losses caused by panic.

Nevertheless, the reconstruction still started.

At least, officially.

"What are those guys upstairs thinking?"

"Why do I have to wear armor?"

"It's too heavy, and they want us to patrol for two hours on top of that."

A young patrol officer muttered under his breath.

It sounded like a complaint, but when envious glances from nearby people swept over, the young officer immediately puffed out his chest defiantly.

His older partner, seeing his somewhat unworthy display, couldn't help but grumble with irritation.

"If you don't want to wear it, take it off."

"Hehe, no way."

The young officer replied with a grin, then leaned closer to his partner, lowering his voice to ask, "Can this kind of armor really fend off those monsters? And can our current pistols really kill them?"

It wasn't just the armor.

At this moment, strapped to one side of the two patrol officers' waists, was a specially designed handgun.

Slightly larger than a standard pistol, it required fingerprint identification to activate.

This was also newly issued standard equipment.

"What are you thinking?"

"You think you're the 'Sword Saint'?"

"Those monsters aren't something we can handle."

"Dealing with smaller ones is the best we can do."

"If you really want to fight those kinds of monsters, then train seriously and work hard to qualify for 'Zero Division' first."

The older officer answered.

Zero Division

"I wish I could join."

The young patrol officer's eyes lit up with longing.

The older officer silently shook his head with a sigh.

Of course, 'Zero Division' was aspirational. Ever since those monsters suddenly appeared two weeks ago, information about 'Zero Division', this special operations unit, was made public to everyone.

Protecting ordinary people from monster attacks!

This was the mission of 'Zero Division'.

Only then did people realize there had always been individuals secretly protecting them from strange and mysterious monsters.

This was why, when 'Zero Division' started recruiting civilians, so many people eagerly signed up.

Those being protected should also become protectors.

This core philosophy quietly spread.

However, not everyone could enter 'Zero Division'.

In truth, the elimination rate for 'Zero Division' was absurdly high.

Only one qualified candidate emerged out of hundreds.

Such a high elimination rate meant that only those extraordinarily talented could remain.

As for him—or them?

It meant they could only serve as assistants.

Just like before.

But looking at his partner's youthful vitality, the older officer didn't say much more.

After all, people need to have dreams.

What if they come true?

Still, life goes on.

"Let's move to the next spot."

The older officer urged his partner.

The younger partner took a deep breath and immediately got moving.

Although the armor was enviable, its 20-pound weight was tough for him to handle.

At first, it wasn't too bad; but as time passed, this 20-pound burden became as heavy as a thousand pounds. Even with auxiliary equipment, it was still exhausting, as the auxiliary system could only be activated in critical moments.

Beep, beep, beep!

"Attention, Patrol Unit F-112, Patrol Unit F-112."

"Incident detected in Zone Z 1-33."

"Immediate support needed!"

The voice over the radio prompted the two officers, who were just about to continue their patrol, to quickly press the buttons hidden beneath the gauntlets on their left arms.

Hiss!

Gas emitted from the base of their armor, lifting their feet off the ground. Using neck-mounted controls, they quickly maneuvered in low-altitude flight mode toward the incident location.

This was the auxiliary system.

A fusion of technology and secret techniques.

Though not yet perfect, it was already very effective.

When the two arrived at the incident scene, the situation had already been dealt with.

"Looks like it was a ghoul trying to escape during a purge."

"You two handle the perimeter security here."

Urashima gave a terse command to the two arriving patrol officers, waved to his five subordinates, and moved on.

His mission was not yet complete.

A nest of ghouls hiding in the sewer had another one that escaped.

He would not tolerate such monsters appearing in the bustling city streets.

Since 'Zero Division' entered the public's view, monsters were no longer allowed in urban areas—this was an order from above, and one Urashima wholeheartedly supported.

At the very least, it allowed civilians to sleep soundly at night.

After nearly three hours, Urashima tracked down the escaping ghoul.

