

## **My Master 821**

Chapter 821:

He distinctly remembered the journey here, noting it had taken him less than an hour to reach this spot.

However, this time, when he and Linghu Gudu arrived at the spot where he had previously separated from Ling Xi and Yan Yourong and the others, it took them more than two hours.

Even after he and Linghu Gudu returned, Ling Xi and Yan Yourong had not come back.

"Where are the two of them?"

Linghu Gudu, full of surprise, looked around and called out, "We walked all the way to the hall and then back again. Haven't they returned yet?"

Cao Zhen didn't bring Linghu Gudu, but instead, he directly opened the China Cloud.

Whether it was Ling Xi or Yan Yourong, he had connected with them before, so naturally, he could check their situation.

Soon, he sighed softly.

Through China Cloud, he could clearly see that the two were making their way along the stairs.

The two had not encountered danger, they just hadn't returned here yet.

Cao Zhen quickly exited China Cloud and continued to wait.

About another two hours later, Ling Xi and Yan Yourong appeared in his sight again.

Seeing Cao Zhen and another, their faces showed no surprise. Ling Xi even whispered, "Master, you really came back. Did you also take a detour before returning?"

Cao Zhen shook his head, "No, we didn't take a detour back, we went back to the hall, and then walked back on our own."

"Ah? Master, you went back to the hall?" Ling Xi, with a look of surprise, asked, "Master? You didn't end up taking a circular route down? Then why did you come back?"

"Why come back?" Cao Zhen pointed down the stairs and said, "Do you think we could burst through that hall to escape?"

We've tried before, the main doors of the hall cannot be opened. Moreover, with so many skeletons and resentful spirits crammed together, even if we charged, we couldn't get through.

I even suspect there might be other possibilities."

Cao Zhen paused briefly before adding, "Has this tower been visited by anyone before? This relic clearly has been contested by many. It's impossible that no one has discovered this tower before; perhaps many have entered this relic. They weren't just one group, so there must have been conflict, some skeletons might be people who died in those fights.

But, not everyone could have died; so, what about those who survived?

They are also within this relic, and they too might have been constantly searching for the true exit, searching for the treasures in this tower. However, they too might be trapped here like us.

We have only been trapped here for a short while, and already feel impatient; what if we had been walking for even longer?

A year, two years, three years... After countless years, being constantly trapped here, would we not develop inner demons?

Or perhaps, thinking their Cultivation Base was high, they might have thought they could kill those skeletons, so they rushed out, then found they couldn't open the gates, and were beaten to death by those skeletons?"

"This... So what do we do?" Ling Xi looked at her master, and suddenly, a dense life force came from beside them.

Following that, a wave of heat surged.

Li Ke?

Cao Zhen looked over at Li Ke, who was being held in Ling Xi's arms. *freewebnovel.com*

At that moment, Ling Xi was so hot that her pretty face turned red, and even sweat beads were densely covering her face, as she looked somewhat painfully at Cao Zhen and murmured, "It's so hot, I can hardly bear this scorching breath."

Cao Zhen quickly instructed, "Li Ke is about to awaken. Put her down on the ground first."

Upon hearing his words, Ling Xi put down Li Ke, and almost the next moment, a clear chirping sound emerged.

This was the chirp of the Saint Beast Bi Fang!

Around Li Ke's body, the flame that had been enveloping her showed a distinct crack, similar to a cracked eggshell.

This place, it's clearly impossible to fly.

Yet the flame wrapped around Li Ke and began to slowly rise.

The next moment, the cracks in the flame around Li Ke grew larger, and with a crisp cracking sound, it burst open.

The flame truly fragmented like a broken eggshell, revealing Li Ke inside.

Cao Zhen immediately turned to Linghu Gudu and yelled, "You, turn your head away."

Linghu Gudu also reacted instantly, turning his head to the side immediately while shouting, "I didn't see anything, really nothing, don't kill the messenger."

Throughout this time, he had often heard Ling Xi and Yan Yourong refer to Li Ke as 'Master Wife,' and now...

He genuinely didn't see anything; although the eggshell-like flame had broken, the flames were still there, and Li Ke was enveloped in flames, so all he could see was the flames, not anything else.

If he were to be killed by Cao Zhen for that, it would truly be an unjust death.

The Spiritual Energy inside this tower was present but wasn't particularly dense, yet this time, after the eggshell cracked, Cao Zhen distinctly felt the surrounding Spiritual Energy becoming exceptionally dense, and a vigorous life force, like a breaching flood, surged toward them.

On these stairs, where there were no plants or moss, at this instant, he felt as if plants were about to grow on the steps.

The life force after the explosion of the flame was incredibly dense!

Simultaneously, an ancient, mysterious, and scorching breath surged toward them, and Li Ke's body also stood upright, as a series of thudding sounds followed.

Chapter 822:

This was Li Ke's heartbeat.

Thud, thud, thud...

Li Ke's heart was beating, each beat seeming to merge with the world around her; each pulsation of her heart seemed to drive everything in this world to beat in unison.

Even Cao Zhen felt his own heart starting to beat in sync with hers.

Flames were burning fiercely all around Li Ke.

Suddenly, in the next moment, Li Ke's slightly closed eyes snapped open.

Almost at the same time, Cao Zhen jerked his head away, no longer looking at Li Ke.

He suddenly realized that they were pretend dao partners, and it wasn't quite appropriate to stare at Li Ke like that.

Beside him, Linghu Gudu noticed Cao Zhen turning away and was momentarily confused. Isn't she your dao partner? Why did you suddenly turn your head away?

Oh, I get it. She may be your dao partner, but nothing has ever happened between you two, right?

For a moment, his gaze toward Cao Zhen was filled with contempt. To think you're a person of great ability? How embarrassing!

After Li Ke opened her eyes, it seemed to take a few breaths for her to come to her senses. Then she quickly opened her Qiankun Bag, took out a piece of clothing, and put it on.

Looking around at the countless stairs, a puzzled look appeared on her face as she asked, "Where is this place? Why are there so many stairs?"

Ling Xi shook her head in response, "We don't know where this is either. Didn't we have a map before? We've been following the map, and we came to this place. Then we discovered that the stairs here seem to never end. No matter how we walked, we would always end up back here."

