

Apocalypse 1001

Chapter 1001

Laura took out a bronze monocular from her backpack and muttered: “Monocular, please show me who’s chasing after us”

She raised her monocular and looked towards a random direction.

Ye Fei Li asked in confusion: “Your majesty, the direction you’re looking—”

“Shh!”

Laura signaled him to stay put.

After looking for a while into her monocular, she quickly spoke: “The person at the helm of the ship is the chairman of the 900 million World Layers Airship Association— his ship was recognized publicly as the fastest”

“There are several dozen expert sailors on the ship, constantly taking turns using their abilities to help the ship increase its speed further”

“If we continue with our normal speed, we’ll be caught up in about half a day’s time”

After she finished, Laura put the monocular away and looked up at Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan nodded: “Got it, do we have a relatively fast ship?”

Laura explained: “Because I’m the empress, most of the airships I own are actually very beautiful, and even filled to the brim with safety features— unfortunately, none of them would be useful against this monster we’re facing”

“Because they were focused on safety, the Bramble Bird Empress’ airships aren’t very fast, is that right?”
Gu Qing Shan smiled and said.

Laura revealed a mischievous smile as she reached her hand into her backpack.

“A ship bought by the royal family would naturally need to focus on safety above all else, but as for things that I personally bought...”

She pulled out a piece of spatial sealing paper and threw it to the sky.

The sealing paper exploded.

A teardrop-shaped red shuttle appeared in front of them.

Zhang Ying Hao whistled.

This shuttle had a very good sense of aesthetic.

Laura explained: “There are no safety features attached, this ship was designed solely focused on the aspect of speed. A joint product of the top 5 shipwrights from the 900 million World Layers Airship Association, it took an entire year for them to finish”

Zhang Ying Hao asked: "How's the speed?"

Laura shrugged: "It's twice as fast as their ship— I would occasionally race against some guys my age, but I always win"

"If that's the case, every time you use it to race, your safety wasn't guaranteed at all?" Gu Qing Shan mused.

Laura said without care: "At the time, monsters like the Soul Shrieker didn't exist in the 900 million World Layers, and I could call upon the Bramble Great Tree at any time, so there was nothing that could threaten me"

"Do you like playing with airships?" Zhang Ying Hao asked.

"I do, both collecting them and racing with them— they help me release stress"

As she talked about airship racing, Laura happily recounted: "When that ship was created, I immediately got news of it and summoned many expert shipwrights to help me craft a personal ship"

"I am THE Bramble Bird Empress, so there's no way I would allow anyone to win against me in a race"

"I have a total of 5 airships that are faster than that ship of theirs, each cost as much as several worlds"

Laura was very naturally stating that as if showing off some of her precious toys.

She wasn't boasting about them at all.

For her, this was just a hobby, a way for her to relax.

There was no need to boast or compare with anyone else.

—because there was no such thing as a person that could actually compare to her when it came to this.

Gu Qing Shan said: "Good, then the only worry we have right now is that they have too many people that could increase the speed of their airship, this is the only threat to us"

Ye Fei Li patted his own chest: "Don't worry, just leave that to us"

"Hm, let's hurry up then and be on our way" Zhang Ying Hao also said.

At this point, Boss had recovered a bit and was able to move again, so the four of them boarded the airship.

The ship's interior wasn't too big, only a space of several dozen meters squared for everyone, which paled in comparison to [The Empress].

It could be seen that this airship had given up on a lot of its original functions for the sake of speed.

Laura sat behind the controls and skillfully piloted the ship.

With a sonic boom, the airship shot from the tattered [The Empress] ship to the sky and swiftly entered the space vortex, quickly proceeding on its way.

Time passed.

Laura once again pulled out her monocular and looked behind her, then said: "There are two real experts among them, whenever it was their turn to pilot, they would quickly shorten the distance between our ships"

Zhang Ying Hao spoke up first: "Then it's time for us to act"

He reached his hand out and started drawing Cards from the void of space.

Very quickly, he had drawn a total of five Cards.

"Ah... Let me see, here"

He drew one Card out and placed it against the floor.

This was a Card with a shadowy rune on its back that depicted a pair of floating wings on its front.

Ye Fei Li curiously asked: "Are you going to use Cards to help the ship fly faster?"

Zhang Ying Hao told him: "This is the Assassin deck's Wings of Takeoff, capable of increasing the speed for any implement"

He pressed his hand against the Card and poured power into it.

The Card vanished into the floor.

The airship began to speed up!

Laura continued to pilot the airship and glanced at the speedometer.

"The speed went up by 50%, nice!"

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She happily praised him.

"But it won't last for very long, this Card can only take effect continuously for 10 minutes, after which it will need some time to cool down" Zhang Ying Hao explained.

"10 minutes? That's quite decent, enough to help us widen the gap" Laura told him.

Ye Fei Li crossed his arms: "How impressive, and here I thought I'd be the one to actually help us out"

Gu Qing Shan smiled: "Cards usually contain certain unique combinations of Laws. Fei Li, you'll see a lot of strange and unusual things within the 900 million World Layers, so don't always judge things the same way you're used to"

"Noted" Ye Fei Li nodded.

10 minutes quickly went by.

The airship gradually returned to its original speed.

Ye Fei Li declared: "Now it's my turn"

He pulled the Forgetting River Soul Flaying Hook out and muttered: “My followers, I need your power”

A faint light began to drift from the khopesh, detached from it, and manifested as faint figures.

“These are... wandering souls?” Gu Qing Shan was surprised.

“That’s right, they’re all recently deceased from the incident earlier. After borrowing my power to accomplish their dying wishes, they weren’t willing to forget everything and reincarnate, so they willingly followed me” Ye Fei Li explained.

Several dozen wandering souls turned more solid and tangible.

They all bowed respectfully towards Ye Fei Li.

“Because all of these souls had unique characteristics or abilities, I was also willing to take them with me, having a helping hand or two is always better than not” Ye Fei Li continued.

Ye Fei Li pointed at one of the souls

“Jim, I remember that you had an ability to make anything lighter, you’ll be responsible for lightening this ship’s load”

“Everyone else stick to the outside of the ship and do what you can to help the ship fly faster”

After Ye Fei Li finished, the souls scattered and acted as Ye Fei Li ordered.

The ship began to speed up again.

Laura checked the speedometer and asked: “The speed was increased by 20%— my Duke, how long will this ability of yours last?”

Ye Fei Li replied: “Half an hour”

“That’s very decent, although it’s not quite as much as Zhang Ying Hao’s ability, half an hour is quite the long duration, at least, it would guarantee that our distance with the Soul Shrieker wouldn’t be shortened”

At this point, Boss’ book hovered in the air and drew everyone’s attention.

The book flipped open to display several lines of text:

[Gu Qing Shan, you must understand something clearly— the greater our distance with the Soul Shrieker is, the more time you would have to look for that Card as we make it to our destination]

[We need to speed up as much as we can and leave the Soul Shrieker far behind to give you ample time to search for that Card]

After reading that, Gu Qing Shan nodded: “I think so as well, that’s why it’ll be my turn to speed up the ship next”

Saying so, he walked to the entrance of the ship, opened the cabin door, and went outside.

The cabin door was then closed behind him.

Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li exchanged glances.

“What is he planning to do?” Zhang Ying Hao asked.

“How would I know” Ye Fei Li replied.

Laura opened the ship’s outer surveillance camera, closely focused her attention on it, and chimed in: “Usually, things that big bro Qing Shan does never make sense to others until the very last moment”

Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li nodded sympathetically.

Outside the ship.

Gu Qing Shan released his inner sight.

He found somewhere to hold onto and grabbed it tightly with his hands.

The airship was traveling so fast that he needed to use spirit energy to guard himself in order to not be affected by the strong winds within the space vortex.

Gu Qing Shan stuck close to the hull of the ship, then looked closely at the War God UI, reading the description of a certain Skill:

[Shadow Shift: Divine Skill, instant cast. You can switch positions with any object or entity within the range of your inner sight]

[Note: This Skill is a Law-grade Divine Skill, no living being can resist it, no barrier or sealing techniques can hinder it]

Reading this, Gu Qing Shan recalled his past battles.

—back on my homeworld, when we ambushed the Pope, I used [Shadow Shift] to switch places with Empress Varona while also taking Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li with me.

In other words, this Divine Skill isn’t limited to me alone, as long as I’m in contact with something, I’d be able to teleport together with it.

Which means...

Gu Qing Shan fully released his inner sight.

With his cultivation at Paragon realm, his inner sight could easily cover the distance of over 10,000km.

“There!”

Gu Qing Shan muttered.

About 9,000km in front of the airship, a skeleton was silently drifting through the space vortex, being randomly swept along with the winds of the space vortex.

Gu Qing Shan enveloped it with his inner sight and activated [Shadow Shift].

Sha!

A skeleton appeared where he originally was.

9,000km away, Gu Qing Shan appeared together with the ship!!!

Chapter 1002

9,000 km.

A single [Shadow Shift] moved the distance of 9,000km.

Indeed, such a distance wasn't anything special within the endless space vortex.

But Gu Qing Shan was no longer the Rejuvenation realm cultivator that he was in Shen Wu world.

He was now at Paragon realm.

During the Age of Old, he would be equal to any Divinity.

The cost of [Shadow Shift] was nonexistent to his current self.

The airship continued to fly through the space vortex.

Within the boundless blue sea of elemental energy, the ship carried them all forward.

As they approached a beautiful wavy silk-like outer ring of a certain world, the airship vanished at once, reappearing on the other side of the void.

The void was immeasurably deep, unable to imagine using common sense.

——even a small fragmented rock that stood still within the space vortex might contain 7-8 worlds within it.

While an entire humongous nebula might not contain any signs of life at all.

A single leaf was a single world, and an entire galaxy might also be just a single world.

The concepts of 'big' and 'small' were useless within the void, incomparable to one another.

These numerous worlds exuded energy fluctuation that clashed and acted on one another, twisting, gathering, erupting, scattering, ravaging, and manifesting as wind.

This was the essence of the never-ending winds of the space vortex.

Gu Qing Shan continued extending his inner sight outward in order to search for the next thing that he would be able to switch positions with.

——there were numerous things that were both useless and unimaginable precious within the space vortex, so this wasn't very hard.

The only thing Gu Qing Shan had to do was choose one that was the furthest away, then confirm that it was just an item and not an entire world.

He wasn't strong enough to switch places with an entire world just yet.

He found a tattered chest, wrapped around it with this inner sight to confirm that it wasn't a world before activating [Shadow Shift]!

And they continued forward this way.

[Shadow Shift]!

[Shadow Shift]!

[Shadow Shift]!

The airship was constantly moving forward through the void of space in a blinking fashion.

Inside the ship.

After watching the surveillance footage for a while, Zhang Ying Hao turned around, took out a marching bed, and put it on the ground.

He then took out a blanket, took off his shoes and jacket, then settled into the bed with the black cat.

“I’m sleepy, wake me after he’s done showing off”

Zhang Ying Hao yawned.

“Hey, is that really ok?” Ye Fei Li asked.

Zhang Ying Hao replied: “With an ability like that, the Soul Shrieker wouldn’t catch up to him even after a year”

Meow!

The black cat meowed out in agreement.

The man and cat covered themselves in the blanket and went to sleep.

Ye Fei Li scowled: “But aren’t you relaxing a bit too much, who knows what we’re going to run into? It’s better to maintain some caution”

While he was saying that, Ye Fei Li took out his game console, skillfully turned it on, chose a saved file, and started playing.

Laura sighed: “My Duke, your facial expression and actions don’t match”

She turned to watch the surveillance footage, observing Gu Qing Shan’s actions, occasionally took out the bronze monocular to check the Soul Shrieker’s distance.

“It seems we’re getting further and further away” Laura muttered.

All of a sudden, the door of the cabin opened and Gu Qing Shan walked back in.

Laura was surprised and asked: “Why did you go back in?”

Gu Qing Shan mused a bit and replied: “I just remembered I have something to deal with”

Laura checked the surveillance footage to see that Shannu had taken his place.

Just like Gu Qing Shan before, Shannu was using [Shadow Shift] to constantly warp the airship forward.

“That sword of yours, hah, I’m feeling both envy and admiration” Laura told him.

“I also feel the same” Gu Qing Shan smiled.

“So, what did you have to do?”

“I just thought that there was something I need to prepare ahead of time— I assume that the map you have of the 900 million World Layers must be the most complete one”

“It should be, there shouldn’t be anyone who could make a more detailed map”

Saying so, Laura took out a silver metal cube.

She pressed a button on it.

A map was then projected into the air.

Laura pointed at a moving dot on the map and said: “This is the map of the nearest 300 million World Layers, and this dot right here is our airship”

“As we’re currently in the middle of 94,000 elemental worlds, the elemental pressure that completely filled the void is causing our speed to greatly decrease, fortunately, your [Shadow Shift] is able to bypass all of that”

“After going through this area, we’ll run into an area of 599 anti-magic worlds, all of which were destroyed due to the lack of moderation in the usage of forbidden magic. That region of the space vortex is extremely stagnant, but since my airship is coated in a unique material, combined with your ability, it shouldn’t be much trouble for us to make it through”

Gu Qing Shan observed the map and carefully listened.

“Wait”

He walked over to Zhang Ying Hao’s marching bed and called him: “Get up, Ying Hao”

“What is it?” Zhang Ying Hao asked.

Meow?

The black cat also peeked his head out.

“There’s something important”

Gu Qing Shan said very seriously.

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“For me or for the black cat?” Zhang Ying Hao asked.

“For the black cat, but I need you to translate” Gu Qing Shan replied.

The black cat called out:

Meow meow meow, meow meow meow meow

Gu Qing Shan asked: "What is it saying?"

"—he said that he wants to eat after this"

"No problem"

Everyone walked up to the projected map.

"Black cat, tell me where our destination is" Gu Qing Shan looked at the map and asked.

Laura realized: "Ah, so you wanted to know where exactly we're heading to in order to make prior preparations"

"That's right" Gu Qing Shan looked at the black cat.

The black cat looked up at the map and called out:

Meow meow meow!

"He said to expand the range displayed on the map a bit" Zhang Ying Hao translated for them.

Laura pushed a few buttons on the silver cube.

The map expanded to show more areas of the void and the worlds on it.

Meow meow!

"He said that it's not enough"

Laura zoomed out again.

Meow meow meow!

"He said to zoom out again"

"Got it"

Finally, the map was zoomed out to the black cat's requirement.

The black cat looked at the map for a while and pointed his claw at a certain spot.

Everyone turned to that area

—it was a completely dark area of the void.

"Wait a minute, why isn't there anything there?" Laura doubtfully asked.

Zhang Ying Hao chuckled and replied: "Perhaps it's a hidden world. Such worlds are usually only opened to people from the underworld and won't arbitrarily give out their locational maps to anyone"

Laura believed that and asked: "Then, what now?"

Zhang Ying Hao replied: "Don't worry, I have the map and proof of entry for most underworld areas"

He pulled out a black metal cube and pressed it.

Sha!

Another screen of light was displayed.

This map was basically the same as Laura's map, except for a few small differences.

As they took a look at it, they found that the area where the black cat pointed at was also blank on this map.

"Strange, why isn't there anything in my underworld map as well?" Zhang Ying Hao felt a bit embarrassed.

Gu Qing Shan mused: "There is strong wind constantly blowing within the void. If the Card is simply floating there, it wouldn't stay in place for too long"

"In other words, there might be something at that location"

"But our maps displayed nothing in that area" Zhang Ying Hao replied.

Everyone couldn't understand.

Ye Fei Li sighed: "If it's not marked on these maps, we probably wouldn't be able to find out anything about it"

Gu Qing Shan's eyes twitched slightly, gesturing to Zhang Ying Hao and said: "No, we still have Boss with us. Not only is he strong, but he's also very knowledgeable, so he might know something we don't"

Zhang Ying Hao understood and scoffed: "Him? He couldn't even get the ship to speed up, let's not ask him about any map"

They quickly got their results.

Boss' book hovered to where they were immediately.

It opened to display a few lines of text:

[It's nothing but a mysterious zone, I really don't understand why you'd make such a big deal out of it]

[My powers have been depleted, so I only need to borrow a bit of origin power from the soul to display it]

Gu Qing Shan answered right away: "No problem"

Everyone hurriedly carried the maps in front of Boss.

Boss stiffly raised his arm and put it up against the book, silently muttering an incantation.

Once the incantation was finished, Boss turned to Gu Qing Shan and nodded.

Gu Qing Shan put his hand on Boss' back and slowly poured Soul Points in.

Being infused with the power of Soul Points, the book in Boss' hand suddenly flew up, crashed against the projected maps in the air before taking all the images in.

A few moments later, the book opened by itself in the air.

Lines of text were displayed:

[Discovered the unreachable place of mysteries, the home of vows and secret protection, home for the descendants of the ancient Deities, unique sealed world]

[Calming Soul Country]

[This world is in an eternally sealed and hidden state, without the correct method, it would never open and allow you entry]

As soon as those words finish manifesting on the book, it hurriedly displayed another series of words below:

[Oh no! Damn it!]

[I was too careless! Why is it this place!?!]

[Hurry! Give me a few Soul Points drinks, right now!!!]

Sensing the urgency in those words, everyone was surprised.

Boss had always been a calm and collected person, even if he would fall unconscious at the next second, he would still act full of pride and confidence.

—*—why is he suddenly so frantic?*

Chapter 1003

Ye Fei Li didn't dare to hesitate and swiftly manifested a canned drink, opened it, then pressed it up against Boss' mouth.

Boss opened his mouth wide and drank the entire can at once.

He struggled to mouth a few words: "Hurry, more!"

Ye Fei Li manifested several more canned drinks, all of which were drunk by Boss in a single gulp.

When he was barely able to talk properly again, Boss stopped drinking.

He hurriedly told them: "Listen to me, the name 'Soul Calming Country' itself is a protected secret that cannot be revealed. And just now, I accidentally revealed it without meaning to"

"Whenever those words are spoken outside of Soul Calming Country, a secret art established to protect that place will be activated"

"The ancient Demis of Soul Calming Country will notice and quickly send people to check the situation"

"Although I have status worthy of their respect, my current strength doesn't reach the same level. Which means we're currently in extreme danger!"

"Gu Qing Shan, you're a Paragon realm cultivator, according to maximum Soul Points standards, you should have about 100,000 Soul Points right now, correct?"

Gu Qing Shan glanced at his remaining Soul Points value—

Without being restrained by the maximum Soul Points limit, he still had about 2,900,000 Soul Points left.

“That’s right, 100,000 Soul Points” Gu Qing Shan nodded.

Boss urged him: “Quickly, let me borrow all of your Soul Points, otherwise we’re all going to die!”

Gu Qing Shan went behind Boss without hesitation.

He put his hand on Boss’ shoulder and sent 100,000 Soul Points over right away.

Receiving these Soul Points, Boss’ body began to exude a faint glow of dignity.

“How is it?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

“Should be enough to gloss this over— don’t any of you say a single word from this point onwards, damn it, this is a very troublesome matter” Boss said in irritation.

Everyone exchanged glances, recognizing the worry in Boss’ tone.

It seems strange.

Even when he went up against the Soul Shrieker’s Holy Retribution, his expression didn’t change a single bit.

So why is he in such distress over revealing the name of a certain location?

While everyone was in doubt, their expressions changed.

—something seemed to have silently appeared inside this airship.

Boss showed a solemn expression on his face and spoke with a silent and graceful tone, emphasizing each word: “Envoy from Soul Calming Country, why have you come before me?”

Everyone looked behind them.

Various shadows appeared on the ground, slowly rising to form the visage of people in grey cloaks.

These men donned full sets of armor, exuding vast power from their bodies. As soon as they appeared, they immediately restrained everyone here.

Gu Qing Shan, Laura, Zhang Ying Hao, and Ye Fei Li all had weapons pointing at them.

The weapons emanated killing intent, clearly expressing a certain thing—

You move, you die.

The entire ship turned absolutely still.

“General, there are no enemies” someone reported.

At this point, boundless holy light appeared from all around, gathering at the center of the ship and manifested as a solemn middle-aged man.

His eyes were sharp, glaring straight at Boss.