He also inadvertently discovered a group of female spider monsters—creatures that lured humans using heads resembling young girls. In truth, aside from the human-like head, the rest of their bodies were spiders.

Even the human heads were spoils they had hunted.

This group of female spiders was the primary reason for Urashima's delay.

Compared to ghouls, which could be dealt with using standard firepower, the female spiders' car-sized bodies required both heavy firepower and containment measures.

"Lucky I made it in time."

Urashima glanced at his watch.

Three in the afternoon.

An hour left until the appointment.

Accelerating would get him there in time without issue.

After placing the rocket launcher back in the trunk, Urashima got into his car, pressed the gas pedal, and sped toward Hanakaiin Family's territory.

When Urashima arrived, some had already shown up.

Hui Lijing, Hu Qiandai, and the old monk from Tongshou Temple.

"Master."

Urashima bowed respectfully to the old monk before greeting Hui Lijing and Hu Qiandai.

Chapter 1199: Wait for me here, don't go away! (2)

Two weeks ago, during the great battle, he personally witnessed the Buddha.

"Hello."

The old monk replied.

After the battle two weeks ago, he could clearly sense the change in attitude from the people around him.

To this, the old monk was indifferent.

He remained himself.

Every day, he wiped and cleaned Tongshou Temple, read the scriptures—nothing had changed.

If he had to name one thing that felt different, it was his resolve to wait until Jason returned.

Jason was undoubtedly the current Master of Tongshou Temple.

Even now, the old monk still firmly believed this.

"Master, is there any news about Jason?"

Hui Lijing asked, her concern evident.

"No, but don't worry."

"Jason is definitely safe."

"He might return at any moment. We just need to be patient and wait."

"Don't forget, even death holds no power over him."

The old monk spoke softly.

His words, accompanied by his gentle tone, were undeniably soothing.

Hui Lijing nodded.

Compared to the old monk, she knew more about Jason.

She also firmly believed Jason would return.

When Jason came back, she would make sure to give him a dandelion.

He had promised to teach her, yet Jason, as her superior, had left her without a word.

Buzz!

From the distance, the hum of an engine grew louder.

A car approached from afar.

Ryosuke stepped out, his face full of exhaustion.

"Officer Ryosuke."

Urashima called out loudly, and Ryosuke smiled. Though the fatigue on his face slightly receded, his eyes were bloodshot, with heavy under-eye circles and dark shadows beneath them.

This made it clear that he hadn't rested properly in a long time.

"How is it?"

"Did everything go smoothly?"

The old monk asked.

"More smoothly than imagined. That bastard Hanakaiin Rō, in some sense, did a good thing."

Ryosuke replied.

The people around him nodded in agreement.

These individuals could all be regarded as members of the "Inside World"; they were already deeply familiar with the "Outer World." They were acutely aware of the hostility the "Outer World" harbored toward the "Inside World."

Just as Hanakaiin Rō had said—guarded, wary, and full of malice.

Just as the “Inside World” harbored arrogance toward the “Outer World.”

Now, finally being in the open was indeed a positive step forward.

Especially amidst the intense pressure from external forces, the honeymoon period between the two worlds had begun.

"But the crimes that guy committed are still unforgivable."

Ryosuke said, his eyes flashing coldly.

No matter his intent, Hanakaiin Rō was unquestionably a murderer who took hundreds of lives—this fact was indisputable and could not be shirked.

And this was why they were here today.

The Hanakaiin Family Head would give them an explanation.

The group continued walking upward.

Soon, they arrived at the Hanakaiin Family's "temporary base."

A cluster of interconnected wooden huts formed the settlement.

Many people, originally from the branches of the Hanakaiin family, were busy working.

After the great battle two weeks ago, the main family's members had perished entirely. Those from the branch families, summoned by Hanakaiin Tōru, had gathered here to rebuild their home.

With two weeks of effort and the aid of various secret techniques, a small scale of order could already be seen.

At the very least, it no longer resembled a heap of ruins.

Hanakaiin Ra stood by the entrance.

"Welcome, everyone."