When Cao Zhen heard Ling Xi's reply, he thought Li Ke must have gotten dressed by now, so he turned his head back around. Indeed, Li Ke had already put on her clothes, but her complexion was extremely pale. It was normal considering that Li Ke had been knocked unconscious by the blast earlier.

Cao Zhen nodded lightly, trusting that Li Ke should gradually recover.

He continued to explain, building on Ling Xi's words, "It's not just that. We found that the path forward seemed to be circuitous, but the path back down was straightforward, so in the end, we were able to make our way back.

This place must be guarded by an illusionary, mesmerizing formation. But the formation is also constantly changing. Ling Xi and Yan Yourong left earlier and when they came back, the time it took wasn't the same as when we left and returned..."

Listening to Cao Zhen and the others, Li Ke finally understood what had happened during this time. After comprehending the situation, she didn't immediately focus on the current problem but said in a low voice, "No wonder I faintly felt, even in my unconscious state, that I saw an image of a person with great ability fighting against the Heavenly Tribulation alone. So everything was real.

As for the current situation..."

Li Ke pointed to the stairs around her and said, "Actually, it's simple. We keep wandering in one place because sometimes we're going up the stairs, and other times we're going down. But because of the formation, sometimes when we're going down, we think we're going up."

Ling Hu Gudu frowned and interrupted, "That can't be right, can it? We went downstairs all the way, and we were sure of our direction."

"That's because of the place you were in," Li Ke pointed to the ground and said. "You both said earlier that this was the place you kept returning to. It should be fine to continue going downstairs from here, but if you try to go up from here, maybe you won't be able to keep going down."

Maybe as you walked, it turned into going up the stairs without you even realizing it."

"Is that so? I want to try it," Ling Hu Gudu suddenly became interested and wanted to experiment.

However, Li Ke quickly interrupted, "Why try? I've already told you the reason why we keep lingering in one place, moving back and forth. Don't you know how to get out of here yet?"

Ling Hu Gudu was momentarily stunned, and the others, Ling Xi and Yan Yourong, were also taken aback. Ling Xi, looking excited, asked loudly, "Master, do you have a way to break through this formation?"

They had been walking for a long time without figuring out a solution.

And her master had instantly come up with a method upon waking up.

A proud smile appeared on Li Ke's pale face, and she even pointed at Yan Yourong and said, "It's simple, just let Yan Yourong take action.

You guys do know that water flows downhill, don't you? Yan Yourong knows the Five Elements Method. Let her keep using water-type divine skills, and we'll walk in the opposite direction of the flow."

"This..."

Ling Xi was momentarily speechless, then exclaimed loudly, "Right! Why didn't we think of that before? Master, you're so smart!"

Instantly, she was filled with admiration. No wonder it was her master, no wonder this was the dao partner her master had chosen!

Ling Hu Gudu was also stunned. Such a simple method, yet he had not thought of it. When had he become so foolish?

Yan Yourong already extended her hand and released a stream of water onto the ground, but in the very next moment, the layer of soil on the surface of the staircase suddenly dispersed, revealing a smooth stone wall, which absorbed all the water.

Immediately, everyone was dumbfounded.

"It didn't work?"

"This stone wall absorbs the water."

Li Ke's brows furrowed tightly, and everyone around her instantly fell into dismay. Indeed, this place wasn't so simple to decipher.

A smile appeared on Cao Zhen's face, relieved that Li Ke's method hadn't worked. Otherwise, had she solved it so easily, his pride would have suffered. As a modern man, being intellectually outplayed, what would he have left to contend with?

Now, it was his turn to shine.

Cao Zhen deliberately cleared his throat and said, "Actually, it's quite simple to distinguish whether we're going up or down, but this will require Ling Xi's help."

He hadn't thought of the method before, but just now, upon seeing Li Ke waking up, it suddenly came to him. To discern whether we're ascending or descending stairs, isn't that easy?

Chapter 823:

Cao Zhen climbed the stairs, and after such a long time, he had figured it out on his own.

The reason they could circle back around was certainly due to a formation, and the special thing about this formation was that sometimes when they thought they were descending, they were actually ascending, and vice versa.

Moreover, it also prevented them from feeling whether they were ascending or descending, which is why they had walked for so long without finding a way out, constantly circling here.

As for the method Li Ke had thought of, he actually hadn't thought of it before; his intelligence had really been crushed. Fortunately, Li Ke's method didn't work, and he also had a method of his own.

When Li Ke heard Cao Zhen asking Ling Xi for help, she was momentarily stunned and asked with curiosity, "Why ask Ling Xi for help?"

Asking Yan Yourong for help made sense because she possessed the Five Elements Divine Method, and of course, Li Ke could see that Linghu Gudu must also have water-based cultivation techniques and divine skills. But she was not familiar with Linghu Gudu, so naturally, Yan Yourong was the one to be asked for help.

But Ling Xi?

Was Ling Xi special because of the talisman?

What use could a talisman be?

Cao Zhen glanced back at Li Ke; if it weren't for the fact that she had just recovered from a serious illness and still looked very weak, he really wanted to tell her the answer.

Are you not just humiliating yourself?

Cao Zhen no longer paid attention to Li Ke but smiled at Ling Xi and said, "Come on, Ling Xi, do as your master says and walk down a few steps."

"Walk down?" Ling Xi didn't understand what her master was trying to do, but upon hearing his command, she obediently walked toward what she supposed was the downward direction.

Cao Zhen, however, stared intently at Ling Xi, and after she had taken a couple of steps, suddenly exclaimed, "Ling Xi, stop, now walk up."

Ling Xi was still confused but would not refuse her master's command. Upon hearing him, she immediately started walking upwards.

Cao Zhen's brows furrowed deeply as he watched Ling Xi and muttered in confusion, "Strange, why are the amplitudes of walking up and down the same? The trembling should be different; it should be more obvious when going down."

As he was still puzzled, Li Ke seemed to have discovered something, suddenly stepping into his line of sight with an angry glare, scolding Cao Zhen, "What are you looking at? How could you be so... shameless..."

"What? How am I being shameless!" Cao Zhen was at a loss for words and muttered, "I'm just trying to find a way to leave. Never mind, this method seems not to work."