“The Exiled Apostle, I had believed that even while you’re corrupted, you would still uphold your responsibility of protecting the secret”

The middle-aged man who was called ‘General’ said.

His tone carried a certain sense of unknown chill, giving off constant boiling killing intent as if he was ready to act at any time.

“I have always upheld my responsibility” Boss calmly replied.

The General looked around and scoffed: “Revealing Soul Calming Country to these mortals, you call his upholding your responsibilities?”

A gloomy presence started to drift from Boss’ body, sweeping across the entire airship.

The shadowy men slightly twitched, apparently anxious.

Gu Qing Shan could even hear a small mutter: “Abyssal aura, despicable!”

Boss glared back at the General without a single pause, his tone becoming cold:

“Watch your words, General”

He raised his hand.

A mass of grey fog appeared out of nowhere on top of his palm, manifesting into the shape of a skull.

Raising the skull in his hand, his gaze and chin slightly turned upwards, calmly continuing: “You should understand, your identity is far less than enough to question me— or are you saying you wish to have a taste of the Abyss’ corruption?”

The General’s glare turned intense.

Every bone in his body was cracking, popping as if it was trying to restrain some sort of burning rage.

“Greatest Above the Crowned Star, I know of your noble status”

The General’s voice suddenly raised in anger: “But according to the ancient covenant, you should be protecting the Calming Soul Country after your exile! And yet you’ve never appeared to do so— even less than a single time!”

Boss coldly chuckled: “There are many places that require my protection, do I perhaps need to swing by every day to be considered protecting you? Do you take me for a house dog?”

The General didn’t dare to reply to this and turned away, saying: “The Elder council has gathered, and they have been notified of your violation of the ancient oath”

Boss’ gaze moved away and turned towards the empty space as he spoke: “Elders of Calming Soul Country, I know you are watching this place, and so I shall inform you clearly of the situation here”

“Although you are thoroughly protected by the ancient power, that had also made your grasp on contemporary news very lacking”

“The Era of [Chaos] has completely descended, the parallel world Apocalypse is taking over the Abyss, endlessly expanding into the space vortex, as the guardian of Calming Soul Country, I came here specifically to notify you of this”

Silence.

A few moments later.

An old man’s voice sounded: [Your notification was indeed necessary, as it is your duty, but then why did you violate the oath and reveal the name of Calming Soul Country?]

Another dried, husky voice continued:

[You should know, once the name is uttered, certain entities within the endless void will surely discover the existence of this place— this is your dereliction]

Boss immediately replied: “Incorrect! It is to uphold my oath that I spoke the name Calming Soul Country to these few individuals”

This time, an old woman’s voice sounded, doubtfully questioning:

[To uphold your oath? Pray tell, what do you mean?]

Boss glanced at Gu Qing Shan’s group, bit his lips, and answered straight: “According to the ancient oath and covenant, I must protect the secret of Calming Soul Country, guard the Demis of Calming Soul Country, as well as search for any and all methods for Calming Soul Country to grow, is that not the case?”

[We admit this is the case, please state directly why you had violated the oath]

Boss insisted: “I did not violate this oath. Today, I came here first to report news of the outer world. Secondly, to follow the ancient oath, find and bring these unique talents to Calming Soul Country, thus help Calming Soul Country grow”

They went completely silent.

The General was the first to chuckle: “Just these people here?”

He released his divine pressure and swept through Gu Qing Shan, Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, and Laura.

Gu Qing Shan only took a step back.

Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li were both unable to handle it, both forced to their knees by the almost solid pressure, unable to move a finger.

Laura had to use both hands to prop herself up, dripping in cold sweat.

She was so uncomfortable she could scream.

And then a voice suddenly spoke:

“Be a bit gentle with a little girl, will you?”

Gu Qing Shan had walked over and shielded Laura.

Receiving his protection, Laura felt relieved.

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The General smirked and mocked: “Huh? A mere insect dared——”

Gu Qing Shan cut him off and casually said: “Don’t think that you can bully a child just because you have a bit of strength. If you say one more word, I will have you die right here”

The General froze, his eyes suddenly opened wide.

No one had ever dared to threaten me in front of so many people!

He has a death wish!

He grinned and was about to pull his weapon, but was suddenly cut off by a sharp screech.

[Halt!]

The General froze again, this time his pressure vanishing entirely.

He bowed to the void of space and respectfully spoke: “Elder, this mortal was disrespectful towards me. According to our Law, mortals cannot shame the Divine, he must die”

Clear whispers of discussion were resounding from the void of space.

Obviously, Gu Qing Shan’s sudden intervention had caused the people being called Elders to notice him.

They were hesitant about something.

Gu Qing Shan ignored all of that, and simply helped Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li up.

“Pitiful mortal, do you really think you’d be able to protect them if I acted right now?” the General said with a grim expression,

Gu Qing Shan stood in front of the three of them, turned to the General and said without changing his expression: “If you act, you will die. Believe me, I don’t joke about these matters”

Watching him, the General was becoming more and more doubtful.

This person is nothing special.

But he dared to declare such a thing in a fully restrained environment.

Unless he’s insane, that meant that he truly had confidence.

Apparently thinking of something, the General stopped talking.

The Elders were still busy discussing from the void of space.

Boss also glanced at Gu Qing Shan; a bit doubtful.

He didn’t know what was going on either.

A few moments later.

A new voice came from the council of Elders:

[Greatest Above the Crowned Star, you have brought to us one with a secret identity]

[As we looked through the source of his secret, we discovered a certain familiar presence]

Another voice spoke up: [Indeed, we can continue our search and reveal this true identity, but we did not— as we discovered that his secret is being protect by a personage that must not be revealed within the void, we cannot afford to offend that noble one]

Another voice followed up, and continued: [Perhaps they are one of the four Pillar Gods, or perhaps another Lord of the void— in the end, there is indeed to issue with you bring this person of noble status to Calming Soul Country, we have approved of this]

[But why did you bring the other mortals as well? I hope you can clear this up for us]

Boss was silently surprised.

He sneaked a glance at Gu Qing Shan.

—this youngster actually has someone protecting his secret in the shadow. If I knew that beforehand, I wouldn't have been in so much of a hurry to come up with this excuse.

However, the rest of them do actually need my help.

Boss cleared his throat and loudly declared: "Firstly, I must declare that I did not bring them, but was actually upholding the oath"

He walked up to Zhang Ying Hao and patted his shoulder, explaining to the void: "This person managed to find Calming Soul Country— ignoring all of your defensive means"

[Truly?] an old voice questioned.

Boss gestured to Zhang Ying Hao to show them his black cat.

"Do you see it? An extremely rare sentient Mystic-type searcher, I know that he should be of great value within the Calming Soul Country"

No one replied from the void.

— as if silently admitting this.

Boss then walked next to Ye Fei Li and pointed at him: "This person is capable of allowing souls to become tangible, and then even heal my wounds— a true Healer, I believe that is enough to prove my point"

Silence, once again.

Finally, Boss turned to Laura.

"And this little girl, do not look down on her"

The Bramble Bird Empress is able to obtain treasures from the void at will.

*—no matter where it is, this ability would be most valuable, most worthy of attention, and most useful.
Especially in a place like the Calming Soul Country!*

Boss was feeling boastful.

As he was about to introduce her, Gu Qing Shan walked up.

“Don’t introduce Laura, otherwise she would be under close scrutiny”

Gu Qing Shan sent his voice.

Boss froze.

You’re telling me not to say it just as I’m about to introduce her?

But it makes sense, these Demis are all very powerful.

Now that my powers are lacking and Gu Qing Shan’s group haven’t fully matured, if the Demis know that Laura had the ability to collect treasures, it would be next to impossible to protect her.

As Boss was thinking of another excuse, Gu Qing Shan had already stood by Laura and spoke to the void: “As the Apostle had said, no one can look down on her, because she is my little sister, and she has always been by my side”

Saying so, Gu Qing Shan picked Laura up and placed her on his left shoulder.

Laura froze.

What a familiar sight this is.

Just like how we fought alongside one another in Triste’s collection world.

He knows that I like to sit on the left shoulder.

Because I told him that I used to always sit on my father’s shoulder when he was still alive.

As for the reason he cut off Boss’ introduction, it was simple to understand with a bit of thought.

Sure enough, the void of space continued to be silent for a while.

Until another old voice spoke up again:

[Hm, these people truly are worthy of living in Calming Soul Country and contributing to Calming Soul Country]

[Since this was the case, you may come to us]

With this light declaration, the armored men lowered their weapons, even the General could only accept the order.

Boss scoffed and spoke to the void of space: “After such a long journey, it turns out I’m being thought of as a traitor, am I?”

The intent of these words was clear.

Since he did not violate the oath, and was also contributing both information and talents to Calming Soul Country, he should not have received this treatment.

After all, he was still the Abyssal King!

The old female voice gently told him: [It was our fault for accusing you wrongly. Our only Apostle, please come and rest, we shall make up for our mistake]

After a bit of consideration, Boss cautiously nodded.

Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li exchanged glances.

Seems like we passed.

The two of them thought of this at the same time.

Laura sat still on Gu Qing Shan's left shoulder, lowering her head without letting anyone see her expression.

She was trying to hold back her tears so that it wouldn't flow.

Chapter 1004

The airship.

The whispers of discussion that sounded from the void of space had already subsided.

The fully-armored soldiers whose bodies emanated intense power slowly retreated into the shadow and vanished from the airship.

The General was the last person to leave.

He stared closely at Boss and said with an unchanged expression on his face: "Continue flying forward through 163 worlds, we will prepare to open the barrier at that area to grant your airship entry"

"This is in order to prevent anyone from discovering our true coordinates"

"I hope you can understand"

"Very well, I'll trouble you— but you really should've had this attitude from the very beginning, I would've bestowed a small gift to you for your troubles, but regretfully, you ruined it" Boss appeared regretfully.

The General seemed to want to say something but held himself back.

He turned around, took a few steps, and vanished from the airship completely.

Everything around them returned to silence.

Hiii— -- hoh— --

Boss inhaled deeply, then exhaled.

He dropped down on his butt and called out: "Drink! Give me a drink!"

Ye Fei Li manifested a Soul Points drink and handed it over.

Boss drank the entire thing all at once, slowly dragged himself on the ground until he sat supporting his back with the wall.

“Listen, we don’t have much time. Before we arrive at that place, I need to explain to you what’s going on”

Boss’ tone became hurried:

“That place is made up of mortals, Demis, the council of Elders, and the Deities. The ones with the highest authority are the Deities, but they very rarely show up, so those truly in charge are actually the council of Elders”

“Under the Elders, every Demi will awaken a Divine Skill on the day they are born— this is the natural-born ability of a Demi, which is also the main difference between them and mortals”

“Because of this, you shouldn’t act too arrogant, otherwise my current self won’t have the power to save you”

Boss glanced at Gu Qing Shan and said: “Especially you”

Gu Qing Shan smiled to gloss things over and asked: “So Deities actually exist?”

Boss replied: “Not before, the return of the Deities only occurred a few ten thousand years ago”

Ye Fei Li was fascinated by his description of Demis and spoke emotionally: “Awakening a Divine Skill since birth— that’s incredible, so the majority of people in that place are Demis?”

Boss shook his head: “No, the majority of them are humans, as well as some other rare creatures. Demis only make up a third of their total population, but they’re the strongest”

Zhang Ying Hao has been wondering something for a while now, so he tried asking: “Which Deity are they the descendants of?”

Boss asked: “Do you know of the Seven Gods?”

“You mean the seven Daemons of the Strife Zones?”

“Yup, they’re those guys’ descendants”

“Where did the seven Daemons come from? And are they dead or alive?”

“These two questions of yours are quite decent” Boss praised him, then explained: “It’s unsure whether or not those seven Deities are still alive, but they all escaped here when the Inner Plane was destroyed”

Gu Qing Shan pursued the topic: “Then, what about the four Pillar Gods? Did they also escape from the Inner Plane?”

“No, the reason why they’re called the Pillar Gods is that the four Gods of Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind rule over this entire space vortex, they are the original Gods of the void”

Gu Qing Shan went silent.

Who would've thought, the situation in the space vortex would turn out to be so complicated?

—-*the seven Daemons came from the Inner Plane.*

—-*the Bygone Era humans arrived from a parallel world, escaping here in order to seek refuge.*

Only the four Pillar Gods originally belong to this void and are its true rulers.

Laura suddenly spoke up: "Our ship is being caught within a certain force, the space around us has also begun to distort, we'd most likely enter a spatial warp state very soon"

Boss carefully informed everyone again: "Keep my words just now in mind—- that location has gotten far stronger than anything you've ever seen; it isn't a place for you to act as you pleased. From now on, you must watch everything you say and do, otherwise, you might just be inviting your own deaths"

Everyone responded affirmatively.

As soon as they did, an opening appeared in the middle of the void just a bit diagonal of their airship.

The opening exuded an immense suction force that enveloped the ship and caused it to vanish from the void.

Meanwhile, from Gu Qing Shan's group perspectives, the ship had instead begun to slow down, gradually moving forward within a world of blue.

"Look!"

Laura pointed to the screen that monitored the outside of the ship.

Everyone turned their attention towards it.

Only to see a vast blue sky outside their window that was dotted with tiny sparks of light and a brightly shining white star.

The star gave off a warm and holy radiance that illuminated this entire world.

Below the sky was a city made entirely out of ivory white rocks.

The city was so vast, so huge that it stretched to the very end of their visions.

Layers upon layers of soft glowing runes were draping down from above, perfectly encompassing the border of the city in every direction and covered it entirely.

"We're here. This huge isolated city is the Calming Soul Country" Boss sighed.

Gu Qing Shan stared into the screen and pointed his hand at a certain part: "Boss, what are those statues?"

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Boss turned to where he was pointing to see that Gu Qing Shan was looking at the inner city, where four statues of white marble had been erected in the shapes of four objects:

A golden coin.

A blue key.

A crimson pendant.

A black book.

Boss smiled and explained: “These are the symbols of the four Pillar Gods, representing the four areas of Calming Soul Country under their protection”

“Is that so? Are they really protecting this place?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

“That’s right, for the past few ten thousand years, the four Pillar Gods have been here ruling over Calming Soul Country” Boss replied.

Gu Qing Shan went silent for a moment.

Until finally, he muttered in a low voice: “Really now? How come I didn’t know about that...”

...

The space vortex.

When Gu Qing Shan’s group was sucked into Calming Soul Country and vanished from the 900 million World Layers.

The Soul Shrieker immediately noticed.

It dashed to the front of the ship and peered into the void.

—-*they actually vanished!*

The Soul Shrieker was stunned for a moment.

「 『 Why did they suddenly disappear? That isn’t possible...』 』

It muttered.

Recognizing that something was wrong, the captain of the ship went forward and asked: “Your Excellency, did something happen? Did something happen enroute?”

「 『 No, continue forward, I need to observe it personally 』 』 the Soul Shrieker ordered.

“Understood!” the captain replied.

The ship continued to quickly sail through the void.

Time passed.

Half a day later.

The ship arrived where Gu Qing Shan’s group disappeared.

The Soul Shrieker went around, but found nothing.

It then ordered the ship’s crew members to search the void.

After a long while.

Still nothing.

The Soul Shrieker didn't give up and chanted an incantation to summon more carriers of [Chaos].

It called upon every carrier of [Chaos] that were experts at searching, filling up the entire ship.

Everyone was then sent out to search for Gu Qing Shan and his group's whereabouts.

One day passed.

The [Demon King Order] and its carrier seemed to have vanished from this world.

Even after trying everything it could, the Soul Shrieker still couldn't locate the [Demon King Order].

The search continued until the fifth day.

When the Soul Shrieker finally changed its tactics.

It activated a technique to make a declaration to the infinite worlds within the void.

「 『 All carriers of [Chaos]! 」 』

『 「 From now on, all of you shall focus on advancing your power 」 」

「 『 Because—— 」 』

『 「 Soon, I shall become your Deity and lead you to conquer every world! 」 」

Every carrier of [Chaos] on the ship scattered right away.

The Soul Shrieker undid their summon, returning them to their original locations.

The only one left on the ship was the Soul Shrieker.

It sat down on the deck of the ship, silently peering into the void.

「 『 Gu Qing Shan, I assume that you've entered some sort of secret location 」 』

「 『 I truly must say, you are indeed smart 」 』

「 『 ——but do you actually think you can avoid me forever? 」 』

The Soul Shrieker displayed a vicious cruel smile.

「 『 Step by step, I am climbing the steps to become the Deity of [Chaos], while you and your [Order] can't possibly hide in that secret location forever 」 』

「 『 I shall wait right here, patiently, for you to appear 」 』

『 「 And when you do...」 」

『 「 It shall be time to finish everything! 」 」

Chapter 1005

“Boss, have you ever met the four Pillar Gods?”

“Not at all, I don’t like to associate myself with deities”

Apparently feeling a bit embarrassed with that, Boss continued to explain: “Several ten thousand years ago, when I knew that the four Pillar Gods entered the Calming Soul Country, I stopped caring about this place”

“—After all, I have too many places that I need to protect, like the bottom of the Abyss, the Starlight Empire, the Isle of Ceremonial Void, so one and so forth, I was a very busy person”

Gu Qing Shan nodded in understanding, but didn’t ask Boss about his identity.

The airship slowly descended in front of a sky-high palace.

This place was the most central area of Calming Soul Country, the center of the entire city.

Laura put her airship away.

The four of them and Boss stood waiting at the gate of the palace.

Several groups of guards were already waiting here.

Two women who wore luxurious robes arrived to receive them and bowed to greet Boss.

“Venerable Lord of Infinite Origin, please lead your people and come with us to greet the Pillar God of Water”

Water God!

Gu Qing Shan felt his heart skip a beat, but felt something amiss.

If this was the real Water God, she would definitely recognize him.

Most likely, she would come to find me right away as soon as the airship appeared.

Then, is this perhaps the real Water Pillar God?

Boss was surprised as well and asked: “What? The Deity wants to personally meet us?”

“Indeed” one of the women smiled in reply: “After all, no outsiders have arrived in our world since the Age of Old. Today would be the first time in a very long time, and thus it drew the Deities’ attention”

Boss nodded slightly.

This made sense.

As he was about to take a step forward, he heard Gu Qing Shan speaking to him through inner sight.

Boss stopped, smiled, and asked: “Would the other three Pillar Gods be there as well?”

The two women bowed again and kept their heads lowered: “Beside Water God, none of the other three Deities expressed their will. We do not dare to assume the matter of the Deities”

Seeing their frightened appearance, they most likely would not say another word about it.

Boss couldn't really ask any further and declared: "Lead the way"

"Yes"

The two women led the group into the palace.

They went through twisting corridors, across a long stairway, and finally reached the main hall of the palace.

Over a hundred Demis with varying statuses had gathered here.

Gu Qing Shan released his inner sight to check his surroundings.

Sitting left-most was a gentle-looking man who wore a crown on his head, most likely the owner of this palace.

But there was no one sitting around him, he was instead placed at the very outer edge.

On his right were several powerful individuals who gave off considerably powerful presences, Gu Qing Shan could even see the General from before who was hiding his face.

Sitting closer to the center were 12 elderly people with gray hair.

— they were most likely the council of Elders.

Compared to the General and others like him, the Elders gave off a more stifled and faint fluctuation of power.

But regardless of whether it was true strength or authority within Calming Soul Country, none of the Generals could compare to them.

And at the center was a hovering throne.

A woman whose face was shielded by a veil sat atop the throne, wielding a black book in her hand.

Due to a strange power fluctuation coming from the veil, Gu Qing Shan could not clearly observe her visage.

However, there was a clear unique feature that everyone was able to recognize even through the veil—
—

There was a blue, flickering flame of light right between her eyebrows.

Unlike the Divinities who only disguised themselves as God, Gu Qing Shan could clearly sense the peerless aura of Soul Points exuding from her.

At this point, Gu Qing Shan was feeling a bit disappointed.

She wasn't the large-scale human war system that Gu Qing Shan met during the Age of Old— Water God.

Although he couldn't observe her face, from how she was being protected in the middle of everyone, it could be inferred that she was the Water Pillar God.