The young Onmyoji, wearing a perpetually innocent smile, greeted the group warmly and led them into the new Hanakaiin Family estate. Following the gravel-covered path, they arrived at the lakefront—the lake water had once been consumed entirely by Jason, but underground water continued to flow out. Following a craftsman's suggestion, this place was turned into an artificial lake, serving not only as a picturesque spot but also for aquaculture.

A flock of ducks swam leisurely by.

Fish leapt continuously from the water's surface.

In the mud and sand, shrimp and crabs scuttled in and out.

"Very nice."

The old monk gazed at the scenery with great appreciation.

"This was unavoidable."

"After the calamity we caused this time, many have distanced themselves from us, so we have to be self-sufficient."

Hanakaiin Ra spoke, though his face showed little bitterness. Instead, he maintained a cheerful demeanor, even excitedly pointing out the distant fields to them.

"By autumn, we'll have crops to harvest."

"Even though the grains grown with secret techniques don't taste very good, it's better than having none."

"If we make it to next year, everything should fall into place."

"That's good."

The old monk clasped his hands together, smiling gently.

Lately, he had been worried about the Hanakaiin Family's situation.

The old monk understood that responsibility for these events must be shouldered.

And what is more suitable than the Hanakaiin Family?

Even if Hanakaiin Rō was willing to bear everything alone, some turbulence was unavoidable.

Now, it seemed that everything was under control.

"Please follow me."

"The Family Head has been waiting for you."

Hanakaiin Ra continued leading the way.

The Family Head's room was by the lake, indistinguishable from the surrounding wooden houses—save for its slightly larger size and the addition of a receiving room.

Hanakaiin Haru sat inside, quietly waiting.

As the new Family Head of the Hanakaiin Family, the young Onmyoji had grown rapidly—displaying far more maturity and composure than before.

Upon seeing the group approach, the young Family Head rose and respectfully greeted the old monk, Hui Lijing, and Hu Qiandai one by one.

As for Ryosuke and Urashima?

Hanakaiin Haru nodded slightly.

Recently, the pressure from “Zero Division” on the Hanakaiin Family had stirred great anger within Hanakaiin Haru.

Chapter 1200: Wait here for me, don’t go away! (3)

If it weren’t for Jason and Urashima being familiar with Ryosuke, he would have already driven them away by now.

Ryosuke and Urashima didn’t mind at all.

They understood Hanakaiin Haru very well.

"Family Head."

Hanakaiin Ra greeted and then reported directly: “Tōru said he’s not interested and continues to stay in his room playing chess.”

Saying this, Hanakaiin Ra showed a bitter smile.

After experiencing the great catastrophe, Hanakaiin Tōru was undoubtedly elected as the new Family Head.

Everyone acknowledged this powerful new Family Head.

Hanakaiin Tōru didn't object either, but on the day of taking over as the Family Head, after becoming the new head, he immediately passed the position to Hanakaiin Haru, then returned to his room.

Everyone was caught off guard.

Hanakaiin Haru was even more at a loss, forced to take the position as the new Family Head.

What about Hanakaiin Tōru?

Just like before, he stayed in his room, rarely appearing.

"Is that so?"

Facing Hanakaiin Tōru, Hanakaiin Haru was also helpless.

He was very clear that Hanakaiin Tōru was quite special in the Hanakaiin Family before, and now he's even more special.

Because the reason why the Hanakaiin Family can still 'peacefully' stay here is due mainly to Hanakaiin Tōru's existence.

Those who witnessed Hanakaiin Tōru's power that day know very well the consequences of going to war with someone who can seal void cracks.

If there were no Hanakaiin Tōru?

The Hanakaiin Family would have long been gone.

Those wolf-like guys wouldn't spare such a fat piece as the Hanakaiin Family.

Even if the main family is gone, the branch family's assets and secret techniques are enough to make those bastards envious.

"Where's Itsuki?"

Hanakaiin Haru asked again.