Ling Xi was still bewildered and didn't know what her master and mistress were arguing about.

Linghu Gudu laughed to himself, but fearing that Cao Zhen would turn his anger toward him, he dared not laugh too obviously, instead trying hard to hold back his laughter, turning his entire face red in the process.

Soon, the group returned to normal and continued to ponder ways to leave.

Cao Zhen, inspired by Li Ke's method, took out a pill from his Qiankun Bag.

Water flows downward, so naturally the pill should also move downward. If water didn't work on these stairs, what about a pill?

When Cao Zhen flicked the pill onto the ground, it was as if it was sucked by something, remaining utterly motionless.

Cao Zhen tried again with more force, but the pill really seemed to stick to the ground, not rolling no matter how much effort he exerted.

With no other choice, he put away the pill and looked around at everyone else, realizing he was out of options and now dependent on whether others had any ideas.

"We don't have any other ideas for now, let's just keep moving," he said.

As he spoke, he looked at Li Ke and asked, "Given your condition, you probably won't be able to walk for long, right? Shall Ling Xi and You Rong carry you?"

"No need!" Li Ke waved her hand and refused Cao Zhen outright, then started walking forward. They had been moving quite fast on the stairs before, but with Li Ke, their pace slowed down instantly.

Indeed, the Nirvana Pill could help Li Ke recover, but it wouldn't restore her to her peak condition instantly.

Right now, Li Ke seemed scarcely stronger than an ordinary mortal.

Having walked only a short distance, beads of sweat had already appeared on Li Ke's face.

Cao Zhen followed behind, growing increasingly impatient at the slow pace of their progress.

Suddenly, Li Ke stopped her forward movement, turned around, and started going downstairs instead.

Cao Zhen was immediately confused and asked in a low voice, "Why on earth are you going downstairs again?"

No sooner had he spoken than Li Ke turned around and started ascending once more. After a couple of steps, she began descending again.

He had been following right behind Li Ke. As she started going down the stairs, she should have been closer to him, yet when he looked up, she seemed to be getting farther and farther away.

Not just him, the distance between Li Ke and each of them was increasing.

In just a moment, everyone noticed the change in Li Ke's position.

"Li Ke, what are you doing?"

"You're getting further away from us, have you found the real path? How did you do it?"

Li Ke stopped as well and turned to look at everyone. Her pale face, still showing signs of illness, seemed to have a hint of a flush from the movement, and she said with a radiant smile, "I'm getting further away from you all because I've found the real path."

Chapter 824:

Because you weren't always climbing upwards; sometimes you were ascending, sometimes descending. Whereas I was consistently climbing upwards, naturally, our distance was bound to grow further apart."

Ling Xi asked with a curious expression, representing everyone's perplexity, "But how did you determine when you were climbing and when you were descending?"

"It's quite simple, because of our bodies," Li Ke explained, looking at the group, "Although the formation here is very clever, obscuring many of our senses, making it impossible for us to use sight to discern when we are going downstairs or upstairs, and even making the sensations of climbing and descending feel identical.

However, there is one thing the formation couldn't change, and that's the fatigue of our bodies. Climbing upstairs is certain to be more tiring, consuming more energy.

If I feel more exhausted, then naturally I am going upstairs; if I feel that it's easier, then naturally I am going downstairs."

"Energy?"

"Conserving energy and exhausting energy?"

For a moment, several people were stunned, but Cao Zhen quickly caught on and exclaimed, "That makes sense. Indeed, this formation could be solved by a mortal, because at the very beginning, a mortal wouldn't feel tired going up or down. But after walking a lot, they would naturally feel tired and would realize that descending is more energy-efficient than ascending.

However, we are different. Although we cannot fly, we haven't become mortals; we are still at the Golden Core Stage. For us, let alone such a short span of time, even if we walked for ten years, a hundred years, we wouldn't feel tired and naturally wouldn't be able to discern this subtle difference.

But Li Ke, she had just recovered. She was still in a weak state, so she could quickly distinguish these differences."

Therefore..."

"So, while my body is still in a weakened state, while I still can feel fatigue and exhaustion, you all should follow me now.

I can feel that my body is recovering rapidly; I don't know at what rate, but once I am fully recovered, then I also won't be able to tell when I'm going up or down."

As Li Ke spoke, she took the initiative to step in front of everyone and then said, "Now, follow my steps."

As soon as the words fell, Cao Zhen saw Li Ke walking down the steps.

Although it seemed that Li Ke was walking downwards, he was very certain that Li Ke was actually climbing up the mountain.

Cao Zhen quickly followed.

In his view, Li Ke would change directions every once in a while, seemingly walking up the mountain at times and down at others.

But nobody questioned Li Ke; they all followed her lead.

After a while, Li Ke suddenly stopped, looking at the group with a headache and said, "My body is recovering faster and faster. I've been walking and should be getting more tired, but I feel that my physical condition is getting better instead. I don't even feel tired now, nor can I discern whether we're going uphill or downhill."

The crowd was stunned once again, and Ling Xi, even more concerned, asked, "What do we do now? We might've already covered half the distance, maybe even more."

"What to do? There's only one method left," Li Ke said resolutely to Ling Xi, "Ling Xi, strike me."

"Ah?" Ling Xi was momentarily stunned and waved her hands repeatedly, "Master's wife, I dare not."

Let alone being the master's companion, even if she weren't, this was a fellow sect member, a Grand Elder of the Hundred Peaks Sect. How could she possibly attack Li Ke?

"Don't hesitate; if I tell you to hit, you hit," Li Ke urged quickly, "I can no longer feel fatigue, I can't tell whether I'm going uphill or downhill, but if you attack me now and cause me to be injured, my condition will worsen, and I will be able to distinguish again."

After all, I haven't fully recovered yet. As long as you attack me lightly, ensuring the injury is not too severe, it should be enough. Perhaps just the force of two Immortal Bridges, no, make it two, should suffice to attack me."

"This..."

Upon hearing this, Ling Xi immediately looked back at her master, and upon seeing Master Cao Zhen nodding, two Immortal Bridges appeared behind her. Following that, a Talisman emerged, and she sent a Talisman hurling towards Li Ke.