And the black book in her hand was the famous Book of the Sea. According to legends and historical records, it is said to have recorded all knowledge of Reality.

Gu Qing Shan and everyone stood still in the middle of the audience hall.

The Water Pillar God flicked her wrist to release a mass of deep blue light.

The light fell upon and enveloped Gu Qing Shan's group.

Water God's gentle voice sounded:

「 Our apostle who came from a far away, as well as the guests that you have brought. All of you must've been through an arduous journey 」

Boss slightly bowed: "I am merely fulfilling my duties as per the ancient oath, that is all it is"

Water God smiled, her gaze swept through Ye Fei Li, Zhang Ying Hao, then stopped at Gu Qing Shan and Laura who was sitting on his shoulder.

「 Human male, mayhap you can reveal to me, who is the personage that is protecting your identity? 」

Gu Qing Shan imitated Boss and also slightly bowed: "My apologies, in truth, I do not know anything about this at all"

Water God turned to the council of Elders.

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An old man within the council of Elders respectfully said: "Honorable Deity, I can only sense that there exists a powerful identity protection technique on his body, but I do not know who it would be"

「 Then it seems this is a secret 」

Saying so, Water God didn't say another word regarding this and instead focused her attention on Laura.

「 Human male, the young girl by your side, is she your younger sister? 」 Water God asked.

"Yes, she is indeed my younger sister" Gu Qing Shan replied.

「 Then why do I see that the two of you are not of the same race? 」 Water God questioned.

Gu Qing Shan paused slightly.

Indeed, I'm a human, while Laura is a Bramble bird.

In front of powerful entities, things such as race can be easily seen through.

Since Water God pointed this out, wouldn't that mean Gu Qing Shan was lying about it before?

What outcome would await one who lied in front of a Deity...?

The entire hall fell silent.

The atmosphere seemed to be changing.

Laura was anxious and couldn't help herself sneaking a glance at Gu Qing Shan.

She did not see Gu Qing Shan changing his expression at all.

A breath's worth of time later.

Gu Qing Shan finally replied.

He lowered his head and spoke with an embarrassed tone of voice: "I didn't think you would notice such a thing. In reality, this is a very well-kept secret, only because Your Holiness had questioned that I could not help but answer it with my utmost sincerity—"

Everyone looked at him.

Gu Qing Shan cleared his throat and said: "My younger sister and I are from different mothers, but have the same father. It has been a many long years since we finally became united again"

Water God's smile froze.

The council of Elders and the rest were all surprised.

Ye Fei Li couldn't help but turn to look at them.

Is that really true?

He silently thought.

Zhang Ying Hao's expression didn't change at all.

Ever since he came in here, he had already worn his sunglasses, currently observing every person in the room in secret.

Gu Qing Shan's words didn't affect him in the slightest.

But Laura wasn't the same.

As she heard Gu Qing Shan, her eyes opened wide, her mouth also opened a bit to gasp.

— is this really ok?

This guy is legitimately lying without any shame.

However, as the Bramble Bird Empress, Laura's intrapersonal skills had already reached a level where she could hide her emotions without fail, and she knew that Gu Qing Shan wouldn't aimlessly do anything.

What is he being cautious of?

Laura slowly put her mental guard up.

As there were no one else, Water God told the council of Elders: 「 For countless years, this would be the first time that Calming Soul Country welcomed new blood, discuss among yourselves and consider how they should be arranged 」

“Understood”

The council of Elder answered affirmatively and began to discuss how to arrange Gu Qing Shan’s group.

Standing still, Gu Qing Shan and the rest had no choice but to silently wait for the results.

Taking this time, Boss used telepathy to silently talk to Gu Qing Shan:

“What are you thinking?”

Gu Qing Shan replied: “Something is inappropriate, you and I have to both be careful”

“What’s going on?” Boss couldn’t help but ask.

“As soon as we met, this Water God questioned my background and displayed clear hostility”

“...just because of a single question, you’re assuming that she’s holding ill will?”

“That’s only the secondary reason, the primary reason is from the two women who welcomed us earlier. Their answer to the question I had you asked made me become alert”

Boss tried recalling a bit and said: “All they said was: Other than Water God, the other three Deities did not express their will, and that they didn’t dare to assume the matter of Deities”

“Yes”

“Was there something wrong with that?”

“Indeed, their words suggested that the other three Pillar Gods were all here, but I know for a fact that that isn’t the case”

Gu Qing Shan continued: “Furthermore, don’t you think that Water God paid a bit too much attention to Laura?”

“...Aren’t you just too worried about Laura?”

“That’s not it. Perhaps you’ve never seen any of the four Pillar Gods, but I know from experience how great the power of a Pillar God would be—— and as one of the four Pillar Gods, her means of probing was too weak”

“You mean that she’s——”

“Yes, she isn’t a Pillar God”

Gu Qing Shan replied.

His inner sight scanned through the Demis, and even through Water God.

The jade gourd pendant Adorable was silently hovering in the air.

Chapter 1006

The people in power were discussing how to arrange for Gu Qing Shan’s group within the audience room.

The man who wore a crown on his head suggested: “Their sudden appearance in Calming Soul Country would surely draw the prying eyes of many, which could complicate their lives from now on”

An Elder asked: “Then, what does Your Majesty suggest?”

Gu Qing Shan and everyone else turned to him.

——*so, this man with the crown was actually the sovereign of Calming Soul Country.*

The king said: “Let them join the country’s royal guards. The identity of every royal guard will be kept a secret, and since they are by my side, no one will spend too much effort trying to probe their origins”

The Generals all maintained silence.

The Elders kept contemplating.

The majority of the people in the audience hall remained silent, only a few agreed: “His Majesty is right”

The atmosphere was filled with a sense of awkwardness that needn’t be spelled out in order to be recognized.

The king looked over everyone, then smiled: “Since no one has any objections——”

「 No, that isn’t suitable 」

The Water Pillar God cut off the king’s words.

Everyone instantly regained their senses and spoke at once: “Please grace us with your divine revelation, our Deity”

The king also lowered himself: “This humble one did not consider all things clearly, please excuse my impertinence, my Deity”

The Water Pillar God didn’t even bother to glance at the king and directly declared: 「 As they are people brought to us by the Apostle, we should conduct a grand ceremony to notify everyone of their existence 」

An Elder from the council of Elders came forward and knelt on one knee in front of Water God and bowed: “Your will shall be done, then, which level of ceremony should we hold for them? After all, we have never welcomed any outsiders before”

「 That is certainly a point to be considered, you are free to discuss among yourselves 」

After saying so, Water God smiled: 「 We cannot allow our guests to stand there and watch our discussions, that is highly inappropriate. Lead them to rest, have some food, and change their attires 」

“Understood”

Several maids came forward and led Gu Qing Shan’s group out of the audience hall.

Water God kept her sight on them as they gradually left, still maintaining a gentle smile.

「 Finally, we have some new blood 」

She muttered emotionally.

...

A wide, open guest room.

The walls were decorated with intricate patterns, the carpet made from the hide of a soft, white-furred animal.

Snacks and drinks had been amply prepared.

Several maids stood on standby, ready to receive their orders as soon as they needed to.

“The discussion will last for a very long time, please have some snacks”

A maid lifted a tray of snacks and came over to them, softly offering.

No one moved.

In this foreign environment, there was no telling what kinds of ability they would run into so how could they eat something that someone else offered so easily?

The maid appeared regretful, then hesitantly explained: “These snacks were intricately made, the taste of which cannot be compared”

Saying so, she retreated and was about to place the tray back onto the table.

Seeing her like that, Gu Qing Shan sensed something.

“Please give me a piece”

He said.

The maid came forward and lifted the tray.

Gu Qing Shan took a piece of snack from it, waited until Adorable confirmed that there were no skills affecting it before he put it in his mouth.

The snack certainly tasted good, the likes of which even Gu Qing Shan couldn't imagine how it was made.

“What extraordinary taste—— I want to trouble you for a bit, please tell me how you made this snack”

Gu Qing Shan picked up another piece of the snack and asked the maid.

The other maids were surprised.

Zhang Ying Hao explained for him: “He's a top-class gourmet chef, famous throughout the entirety of the 900 million World Layers. Many people would feel honored to enjoy his personal cooking”

The maids all displayed an understanding expression on their faces.

The maid who offered the food displayed an appropriate smile and replied: “This is a snack made for the royal family, the recipe of which is kept a secret that only royal family employees are allowed to know—

— however, as you are our esteemed guests, we will try to ask and see if we can divulge the recipe to you, sir”

Gu Qing Shan nodded: “Then let me thank you in advance”

He and the maid paused for a brief moment.

The maid lowered her head, then silently retreated.

Everyone else kept quiet, still focused on resting.

A few moments later, several other maids arrived with formal clothes.

“Please change your clothes” the maids said in unison.

Zhang Ying Hao walked up to check it and sent his voice to Gu Qing Shan: “No issues”

“Of course, it would instead be strange if there are issues with such a minor thing” Gu Qing Shan replied.

A maid turned to Laura and said: “It is highly inconvenient for you to change your clothes here, please come with me to another room, we shall return right away”

Laura looked at Gu Qing Shan, full of hesitation.

Males and females must naturally keep distance, and since she was a noble Empress, she naturally couldn’t change her clothes right here.

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But she was also anxious to leave Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan smiled and told her: “Come, big brother has something to tell you”

Laura walked up to him.

Gu Qing Shan raised the Silent Dusk Cloak to obscure the maids’ eyes and covered Laura.

A short moment later.

The cloak was lowered.

“Have you remembered my words?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

Laura nodded: “Hm, I will keep big bro’s words in mind to not commit any rude action”

She nodded to everyone and left with the maid.

A few moments later.

The maids seemed to have received some sort of news.

They exchanged glances and bowed at once: “Please change your clothes there, we shall be with you shortly”

“Alright, go ahead. We’ve troubled you” Gu Qing Shan waved his hand to dismiss them.

The maids went away.

Gu Qing Shan turned to Zhang Ying Hao immediately.

Zhang Ying Hao took a deep breath and spoke with a serious expression: “I have a few ways to escape pursuit, but this is a closed world, and the enemy’s forces are strong. Even if we can avoid their trap, we wouldn’t have anywhere to escape to”

“No need to worry about that, we need to prepare right away, they might spring the trap any moment now” Gu Qing Shan said in a low tone of voice.

“Got it”

Zhang Ying Hao started to draw Cards from the void of space.

Boss had remained silent up to this point, but now suddenly asked: “You said earlier that Water God was probing us, what was she trying to find out?”

Gu Qing Shan replied: “I want to know that as well”

Saying so, he released a deep blue mass of light from his hand— just like the light that Water God released in the audience hall.

This grand light fell down and enveloped everyone.

Lines of glowing text swiftly appeared on the War God UI.

[You’ve been temporarily equipped with the large-scale human war system super appraisal function]

[You’ve obtained the following information:]

[Zhang Ying Hao, human male. Combat state: peak, combat prowess: level 8]

[Ye Fei Li, World Destroyer. Combat state: slightly fatigued (lacking Soul Points), combat prowess: level 10]

[Gu Qing Shan, identity cannot be determined (his identity is obscured by a powerful secret technique. Unless he informs you of his own accord or you are able to defeat the one protecting his secret, his identity remains unknown). Combat state: peak, combat prowess: level 21]

[Boss (this personage’s self-titled name holds priority), identity: Lord of Infinite Origin. Combat state: Absolutely weakened (heavily wounded to near-death, does not have enough combat power), combat prowess: level 99]

Gu Qing Shan swiftly skimmed through everything.

Strange.

This Water God isn’t the Water God I’m looking for, but she has the large-scale human war system appraisal function equipped

Who exactly is she?

Asking for my identity as soon as she saw me, what was her purpose?

As there wasn't much time, Gu Qing Shan didn't think too much further about this and informed Boss immediately: "They most likely already know about how serious your injuries are"

Sensing the blue light, Boss understood what Gu Qing Shan was trying to say.

He sighed: "I thought my identity would at least be able to suppress them, but it was just wishful thinking"

Gu Qing Shan nodded: "Ying Hao, the situation is extremely terrible, we need to begin right away"

Zhang Ying Hao displayed a Card in front of everyone and said: "This is my ace in the hole, please do as I say"

The Card depicted a hitman wielding dual daggers.

Behind the hitman, his shadow had manifested as a second person that made the same actions that the hitman did.

Zhang Ying Hao tossed the Card out and explained: "This is the [Flesh Marionette] Card, it's able to receive all damage for us right before the moment of our deaths, manifest the appropriate wounds, then turned into our actual corpses"

"To activate it, I'll need to use 70% of my power, as well as a drop of your blood in order to replicate your bodies"

Without hesitation, Gu Qing Shan cut his finger with a small sword phantom and flung a drop of blood onto the Card.

The Card glowed a bit brighter.

Ye Fei Li also let out a drop of blood and flicked it onto the Card.

Boss hesitated: "I've already used up the last of my blood, what now?"

Zhang Ying Hao told him: "A strand of fur or hair is fine too"

Boss scowled, but pulled a strand of hair and placed it onto the Card.

Gu Qing Shan looked at Zhang Ying Hao.

Zhang Ying Hao sensed it and nodded: "I can activate it any time, but after activation, I'll be greatly weakened and unable to participate in combat"

"No worries. Now we'll need to wait and see if 'that' will actually happen"

Gu Qing Shan said.

He pulled a piece of paper out from his mouth and unrolled it in front of everyone.

A single line of text was written here using Divine Script:

[I can only buy a bit of time, quickly run away, or you will lose your lives without a doubt]

Below that, a simple diagram depicting the route of escape was drawn.

Chapter 1007

Within the silent and fragrant room.

Laura had finished changing her clothes.

She looked at herself in the mirror in surprise and called out: "Is anybody here?"

No answer.

Just a moment ago, there were still a few maids standing not too far away, but at some point, they all disappeared without a trace.

Laura raised her voice and called out again: "Is anybody here?"

Still silent, no one answered her.

All of a sudden——

Boom!!!

A thunderous explosion, followed by intense rumbling came from the other side of the palace.

A solemn, dignified voice resounded from the sky:

「 It has been found, the Apostle used a disguising technique on some of the most terrifying Abyssal monsters and tried to infiltrate them into our Calming Soul Country 」

「 All the evil creatures have been massacred! 」

「 Following the will of the four Deities, from this point onwards, Calming Soul Country will no longer accept outsiders! 」

Laura was shocked.

She hurriedly rushed towards the door.

Apparently sensing her approach, a fence made of runes manifested on the door.

The fence of runes quickly manifested and covered the entire room.

——this place had turned into a prison cell!

Laura stopped.

She stood in front of the fence; a bit hesitant.

All of a sudden, another voice resounded from outside the palace.

——Boss' voice:

"Despicable Pillar Gods! This place is supposed to be under MY control, your appearance ruined everything!"

A female voice sighed, trying to persuade him: 「 Give it up Apostle. With me, the Water God, here today, your plan shall not succeed 」

“Die!” Boss roared in anger.

Blinding light peered in from the gaps of the window, illuminating this entire room.

Followed by the intense sound of explosions.

A battle had begun.

The sound of battle gradually moved upwards further and further away from the ground.

Apparently, both sides had chosen to fight away from this palace.

Laura was a bit surprised at first but quickly returned to normal after a bit of thought.

She returned to her chair and silently sat down, waiting for someone to call out to her.

...

At another location.

Where Gu Qing Shan and his group originally were.

The entire room was abruptly turned into rubble from a powerful, intense attack.

This was a skillfully executed attack that had gone through several compressions, not only did it greatly increase its strength, the power of the attack would also be contained within a certain area and caused no collateral damage.

Because of this, the entire room was thoroughly destroyed.

Several corpses laid sprawled all over the ground.

Gu Qing Shan, Ye Fei Li, Zhang Ying Hao, and Boss.

Their life signs had ceased, their bodies riddled with terrifying wounds.

The corpses silently laid there without a sound.

The vicinity of the room was obscured in darkness.

This seemed to be a spell or technique used to prevent probing from outside.

Without the Deities' permission, no one was allowed to approach this place.

In the darkness, two figures appeared.

They carefully and meticulously checked the four corpses.

After a long while, one of the figures sighed:

「 Have you checked the Apostle's corpse? 」

The other replied: 「 I have, he's dead 」

「 I've also checked him, then he's surely dead 」 the voice slowly revealed itself as a female while boasting: 「 The Apostle has lost all of his powers, so he naturally couldn't handle the combined might of us four 」

The second voice from before asked: 「 Are you sure that little girl is the Bramble Bird Empress? 」

「 Positive. I specifically used my part of the war system to confirm it 」 the female voice replied.

The other voice replied: 「 Then it's a good thing, the rest has been arranged, this matter will conclude here as we have decided 」

The female voice said with satisfaction: 「 Now that we caught the Bramble Bird Empress, we won't need to worry about treasures anymore 」

The other voice said worriedly: 「 The Apostle had lost his power so it doesn't matter if he's dead. But that guy with the unknown identity, if the outside world discovered this matter, how do we deal with that? 」

The female voice replied: 「 Hmph, regardless of who's behind him, the seal of Calming Soul Country was jointly created by the ancient Deities, no single Deity would be able to dispel it from the outside world on their own—— and no one here would be able to send any information outside! 」

「 And so... 」

「 And so, he's simply dead. No one will know about it, no one from outside will ever find out that we killed him within this place either 」

The other voice paused slightly, then affirmed in agreement: 「 Indeed, that person must surely be more or less related to the True Deities, if he was left alive and realized our identities, it would certainly not be a good thing 」

The female voice added: 「 And killing him allowed us to obtain the Bramble Bird Empress, this is an arrow that shot down two birds 」

The other voice slowly relaxed and said: 「 I need to take a look at the others—— they've gone quite far pretending to fight against the Apostle 」

The female voice questioned: 「 Wait a minute, regarding the king, did you resolve that yet? 」

The other voice coldly scoffed: 「 He prepared nothing but a single plan, I've already killed the one he had arranged 」

The female voice said with satisfaction: 「 That's good, I will first put the corpses away, before keeping an eye on the Bramble Bird Empress, lest she escapes 」

「 Hm 」

The conversation was over.

A figure vanished from this ruin.

Leaving one figure behind.

With a wave of their hand, the corpses on the ground vanished without a trace.

The figure stood still for a while.

「 Hmph, a former Apostle, ending up like this, what a laughable and pitiable end 」

The figure said to herself as she went outside.

As soon as the figure left the darkness, her appearance was made clear.

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Water God!

It was her!

For some reason, she suddenly stopped and stood still for a bit.

She then shook her head, perhaps finding her actions a bit ridiculous, and left.

Everything returned to silence.

Not too long later, a voice sounded.

“Gongzi, you are...?”

This was Shannu’s doubtful voice.

Gu Qing Shan’s voice replied:

“This is called a human pillar, haven’t you seen it before?”

“But, why do you have to stay like this?”

“Laura’s umbrella is only so big; we need to stack on top of one another in order to allow her to stand on top and cover the rest of us”

Laura suddenly chimed in: “Gu Qing Shan, that’s incorrect, my [Shelter of Infinite Worlds] doesn’t require you to be directly below, as long as you’re in contact with the umbrella, you’d receive the effect”

“Huh? Why didn’t you tell me about that sooner?”

“I just thought this was some sort of special formation you came up with, who knew you’d go so far just to hide?”

Right away, Laura suddenly appeared in the air.

She lightly landed on the ground.

The scene in the air went clearly on display.

Ye Fei Li was standing at the bottom, Zhang Ying Hao was standing on his shoulders, Boss was standing on Zhang Ying Hao’s shoulders, and Gu Qing Shan was standing on Boss’ shoulders.

Originally, Laura was standing on Gu Qing Shan's shoulders as well.

—-and Laura had her umbrella opened, using [Shelter of Infinite Worlds] to make sure that they weren't discovered.

Even before Laura had fully awakened [Shelter of Infinite Worlds], she managed to completely avoid Triste's pursuit thanks to it.

In their history, one Bramble Bird king had even managed to use this ability to enter the infinite abyss of broken worlds without dying, and even left with the ancient armor of the Old Gods.

Which was why this ability was perfect in order to fool their enemies.

Laura stood on the ground and opened her umbrella again.