"Hanakaiin Itsuki went to participate in the '99-Cup Milk Tea Challenge'.

Hanakaiin Ra's smile was increasingly helpless.

Hanakaiin Haru fell silent.

Hanakaiin Itsuki has always been unconventional, as he was in the past, he is now, and probably will not change in the future.

Who can help me...

Hanakaiin Haru silently thought in his heart and then looked at everyone.

"Then let's begin."

As he said this, a group of tribesmen from the Hanakaiin Family brought in the former previous Family Head, along with a petite woman.

Bearing heavy shackles, the former previous Family Head looked in good spirits.

So did the woman.

They even smiled, seemingly not worried about their future.

"We meet again."

The former previous Family Head proactively greeted Hui Lijing.

As for the others?

They ignored them altogether.

Including the old Monk from Tongshou Temple.

"How do you feel now?"

Hanakaiin Rō asked Hui Lijing.

"Feelings?"

"People around have calmed down after the initial panic."

"As for me, I'm still learning hard."

Hui Lijing didn't know if Hanakaiin Rō was asking her or about the surroundings, so she answered both.

"That's good."

Hanakaiin Rō said and then extended his right hand.

Hui Lijing was momentarily stunned, but out of courtesy, she shook his hand.

Hanakaiin Rō smiled.

"My wish is fulfilled."

"Nothing left to linger on anymore."

"As for the rest?"

"Do whatever you want with my body after my death, bury it, burn it, feed it to dogs—all's fine—except it would be a waste if my strength and knowledge vanished just like that."

"So... I gift them to you."

Hanakaiin Rō smiled, and the power of Onmyoji within his body surged into Hui Lijing like a tide, forming a brand new Onmyoji seed, then this seed took root and sprouted, growing vigorously at a visible pace.

Meanwhile, an extremely complex array of knowledge appeared in Hui Lijing's mind.

She understood instantly.

It seemed as if she had been learning it since childhood.

"And mine too."

The petite woman held Hui Lijing's other hand.

The same Onmyoji power, mixed with a thread of peculiar strength.

The influx of this power made Hui Lijing's aura thickened once more.

"You two?!"

Hui Lijing widened her eyes at the two of them.

Everyone around also looked at them in disbelief.

After a full ten minutes, the two let go of Hui Lijing's hands, gazed at each other, embraced, and sat down on the ground, no longer breathing.

This was their farewell.

Ryosuke stepped forward to check, confirmed that they were dead, and left with Urashima.

As for suggesting taking the bodies?

Seeing Hanakaiin Haru's murderous gaze, Ryosuke wouldn't do that unless he had lost his mind.

Besides, he needed to report the new situation immediately.

Another powerful being was born!

Hui Lijing!

The aura just now still left him trembling.

And Hanakaiin Rs secret technique... can it be spread?

If it could...

With these chaotic thoughts, Ryosuke left.

The old Monk from Tongshou Temple softly chanted sutras over the two bodies.

Hui Lijing lowered her head in silence.

"Jing?"

Hu Qiandai asked softly.

"I'm fine."

"I feel like I can do some things I've wanted to do for the past two weeks but couldn't."

Saying this, Hui Lijing respectfully bowed to the two bodies.

Then, she headed towards the mountain peak.

With every step, her aura grew stronger.

When she stood at the peak, a dandelion had already appeared in her hand; she turned and smiled at everyone.

"I'm going to find Jason."

"I'll be right back."

"You all wait here and don't go anywhere."

As her words fell, she brushed the dandelion against the sky in front of her.

Not just strength.

But also the secret technique inherited from Hanakaiin Rō.

Combining these two—

A rift immediately appeared.

Hui Lijing leaped into it, and the rift vanished in an instant.

Everyone looked at each other, completely at a loss for words.

Meanwhile, in a room halfway up the mountain, Hanakaiin Tōru glanced up.

Some things look nice.

But the outcome?

It really is hard to put into words.

"I hope you truly survive this."

He said, continuing to play chess.

At this moment, Jason encountered a great trouble.