"Bang!"

A muffled sound was heard; Li Ke was struck in the back by the Talisman and stumbled forward, coughing out a mouthful of crimson blood. Her complexion, which had seemed to regain a healthy rosy flush, instantly turned pale.

Even Yan Yourong extended a hand, steadying Li Ke's body to prevent her from falling over.

Taking a deep breath, Li Ke then pointed ahead and said, "Go on, continue following me."

With two female cultivators present, Li Ke chose one of them to attack her—of course, that would either be the seemingly much gentler Ling Xi or Yan Yourong, whose attack methods and style were well-known. But she hadn't expected Ling Xi's attack to be so severe.

Had she known, she would have chosen Yan Yourong instead. Or better yet, she might as well have chosen Cao Zhen.

After being injured, Li Ke quickly determined the direction and led the group forward.

Chapter 825:

However, although injured, her physical condition was significantly improving.

Although this improvement did not repair her body, her cultivation base and overall strength were indeed increasing.

For example, someone with only two Immortal Bridges might almost not endure the same injury and could even fall into a coma.

But, for someone at the Grand Completion of Immortal Bridge, the injury would seem much lighter.

If it were someone at the Core Formation Stage, the injury might not even matter at all.

So, as her strength slowly recovered and her cultivation base also began to recover, she gradually became unable to accurately determine whether the path ahead was leading downwards or upwards.

She could only stop in her tracks and say to Cao Zhen, "Come, attack me, this time with the power of eight Immortal Bridges."

Cao Zhen, who had never been asked such a thing before, especially by a woman, immediately struck Li Ke.

After Li Ke was injured, she discerned the path again and led everyone forward.

About half an hour later, Li Ke's voice rose again, "Come, attack me, with the power of two at Core Formation."

"Attack me... with the power of five at Core Formation."

"Attack me..."

Along the way, Li Ke continuously asked Cao Zhen to attack her.

After suffering the beatings, it was still Li Ke who led everyone forward, muttering irritably as they walked, "This time I took a big loss, letting you continuously attack me.

I'm telling you, once we get there, I am definitely taking the biggest share."

"Okay, no problem."

"I agree!"

Upon hearing this, everyone nodded in agreement. Without Li Ke, they probably would not have even been able to leave this place, let alone possibly reach the core of this tower and then take the treasure.

Li Ke still had to keep letting people attack her, so there was absolutely nothing wrong with her taking the biggest share for these efforts.

"Sixty percent," Li Ke stretched out her hand, making a gesture like a bull's horn, "I take sixty percent, and each of you can only have ten percent."

This place was so unique, and with such a palace, she did not believe they could reach the palace's location in a while without finding treasure!

Cao Zhen did not know how long he had been following Li Ke, he had even forgotten how many times he had struck her.

As they continued on their way, a huge platform finally appeared before them!

It was the highest platform of the entire structure!

The platform was built on a platform as smooth as jade.

When Cao Zhen and the others climbed onto the platform and looked down, suddenly, countless steps came into their view.

"We have finally reached the mountain top!"

"Indeed, Li Ke's method is flawless."

"However, this platform is not the treasure vault, is it? It looks like... a map!"

There was indeed a map in the middle of the platform.

Cao Zhen and the others did not move but looked towards Li Ke.

Li Ke nodded slightly and approached the map. They had agreed earlier that she would take the largest share, and now on this huge platform, it seemed there was only this map, so naturally, it was hers to take.

Soon, the map was in Li Ke's hands.

However, before she could even examine what the map was like, it suddenly flew up and landed on the platform, instantly merging completely with the platform.

The next moment, images began to emerge on the smooth, mirror-like platform.

Images of mountains and rivers appeared.

Cao Zhen looked at these images, and instantly felt he was no longer inside the ruins but had flown beyond Heaven, looking down upon endless landscapes.

He saw mountains, winding rivers, boundless deserts, and vast steppes...

He even felt he saw the Hundred Peaks Sect, places he had passed when he went to the Capital City, only these places had no buildings or cities, what he saw were majestic landscapes!

What he saw was not only the Town Immortal Dynasty, he also saw the South Ocean, the endless ocean, and even the Great Jin Dynasty he had visited with the Grand Preceptor...

He saw howling winds, drifting snow, and torrential rains...

This time he saw no human figures, and naturally, no masters either.

He did not know how much time had passed before he finally came to his senses.

And around him, the others were already looking at him, clearly having regained consciousness before him!

"Master, you have finally come around," Ling Xi, seeing Cao Zhen awaken, immediately asked with concern, "Master, what did you see just now?"

"Mountains and rivers, endless domains," Cao Zhen turned to Ling Xi and asked with curiosity, "Did you see something different?"

Ling Xi shook his head, "No difference. Disciple also saw towering mountains and boundless oceans."

"Exactly, we all saw the same thing," Ling Hu Gudu, though curious why Cao Zhen took longer to awaken, did not ask more but said moodily, "This picture is clearly the same as the second one we received, not a map, but one of those five pictures."

Look, this picture has now also turned blank. Last time with one of the pictures, we felt the confrontation of masters with the Heavenly Tribulation, and we all had epiphanies, but this time, watching those mountains and rivers, although stirring, did not help our cultivation."

Chapter 826:

Li Ke said begrudgingly, "There's no need to mention it, I haven't complained about anything." She was the most aggrieved of all; this time it was agreed that she would receive the lion's share, but the result was just this kind of map.

Of course, one couldn't say the map was unimportant.

After all, she knew that the formation of this ruin seemed to be due to those five maps, and now, they had obtained two of them.

The greatest treasure of this ruin could very likely be to assemble all five maps.

However, now that they had two maps, they couldn't see anything special about them. Perhaps, only by gathering all five would something change,

but for the other three maps, they currently had no clues at all.

Everyone searched on the platform for a long time without finding other treasures and could only continue walking along the path.

After passing the platform, everyone was even more amazed to find that the stairs in front of them didn't differentiate between going up or down as before.

There was no formation on the road ahead.

As the group proceeded, they soon came to a stone door. With a gentle push from their hands, the stone door opened effortlessly, and they finally stepped outside.