She vanished completely, no one was able to sense her.

"Come, touch the umbrella, this way you won't be discovered.

Her voice emerged from the void of space.

Everyone reached their hands out towards the empty space.

And vanished one by one.

Boss' voice seemed triumphant: "This is much more convenient. If I knew about this earlier, I wouldn't have agreed on that human pillar thing"

Ye Fei Li also commented: "Right? You're all so heavy, I had to stay at the very bottom"

"You're already complaining about how heavy we are? I spent 70% of my strength just to make those disguised corpses" Zhang Ying Hao said in irritation.

Ye Fei Li explained: "It's not that, I was afraid that we would be too tall to leave"

Shannu's voice sounded to stop their complaints: "Gongzi, didn't you want me to wait there? Why did you summon me back?"

"Because it's no longer necessary, I already have a pretty good idea of what they wanted to tell you" Gu Qing Shan replied.

"But if I return like this, they'll discover that Laura has vanished very soon"

"Hm, you're right, let's move right away!"

"Where?"

"I have a map here. It should be fine..."

Their voices slowly moved further as they left the ruined structure.

All of a sudden.

An angry voice resounded across the entire palace.

「 Immediately seal off this place, no one is allowed to leave or enter! 」

Water God.

She had issued another order.

At this point, Gu Qing Shan's group had already gone through several secret passages, passed several hidden mechanisms, and were walking along another secret path below the palace.

Gu Qing Shan was holding a piece of paper in his hand, following the crude instructions on it, and walked in front of everyone.

Shannu was at the back.

“Gu Qing Shan, aren't you afraid that the content on the paper would be false?” Laura asked.

Gu Qing Shan replied: “If they wanted to kill us, what they did just now was more than enough. This paper would be nothing but excessive, so we'll check out the situation on it first before making any follow-up decisions”

Boss raised his hand: “I need to say something first, if a battle occurs, I won't be able to help”

Zhang Ying Hao also said: “Me too, I've already exhausted 70% of my power, I can only snipe or ambush them a bit now”

Ye Fei Li hesitantly: “I—I'll do my best, but the people here are too strong, I'm no match for any of them”

Gu Qing Shan looked through them, then at Laura.

Laura consoled him: “Gu Qing Shan, relax. Although I can't fight either, I know how to hide myself. I won't be like those guys who only drag you down”

Gu Qing Shan said without changing his expression: “I don't feel consoled at all”

They arrived at the exit of the secret path.

A dead body was there.

When they came forward to check, they found that it was the maid from before.

The maid who offered snacks to Gu Qing Shan.

She was already dead.

From the looks of it, she originally intended to receive everyone here.

Gu Qing Shan sighed in dejection.

The voice that conversed with Water God said that they had already dealt with the king's arrangements, which was most likely referring to her.

Everyone also stayed silent.

“What do we do now?” Boss asked.

Gu Qing Shan replied: "We shouldn't stay here for long, Fei Li"

"Hm"

Ye Fei Li walked up and checked the body.

"She hasn't died for very long. Her soul is still here"

Ye Fei Li muttered.

He drew the Forgetting River Soul Flaying Hook, lightly touched the body, and abruptly pulled back.

A transparent female figure was brought out of the body.

It was the woman's soul.

Chapter 1008

The path was silent and gloomy, constantly emanating a faint stench of blood.

The maid's body was still lying on the ground.

A transparent humanoid figure was stuck on Ye Fei Li's khopesh.

——the figure was female and gave off a faint glowing light, displaying the characteristics unique to a soul.

This was her soul.

When the soul first appeared, it seemed a bit faint, but as she saw her body and the five people in front of her, she realized what had happened.

Right, I was killed.

The maid stood still.

She slowly crouched down in front of her body, wanting to touch it.

But her hand went through without being able to reach anything.

The maid's expression was filled with despair, she cupped both hands in front of her face and started sobbing.

Zhang Ying Hao looked at Ye Fei Li.

Ye Fei Li turned to Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan shook his head and signaled for everyone to wait.

——the moment that a person discovered their own death would probably be the time when their minds would be the most shaken.

It was necessary for them to allow her time in order to accept this fact and calm herself down.

Everyone silently waited.

The maid was crying sorrowfully and occasionally mentioned something.

But they couldn't hear any sound coming from her.

She was currently a wandering soul— a unique state in which she had only just left the realm of the living, but had yet to enter the realm of the dead to accept her role or her outcome, so she had no voice and no sound.

Only Ye Fei Li who had the ability to listen to all things could hear her.

Ye Fei Li's face slowly displayed a sense of sorrow.

"Did you discover something?" Gu Qing Shan asked in a low voice.

"Ah, nothing much, I only felt that her life has been tough—"

As Ye Fei Li was talking, his expression suddenly stopped.

He raised his hand to signal everyone to be quiet and said: "Let's talk about this later. Don't say anything. I think I heard something approaching us".

Everyone remained silent.

Ye Fei Li crouched down, pressed his ear against the ground, and displayed a listening look.

His expression was turning more and more serious.

"What is it?" Zhang Ying Hao couldn't help asking.

Ye Fei Li quickly explained: "A sound that I've never heard before is quickly approaching this place from deep beneath the ground"

"Can you generally tell what it is?"

"It seems a bit like a soul-like entity— and it's expressing its will to eat"

Gu Qing Shan immediately said: "A battle might be approaching us, everyone, get ready!"

The rest responded: "Got it!"

Shannu turned back into her sword form for him to wield.

Gu Qing Shan then drew the Earth sword from the void of space and held it tightly.

The Heaven sword and Chao Yin sword both manifested behind his back, slowly hovering there.

Gu Qing Shan readied his stance with spirit energy circulating around his body.

He was ready for battle!

All of a sudden—

Gu Qing Shan noticed that there were no other movements around him.

He turned around.

Only to see that Ye Fei Li, Zhang Ying Hao, Boss, and Laura have all vanished.

“Where are you guys?” he couldn’t help but shout.

Boss’ voice answered him from the void of space, sounding a bit awkward: “About that—— we’ve hidden away together with Laura, to prevent further injuries in battle”

“...” Gu Qing Shan was speechless.

He also had no time to say anything.

Because the sound of a holy aria had begun to resound from below the surface.

One by one, figures clad in brilliant light appeared from below.

They were people who donned cloaks over their bodies.

They had solemn expressions on their faces, all wielding a pure-white staff that carried a ceremonial feeling in their hands while humming and reciting verses of a poem that gave off a holy aura.

Gu Qing Shan noticed that their bodies were all slightly transparent, but the presence they gave off was different from that of a wandering soul.

A white-robed old man stepped out from the group and looked at the maid with a pitiful gaze.

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「 It is time, follow us and return to the soul’s eternal land of slumber 」 the white-robed old man declared.

The maid stood up and took a step backward.

She opened her mouth and quickly said something, bowing to the old man while begging him.

Gu Qing Shan could hear the old man’s voice, but not the maid, so he could only gesture towards his ears.

Ye Fei Li’s voice then sounded from inside his mind:

“She’s saying that she can’t leave for the Calming Soul Country yet. Her only child isn’t even 4 years old yet, and he’s currently sick, if she left right now, no one would be there to take care of her child”

While Gu Qing Shan was listening to that, the scene between the souls continued.

The old man deeply sighed and spoke gently: 「 The matters of life and death are not under the control of any person. Your child has his own fate, be it good or terrible, it is no longer something that you can care about 」

「 You must understand, you are already dead 」

The woman continued to shake her head in a frenzy, prostrating to the ground trying to beg.

The old man appeared impatient.

He declared with a firm expression: 「 Listen well, no souls are allowed to refuse the invitation of the Calming Soul Country, this is the fate of all Demis, as well as the fate of everyone within Calming Soul Country 」

「 Take her away 」 the old man called out to the people behind him.

Several robed men came forward and propped the woman up, restraining her.

The woman cried out in despair.

“What did she say just now?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

“She said her only wish is to see her child one last time” Ye Fei Li replied.

Hearing that, Gu Qing Shan fell into thought.

The transparent entities had already caught the woman.

The sound of the holy aria became resoundingly loud.

Continuing to recite their unfathomable verses of poems, their bodies slowly sank downwards.

Just as they were about to leave.

Gu Qing Shan abruptly clapped his hands and said: “I think she can’t leave just yet”

“Got it” Ye Fei Li replied.

A khopesh that appeared faint and transparent abruptly flew out from the void of space.

With a light inward flick, the khopesh drew the woman’s soul back.

Her mind had already turned blank, her consciousness had given up, and she no longer reacted to anything.

But when she noticed that she was back to where she was before, she was in disbelief.

Taking a look at the khopesh, her senses returned.

I haven’t been taken to Calming Soul Country yet!

She abruptly turned towards Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan smiled at her and said: “Remember me?”

She nodded.

Gu Qing Shan then told her: “Thank you for your snack, we’ll talk more later”

He walked forward and stood in front of the girl.

The transparent robed men were staring at him coldly.

The white-robed old man spoke in a low, threatening voice: 「 Regardless of who you are, to interfere with the order of life and death means that you have violated the taboo of Calming Soul Country 」

Gu Qing Shan showed an apologetic expression and lowered himself, then spoke: “I solemnly respect the customs and traditions that make up the rules of every world, and I didn’t mean to offend yours, but I have a very crucial matter that I need to discuss with her, so I’d like to ask you to make an exception for me”

「 Exception? Death has never made any exceptions for anyone! 」 the old man roared in fury.

“Of course, of course, I know that. That’s why I’m more than willing to pay a small price for it. Pardon me asking but do you take money, or treasures?” Gu Qing Shan said.

He reached one hand out and opened his palm.

From the void of space, countless metallic coins that gave off the glow of magic appeared in his hand, then continued to pour out onto the ground, making a loud clanging of metal.

The metal coins were soon stacked high enough to form a small hill the height of several people.

Standing next to the coins, Gu Qing Shan said: “Although you gentlemen might have no use for this anymore, who doesn’t have some children or grandchildren? As seniors, you always need to worry for the younger ones— after all, money is necessary regardless of what you do, be it cultivating, getting married, buying houses... children need money”

“And it just happens that I have all these coins with unique powers and abilities, certified treasures from the Strife Zones that are universally recognized everywhere within the 900 million World Layers. This much should be more than enough for all your descendants’ needs”

He reached his other hand out.

Innumerable weapons, armors, jewelry, summoning books, magical scrolls... all sorts of treasures appeared in his hand, then continued to fall to the ground.

These treasures couldn’t stack on top of each other, so they flowed all around like a river.

“Gentlemen, if you don’t like money, I also have all sorts of treasures that anyone would crave for without fail”

“Each of these treasures are very valuable, whether you use it yourself or gift them to others, you would never find yourselves in an embarrassing situation. Some of them are even great enough to become family heirlooms”

“Gentlemen, I truly don’t mean to offend you. I’m more than willing to part with all this wealth and treasures with the only hope that you give me a bit of time, just enough to talk to her and finish that we couldn’t before”

“After that, you can simply continue as your rules dictated, what do you think?”

Standing in between a mountain of coins and a river of treasures, Gu Qing Shan said very sincerely.

Chapter 1009

The secret passage.

All the robed men were facing Gu Qing Shan with strange expressions on their faces.

「 You are saying that you wish to make a transaction with us? 」

The white-robed old man questioned.

“Very correct, I sincerely need this soul, and you can name your price”

Gu Qing Shan happily replied.

The white-robed old man’s grim expression receded, replaced by contemplation.

Gu Qing Shan simply looked at him without saying anything.

A moment of silence.

But this silence was extremely fragile, the kind that could be broken at any moment.

Water God had sealed off the palace trying to search for them and would soon discover this place without a doubt.

The group behind the white-robed old man was clearly restless, as if they were ready to attack at a moment’s notice.

Gu Qing Shan could even sense the solid, unhidden malice drifting from the white-robed old man’s body.

That was because he didn’t make any effort to hide it at all.

Does he not know how to hide it?

Or he doesn’t care to?

Gu Qing Shan’s thoughts were moving quickly.

Ye Fei Li silently sent his voice through inner sight: “There’s a huge movement of souls underneath the ground, I can hear the pained moaning of billions of souls”

Without changing his expression, Gu Qing Shan slightly nodded to express his understanding.

—-what a strange entity, having such an advanced level of control over souls.

What exactly does its existence signify within Calming Soul Country?

Gu Qing Shan randomly picked up a round disk inscribed full of tiny letters and showed it to him:

“Just look, all of these treasures have various wondrous uses, as long as you agree to, they will be yours”

He tapped the disk with his hand and added:

“If you don’t like these things, I have other treasures as well. All you need to do is nod”

The white-robed old man suddenly said: 「 Your goal, is it only to talk for a bit longer with this soul? 」

Gu Qing Shan answered right away: "Of course. But you're willing to give me this soul permanently, I can pay an even higher price"

The white-robed old man glanced at the hill of coins, then at all the treasures on the ground, and abruptly asked: 「 You, do you have the treasures on the level of Soul Artifacts? 」

Gu Qing Shan clapped his hands and grinned: "Soul Artifacts might be quite precious, but I also have quite a few of them"

「 I don't believe you 」 the white-robed old man said.

Soul Artifacts were the most precious items in existence, all of which held endless power.

The twin swords Heaven and Earth in his hands were in fact peerless Soul Artifacts of the Eternal Abyss.

Even within the vast 900 million World Layers, the most valuable treasures were Soul Artifacts without a doubt.

The mere appearance of any Soul Artifact was enough to spark a bloody struggle of war between billions of worlds.

"I'll make you believe me" Gu Qing Shan replied.

He casually swiped the air, caught a Soul Artifact that Laura handed him, and tossed it over to the white-robed old man.

The white-robed old man received it, held it in his hand, and squeezed it tightly.

An infinitely thin strand of green string appeared within the void of space and swiftly left deep lash marks on the walls of the secret passage.

This was a Wind-Elemental Soul Artifact with a double cutting edge.

The white-robed old man's eyebrows loosened.

「 It truly is a Soul Artifact 」

Saying so, he immediately put the Soul Artifact in his mouth and swallowed.

Gu Qing Shan noticed that the old man's neck swiftly inflated, then quickly returned to normal.

"How is it? Do we have a deal?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

The old man looked cautiously at him then spat out the words: "We do"

Boom!!!

A huge explosion suddenly rang out from the end of the secret passage.

It was in the direction that Gu Qing Shan and the rest had arrived from.

Within the unsettled dust, a figure appeared where Gu Qing Shan and the rest came from, flashed a few times, and arrived in front of them.

Water God.

She glanced at Gu Qing Shan, then at the white-robed old man and declared: 「 I want this person dead 」

The white-robed old man looked at Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan said right away: “Only I can take out my treasured Soul Artifacts, I’m sure you also know this kind of storage technique, only the owner of the space is able to open it”

The white-robed old man thought for a brief moment and told Water God: 「 I am currently conducting a transaction with him, leave his matter for later 」

Water God replied: 「 No, this person must die, we’ve decided on his fate 」

「 I am conducting a transaction with him, the Great One needs his items 」 the white-robed old man replied.

Water God’s expression changed a bit, but coldly chuckled: 「 The Great One? Since when did you dare to borrow her name to violate the will of us four? 」

Overwhelming divinity emanated from her body.

Unlike the fake aura of the Divinities, this was a surge of power created through pure Soul Points!

This power was capable of destroying anything and everything!

But the white-robed old man did not budge a single bit and scowled: 『 Back down 』

Although it was only a curt and short statement, his voice had turned female.

——this voice was faint, unclear, as if it didn’t usually talk, or wasn’t used to the language of humans.

Hearing this, Water God was shocked.

She then quickly regained her senses.

Water God’s aura fully receded into her body, she then bowed down with her head touching the ground and spoke respectfully: 「 Understood, Godmother 」

Glancing deeply at Gu Qing Shan one last time, Water God quickly retreated from the secret passage.

“Ah, thank you very much. I really must say, your subordinates are quite dutiful, insisting on killing me like that” Gu Qing Shan commented.

The white-robed old man watched him closely: 「 I want Soul Artifacts 」

Gu Qing Shan asked: “Then this woman’s soul shall be mine—— how many Soul Artifacts do you want me to exchange for her soul with?”

「 Your Soul Artifact, I want them all 」 the white-robed old man replied.

“How are we going to conduct the trade?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

「 By a covenant, her soul shall be yours, all of your Soul Artifacts shall be mine 」 the white-robed old man replied.

He took out a parchment scroll and tossed it to Gu Qing Shan.

The parchment scroll hung itself in the air and unrolled in front of Gu Qing Shan.

A covenant was written on it using Divine Script.

This was a very old type of writing, as described by the book he received from the Spire Association, it was left behind by an ancient civilization and had gone out of use within the 900 million World Layers.

Gu Qing Shan seriously looked through it once.

From a mere transaction perspective, this covenant was very fair.

However, it mentioned nothing about his safety.

「 You, sign the covenant 」

The white-robed old man said with an emotionless tone of voice.

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Gu Qing Shan shook his head: “The content of the covenant is fine, but the amount on the transaction is too little”

The white-robed old man replied: 「 I only need your Soul Artifact 」

Gu Qing Shan questioned: “Then what about more souls?”

The white-robed old man observed him, then mocked: 「 You only have one soul 」

Gu Qing Shan tried probing: “But I know how to head into other sealed locations, like the bottom of the Abyss, the Starlight Empire, the Isle of Ceremonial Void”

「 Ridiculous, all those places have a prerequisite of entry. With your pathetically meager strength, you can't even enter them 」

The white-robed old man casually replied.

The robed men behind him slowly turned blurry.

They wiggled a bit where they stood before sinking into the ground.

Immediately after that, before Gu Qing Shan managed to react, several long black tentacles appeared from the ground next to him.

These tentacles wrapped around Gu Qing Shan and restrained him in place.

「 Sign the transaction covenant, or die 」

The white-robed old man declared from afar.

As if he didn't hear that, Gu Qing Shan simply watched the tentacles around him in surprise.

He could faintly see the figures and visage of those people from before from the tentacles restraining him.

However, even that was becoming faint.

As Gu Qing Shan took a step forward, he was restrained by the black tentacles and gradually pulled back.

He muttered: "So your souls were actually attached to the body of the monster, how unexpected..."

He couldn't drag this out any longer.

Forced to sign the covenant,

Give them the Soul Artifact as written,

Be killed,

And get his soul stolen away.

This entire course of events could easily be foreseen.

Gu Qing Shan's eyes became sharp.

His inner sight wrapped around the old man and immediately activated [Shadow Shift]!

A split second later, Gu Qing Shan's complexion changed.

[Shadow Shift] had no effect!

That can't be right, [Shadow Shift] would not be affected by any restraining techniques, unless—

These tentacles actually belong to the same body as the old man.

They were all parts of a gigantic monster's body!

[Shadow Shift] would naturally be unable to change places with only the body parts of another entity, and this would be the only plausible explanation.

Gu Qing Shan's mind quickly moved and thought things through in the blink of an eye.

He changed his tactics.

A bright flash of blue and white lightning bloomed within the black tentacles.

Lightning Thaumaturgy: [Dreamjolt]!

Every black tentacle froze on the spot.

Gu Qing Shan drew the Earth sword and slashed.

[Earth's Choice]!

The tentacles were mercilessly cut by the faint blue sword phantom.

The War God UI displayed that he lost over 700,000 Soul Points at once!

Gu Qing Shan didn't care to feel bad about losing Soul Points.

At a point like this, his life was most important.

Releasing his inner sight to observe, he saw that the white-robed old man was also shivering in place, unable to move.

Yup, the white-robed old man and the tentacles are a single entity!

Gu Qing Shan leapt out from within the broken tentacles.

At the same time, the transparent khopesh had brought the woman's soul towards a void empty spot.

"Gu Qing Shan, hurry!"

Laura's worried voice resounded from that void.

Gu Qing Shan reached one hand towards the empty void, while his other hand put the round disk in front of himself and swiftly operated it.

Almost immediately, a bright glow started to emit from the round disk.

The small-scale warp formation was activated!

The round formation enveloped that void empty space and glowed abruptly bright before vanishing.

A second later.

The empty void was still empty, but the entities hidden within it had already been warped away.

The white-robed old man didn't know what just happened at all.

He only saw Gu Qing Shan activating a round disk before vanishing without a trace.

...

At another location.

The room where Gu Qing Shan and the rest stayed in before.

This place had already been ruined by the previous attack.

Two of the 'Pillar Gods' had already thoroughly checked this area before leaving.

Everything was normal.

Perhaps sensing that there was no danger, Boss' voice abruptly came out:

"Now what—"

"Shhh—"

This was Gu Qing Shan's voice.

The void returned to silence.

They were now using telepathy to communicate.

“Now what do we do?”

“Let’s hurry up and leave”

“Why in such a hurry? Didn’t we manage to escape?”

“It’s clearly been enraged, let us find a safe place to observe what it exactly is”

They returned to silence.

One breath.

Two breaths.

Three breaths.

The entire palace structure trembled and shook as if an earthquake had occurred.

Several thousand gigantic black tentacles broke through the palace walls and shot straight to the sky.

The tentacles continued to rampage all over the palace, leveling it in the mere blink of an eye.

A grim and furious roar emerged from deep beneath the ground:

「 YOU—— SHALL—— DIEEEE—— 」

Chapter 1010

Countless black tentacles reached up into the sky from the ruined palace.

Those who still lingered in this area were caught by the tentacles and sucked completely dry.

Every breath’s worth of time, over a hundred Demis were mercilessly caught and consumed.

Even more tentacles continued to sprout from below and swept across the ground.

Nothing managed to stop these black tentacles as more and more structures were being struck down one after another.

A battle broke out.

A soldier with intense power radiating from his body charged to the sky.

“It’s our General of Defense!” someone shouted.

Everyone looked up.

The soldier clasped his hands together and shouted in fury: 「 Die! 」

Intense heat swept across the ground, swiftly igniting any dry objects and causing them to burst into flames.

His entire body turned into a giant made of flames as he shot towards the numerous black tentacles like an asteroid.

This was most likely his Divine Skill that he had trained to its limits.

Under everyone's watchful gazes, 7-8 tentacles black tentacles moved over and swung towards the giant of flames.

Immediately the flames broke apart and scattered downwards from the air.

The scattered flames fell on the ground and lit many areas ablaze, turning them into a sea of fire.

In a single strike, the General of Defense lost his life!

What kind of terrifying power is that!?

The military personnel who were preparing to move forward halted their advance.

Even the strongest among them was killed with a single hit, the rest of them wouldn't be doing anything except heading towards their deaths if they went forth.

The countless Combatants of this country fell into despair.

The stronger they were, the more they were able to feel the terror of this monster.

And this was only its tentacles.

Their true source of fear was the monster's main body.

And its main body still hadn't appeared!

Everyone ran away in fear.

Chaos ensued.

It was as if the end of the world had arrived.

All of a sudden, a dignified voice resounded in the sky:

「 The four Pillar Gods are coming to engage in combat with this monster. To prevent yourselves from getting caught in the struggle, leave the King's District immediately! 」

Far in the sky, four flickering points of light were approaching.

“Our Deities are coming!”

The crowd cheered.

The shocked troops regained their senses and began to help the civilians with evacuation.

Quite a few people stopped their feet, wanting to watch the battle.

But since their Deity had issued an order for everyone to leave this area, how could they allow anyone to violate that?

The troops began to chase the people away.

At the same time, the four Pillar Gods appeared in four different corners of the sky and each unleashed a jet-black seal towards the palace.

The entire area of tentacles was thoroughly isolated.

No one could observe the situation inside any longer, only the sounds of overwhelming attacks and explosions could be heard.

A few kilometers away from the King's District.

Zhang Ying Hao and Boss were standing on the roof of a building sensing the faint fluctuations of battle in the air.

"Quite the excellent hidden orchestration ability" Zhang Ying Hao commented.

"Indeed, by sealing the area off, no one would ever find out that the monster inside was actually on the same side as they are" Boss crossed his arms and nodded in agreement.

They leapt down from the roof and landed in a small alley.

Using the power of the Forgetting River Soul Flaying hook, Ye Fei Li temporarily granted the maid's soul the ability to interact and communicate with mortals.

A faint glow appeared on the maid's body.

This was a unique glow that signified a wandering soul accepting the power of a Huang Quan divine armament.

Just like how Ye Fei Li granted the wandering souls power in order for them to enact their vengeance against the carriers of [Chaos] from before.

"There"

Ye Fei Li told her.

The maid sensed herself and found that she was now able to touch tangible objects and speak.

She turned to the group and explained:

"His Majesty had me wait for you in that secret passage"

"As soon as I rendezvoused with you, I would have immediately taken you from that place and headed towards His Majesty's location"

"At least, that was my mission. Unfortunately, after waiting for a while, I suddenly fell unconscious. In hindsight, I was probably killed without knowing it"

Gu Qing Shan silently listened and waited until she finished until he asked: "Why did the King make you responsible for such a dangerous job?"

"Because I have a certain Divine Skill called [Fearless Transmission]"

"By choosing a location, regardless of what happened, I would be able to directly return to that location with a single thought"

“Regretfully, I did not manage to wait until the point where I was able to use that Divine Skill”

The maid sighed.

She solemnly bowed towards Gu Qing Shan’s group and continued: “Please allow me to return and meet my son. He’s currently sick, so I must be at his side, this way I would have no regrets even if I thoroughly disappear”

Ye Fei Li explained: “You can’t leave the range of my khopesh right now or you will be discovered by that entity right away— its expertise with soul-related techniques should be quite considerable”

The maid insisted: “I beg you, please help me just once. I’m already dead, I don’t have any other wish, I just want to see my son one last time”

Ye Fei Li turned to Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan fell into a bit of contemplation.

The four fake Gods announced that we were evil, yet the King ordered this woman to contact us.

The fact that she was issued such a heavy responsibility meant that she must be one of the King’s closest aides or a secret person that no one knows about.

In other words, she must have come into contact with a lot of secrets and have knowledge of many things.

Including information regarding Calming Soul Country that not even the populace of Calming Soul Country necessarily knew about.

Gu Qing Shan looked at the maid’s soul.

Only to see that her entire expression was full of sorrow and despair, even as a soul, her tears were still flowing without stopping.

Gu Qing Shan asked: “You’re worried about your son, but where’s the child’s father?”

“When I got pregnant, he had already left us” the maid replied.

“So you raised a child by yourself?”

“Yes”

“What a difficult thing to accomplish, may I ask how I should call you?”

“My name is Xuan Ya”

“Xuan Ya, nice to meet you, I’m Gu Qing Shan, and these are my friends”

Gu Qing Shan introduced each of them to her.

“Now, let us all come with you to your house. On one hand, it would be to help you see your child, on the other hand, we also need a place to hide”

The woman was so glad that her tears flowed every more and asked with a trembling voice: "Really? I'm nothing but a wandering soul right now, but I would like to express my gratitude"

She lowered herself, about to kneel to them.

But Gu Qing Shan hurriedly lifted her up.

"There's no need for that. You were killed trying to accomplish a mission to save us"

Gu Qing Shan smiled: "In that case, it would be us who owed you a lot"

...

A remote corner of the city.

The woman called Xuan Ya stood in front of a small room, hesitant to go forward.

"What's the matter?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

"He's... only three years old, I don't know how I should face him" Xuan Ya continued to cry as she replied.

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Everyone turned completely silent as they heard that.

A poor child who had no father, now also lost his mother.

How would we live from now on? And what kind of hardship would he have to face?

Can he even survive by himself?

It wasn't clear what Laura was thinking, but she slowly lowered her eyes and a drop of tear gradually dripped down her face.

Gu Qing Shan, on the other hand, was silently thinking about something else.

—it has only been 5 days since the last time I used the Heaven sword, so there are at least 5 more days until I can use [Chaotic Flow] again.

I have no way to resurrect her right now.

Gu Qing Shan sighed and told her: "Let's go, we'll come with you"

The woman shook her head, then nodded.

She reached her hand up to open the door.

But her hand went through the doorknob.

Ye Fei Li said apologetically: "Ah, I'm sorry, the ability to make wandering souls tangible can only be maintained for a few short minutes"

The woman seemed to sigh, then stepped back.

Gu Qing Shan asked: "How much longer until you can use it again?"

"An hour"

"Only an hour, we can wait that long"

"But even after an hour, it will only last for a few minutes. After all, the ability to make souls tangible isn't a specialized skill, it's only a bonus trick that the khopesh has"

"That is a bit troublesome, if she happens to run out of time just as she's talking to her son, wouldn't that be terrible?"

"Hm..."

They were quickly discussing this.

Listening to their discussions, Xuan Ya slowly lowered her head.

Suddenly, a loud cry came from inside the room:

"Mama..."

Xuan Ya ignored everything else, silently opened her mouth and said something, then dashed inside.

A door was there, but how could that prevent anyone here from looking inside?

Gu Qing Shan released his inner sight to check.

In the room, a bowl of water on the table has been overturned, a bottle of medicine fallen to the ground.

A three-year-old looking child was lying on the bed, his disease caused his small face to scrunch up in pain.

He was clearly not well, the disease plaguing him in his sleep.

But he stayed firm and silently endured his affliction, only when it got too uncomfortable to bear that he uttered a soft 'mama'.

Xuan Ya warped her hands around her child.

But as she was just a soul, no matter what she did or said, her son couldn't hear or feel it at all.

She was panicking.

"Let's jump in and help him" Ye Fei Li wanted to charge in.

Zhang Ying Hao stopped him and said in a low voice:

"You're a stranger to him, and not even a Demi, charging in that way would only scare the little child"

Ye Fei Li clenched his fists in frustration and asked: "Then what do we do now?"

Zhang Ying Hao replied: "Knock him unconscious, then cure him"

“That’s too brutal” Ye Fei Li said in dissatisfaction.

While Gu Qing Shan was observing this, he felt a small pair of hands grabbing his own.

As he looked down, he saw that it was Laura.

“Qing Shan” Laura looked up to him and muttered: “He’s an orphan now”

“Hm”

“Can we help him, just a bit?”

“...Hm”

An autumn water blue steel sword appeared from behind Gu Qing Shan and turned into Shannu.

“Gongzi, let me” Shannu volunteered.

Gu Qing Shan shook his head and replied: “You haven’t acted as a mother yet, without experience and time to learn, it would only complicate the situation”

He patted Ye Fei Li’s shoulder: “Call Xuan Ya back, and give me a strand of her hair”

“Ah, sure”

Ye Fei Li called the wandering soul back, then released her body, plucked a hair from it, and gave it to Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan took the hair, then asked Ye Fei Li: “Now— can you help me form a mental connection with Xuan Ya?”

“It’s a good thing that you’re a cultivator and that your spirit sense is quite powerful. We would barely be able to achieve it, but it won’t last for very long”

“How long?”

“Ten minutes”

“That’s enough”

It was now that Xuan Ya returned.

Gu Qing Shan talked to Xuan Ya a bit, asking about her normal daily life.

The two of them finished talking.

Ye Fei Li activated the Forgetting River Soul Flaying Hook again and connected their minds together.

“Say something” Gu Qing Shan said.

Xuan Ya said something.

Gu Qing Shan nodded to express that he was able to hear her.

Xuan Ya stared closely at him, then abruptly went forward and embraced him.

“Let’s begin”

Gu Qing Shan said.

Xuan Ya then turned around and stood in front of Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan activated [Mystery of All Beings Equal] and turned into Xuan Ya.

He opened the door and went inside.

Everyone stood at the door, silently observing the situation in the room.

As the child noticed his mother coming home, he called out in surprise.

Xuan Ya wiped her tears and displayed a gentle smile.

Gu Qing Shan followed suit and also smiled.

Whatever Xuan Ya said, Gu Qing Shan repeated.

Whatever expression Xuan Ya made Gu Qing Shan would make the same expression.

As Xuan Ya made an embracing gesture, Gu Qing Shan also embraced the young child.

At first, they weren’t completely in sync, but Gu Qing Shan soon adjusted and perfectly synchronized himself to Xuan Ya’s expressions and actions.

He was becoming more and more fluent.

Xuan Ya reached her hand towards the table——

Gu Qing Shan picked up the bowl.

Xuan Ya gently consoled her child.

Gu Qing Shan repeated her words.

Xuan Ya lowered her head.

Gu Qing Shan crouched lower and gave the young boy a kiss.

At this moment, he was Xuan Ya.

Outside the door, no one said anything.

Finally, Boss couldn’t help but ask: “How is he acting so well? In human society, he shouldn’t have the experience of being a mother, should he?”

Laura couldn’t hold back her tears and was constantly wiping her face.

She muttered: “Because he is also an orphan”

Chapter 1011

Gu Qing Shan had a total of 10 minutes

He used 8 minutes to calm the young child down.

And during the last half-minute, he used a cultivator's technique to help the boy enter deep sleep.

Time was up.

Gu Qing Shan and Xuan Ya's mental connection was cut.

Everything went perfectly well.

There were no openings.

Once he found himself unable to hear Xuan Ya's voice any longer, he dispelled [Mystery of All Beings Equal]

Seeing Xuan Ya's worried expression, Gu Qing Shan told her: "Don't worry, this is only a technique to help him sleep, there aren't any adverse side effects. Instead, it can help him sleep better and get well soon"

Xuan Ya sighed in relief.

She reached her hand out and gently touched her child's face.

A few moments later.

Xuan Ya opened her mouth and silently said something.

Ye Fei Li carefully listened and relayed the message: "She said that she's already dead so she no longer owed the king anything, but now she owes you a favor"

Gu Qing Shan smiled: "No need to be so formal. If it was anyone else in your shoes, I would have helped as well"

"She's asking the reason we came here from the outside world"

"It's because we lost a certain item in this place a few ten thousand years ago"

At first, Xuan Ya had a doubtful look on her face, then quickly fell into thought, as if she recalled something.

Everyone else had also settled down in the room.

Boss had laid down on the sofa like a corpse.

After using [Shelter of Infinite Worlds] for so long, Laura was also tired so she was sitting on a rocking chair drinking a can of stamina drink.

Zhang Ying Hao was standing next to a wall that hung a map of Calming Soul Country. He took out a cigarette, but then looked at the sleeping child and put it away in irritation.

Apparently thinking of something, Zhang Ying Hao abruptly asked: "Xuan Ya, if you're already dead, would anyone come here to search your house?"

Being called so abruptly, Xuan Ya was stunned for a brief moment before she replied.

“She said that she’s only a normal civilian on the outside. Unless the king directly ordered it, she would not act, and no one knows about her true identity, so there shouldn’t be any issues”

Everyone was relieved.

Most likely, the four Pillar Gods would not investigate a nobody under the king.

—--especially one that was already dead.

The current top priority for the four Pillar Gods is to calm that monster down, then come up with a way to gloss this entire matter over with the populace.

“This place still isn’t safe. After a bit of rest, we need to quickly move to another location” Gu Qing Shan said.

Zhang Ying Hao continued to study the map on the wall and replied: “Don’t worry, I’m looking for a suitable place. How about you help me?”

“Sure”

Gu Qing Shan was about to walk over.

But Ye Fei Li stopped him: “Qing Shan, she told you to wait a bit”

Gu Qing Shan stopped.

Xuan Ya walked forward, glanced at him, then silently said something.

Ye Fei Li relayed: “She said that while she was working for the country, she gave it her all, only asking the king for one thing in return: That is if anything happened to her, she asked the king to help care for her child”

“But it has already been several hours since she died, and yet no one had come to care for her child. Only you helped her”

Just as he had said that Zhang Ying Hao abruptly clapped his hands.

“Someone’s coming” he whispered.

Laura curiously asked: “How do you know?”

“They triggered the air that I rigged”

“You can even rig the air?”

“Of course. Gu Qing Shan, hurry up and make a decision, I’ve arranged a few things at the intersection to draw their attention, but it won’t be for very long”

Gu Qing Shan thought over for a split second and said: “That’s very strange, let us see what happens first”

A few minutes later.

The sound of knocking could be heard from the door.

The door was then lightly opened.

Two men in black armor swiftly went into the room without a sound.

“Safe”

“No one here”

The two of them looked around and whispered to each other.

The entire room seemed normal, only a 3-year-old child was sleeping in his bed.

This caused them to lower their guards.

—-however, they didn’t know that Gu Qing Shan, Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, Boss, and even Xuan Ya’s soul was standing in a corner, holding Laura’s umbrella.

They were silently watching them.

One of the men sighed: “How regretful, such a loyal and useful person fell into the enemy’s hand and was directly killed just like that”

“It is regretful. Her clan was already a ruined one, but now we need to remove all traces of her as well to prevent any trouble for his majesty”

“Right, this unwanted child can’t be allowed to live”

“How do we do this?”

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“Like always, you off him, I’ll set the fire”

“Got it”

They were about to get to it as they finished talking.

But out of nowhere, they felt someone touching their shoulders.

Then they found themselves unable to move!

A split second later, they felt a sharp pain before they fell unconscious.

Laura put her umbrella away.

Everyone reappeared.

Gu Qing Shan put his sword away and spoke to Xuan Ya apologetically: “I couldn’t kill them just now—-
- because that monster is very sensitive to death and souls, if someone died here, it would immediately notice”

Xuan Ya nodded.

She appeared completely drained, almost as if she lost her reason to live, but at the same time, she seemed like a burden had been lifted off her chest.

It seems the final bit of trust she had towards the king was now gone as well.

Xuan Ya waved her hand towards Gu Qing Shan.

“She told you to come with her” Ye Fei Li said.

Gu Qing Shan followed Xuan Ya in front of a bookshelf.

Xuan Ya pointed at a certain book.

Gu Qing Shan picked it off the shelf.

Xuan Ya said something.

“Page 653, the 9th line from the top, second sentence. Say it out loud” Ye Fei Li relayed her words.

Gu Qing Shan opened the book, turned to that page, and saw the sentence she wanted him to read.

Although he didn’t understand what it was about, Gu Qing Shan knew that Xuan Ya wouldn’t try to hurt them at this point in time.

He cleared his throat and whispered the line on the book: “Contract inspection”

A scroll glowing in golden light suddenly manifested in the air.

The scroll hovered silently and gave off a light that illuminated Xuan Ya.

A few moments later.

A voice filled with divine dignity resounded:

「 The royal family had betrayed the ancient oath and tried to act against a descendant of the guardian clan 」

「 The oath has been broken 」

「 From now on, the royal family’s guardian clan shall no longer need to fulfill their oath 」

Two faint golden shackles appeared on Xuan Ya’s soul and shattered.

Following that, the golden scroll also shattered into sparks of light that slowly dissipated.

Xuan Ya showed an expression of relief and quickly explained.

“She said that she was part of the royal family’s guardian clan, one with many protective Divine Skills. During her generation, she fell in love with the prince”

“After she was pregnant with the prince’s child, the prince heartlessly abandoned her”

“However, according to the ancient contract, this was not part of the oath, so she had to continue to work for the sake of the royal family”

“Up until just now, when the royal family intended to kill this child”

“It was because of that that the ancient oath had been broken”

“From now on, even if she’s only a soul, both her and her child are free”

Hearing that, Gu Qing Shan sighed emotionally.

He closed the book and spoke seriously: “That’s a good outcome”

Xuan Ya nodded, walked to a corner of the room, and pointed at a damaged doll.

This seemed to be a doll for children up until the age of 2, as her child had grown older, he no longer played with it.

Gu Qing Shan understood, walked towards the doll, and picked it up.

Xuan Ya put both hands up to make a ripping gesture.

Gu Qing Shan ripped the doll in half.

Clank clang!

A silver ring dropped out from the doll, fell to the ground, and made an expected metallic noise.

Gu Qing Shan waved his hand, summoning the silver ring from the ground.

Lines of glowing text appeared on the War God UI:

[You’ve obtained the Ring of the Inner Plane Guardians]

[This was a ring specifically forged to pass on a secret at the moment of the Inner Plane’s destruction]

[As the restraining oath on this ring has been broken, you may activate its secret without performing any duties]

[The only prerequisite is that you must know the corresponding incantation]

[Utter the incantation and activate it]

Looking at this silver ring, Xuan Ya had a complicated expression on her face.

She softly muttered something.