At that moment, everyone's expressions grew more complex.

This time, while it could be said to be dangerous, in truth, they hadn't experienced any attacks. But to say it wasn't dangerous—if it weren't for Li Ke happening to wake up, and if it weren't for her physical weakness, they probably would still be trapped inside the tower, not knowing how much longer they would be stuck there.

However, after all their efforts and leaving the tower, they felt they had gained little.

Yet, oddly enough, one of the maps they had obtained seemed to be one of the five that formed the ruin.

Soon, Linghu Gudu pulled out a map and said to the others, "We have already completed one map, but we have another one. Perhaps we should look at this other map. Shall we follow the other map?"

Cao Zhen and the others exchanged glances and nodded slightly, as that was their only option now.

Soon, they got up and started moving forward following the other map.

However, after leaving the tower, it was already afternoon. They hadn't flown for long before the sky gradually darkened, and they quickly found a cave and entered it.

When they first entered the ruin, perhaps because everyone was on the periphery, they were actually able to encounter other people, even entering other people's caves twice. Later, someone broke into their cave and tried to attack them.

Now, perhaps because they were delving deeper into the ruin, everyone had gone deeper into different locations, and it had been a long time since they had seen anyone else.

Upon entering the cave, Li Ke was arranged by everyone to sit at the very back of the cave and began to practice cultivation in meditation. Cao Zhen then turned on China Cloud. This time, instead of rushing to the Eclipse Demon, he first contacted his parents and spoke with them for a while before connecting with Little Beiyang.

He observed the situation at Hundred Peaks Sect through Little Beiyang.

Now, it had been almost two months since he had left Hundred Peaks Sect.

During this period, there had been no changes at Hundred Peaks Sect, nor had any major events occurred; everything was as usual.

However, Little Beiyang seemed to quite like the person named Zhu Peng. Observing him, Cao Zhen noticed that Little Beiyang scarcely practiced cultivation; he mostly spent his time coaching Zhu Peng's cultivation.

After watching for a while, Cao Zhen disconnected and began connecting to the Eclipse Demon.

In a twisted and narrow corridor, the Eclipse Demon and Qian Jiao walked side by side.

Cao Zhen was momentarily stunned. It had been so long, and while he and the others had been delayed in the tower, he was already out, yet they were still wandering aimlessly in that maze-like place.

How much longer were they planning to wander aimlessly?

Or perhaps, the place they were heading to, like the one he was in, actually had a formation, but they hadn't found a way to break it yet?

After walking a distance, the Eclipse Demon and Qian Jiao came across three forks in the road again, but this time, Qian Jiao did not immediately venture down one. Instead, she took out a special sheet of talisman paper from her bosom.

The next moment, she raised a finger, on which several small blue flowers were painted on her nail, and lightly slashed it across one of her index fingers, immediately causing it to bleed.

Qian Jiao used the blood to quickly draw on the talisman paper.

A map!

Cao Zhen recognized at a glance that what Qian Jiao was drawing was a map, and the Eclipse Demon also realized the problem. He immediately exclaimed, "Junior sister, what are you doing? Drawing a map? That talisman paper—are you trying to contact someone?"

Qian Jiao continued to diligently draw the map without looking up and replied, "Of course, I need to contact the Fourth Prince. As for this map, it naturally represents where we have reached.

Senior brother, you might not have seen the map we followed to get here, but this map was initially processed by my hands, and I remember clearly what it looks like.

Now, the time is about right, it's time to inform the Fourth Prince to come here."

She continued without even lifting her head, seemingly unafraid that the Eclipse Demon might take this opportunity to attack her.

"Contact the Fourth Prince!" The Eclipse Demon was startled and asked loudly, "Why do you want the Fourth Prince to come here? Do you want the Fourth Prince and the Third Prince to compete for the treasures here?"

Chapter 827:

"But you should know that among these treasure maps, some are genuine, some are fake. If the map here is a fake, then we will get nothing at all. Wouldn't that mean Prince Four made a wasted trip?"

Qian Jiao finally lifted her head, a smile appearing on her face as she looked at the Eclipse Demon, "Elder Brother, are you concerned about Prince Four? Have you already decided to defect to Prince Four?"

"I..." Eclipse Demon's face showed a look of headache, as if he was caught in a dilemma.

Seeing the Eclipse Demon's expression, Qian Jiao couldn't help but shake her head and said, "Elder Brother, you really aren't suited for our Demon Sect. You'd be better off joining those so-called reputable and upright sects, going to the top ten Immortal Sects. You're too kind-hearted. At such a time, what are you still worrying about? Why should you consider Prince Three? Has Prince Three ever truly treated us as humans?"

"And as for our Sun and Moon Demon Sect, they value the Sun Moon Demon, the Xue Yue Demon, more. They do not value you, Elder Brother, so why should you remain loyal to them?"

"Enough, I also know you're sentimental, Elder Brother. Since you can't make a decision, then I'll make the decision for you. When Prince Four arrives, after finding us, Elder Brother, you don't need to say much. Just agree with me, saying that you have already defected to Prince Four. Otherwise, Prince Four will definitely take action against you."

"Also, Elder Brother, we've been wandering around here for so many days, the chances that we have a fake map are not high. It should be the real map, that's why I want to copy the map, to notify Prince Four."

"Moreover, even if it actually is a fake map, it doesn't matter. Because once Prince Four arrives, regardless of whether it is a fake map or not, the person who will win is Prince Four.

"Prince Three has already separated everyone. Tell me, when Prince Four enters this place, what would happen if they encounter Prince Three's men?"

"You... You're notifying Prince Four because you want to kill Prince Three!" Eclipse Demon's face suddenly changed drastically.

"Exactly," Qian Jiao openly admitted, "Prince Three's first goal in entering this place is to obtain the final treasure, and only then to suppress Prince Four.

"However, Prince Four's purpose in entering here is to obtain the treasure while simultaneously assassinating Prince Four!

"Prince Three, he has to prioritize his tasks upon entering here. But Prince Four aims to achieve all his goals, and he has both the confidence and the ability to do so. This is the biggest difference between Prince Four and Prince Three!"

As Qian Jiao spoke, her hands did not stop moving for an instant. In no time at all, she had completed drawing a map.