Ye Fei Li relayed her words: “She told you to repeat after her: Now, I am not afraid”

Gu Qing Shan held the ring and whispered: “Now, I am not afraid”

As soon as he said so, a glorious holy light suddenly appeared from the ring and enveloped Gu Qing Shan’s body.

It had been activated!

Chapter 1012

The silver light completely enveloped Gu Qing Shan.

He stood still within the light and made no reaction.

“What’s going on?”

Laura anxiously asked.

“What’s going on with that ring of yours?” Ye Fei Li suddenly turned and glared at Xuan Ya.

Xuan Ya shook her head and said something.

Ye Fei Li listened and told everyone: “She said that Gu Qing Shan is receiving a few secrets from the era of the past, he’s fine”

Zhang Ying Hao coldly stared at Xuan Ya and said: “Hmph, why should I believe you? That ring of yours is surely——”

Boss waved his hand, cutting him off mid sentence: “Don’t worry”

Zhang Ying Hao turned to him.

Boss appeared considerably tired, but also sorrowful for no reason.

“It’s fine, he’s just learning about a few things—— if he wants to do anything within this world of Calming Soul Country, this process is necessary”

Boss added: “This is a kind of recognition of status”

“Then—— we can’t do anything right now but wait?”

“We can only wait, and there’s nothing else to do either way”

After saying so, Boss laid back down on the sofa.

Everyone exchanged glances before focusing their gazes on Gu Qing Shan once again.

Gu Qing Shan remained still.

Under the illuminating glow, he was clearly very close to everyone here, but at the same time, he seemed to be unreachably far away.

——at the moment the ring was activated.

Gu Qing Shan felt himself entering a world of darkness.

It was nothing but thick, stifled darkness around him.

All of a sudden, a dignified voice resounded:

「 On the day that all the stars fall from their place in the sky, the Realm of Myriad Gods shall heed its end 」

The darkness faded.

Gu Qing Shan suddenly noticed countless stars in the sky falling to the ground.

The ground was howling.

For some unknown reason, Gu Qing Shan felt fear.

This fear wasn't from the countless falling stars, but rather because of an unspeakable dread that came from the ground below.

Although Gu Qing Shan's eyes weren't able to observe it, this sensation had been imprinted into his mind, allowing him to sense the bone-deep sense of despair and fear.

The scene in front of his eyes flashed.

Gu Qing Shan found himself standing inside a palace. The palace was quickly flying through the sky as if something was chasing after it.

Countless armored soldiers stood within the palace.

A man who wore a crown sat on top of a throne and questioned those around him: "How many stars are there left in the sky?"

Someone reported: "Your Majesty, it's all gone, all of them are dead"

"Reporting—"

A figure came flying from outside the palace and landed in the middle of the hall.

This person was riddled with wounds, breathing heavily: "There are some Deities who are still alive. I just witness the God of Knowledge taking the royal family of Starlight Empire with him through the world barrier towards the space vortex"

"The space vortex!?"

A Combatant spoke in frustration: "How could a Deity have done this, there are countless terrifying monsters in the space vortex, some of which not even the Deities would be able to fight against!"

Another Combatant refuted him: "It is fine, our side still has the Lord of the Eternal Abyss, the Greatest Above the Star Crown. He has purposely given up his human identity to take the form of a monster within the Abyss—— he is the strongest monster of them all!"

Everyone went quiet.

When that person was mentioned, it seemed everyone felt a complicated mood.

A sharp scream abruptly resounded from outside.

It was as though this was the signal.

Death began to spread.

Countless cries and screams of despair from all living beings resounded within this space without stopping.

The crowned man sighed: "It seems that the God of Death was correct. The Realm of Myriad Gods have fallen, it is fortunate that we received the protection of the God of Life"

He lowered his head as he clutched a golden ring in his hand.

A brief moment of silence.

Boom!!!!!!!!!!!!

The intense sound of impact reverberated across this entire space.

It went completely dark outside of the palace.

Gu Qing Shan was able to see through the darkness and witnessed the myriads of living beings.

Every type of life form was hurriedly rushing to the sky from below with all they had.

They all had expressions of fear and dread, instinctively making their way towards the sky for the sake of survival.

At this point, the crowned man's expression changed as he shouted: "There's no time, we need to move towards the space vortex now!"

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He wore the golden ring on his finger.

The golden ring glowed brightly and enveloped the entire palace in a faint golden glow.

Within this glow, the palace seemed to have received some sort of guidance as it abruptly shot forward with a sonic boom, breaking a hole through the sky and vanished from this world.

At the very last split second, Gu Qing Shan looked behind the palace.

The life forms that were fleeing with all their might froze in mid-air.

Unfortunately, they were a bit slower than the palace.

—so, they were already dead.

Countless corpses of countless shapes and sizes filled the sky, manifesting as a sea of corpses.

Everything went dark.

And another flash.

Gu Qing Shan now found himself once again standing inside that palace.

This time, the palace was situated on top of a series of tall mountains, no longer in a crisis.

He saw the crowned man from earlier again.

The man was sitting high on his throne, bloodied all over, and was near his last breath.

But he was looking down at three armored Combatants below.

"The God of Life has crashed into the void, and I shall soon follow them into eternal slumber"

"You are the most devout followers of our God, and the most loyal guardians under my command"

"Today, you and I shall pledge to the same oath right here"

“Please, in my place, protect Calming Soul Country, and guarantee the continuation of the royal bloodline. In exchange, the royal family shall always protect you and swear to never harm your descendants”

He tossed something in his hand.

Three silver rings flew down and hovered in front of the three Combatants.

“I do not have much time left”

“If you are willing to follow that oath, please wear this ring”

The three Combatants all had serious expressions on their faces.

The three of them reached their hands out to take the rings and wore them at the same time.

The crowned man silently observed his until the end, when he finally displayed a glad smile.

He sat upright on his throne, breathed his final breath, and slowly slumped his head.

The scene vanished.

Gu Qing Shan found himself returned to the small room.

He fell into a long silence.

The two scenes just now contained too much information that he needed time to reorganize himself.

A long while later.

Gu Qing Shan turned to Xuan Ya and asked: “What kind of place is the Realm of Myriad Gods?”

Xuan Ya said something.

Ye Fei Li listened and repeated: “Within the space vortex, it is called the Inner Plane”

“At the moment of the Inner Plane’s destruction, the numerous Deities within the sea of stars fell from their place in the sky. Only seven Deities managed to take their holy countries with them and escape that dreadful Apocalypse”

“However, the space vortex wasn’t safe”

“The seven Deities fought against countless unknown monsters for many years, falling one by one”

“But as the Deities never ceased to fight, the number of monsters within this void greatly decreased”

“Having predicted their outcomes from long ago, they formed a covenant with the four Old Gods of the space vortex—— the Four Pillars of Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind. They could completely seal their holy countries away, as long as the living beings inside were allowed to thrive and live on”

“While the holy countries originally could not possibly survive within the space vortex, due to this gamble of their Deities, they were allowed to exist”

“Up until a few ten thousand years ago”

“A Card appeared on the royal family’s altar of their God”

“At the moment of this Card’s descent, it gave off an intense power fluctuation that broke through the seal of the Gods”

“This power was felt throughout the space vortex within its vicinity, allowing a terrible monster to follow it and discover Calming Soul Country”

“It was the enemy of the God of Life, an unknown existence within the void that could rival Deities. It was greatly injured within its battle against the Deities by their combined efforts, unable to recover after all that time. When the seven Deities were no longer there and the four Pillar Gods had no leisure to care about anything else, it sneakily appeared, looking for vengeance”

“It followed that Card into Calming Soul Country”

“Meanwhile, due to her lack of power, the entity on the Card was no match against this terrible monster. She had no choice but to give up her Card and escape alone from our world”

“Her Card was taken by that monster, split apart into four portions by a power that we could not understand and bestowed upon the four Demis who betrayed us and surrendered themselves to it, masquerading them as Deities”

“As for the entity on that Card, before she left, she told the royal family that she must come to the 900 million World Layers in order to wait for a certain person to appear”

“Only that person would be able to save her”

Hearing that, Gu Qing Shan already noticed something.

He tried to maintain his calm and asked: “Did she tell them her name?”

“Yes”

“She said she used to be called Water God. But in order to differentiate herself from the four Pillar Gods, and in order to better hid herself within the 900 million World Layers, she had changed her name”

“She said to call her Darksea”

Chapter 1013

Hearing the name Darksea, Gu Qing Shan took a deep breath.

So that was it.

If that’s the case, then everything makes sense.

I really need to save her.

Right now, she’s the only hope of fighting against the Soul Shrieker!

“Thank you for telling me so much”

He sincerely expressed his gratitude to Xuan Ya.

—*if Xuan Ya hadn't told me all of this on her own accord, I would've had to spend a huge amount of effort to probe all these secrets.*

After all, some of these were absolutely top-secret matters of Calming Soul Country.

Like the end of the Inner Plane, the death of the seven Deities, Darksea's departure... none of these were matters that normal people would be able to find out. Within this Calming Soul Country, most likely only the royal family and the guardians know of this.

"She said she wanted to thank you, and this was the only thing she could do"

Xuan Ya nodded, then continued.

While listening, Ye Fei Li relayed her message:

"According to the four Pillar Gods' declaration, the souls of everyone who are considered to be dead would be received and welcomed into the true garden of Eden"

"But no one knows that this was only an illusion created by the monster"

"In truth, after they are dead, their souls would only be taken and consumed by the monster"

"The royal family that used to rule over this world was no match for the four Gods, and definitely no match for that terrifying monster, they couldn't do anything but prolong their dying breaths"

Gu Qing Shan cut off Ye Fei Li and asked: "If that monster was so powerful, why didn't it simply destroy the royal family?"

"At the time, that monster used a unique method in order to infiltrate Calming Soul Country—- it consumed the Law of Death of Calming Soul Country then took its place, thus gaining entry and becoming a part of this world"

"It is able to lord over the fate of all dead souls within this world"

"However, it was only after it became the Law of Death that it discovered that the royal family held the means to destroy Calming Soul Country as a whole"

Gu Qing Shan displayed an understanding expression.

If the world gets destroyed, so will the world's Laws.

Even if the monster wouldn't be killed outright, it would still suffer heavy injuries.

Having been wounded before by the joint efforts of the seven Deities, it was surely unwilling to suffer heavy wounds again.

Sure enough, Ye Fei Li continued: "When that monster discovered this, it was already too late, so it had no choice but to accept this and tolerated the royal family's existence"

"That monster could only lift the four fake Gods and use them to usurp their authority—- even so, the monster couldn't push the royal family too hard into a corner, otherwise when the royal family steeled their determination for mutual destruction, it wouldn't end up favorably either"

“I understand” Gu Qing Shan sighed.

Laura looked at him and worriedly asked: “Gu Qing Shan, what do we do now?”

“Get rid of those four fake Gods and take back the fragments of the Card” Gu Qing Shan replied.

Zhang Ying Hao asked further: “What about that monster?”

Gu Qing Shan shook his head: “If the original Deities couldn’t kill it, we would naturally be unable to do so either. We need to pick our fights”

Hearing that, Zhang Ying Hao fell into thought.

After a while, he spoke up again: “There are too many variables in this matter. Those four are stronger than any of us, and that terrifying monster has already turned into a part of this world’s Laws, do you think we can really avoid it?”

Gu Qing Shan sighed: “With just the four of us, naturally not, that’s why we need to find help”

“The king?”

“Yes”

“I don’t like him”

“But in the current situation, he’s our only choice for cooperation—-- hah, seriously, someone like him isn’t a suitable contract partner at all”

The two of them both expressed clear hesitation.

Their gazes fell onto the sleeping child.

He was still deeply asleep.

Xuan Ya then said something.

Ye Fei Li repeated her words: “She said that you must keep something clear in mind. Every Demi born on this world can awaken a Divine Skill, even if a certain person isn’t particularly powerful, their Divine Skill can far surpass the limit of their strength and exert unimaginable power”

“Furthermore, the current king of Calming Soul Country is, without a doubt, the strongest king in history. She’s saying that we can’t underestimate him or we will find ourselves losing without knowing why”

Gu Qing Shan nodded: “I understand that— but I need to ask something, does she know what the king’s Divine Skill is?”

“She said that the current king’s Divine Skill is called [Hundred Thousand Selves], this Divine Skill will allow the king to borrow the Divine Skill of every previous king before him”

“...” Gu Qing Shan.

“...” Zhang Ying Hao.

“No wonder he’s the strongest king” Laura commented from the bottom of her heart.

Knock!

Knock!

Knock!

A series of knocks resounded from the door.

Gu Qing Shan turned to Zhang Ying Hao.

Zhang Ying Hao shook his head, expressing that the trap he sprung outside didn't activate, and he didn't notice anyone approaching.

Gu Qing Shan released his inner sight but saw nobody as well.

Knock!

Knock!

Knock!

The sound of knocking came again.

Suddenly, Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, and Laura froze in place.

They seemed to have been restrained inside a narrow space that didn't even afford them space to move a finger.

Gu Qing Shan also sensed space coiling itself around him.

Not only was space enclosing itself around him, but it was also solidifying into an invisible wall, apparently leaving just enough space for his body to stay in.

All of a sudden, Gu Qing Shan's eyes seemed to have noticed that and unleashed an invisible airflow that forced the coiling space to expand once more.

It didn't take much effort.

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Gu Qing Shan also felt unexpected.

A similarly unexpected voice resounded from the void of space.

「 Huh? 」

When this voice resounded, Boss who was laying on the sofa had already gotten up and stood by Gu Qing Shan.

“This is [Lock of Dimensional Gate], a Sound-type Divine Skill that can put anyone into stasis, rendering them unable to move” Boss muttered.

“Is that so? Sounds impressive” Gu Qing Shan casually replied.

Two lines of glowing text appeared on the War God UI:

[Due to the inclusion of Primal Chaos, parallel world, Inner Plane, sword, and power of the four Pillar Elements, your Iris World Technique have broken the Divine Skill: Lock of Dimensional Gate]

[Your Iris World Technique is still accumulating power]

Gu Qing Shan's inner sight scanned through as his thoughts moved.

Four swords had manifested behind his back.

He reached his hands out to wield the twin swords Heaven and Earth.

His killing intent rose.

Without saying a word, the other party acted to restrain Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, and Laura.

This was a kind of malicious probing.

If everyone on their side was restrained, the other party would've regarded them as having no threat, squeezed them dry of every last bit of value they had, and had them killed!

Gu Qing Shan glanced at the void of space and curtly spoke: "This is the rudest knocking on someone's door I've ever heard. If you want to die, come forward"

— he had been angered.

Following this, if the other party truly dared to act against them, Gu Qing Shan would kill them on the spot even if he had to use the remaining million Soul Points he had!

Apparently sensing this killing intent, the void went silent.

「 How unexpected, other than the Exiled Apostle, there was someone else who could resist my Divine Skill 」

The voice muttered to itself in confusion.

From the void of space, a man wearing a crown and a luxurious crimson cape appeared.

— the king of Calming Soul Country.

「 You must forgive me for my rudeness just now. After all, I wanted to know what kind of person managed to knock my subordinates unconscious 」 the king said apologetically.

He turned to the two men on the ground and muttered: 「 There are fewer and fewer useful ones every year... 」

As Gu Qing Shan kept a close eye on him, he noticed that the king couldn't see Xuan Ya's soul.

Xuan Ya's complexion was pale as she was hurriedly shouting something to Gu Qing Shan.

But Ye Fei Li was being restrained in a special space, unable to relay her words.

Gu Qing Shan thought briefly and sensed something occurring.

"Shannu!" he abruptly shouted.

“Yes, gongzi!”

Shannu’s voice replied.

The autumn water blue steel sword flew in front of the bed and abruptly exuded countless black sword images.

Secret Art, [Drawn Shadow]!

A clear and abrupt ‘kih!’ resounded.

Something seemed to have been shattered in the void of space.

All the black images retreated back into the sword as it hovered above the bed to protect the sleeping child.

The Six Paths Great Mountain sword could break all Laws.

There should be no issues using it to protect the child.

Seeing this, Xuan Ya sighed in relief.

The king’s gaze fell onto the sword and scowled.

He spoke in a confused tone: 「 How very unexpected—— she’s already dead and yet you still protect her child so. Did you make some sort of secret deal with her? 」

Gu Qing Shan replied: “The one with an oath with her is you, not us—— I’m finding this to be quite unexpected as well, after all, attempting to kill a child in his sleep isn’t what a normal person would be capable of”

The king went silent as a flash of anger appeared in his eyes.

At that split second, Gu Qing Shan felt that he might have acted right away.

But no attacks came.

「 What do you know? That is an unwanted child, a matter of our royal family, it is unrelated to you outsiders 」 the king declared.

His gaze turned to Boss as his tone relaxed briefly: 「 Greatest Above the Crown Star, you seemed to have been injured quite heavily, but is still able to resist my Divine Skill, that truly is unexpected 」

The king once again displayed a smile on his face as he looked at them.

「 Gentlemen, let us not mind such minor matters. Now that you’ve proven your strength, we can now sit down and discuss the current situation 」

「 We have much that we can cooperate with 」

Gu Qing Shan exchanged glances with Boss.

““Our thoughts exactly””

The two of them answered in unison.

Before he even finished his words, Boss had already charged forward.

His book preemptively opened to a certain page as he held it in his hand, quickly chanting something.

While Gu Qing Shan vanished altogether.

The king showed a mocking expression as he was about to say something, but then his face went pale.

He found himself already restrained.

——[*Lock of Dimensional Gate!*]

This was the Divine Skill I borrowed from a previous king, but it's now restraining me!

An excited voice resounded from the void of space:

Xiu xiu xiu!

At the next split second, Gu Qing Shan came down from above.

A sword with an ancient motif imbued with vicious lightning swung straight at the king's neck!

Chapter 1014

Seeing the arcing lightning approaching him from the Earth sword, the king's complexion changed.

This sword didn't seem to be very powerful, but it gave him a shivering notion of danger.

The king abruptly opened his mouth and spat out a black mass of air at the sword.

Gu Qing Shan was the one who attacked first, but the king's attack arrived several times quicker than his.

This was pure suppression of strength.

In that split second, Gu Qing Shan's sword continued downwards without hesitation.

Boss had already gotten into an appropriate range to perform his technique and uttered the words: "Divine Spirit Barrier!"

The book in his hand gave off a series of trembling noises.

Right in front of Gu Qing Shan, a monster with many horns was summoned by Boss.

The monster opened its mouth wide and sucked the black air away.

With a sharp screech, the monster vanished without a trace.

Since he had the help of Boss' summoned monster, Gu Qing Shan didn't need to dodge.

He only needed to.

Keep moving forward.

And slash!

Lightning Thaumaturgy – [Dreamjolt]!

Struck by this attack, the king was immobilized.

Gu Qing Shan swung a second time, hacking off the king's arms and legs.

Boss abruptly shouted: "Back!"

Gu Qing Shan tilted his body and vanished.

At the very next split second, another king appeared from the void of space and pressed his hand at Gu Qing Shan's original location.

A black crack appeared in his hand, expanded to the void of space, and swallowed everything.

It could be easily seen that if this attack had struck Gu Qing Shan, his body would have been severely dismembered.

Fortunately, Gu Qing Shan avoided it.

The second king didn't give chase and instead fused with the first king.

The king's severed arms and legs returned to normal.

As Gu Qing Shan watched this, he was surprised but didn't waste any time.

He appeared next to Zhang Ying Hao and destroyed the Dimensional Locks that restrained them.

Laura vanished right away.

Ye Fei Li and Zhang Ying Hao swiftly followed as they reached their hands into the void.

Standing across from them, the king appeared quite excited.

「 Although you aren't strong, you have quite a few decent unique abilities 」

The king smirked and purposely sighed: 「 How unfortunate, that first attack would have been your only chance, why didn't you kill me right away? 」

「 Most likely, you've already understood the rules of death in this world. Whenever someone dies, that monster would immediately notice. You're afraid that it would destroy this place in its rage, aren't you? 」

Boss replied: "It wasn't only that. I already saw you perform the Divine Skill: [Soul Substitution]. [Soul Substitution] is an ability that allows another soul to temporarily reside within your body through certain severe conditions. This way, only that soul would die when you receive fatal damage, while you remained completely fine"

Gu Qing Shan was startled.

The king nodded without much thought: 「 Correct. I know that you're only declaring that for your friends to hear, but that is also meaningless 」

“Why?” Boss questioned.

「 Because I have already gathered the souls of many and made them reside in my body. At this moment, I have a total of 999 lives 」

The king observed them, wanting to look at their expression of despair.

But he was disappointed.

Neither of them displayed anything with their expressions.

The king continued: 「 Just look, you’re too scared to even kill me, and you can’t even if you wanted to. However, I can kill you anytime I wish without any restraints 」

“Quite impressive indeed” Gu Qing Shan praised.

The king crossed his arms: 「 The only reason I haven’t utilized my full power is because I don’t want to cause too much commotion and lead those guys here 」

“Being so careful must mean that you also have ulterior motives” Gu Qing Shan commented.

「 Of course, I want you people to swear your allegiance to me 」

The king continued: 「 Remember, think carefully before you answer me, otherwise, the next time I act will be to kill you before throwing your souls to that monster 」

Gu Qing Shan and Boss exchanged glances.

Gu Qing Shan put his sword away and lightly cleared his throat: “You’re the king. There should be countless people willing to work for you. Why personally come to have us swear allegiance to you?”

The king replied: 「 It’s fine even if I tell you. Because the people born in this world all have the God of Life’s sigil within their souls, the only people who do not are those from the royal family due to their status 」

“Soul sigils from the God of Life?”

「 Indeed, while the God of Life was still alive, this was a method for them to protect their followers 」

「 However, our Deity had passed away, and since that monster had fought against the God of Life for so many years, it has gotten sensitive enough to the point that it could sense these sigils 」

“And what does that have to do with us?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

The king lowered his voice and spoke urgently: 「 You still don’t understand? Only you can escape its monitoring, you are the only people in this world capable of such a feat! And I need people like you to work for me 」

Gu Qing Shan nodded.

So that’s what this was all about.

He slowly muttered: “No wonder you sent Xuan Ya to receive us earlier”

This statement seemed a bit abrupt.

Xuan Ya understood what it meant and started to tremble.

The king's amiable appearance no longer remained, he scowled and stared closely at Gu Qing Shan's blank eyes.

「What— are you trying to say?」 the king questioned.

Gu Qing Shan continued without hesitation: “At the time, the monster and the four Gods were trying to come up with a way to declare Boss as a malicious traitor while also killing us, and also to cover everything up”

“That is the moment when they would be the most high-strung”

“Because of that, as soon as Xuan Ya appeared, regardless of what she was doing in the secret passage, the monster would immediately send people to get rid of her”

“While you would have sacrificed a subordinate in order to save us. This would both cause us to feel apologetic and that you were someone we'd be willing to associate ourselves with”

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“You most likely believed that we would have gone past Xuan Ya's corpse and quickly entered the door on the other side of the secret passage”

“I assume that there was some sort of one-time teleportation device behind that door, where we would have been transported directly to a place you prepared and meet you face-to-face”

“At that time, you would mourn Xuan Ya's sacrifice while we feel apologetic, then we would volunteer to work under you and help you achieve a few things to make up for your loss”

Gu Qing Shan sighed, then said: “Pitiful Xuan Ya, she thought that her teleportation Divine Skill could have contributed greatly, but in fact, her only use was to be killed and express to us just how much you tried to help”

Silence filled the room.

Xuan Ya's soul covered her mouth with her hands as her tears silently flowed.

The king stared at Gu Qing Shan in wonder, perhaps evaluating him once again.

In truth, everything went as the king had predicted up to the point where Gu Qing Shan's group saw Xuan Ya's body in the secret passage.

Gu Qing Shan's choices and ability to read the situation went far beyond the king's assumptions.

It was from that moment that everything changed.

After musing for a while, the king spoke:

「Excuse me, you— what was your name?」

“Gu Qing Shan”

The king displayed an interested expression and told him: 「 You're a smart person, I like people like you 」

“My apologies, but I don't like you” Gu Qing Shan replied.

The king waved his hand without care and said: 「 Your strength is severely lacking, but your unique abilities are all the best I've ever seen, and now that I've seen your wits, I can truly feel myself benefiting from this 」

“What exactly do you want us to do?” Gu Qing Shan curiously asked.

「 At that place that the God of Life left behind, one person cannot make it, but if I brought others, they would be sensed by the monster through their sigils—— 」

The king abruptly stopped.

He pulled out a scroll from his chest and spoke: 「 Sign this covenant and pledge your allegiance to me, then we'll mention the specifics 」

“But we never said we wanted to swear allegiance to you” Boss replied.

The king chuckled.

「 Do not force my hands 」 the king's tone slowly turned grim: 「 I can guarantee this, after your deaths, I will beg that monster to allow me to torture you all before your souls are consumed 」

「 If you insist on being a bunch of fools who don't fear death, then die 」

「 If you know fear, then accept this guardian covenant. I can guarantee that you will receive the best treatment, as I do with all my subordinates 」

Gu Qing Shan cleared his throat and questioned: “By ‘best treatment’, you mean like Xuan Ya did?”

The king's expression thoroughly became grim.

「 State your choice 」 he grumbled in a rage.

Gu Qing Shan turned to Boss.

“Are you afraid?” he asked.

“Quite afraid”

“Then we——”

“Hm, let's surrender”

Gu Qing Shan turned to the king again and sighed helplessly: “We've decided to surrender”

The king's lips curved to reveal a half-mocking, half-triumphant smirk.

But the two people in front of him had already disappeared.

The king sensed his surroundings.

—-and discovered nothing.

「 With only that? 」

He raised his hand and grinned.

But before he could unleash any technique, a soul-stealing howl resounded:

“Aeaaaaa— hah—”

Immediately, a bullet appeared in between the king’s eyebrows and went through without any issues.

The technique was halted.

Blood splattered

The king fell down.

But another king rose up and declared:

「 What a foolish act. Even if you had killed me, that monster would only rush here due to the Law of Death 」

「 Not even the Deities were its match 」

「 Furthermore, I have over 900 souls to substitute myself, regardless of what you do, you won’t be able to kill me 」

His aura greatly shot up and caused the room to creak almost to the point of collapse.

Regardless of where they were hiding, they would only be crushed by this overwhelming power.

The king declared in a grim voice:

「 It seems I have suppressed my powers too much and given you an unrealistic hope 」

「 Very well, I shall have you all take on my fu— — 」

Someone suddenly touched him.

The king felt his entire body tensing up, unable to move, unable to say what he intended to.

From the void of space, a hook-like weapon appeared, lightly touching his body before heavily pulling it backwards.

Hundreds of transparent figures were pulled away.

At the same time, the king abruptly felt pain in his chest.

He looked down.

A long scepter had pierced through his body.

For some reason, he could feel all of his souls trembling from fear.

This scepter— what is this thing!!!?

Gu Qing Shan silently reappeared.

Putting his hand against the horned skull on top of the scepter, he casually said: “When it comes to death, I actually have quite the authority as well”

Chapter 1015

The Apostle is indeed heavily injured.

And the strength of one called Gu Qing Shan is nothing to write home about.

The King understood very clearly that he was the strongest among everyone in the room, capable of crushing them all as long as he wanted to.

There was no question about that.

—-I had even held myself back to prevent my presence from crushing these people right away.

Because that would draw the attention of the monster.

But the battle started and ended very abruptly.

The king was now lying on the ground, still haven't regained his senses.

Originally, I wanted to use my overwhelming power to suppress these people and force them to kneel in front of me.

But then,

Why did,

Things turn out this way?

The king was unable to accept the current situation.

But with a scepter poking out from his chest, the constant searing pain was constantly reminding him that it was all true.

A sense of unprecedented fear was plaguing the king's mind.

This was the instinctive fear which every living being felt as they faced the judge of death.

—-the sensation of his life and death being held in another person's hand, the sensation that extended even to his soul.

Some people would cry, sob, and beg as they faced this situation, trying to do everything they could to live.

But some people chose differently.

The king glared at Gu Qing Shan and groaned in fury:

「 Do it, kill me if you really can! 」

「 I am the ruler of the God of Life's holy country, the servant of God, the king of Calming Soul Country, I am not afraid of death! 」

As he looked down on him, Gu Qing Shan held a bit of praise in his eyes.

At least, this king still had a bit of merit to him.

Keeping his hand on the scepter, Gu Qing Shan put up an index finger and slowly moved it from side to side.

“You're misunderstanding something” Gu Qing Shan replied: “I never said I wanted to kill you”

The king froze.

“It's true” Gu Qing Shan continued, “We definitely won't kill you; you need to keep that in mind”

The king slowly breathed out in relief, feeling like this heroic act just now was just for the blind to see while he couldn't help but feel relieved from the bottom of his heart.

It was naturally a good thing being able to survive.

Gu Qing Shan simply watched as his emotions switched several times before going on: “And also—— truthfully speaking, we need to thank you as well”

Thank me?

The king froze again but hesitated to respond to that.

Gu Qing Shan sincerely explained: “Just think about it. You had your subordinate sneak us a piece of paper and made sure we were on our guard ahead of time, then sent her to the secret passage to wait for us and prepared a way for us to leave. Although we used a different way to escape in the end, that didn't change the fact that you were doing all of this for our sake”

“Regardless of what schemes you were hatching against your subordinates, this was the undeniable truth”

“The only reason why we fought with you just now was to show you that we don't want to become your subordinates, that's all”

The king coldly replied: 「 You really think I'm going to believe these pathetic excuses? 」

Gu Qing Shan answered indifferently: “It doesn't matter whether you believe them or not. Because I only have one question for you, after you answer, we'll act like this never happened at all. You can return to being the king, and after we take what we want, we'll leave Calming Soul Country”

「 What do you want? 」

“Information. Everything you know about that monster and the four fake Gods. I want it all”

The king found that unexpected.

「 You really don't want anything else? 」 he tried asking.

“No, I only want information about the monster and the four fake Gods” Gu Qing Shan answered right away.

「 What do you want that for? 」

“To kill them. I want the Card they hold”

The king displayed a pondering look.

Card...

So, the reason they came here was for the Card fragments that the four fake Gods are keeping.

The king had an unconvinced look on his face and asked: 「 Are you really not after the authority and wealth of Calming Soul Country? 」

Gu Qing Shan cleared his throat and replied, a bit embarrassed: “I’ll be frank. This place of yours is simply destitute, including that monster. All it took was a single Soul Artifact for it to become hysterical, so there really isn’t anything here that’s tempting to us”

The king froze again.

This was the first day in his long life that he was shocked so many times.

At the same time, he felt a strange sense of relief.

If they aren’t after Calming Soul Country, I still have a chance to survive.

—-and in hindsight, that monster has truly been madly collecting Soul Artifact.

But considering how precious Soul Artifacts are, there weren’t many of them in Calming Soul Country in the first place, all of which had already been taken by the monster.

The king scoffed: 「 We’re destitute you say? What do you actually know? We were originally extremely wealthy; our kingdom had a total of 12 Soul Artifacts of great power, but all of them were taken by that monster 」

Gu Qing Shan continued looking at him, but started to show pity on his expression.

The king’s cold smirk slowly went stiff.

Gu Qing Shan’s attitude made him a bit unsure.

“Hah— Laura, come” Gu Qing Shan called out.

“Got it, master!”

Laura ran over, turned her backpack upside down, and shook it.

—-clink, clang, cling, clank!

A huge amount of treasures started to pour out from the bag, slowly stacking into a small pile around the king.

They all gave off mystical power fluctuation, clear to anyone with a bit of knowledge that they were indeed the ultimate treasures of great value within the 900 million World Layers.

Soul Artifacts

They were all Soul Artifacts.

Even with rough estimation, anyone could tell that there were hundreds of them right here.

The king opened his eyes wide, unable to comprehend what was happening in front of his eyes.

If it weren't for the constant pain in his chest, he'd have actually believed that this was a dream.

The king opened his mouth, trying to say something, but found himself speechless.

And I tried using 12 Soul Artifacts to refute them just now.

How pitiful.

Gu Qing Shan took a glance at him, then casually said: "Here's an advice— staying for too long in a small corner of the world will affect your sense of value"

The king felt like he just received a heavy punch to the gut.

He closed his eyes, then abruptly opened them again, feeling a burning sensation in his heart.

Who had ever dared to talk to me that way!?

And yet, with so many Soul Artifacts in their hands, they truly do have the qualifications to talk to me that way!

Damn it!

The king couldn't contain himself and shouted: 「 Wealth is only a part of it. That matter I mentioned to you earlier, I refuse to believe that you don't want a part of it! 」

"Which matter?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

「 Do you really not want to know the secret of the God of Life? 」

Gu Qing Shan waved his hand and scoffed: "If the Deities themselves couldn't kill that monster, then their secret won't do me any good either"

"Not to mention, when it comes to secrets, the more you know the more troublesome it becomes, so I'd like you to spare me with that"

The king froze, then spoke up again: 「 Facing that monster, you won't be able to escape, only the ruin of the God of Life— 」

"Frog in a well" Gu Qing Shan sighed and muttered.

These words successfully roused the king's anger.

「 Do you really think you can go against that monster? 」 he loudly mocked.

Gu Qing Shan shook his head with an annoyed look on his face as if he was talking to some newbie who didn't understand a single thing.

He clapped his hand.

Zhang Ying Hao walked forward, pulled out a long shining shoulder-mounted cannon, and lightly tapped it against the king's face.

"Can you sense its power?" Zhang Ying Hao whispered.

The frigid metallic sensation completely silenced the king.

The raging flames in his heart were instantly doused.

As a ruler of a powerful country, he naturally recognized a weapon of mass destruction when he saw one.

This Technological-type weapon can indeed destroy an entire world.

If Calming Soul Country gets destroyed, the monster would naturally be heavily injured.

This way, even if they couldn't kill it, they would be able to buy enough time to escape!

And they were carrying such a weapon around!!!

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The king felt his heart greatly tightened, feeling nothing but frustration.

This was even more frustrating compared to when he was stabbed by the scepter and believed that he was about to die.

—he naturally didn't know that this was a treasure that Laura obtained from the border of the unending abyss of broken worlds.

To obtain this treasure, Laura even broke her vow of not grabbing any treasures.

Even the assault handgun respectfully referred to this weapon as Cannon Brother.

It was the only one of its kind!

Gu Qing Shan waved his hand.

Zhang Ying Hao put Cannon Brother away and stepped back.

Gu Qing Shan cleared his throat again and told the king: "Alright, give me all the information you've collected about the four fake Gods to me, and our little grudge here can be considered over with"

「 Truly? 」 asking this, the king sneaked a glance towards the others.

None of the others seemed to have any objections.

The little girl only poured a bunch of Soul Artifacts out before ignoring everything again.

The man only came forward to show off a world-destroying weapon before going back and pulled out a cigarette, only to sigh and put it away again.

Quite obviously, he was a smoking addict.

Nobody cared about the Soul Artifacts that were all over the ground.

Damn it, these are Soul Artifacts! Soul Artifacts that even the monster would go crazy over!

The king slowly calmed down.

No wonder the one called Gu Qing Shan called Calming Soul Country a destitute place earlier.

Comparatively, Calming Soul Country was truly destitute.

Even that terrifying monster would be nothing but a poverty-stricken fellow.

—-seriously, what's wrong with these people?

Is there really no one but myself in this room that cares about the wealth of Calming Soul Country?

They don't even care a little bit about the ruin of the God of Life?

This is a ruin left behind by God!!!

The king felt himself a bit unable to keep up.

He felt similar to a bandit that went through an untold amount of effort in order to steal and secure a treasure trove, only to be discovered by an enemy at the last possible moment and couldn't help but enter desperate combat against them.

In the end, he was completely defeated, pinned to the ground unable to move at all.

It was now that the enemy told him that they didn't want his wealth or treasure, pointing out that it was all nothing but trash.

Utter trash that wasn't even worth their attention.

The enemy only had a single demand.

—-they were forcing him to talk with them about whether or not the weather today would be good or it would rain.

About whether or not the rain would be that heavy...

Yes, only something equivalent to small talk.

The king felt his eyes becoming a bit wet.

He stared straight at Gu Qing Shan and questioned in a low voice: 「 I want to confirm something again. If I give you the information you wanted, you will let me go? 」

Gu Qing Shan replied: “Of course, we'll sign a covenant on it— I also hope that you will tell me what I want and not any lies...”

The king said nothing.

He pulled a scroll out from the air with his hand.

Gu Qing Shan glanced at the scroll, randomly took it with his hand, and handed it to Laura.

After looking over it, Laura gave it to Boss. Boss also nodded and gave it back to Gu Qing Shan.

“No problems” Laura said.

“A very strict scroll” Boss added.

“——Great”

Gu Qing Shan unrolled the scroll and wrote the following clauses on the scroll:

[As long as the king provides the correct information, neither sides will do anything against one another]

He cut the tip of his finger and dripped some blood onto the covenant.

The scroll was then given to the king.

The king did the same.

A flash of light appeared on the scroll.

“There” Gu Qing Shan said.

The king felt relieved.

From this point on, as long as I give them actual information, they wouldn't be able to take my life any longer.

However, the king still couldn't accept how relaxed Gu Qing Shan was about all of this.

His mind was quickly moving.

Right now, I don't have anyone that I can mobilize.

As Calming Soul Country had always been closed off, other than the royal family, everyone had already fallen into the monster's tight grasp.

It was out of pure coincidence that these people appeared in this place.

They were the only entities within Calming Soul Country that would not be discovered by the monster.

Although they weren't particularly powerful——

They have unique abilities.

Wealth.

Powerful equipment.

And an excellent leader with an actual head over his shoulders.

In other words, they're the only hope.

—my only hope of exploring the ruin!

The king took a deep breath and took out a piece of crystal.

「 The information regarding the four fake Gods are all in here 」

“Very well”

Gu Qing Shan received the piece of crystal.

The covenant scroll was instantly burnt to a crisp.

—the covenant had been formed.

From this point on, neither side can harm the other.

Gu Qing Shan pulled the Devil King Warden Rod from the king's chest.

“Sorry if I offended you” he said apologetically.

The king covered the hole in his chest and slowly stood up.

If it weren't for the unique power of that scepter, this wound wasn't anything significant to him.

After a moment of hesitation, the king finally made up his mind: 「 I have something else I would like to form a covenant with you 」

“About what?”

「 I need you to help me explore the ruin of the God of Life 」

“I refuse. This matter is completely unrelated to us, so we won't waste our efforts on it” Gu Qing Shan shook his head.

After a moment of silence, the king continued: 「 ...Didn't you say you wanted to get rid of the four fake Gods? 」

“Indeed”

「 If you help me explore the ruin, in exchange, I will also help you get rid of the four fake Gods—after all, they are also my enemies 」

“If that's the case... it's not completely out of the question. If you are willing to shoulder all the cost, we'll take some time and seriously consider it”

「 The cost is no issue. I will be staying in the royal palace. If you are willing to cooperate with me to explore the ruin, please use this to find me 」

The king handed Gu Qing Shan a teleportation scroll to Gu Qing Shan, stared deeply at him for a long while, then disappeared.

The room returned to silence.

No one said anything.

After a while, Laura finally couldn't contain herself anymore: "Can someone tell me what just happened?"

"What's the matter?" Zhang Ying Hao asked.

"That king came to find us with killing intent, right?"

"Hm, if we didn't surrender, he was ready to kill us, there's no question about that"

"But that wasn't the case when he left"

"Why do you think that?"

"He gave us the information, then volunteered to shoulder all the costs just to invite us to explore the ruin of God, promising to form a covenant to help us get rid of the four fake Gods——— did he suddenly go mad?"

"He wasn't mad, he just ran into a true conman"

Saying so, Zhang Ying Hao went out of the room with a small pack of cigarettes.

It should be safe for now.

One of the two biggest forces in this world will no longer try anything against us, while the other biggest force is still struggling to conceal the truth of the monster.

I can finally have a smoke.

Chapter 1016

"What do we do now?" Ye Fei Li asked.

"Rest" Gu Qing Shan replied.