Then, with a flick of her wrist, a flame rose from her hand, quickly setting the talisman paper ablaze.

Looking at the burning flame, Cao Zhen quickly started to think. This Qian Jiao had already sent the map to Prince Four, which meant that Prince Four might very well come.

Then, with all of Prince Three's men spread out, once Prince Four's men arrive and regroup, knowing the marks made by Prince Four and others,

they could continuously roam and it was very possible they would encounter Prince Three's men. Then, whether it's Prince Three's men or Prince Three himself, they might be killed by Prince Four.

This, to Cao Zhen, didn't seem like good news for either the Hundred Peaks Sect or the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty.

It was clear that Prince Three and Prince Four were at odds. If both of them were around, they could fight one another. But if one of them died, the other would quickly become the sole power.

If Prince Three died, then what about the Sun and Moon Demon Sect?

He didn't believe that the people of the Sun and Moon Demon Sect would fight to the death with Prince Four over the death of Prince Three. It was possible that the Sun and Moon Demon Sect would defect to another prince, or maybe they would be directly overtaken by Prince Four.

Then, with both the Sun and Moon Demon Sect and the Red Refinery Demonic Sect under the control of Prince Four, and the two sects collaborating, the trouble would be even greater.

So, it would be best not to let Prince Three die.

It would be best to let Prince Three know that Prince Four wants to kill him, and then have these two princes become irreconcilable enemies.

The current situation, however, is that Prince Four has already prepared to plot against Prince Three, while Prince Three is still focused on gaining the inheritance first. How can this do?

You two should give up on the inheritance first and fight each other!

Or perhaps, should I also enter there and find an opportunity to weaken Prince Four's strength?

If there is a chance, should I deal a heavy blow to Prince Four first?

Of course, if it so happens, and I can catch both Prince Four and Prince Three in one fell swoop, killing them both, naturally that would be even better.

And, there might be a chance for me, once inside, to obtain the final treasure?

Just now, Qian Jiao already said that among these maps, there are real ones and fake ones, so the other map I have could be a fake.

But, as for the map they are currently using, they have been there for so long, it's very likely to be real.

Moreover, there were so many people who went in to scout for us, and I also know the signs secretly left by Qian Jiao and Eclipse Demon.

With such advantages, why shouldn't I pick them up, why not go in!

Just now, I saw Qian Jiao drawing the map.

Cao Zhen quickly made up his mind. After disconnecting from the China Cloud, he swiftly took out a pen and a map from his Qiankun Bag and started to copy it quickly.

With his movements, on the side, Ling Xi, Yan Yourong, and even Linghu Gudu immediately took notice.

Chapter 828:

"Is this a map?" Linghu Gudu asked Cao Zhen in bewilderment, "Where did you get such a map from?"

"Where the map came from is none of your concern; I have my means. What I must say is, the map here contains both truths and lies. We can't be certain about the authenticity of another map we have, but I can assure you that this one is genuine,"

Cao Zhen said, pausing briefly before continuing with a grave expression on his face, "However, if we go to the location outlined on this map, we are likely to encounter formidable foes, extremely powerful

enemies. Once we're there, the chances are we might not have any opportunity to explore but rather be embroiled in conflict continuously.

Actually, you don't have to join us; you can leave on your own."

He intended to take action against the fourth prince and his group, but Linghu Gudu held no grudge against them; there was no need to drag Linghu Gudu into the fray.

Moreover, since Linghu Gudu was someone they had met only upon entering the ruins, Cao Zhen couldn't fully trust him when it came to critical moments; that's why he suggested that Linghu Gudu could leave first.

"Leave? You're basically telling me to get lost," Linghu Gudu blurted out in astonishment, then immediately raised his voice, "You want to discard me after I have served my purpose, but I won't leave. I want you to join me in steering towards the greatest treasure! Besides, danger is desirable. The presence of danger indicates that the potential rewards could be even greater. No more talk needed, I'll go with you."

He had come to realize that his luck had been extraordinarily good since he teamed up with Cao Zhen and the others. Although they encountered dangers, the dangers he faced when alone in the past were much greater and more perilous!

Yet, in such dangerous situations, he wasn't guaranteed to gain anything.

But after joining forces with Cao Zhen and his group, there was always a reward whenever there was danger.

Under these circumstances, he certainly wasn't going to split from Cao Zhen and the others.

"Good," Cao Zhen, hearing Linghu Gudu's decision, looked at him solemnly and said in a deep voice, "Since you still wish to accompany us, and considering there might be a major battle ahead, let me warn you not to show any cowardice or attempt to flee if we truly engage with the enemy."

"Rest assured, I, Linghu Gudu, am not such a person!"

Linghu Gudu patted his chest, assuring them of his integrity.

Li Ke, although not participating in the conversation between the two men, quietly sent a message to Cao Zhen, "Has Dragon senior contacted you? The place we're going to, is the map you drew given to you by Dragon senior?"

"What do you think?"

Cao Zhen did not directly answer Li Ke's question, leaving her to guess.

As a night swiftly passed by unnoticed, Cao Zhen and his companions wasted no time in leaving the cave and followed the map drawn by Cao Zhen, flying in a different direction.

Seven days!

It took seven days for Cao Zhen and his group to finally reach the end of the map.

By that time, Li Ke had fully recovered, and even her aura seemed much stronger than before.

A colossal palace appeared before them, and Cao Zhen led his companions into it.

Soon, they were confronted with a series of branching paths.

"Divided paths?" Linghu Gudu turned back to Cao Zhen and asked, "Should we split up and go our separate ways?"

"No. Together! Look at this door; it could open at any moment. We have no idea how many people have entered this place. If we split up and encounter a powerful enemy, what then?" Cao Zhen firmly shook his head. At present, he had no clue if the fourth prince and his party had entered, nor did he know how

many were with the fourth prince. However, judging by the third prince's entourage and considering what Qian Jiao had said, it was likely that the fourth prince's group was no smaller and no weaker than the third prince's.

If they split up now, what would they do if they ran into the fourth prince's people?

Linghu Gudu nodded repeatedly; staying together was good, he had merely asked casually, to begin with.

Cao Zhen thought for a moment and decided to choose the same branching path the third prince had entered before and followed it.

After all, he could monitor the situation of the Eclipse Demon and his group through China Cloud, so there was no need to enter the path they'd taken. Instead, he was curious to see where the third prince and his men had ventured before.

Upon entering the branching path, he walked steadily forward while also glancing at the stone walls on either side. However, as he reached the end of the corridor and confronted another branching path, he saw no marks left behind.

The third prince had left no marks!

Cao Zhen's brows furrowed tightly. The third prince had said earlier that everyone should leave marks, and when Qian Wu encountered the Eclipse Demon and Qian Jiao before, he had even questioned them about why they hadn't left any marks.

Consequently, it had seemed natural to Cao Zhen that apart from the traitor Qian Jiao, everyone else should have left marks.

He had previously thought it would be straightforward: he'd enter, see the marks, and then retreat and try another path until he found one that the third prince's men hadn't taken. That would have meant the third prince's group had scouted for him, potentially allowing him to claim the biggest treasure there.

But now, the path taken by the third prince also lacked marks.

Was it because the third prince, like Qian Jiao, had left marks elsewhere, or was it something else?

"Let's search around; this is the initial entrance. If anyone has come in here, they might have left marks."

Without hurrying through the current branching passageway, Cao Zhen looked around at his companions and gestured for everyone to search for marks. Despite a lengthy search, no marks were found.

So...

The third prince had truly not left any marks.

Cao Zhen realized that none of these so-called princes were to be underestimated.

The fourth prince had a spy overtly placed in the third prince's company, and the third prince himself didn't seem to trust his subordinates, refraining from leaving any marks at all.

Or perhaps, the only person the third prince truly trusted was the middle-aged man always by his side?

"Well then, no marks; we'll just continue forward."

After considering the situation, Cao Zhen decided not to change his planned route and to press on.

Chapter 829:

Cao Zhen had already known through observing the Eclipse Demon and others via China Cloud Observatory that the place he had entered was like a maze.

However, only after he truly entered did he realize just how many paths there were.

Having seen the markers left by the Eclipse Demon and Qian Jiao, and having known what markers the three princes and others had left behind, he had now been wandering this palace-like maze for seven days.

Li Ke had completely recovered, reaching a peak state even stronger than her previous peak states.

Yet, they were still endlessly wandering here, and during this time, they had not encountered another person.

Perhaps it was because there were too many people who had entered these ruins this time, allowing the Guardian Immortal Imperial Dynasty to regain a brief peace.

During this period, the Hundred Peaks Sect had been very quiet, and even the major cities near the Hundred Peaks Sect had no disturbance.

Inside the Hundred Peaks Sect, a group of disciples were not relaxing but were diligently cultivating.

Meanwhile, the Peak Masters of the various peaks, seeing their own disciples cultivating, headed to the Conference Hall.

Today, the Vice Sect Master urgently gathered everyone for a matter.

In the Conference Hall, Nie Jie, looking at everyone who had arrived, did not hesitate and directly spoke, "The reason for gathering everyone here is that it is time for our Hundred Peaks Sect to select disciples."

As his words fell, the people around quickly responded.

The Hundred Peaks Sect goes out every ten years to the world of mortals to recruit disciples once, and these disciples, after entering the Hundred Peaks Sect, would enter various academies.

However, the internal selection of disciples by the individual peaks of the Hundred Peaks Sect naturally could not happen only once every ten years.

If so, who knows how many disciples would be delayed in the academies.

Generally, the academies themselves would conduct an evaluation and allow the Taoist boys whom they deemed suitable to leave the academies for selection by the people from the various peaks.

Of course, this evaluation was generally divided into two types.

The first type is naturally where the Taoist boys truly possess exceptional talents and, they believe, have nothing more to teach them.

The other situation is when the Taoist boys have grown older.

The children who enter the academies are of various ages. For instance, those Taoist boys who enter the academy at thirteen, if after five or six years they are nearly twenty and still haven't stood out from the academy, even though it's inappropriate to continue keeping them in the academy, they will still be put forward to see if there are peaks interested in choosing them.

Of course, generally, such disciples usually have no peaks choosing them.

After Nie Jie finished speaking to everyone, he spoke in a low voice, "However, this year's situation is special, the Sect Leader has gone out, and moreover, we also have many newly recruited disciples. My suggestion is, perhaps we should wait for the Sect Leader to return before deciding."

As his voice fell, an elderly man in the crowd immediately spoke loudly, "Vice Sect Master Nie, although the Sect Leader is absent, you are here. And while it's not a small matter for each peak to recruit disciples, there really isn't a need to wait for the Sect Leader to decide on this matter."

While he spoke, he also glanced towards several other elderly Peak Masters.

The few Peak Masters, upon making eye contact, immediately realized.

"Right, there's no need to wait for the Sect Leader's return."

"Every year our Hundred Peaks Sect recruits disciples for each peak, it's the usual practice, it wouldn't be good to break this tradition."

"Exactly, ten years ago our Hundred Peaks Sect also recruited a batch of disciples, and that time, we didn't talk about delaying."

"Right, the rules of our Hundred Peaks Sect cannot be changed, we must recruit disciples as soon as possible. No, don't look at me like that, I just don't want to break the rules of our Hundred Peaks Sect."

One by one, the Peak Masters of the Hundred Peaks Sect quickly reacted, each starting to clamor loudly.

Recruiting disciples now, and waiting for the Sect Leader to return to recruit disciples, are definitely not the same!

This year, the Hundred Peaks Sect had recruited quite a few disciples with astonishing talents.

Most of the disciples would be very happy just to be chosen by a peak, but for those genius disciples, it would be the disciples who choose in return.

Whom would those disciples choose?

If they were those disciples, they felt, they would certainly choose Four Treasures Peak.

The Peak Master of Four Treasures Peak is none other than the current Sect Leader of the Hundred Peaks Sect.

Of course, this is not the point. The point is that Peak Master Cao is a reincarnated being of great ability.

Moreover, the cultivation abilities of a few of Peak Master Cao's disciples are also visible to everyone, all being amongst the top during the Minor Era of Inversion of Heaven and Earth.

With such a method of training disciples, if there's a choice, then one must indeed become a disciple of Peak Master Cao.

Last year, when the fame of Four Treasures Peak was not evident and no one knew Peak Master Cao was a reincarnated being of great ability, Peak Master Cao was able to recruit Yi Sheng, who was recognized at that time as the most talented.

Now, really waiting for Peak Master Cao to return, those talented disciples would all likely be recruited into the Hundred Peaks Sect by Peak Master Cao!

They must ensnare those people before Peak Master Cao returns.

This year, there is Liao Youdi, who has a cultivation talent not inferior to Yi Sheng—a High Level Immortal Body!

Of course, if it's just top cultivation talent, that doesn't necessarily mean one will become a genius; if the temperament is poor, one might also end up mediocre.

But everyone has inquired, although Liao Youdi is just a child, she is exceptionally mature and resilient, even ferociously so.

Similarly, with a High Level Immortal Body, everyone even believes that Liao Youdi's temperament is stronger than Yi Sheng's last year.

Chapter 830:

Indeed, many people were more optimistic about Liao Youdi than about Yi Sheng!

Yi Sheng had already achieved the state of Nine Abnormal Phenomenon Golden Pills.

And it took him only one year.

Of course, they were aware that Yi Sheng's rapid breakthrough was undoubtedly aided by the Sect Leader; they didn't have the Sect Leader's abilities, but if they could take Liao Youdi under their wing, they had confidence that within a few years, Liao Youdi would grow tremendously.

Considering Liao Youdi's temperament and talent, many Peak Masters privately believed that for Liao Youdi, achieving the Ten Different Phenomena of Golden Elixir Great Perfection wouldn't be an issue.

Last year's Yi Sheng, also a High Level Immortal Body, didn't have everyone convinced that he would definitely reach Perfect Completion Golden Core.

Because, at that time, Yi Sheng was truly too arrogant, too confident, to the point where 'confident' wasn't enough to describe him—it should be 'conceited'!

But Liao Youdi was different, they had never seen such a resilient child in all these years.

If they could take such a Disciple under their guidance, it would surely bring glory to their Peak!

Besides, aside from Liao Youdi, there were many other geniuses this time.

The only issue was that Liao Youdi had been at the Academy for less than a year, and they feared the Academy's headmaster might not let her leave.

Nie Jie, watching the crowd speaking one after another, wanted to delay the selection of genius Disciples, but ultimately, he gave up.

He couldn't refuse everyone on his own.

"If that's the case, then two days from now, each Peak can head to the various Academies to select Disciples."

The assembly dispersed quickly, but the Peak Masters of the various Peaks didn't truly wait two days before heading to the Academies.

What a joke—if they waited two more days, the opportunity would be cold; they were going now.

Heavenly Swan Academy, the Heavenly Swan Academy was among the top-ranked Academies of Hundred Peaks Sect. In the past, when the Hundred Peaks Sect Peaks selected Disciples, some Peak Masters would privately ask him to say a few good words about their Peak to convince certain geniuses to join them.

But he had never encountered a situation like this, where crowds of people came to their Heavenly Swan Academy.

The headmaster of Heavenly Swan Academy, upon recognizing the guests, was stunned.

"Blue Peak Master, Huang Feng Peak Master, Ma Peak Master... my esteemed Peak Masters, what brings you to our Heavenly Swan Academy?"

He knew that it was nearly time for the Peaks to select Disciples, and it was normal for some Peak Masters to make friendly overtures. But the problem was, this time, too many had come.

At a glance, there were over fifty Sub-Peak Masters standing before him, and he was simply dumbfounded. What was going on?

"What brings all you Peak Masters here...?"

Among the crowd, one Peak Master spoke with a smile, "Headmaster, we're about to select Disciples for our Peaks, so we thought to come and inquire about any talented Disciples in the Academy."

At this, other Peak Masters joined in immediately.

"Right, headmaster. Your Heavenly Swan Academy has always been top-notch in our Hundred Peaks Sect."

"Headmaster, I remember, our Academy took in a new Disciple this year, named Liao Youdi. With her qualifications, she should be selected through the examination this year, right?"

"I know about Liao Youdi. If her talent can't pass the examination, then who can?"

The headmaster, hearing the words of the crowd, immediately realized who they were here for.

But the problem was...

"Esteemed ones, Liao Youdi certainly possesses remarkable talent, and she learns extremely quickly no matter what it is; however, she's just been with our Academy for less than a year. She hasn't learned many things yet, and I didn't allow her to participate in the examination this year."

No sooner had the headmaster finished his statement than the surrounding Peak Masters became anxious!

"Now, see here, headmaster, this isn't right. Why prevent her from taking the examination?"

"Yes, Liao Youdi isn't that young. You might think a year isn't much, but at her age, a year's delay can have a big impact!"

"Headmaster, it doesn't matter if she hasn't been taught everything yet, we can teach her. Such a genius should be allowed to take the examination early and join our Peaks!"

"Exactly! Headmaster, you have to let her go!"

As soon as they heard the headmaster say that Liao Youdi wouldn't participate in the examination this year, they all became frantic, joking aside. Why were they in such a rush to select Disciples now if not to take advantage of the Sect Leader's absence and coax Liao Youdi?

With the Sect Leader not around, Hundred Peaks Sect had only three Disciples.

Among them, Xiang Ziyu, the eldest, was always occupied with cultivating various Divine Skills and certainly had no time.

The remaining two, Bei Yan and Yi Sheng, were both quite young; they couldn't possibly be outcompeted by others!

But the problem was, if they waited until next year, after the Sect Leader and his entourage returned, how could they compete then?

So, they must make Liao Youdi participate in the examination this year, be released this year for the Peaks to select her!

Even some hot-tempered and impatient Peak Masters directly raised their voices in protest.

"What kind of genius is she to be wasted in the Academy? What can your Academy possibly teach her? Better to release her quickly!"

The headmaster of Heavenly Swan Academy, upon hearing this, immediately showed a displeased expression. What did they mean by that? Did they look down on their Heavenly Swan Academy?

I would like to see who's so bold, and just wait—when your Peaks are recruiting Disciples, I will... ah... the Head of Sacred Fire Peak, uh, never mind.