Ye Fei Li exhaled deeply, pulled out a gaming console from his chest, and said: "That's good. I've just made it to the hardest stage, if I died today that would've been left unfinished forever"

He found a chair and plopped himself onto it.

Started up the console.

And began playing.

Gu Qing Shan silently shook his head.

Laura smiled: "Gu Qing Shan, what did you think of me calling you 'master' earlier?"

Gu Qing Shan stroked her head and praised: "Well done, that was perfect coordination"

Laura happily smiled.

"Are we really going to help the king explore the ruin?" she asked.

“I wanted to consult Boss about that” Gu Qing Shan replied.

Boss had already laid flat back onto the sofa again.

Hearing Gu Qing Shan, he closed his eyes and replied: “The God of Life is one of the few Deities who managed to escape the destruction of the Inner Plane, not only were they powerful, they should also know plenty of secrets so it isn’t a bad idea to take a look”

“Do you know something?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

“Not really, but I assume that the Soul Shrieker is still scrambling to find us outside. Before coming back out, it would probably help our cause to understand ancient history” Boss replied.

Gu Qing Shan thought for a bit, then concluded:

“Then it’s decided, we’re going to take a look at the ruin of the God of Life”

He waved his hand towards Xuan Ya who was hovering in the air and called her over.

“For a covenant, a three-year-old child doesn’t have the ability to sign one on his own accord, but as his mother, you have a direct bloodline connection that should allow you to help him sign certain contracts”

Gu Qing Shan spoke very seriously:

“At this moment, I’m offering for your son to join us”

“Once he and you join, you will be considered people on ‘my side’”

“Just now, I signed a very vague covenant with the king. Due to the concerns of his own safety, he placed great emphasis on the ceasefire but failed to realize that it was mutual. Although we can’t harm him in any way, he would be unable to harm anybody in my group as well”

“Any member from the royal family side who approached you with malice would immediately suffer the consequences from that covenant”

“So, make your choice”

Xuan Ya was extremely glad and hurriedly nodded.

“She said that she is willing”

Ye Fei Li relayed the message without looking up.

Gu Qing Shan said; “Then it’s decided. You have to say this exactly: ‘My child and I are willing to join the Blade Edge Pledge’”

“The Blade Edge Pledge?”

Zhang Ying Hao’s voice came.

He had only just come back in after closing the door.

“That’s right, the two sides that I set up in the covenant was the royal family and the Blade Edge Pledge”

Gu Qing Shan continued to explain: “The Blade Edge Pledge is the team that Barry and Kitty formed with their comrades, so it has enough basis for a covenant, there shouldn’t be any issues”

Zhang Ying Hao nodded and sighed: “This way, the royal family wouldn’t be able to act against them any longer, without anyone’s knowledge, you’ve perfectly sheltered both her and her child”

Meanwhile, Xuan Ya had already begun to speak.

“My child and I are willing to join the Blade Edge Pledge” she silently declared.

Following her words, two faint sparks of light descended from above, covering Xuan Ya and her son.

This was the power of the covenant.

Gu Qing Shan tapped his Inventory Bag and took out a formation plate to arrange some formations around the sleeping child.

“To avoid any unnecessary troubles, I’ll use a spirit energy baptism formation to make sure that your child remains in his sleep. This will improve his potential as he wakes up, a process that does more good than harm”

“I’ve also arranged an appropriate amount of defensive formations”

“For the next few days, he will remain asleep, up until I can resurrect you— once you’re alive again, you can meet him in person”

Hearing that, Xuan Ya opened her eyes wide, her mouth gaping open in shock.

“That’s right, don’t be shocked, I can resurrect you”

Gu Qing Shan said.

...

On the other side.

The king made his way back to the palace.

He silently sat on his throne, contemplating the most recent events.

「 Father, did everything go well? 」

A tall, handsome man walked up to the lower steps of the stairs leading up to the throne and asked.

「 Far from it, the only thing we can do right now is to silently wait 」 the king replied.

「 Father... what of the matter regarding the guardian? 」 the prince asked.

「 She is dead, unfortunately, her child lives on. Send your men over to keep an eye on that place, once they leave, come inside and kill that child with your own hands 」

The handsome prince was hesitant to answer, apparently wanting to refuse.

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The king's gaze turned firm as he solemnly shouted: 「 Don't you understand? Once the bloodline of the royal family and the guardian clan mixes, only one of two outcomes shall ever occur. Either the child dies before they reach three years old, or they will absorb the power of two royal family members and quickly develop a brand-new Divine Skill 」

「 For the last three years, I've waited for that child to die, but he has managed to live on! 」

The king caught the prince's shoulders with his hands, shouting: 「 The only people left who still have the royal family bloodline are you, me, and that child. Do you want your power to be absorbed, slowly turning into a useless husk of your previous self? 」

「 No, I do not want such a thing! 」 the prince fearfully answered.

When the king was about to say something else, his expression changed.

He released his hands and pushed the prince away

The king displayed an amiable smile and told the ones who came from afar: 「 Welcome, my esteemed guests. I believe this means you've made your decision? 」

The fluctuations of spatial warp slowly manifested in the middle of the royal palace.

Gu Qing Shan's group appeared in the palace.

“Indeed, we've decided to help you explore that ruin in exchange for your help to capture or get rid of the four fake Gods”

Gu Qing Shan replied.

The king heartily laughed and stood up: 「 Then please follow me, after signing the covenant, we shall leave for the ruin right away 」

“Very well, please lead the way” Gu Qing Shan replied.

The king walked down his throne and threw one last glance at the prince.

「 Hmph! Quickly get to it! 」

He sent his voice.

「 Understood! 」

The prince nodded and turned to leave the palace.

While the king led them towards another direction.

He led Gu Qing Shan's group through various palace structures, complicated mechanisms, secret passages, and finally arrived at a certain sealed underground room.

「 Let us sign our covenant first before anything else, shall we? 」 the king smiled and said.

“I only have one issue” Gu Qing Shan replied.

「 Please go ahead and say it 」

“According to our previous covenant, we currently cannot harm one another, but as we’re here to help you explore the ruin, we can’t go in blindly. I want you to share all the information you have before and during our exploration of the ruin”

After a bit of thought, the king nodded: 「 That is fine 」

“Then we have ourselves a cooperation” Gu Qing Shan smiled.

Both sides quickly signed the covenant.

The king’s heart calmed down again.

——information sharing and such is trivial, the leftover treasure trove of the God of Life is the more important matter.

Although he already knew that the other side was filthy rich, he was still surprised to hear that the other side really didn’t want any part of it.

That was why he accepted this deal so easily.

Due to the covenant, neither side could harm the other.

After entering the ruin, the things that both sides wanted were also different.

There was no conflict of interest.

——there couldn’t be a better foundation for cooperation than this.

「 Please come with me 」

The king smiled gladly.

He brought their group to the innermost chamber.

The king cut the palm of his hand and smeared it all over the wall.

Sensing his blood, the wall split apart and slowly moved to either side with a heavy noise.

Soon enough, a large bronze gate appeared in front of everyone.

The gate was completely bare without anything on it, but it gave off a thick stench of blood.

A deep sense of vicissitude could be felt from it.

“I have a bad feeling about this” Zhang Ying Hao unnaturally spoke up.

“I feel the same” Boss replied.

The bronze gate was silent and gave off no sound, but they felt as if it was constantly exuding billions of faint cries and sobs.

The king explained:

「 From a very long time ago, this gate had been here to seal something within. Although I don't know what it was, if this place was left behind by the God of Life, the benefits hidden within must also be great 」

Gu Qing Shan asked: “Did your ancestors leave any words regarding this gate?”

The king didn't really want to answer that, but he felt a sense of alarm ringing in his heart.

This is the power of the covenant.

I have to answer this question.

Otherwise the power of the covenant will wound me heavily.

The king had no choice but to answer: 「 It was related to a certain secret of the Deities. My ancestors only left a single statement: This gate can only be opened at the moment of ultimate crisis for the royal family. Furthermore, it can only be opened once, there would be no second chance 」

「 Because of this, we need to move against it with everything we have 」

Gu Qing Shan evaluated this large bronze gate again and replied: “No problem”

Chapter 1017

The bronze gate closed behind them.

Darkness.

Nothing was visible around them.

The group simply followed the passage and flew forward.

“Do you not know anything regarding this ruin?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

「 Our clan has always passed on the secret of the ruin by sealing it within our heads. When we make it to the appropriate locations within the ruin, the seal would be undone and inform us of the related matters 」 the king replied.

Gu Qing Shan praised: “What a wonderful solution, this would certainly prevent leaking the secret by accident”

He wasn't at all worried about the king lying to him.

——because he gave up all possible earnings from this trip, only demanding information.

According to their covenant, the king must inform him of everything he knows and will know.

The dark passage was extremely long.

After a long flight, they finally slowed down.

A tall cliff stood right in front of them.

Intense wind howled from below the cliff, bringing with it a frigid sensation from the very bottom as it flowed towards the unseen ceiling within the darkness.

Huge towering pillars stood tall in front of the cliff, displaying its horror to those witnessing it——

Countless bodies were pinned on this pillar.

Or rather, the pillar itself was created from those bodies.

Corpses of all shapes and sizes, mystical and unfathomable.

Multitudes of insect carcasses.

Multitudes of linked humanoid corpses.

Non-sentient, unmoving beasts.

Strange and unfathomable abyssal monsters.

Too many to count, too many to estimate.

Gu Qing Shan could even see a mythical creature that only existed within cultivating legends.

——a Heavenly Dragon.

The Heavenly Dragon was coiled around the pillar of corpses, its body completely greyed out, as if it was a lifeless specimen in a lab.

These pillars of corpses stood within the presumably bottomless darkness, rising all the way up to the endlessly far ceiling.

Above and below, both could not be seen.

This greatly shocked everyone here.

The king clutched his forehead, moaning in pain.

Enduring this, he muttered: 「 Argh... I can sense a secret being unlocked, its seal is being undone, wait a moment 」

Everyone stood and waited.

Gu Qing Shan said: “Laura, wear your armor”

Laura regained her senses.

She first donned the Bramble Bird Sovereign armor, then walked up to Gu Qing Shan and took out a smooth ice cube that was about the size of her hand.

“What is this?” Gu Qing Shan curiously asked.

Laura displayed a secretive expression on her face and didn't answer right away, instead she used telepathy to talk to him: “Do you still remember? When we were at the border of the unending abyss of

broken worlds, I said that I felt something even stronger than the Sovereign armor approaching us from the vortex, and I insisted that I had to grab it no matter what?”

“I remember. At the time, you couldn’t fight the temptation and took it in the end” Gu Qing Shan replied.

“It was this thing here. I’ve not been able to figure out how it works, but I can guarantee that it far surpasses any defensive item I own, how about you try it out?” Laura said.

She gave the ice cube to Gu Qing Shan.

It felt chilling to the touch.

As Gu Qing Shan took the ice cube in his hand, he found that it was a transparent and clear cube of ice with some flowing water inside— it might be water or it might be something else, but it was indeed flowing.

Lines of glowing text appeared on the War God UI:

[Wielder of Elemental Water, Song of the Night, Elemental Spirit King Personal Armor: Embrace and Praise from the Frost of Evernight and Wind of Chaotic Tribulation]

[Note: This is an incomplete fragment of a Divine Garb, you are unable to utilize its complete characteristics]

[Note: As this is a Divine Armament, you must communicate with the Artifact Spirit before you can learn of its attributes]

[Special note: This armor’s Artifact Spirit had already been eliminated countless years ago, but as the War God UI has recorded its characteristics, you are notified of the following attributes:]

[Aria of Frost: Whenever an opponent’s attack comes into contact with this armor, their attack speed will be reduced by 3% until it is thoroughly frozen (unusable)]

[Praise of Evernight: As night falls, your defenses are increased 3-fold]

[Aria of Frigid Wind: Whenever you kill an opponent, all the power of their soul will remain upon your weapon, empowering your subsequent attack (unusable)]

[Praise of the Wind of Chaotic Tribulation: The Wind of Chaotic Tribulation that lingers around you will neutralize an enemy’s attack, once per day]

Feeling his eyes overwhelmed by the information, Gu Qing Shan asked: “War God UI, why are there two abilities that can’t be used?”

[Ting]!

After a clear chime, the War God UI replied: [Because this armor has been damaged very severely, half of its abilities have become unusable. However, you obtained its two Praises, which is more than enough]

As soon as it said so, the ice cube in Gu Qing Shan’s hand broke apart and turned invisible.

Lines of glowing text appeared on the War God UI:

[Time: The current situation is recognized as nighttime]

[Praise of Evernight as well as Praise of Wind of Chaotic Tribulation have both been activated]

[Any of the opponent's attacks against you will be fully neutralized by the armor, usable three times]

Gu Qing Shan sensed a faintly drifting wind that lingered around his body.

This was an invisible armor.

Tch---

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That's really strong

He couldn't help but turn to Laura.

At this time, Laura had taken out three sets of armor, giving them to Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, and Boss.

Defensive artifacts that she carried with her were without a doubt the most powerful within the 900 million World Layers.

They all hurriedly thanked her and donned the armors.

Ye Fei Li sighed emotionally: "Usually for a game, a reward is only given out after slaying all the monsters, but now we've been given such powerful armors even before any monster appeared"

He was wearing a set of bright red armor with a pair of illusory wings behind his back, making him appear incredibly eerie.

Laura giggled: "I don't know how to fight, so I'll need you to protect me from this point on"

"Naturally, your majesty" Ye Fei Li replied.

At this point, the king had opened his eyes and was silently glancing through the forest of corpse pillars, declaring:

「 I know how to get past this place 」

He walked up to the cliff and knelt down in front of a piece of a broken boulder, lightly muttering an excerpt from a prayer to the God of Life.

A short while later.

The broken boulder started trembling nonstop.

A hovering stone slab manifested right above the bottomless ravine.

The king stood up and told them all: 「 We must stand on the stone slab. It will bring us across this forest of corpse pillars 」

「 Keep in mind, do not release even a bit of power, otherwise, we might draw the attention of unknown monsters 」

Everyone nodded.

Laura curiously asked: “What will happen exactly if we released just a bit of power?”

The king took out a small, well-decorated box from his chest and threw it towards a faraway corpse pillar.

As the box hit a certain pillar, it shattered and opened to reveal a scroll that emanated magical powers.

『 Aeeeeeeee!!!!!! 』

Billions of voices were wailing at once.

The wailing resounded from every corpse pillar in their vision.

Before anyone could clearly see what happened, the scroll had already been shredded to pieces and vanished from where it was before.

Every corpse on the corpse pillars seemed to have returned to life as they were madly searching for any new fluctuations around them.

A giant rotting arm even appeared from one of the corpse pillars.

The arm was madly swiping at the air.

The void of space was ripped apart.

Gu Qing Shan’s group remained silent as they watched this.

The king couldn’t help but wipe the cold sweat from his head.

He only wanted to show them an example, who knew the reaction would be even worse than he had imagined.

「 Did you see that? We cannot release even a single bit of power, or we will be ripped apart 」

“What about talking?”

「 Talking shouldn’t affect anything—— but I still suggest that we use telepathy 」

Everyone nodded in agreement without objection.

The power that the arm displayed just now was so overwhelming that they felt powerless to resist just watching it.

“Alright, let us be as careful as we can, let’s go” Gu Qing Shan declared.

He lightly stepped onto the stone slab.

Everyone else followed suit, standing firmly.

It was now that the king noticed something different.

These people who were going to explore the ruin with him had all donned their armor.

Indeed, it was natural to wear armor in preparation for exploring such a dangerous ruin.

But what's going on with these armors!?

As the king's gaze swept through these people, his eyes only opened wider and wider.

He could judge the quality of goods, and he understood how powerful these armors were a lot more compared to people like Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li.

These people aren't very strong.

But their unique abilities are considerable.

Not to mention this level of gear.

—-that's unbelievably good treatment.

Zhang Ying Hao noticed his gaze and asked in surprise: "What are you looking at? Is there a problem?"

He was wearing a full suit of black armor; his body occasionally melting into the void of space and gave off a mysterious aura.

After a long while of silence, the king hesitantly spoke:

「 Erm—- 」

「 About that—- 」

「 I just have a question I wanted to ask—- 」

「 Although I'm a king—- 」

「 I actually have my own ideals as well—- 」

「 You should know, being a king is extremely tough, and I didn't really sign up for the job 」

Feeling confused, Zhang Ying Hao asked straight: "What exactly do you want to say?"

「 Are you still accepting members? 」

The king asked.

Chapter 1018

「 Do you still accept members? 」

The king asked.

In truth, he had already realized from their previous interaction that these people were extremely wealthy.

—-the only thing he didn't expect was that they were rich to this degree.

The king cautiously glanced at Gu Qing Shan and Laura.

These two were wearing armor that had far surpassed the level that could be considered with money, even if he sold the entire Calming Soul Country, he still wouldn't be able to buy either of these armors.

Not to mention, the little girl was actually this man's servant.

He clearly heard it earlier, the little girl called the man 'master'.

Even if words couldn't be trusted, their gestures and attitude could be used to confirm their relationship.

The little girl was always paying close attention to the man.

Whatever he said, the little girl would seriously ponder; and when he gave his order, the little girl would receive it without hesitation.

Whenever he smiled, she was glad.

Whenever he scowled, she became anxious.

—-without a doubt, this was a master-servant duo.

The king was feeling a bit envious.

Yes, Calming Soul Country was the home country of Demis, each Demi was sure to awaken a Divine Skill and were born naturally powerful.

But compared to having a servant like this...

A Divine Skill doesn't seem to be that special anymore.

—-not to mention, even with my countless Divine Skills, I still almost lost my life by having a scepter stabbed through my chest.

Right, that scepter was also a priceless treasure.

After everything is finished, these people would surely have a way to leave Calming Soul Country.

Thinking up to this point, the king's thought made a turn.

Calming Soul Country has now fallen under the monster's control, is there any meaning to continue remaining there?

—-I'd rather come with them to the 900 million World Layers instead!

It would be even better if I can join them.

The king felt like a bright future had opened itself up to him.

And that was why he asked that question.

Gu Qing Shan smiled and replied: "We are accepting members, but according to the rules of our Blade Edge Pledge, a period of 3-month probation is required for new members"

「 Probation? In order to test for loyalty? 」 the king asked.

“No, our organization consists of experts from various fields, there is no such thing as a leader to give your loyalty to” Gu Qing Shan replied.

Hearing that, the king felt even more relieved.

Gu Qing Shan continued: “The probation period is to allow a reserve member to show his or her worth, thus determining what level of treatment they would receive after becoming an official member of the organization”

「 Treatment...」 the king repeated that word.

“Indeed, treatment” Gu Qing Shan nodded in affirmation.

「 Then, how do I become a reserve member? 」 the king asked.

“You can be considered a reserve member after getting a recommendation from three official members” Gu Qing Shan replied.

The king thought for a bit, then declared resolutely: 「 Very well, I would like to officially sign up to become a reserve member, I hope that you will accept me 」

「 After all, my fighting strength is considerable, I can surely support this team as its strength 」

Gu Qing Shan concurred: “Indeed, we do need an expert who can truly stand at the front, what do you think?”

Ye Fei Li and Zhang Ying Hao exchanged glances.

— — Gu Qing Shan is truly impressive, to be able to make up the concept of ‘probation period’ requirement for joining an organization on the spot and even declare it grandly without batting an eyelid.

In fact, they clearly understood what he meant he said ‘an expert who can truly stand at the front’.

Cheh.

Seems like we got a frontline ‘tank’ for this little exploration of ours.

And also— —

The Soul Shrieker is most likely waiting just outside Calming Soul Country as well.

Hm....

The two of them nodded: “No objections”

Gu Qing Shan patted the king’s shoulder and said: “Very well, from this moment on, you are a reserve member of the Blade Edge Pledge, you’ll have three months to prove your worth”

“And your worth will directly determine your treatment following that”

The king looked at Gu Qing Shan, glanced at the invisible gusts of wind drifting around him, then glanced at Laura.

He couldn't help pointing at Laura and asked: 「 Then... I have a question, what level would I be able to receive a servant like you do? 」

Gu Qing Shan shook his head: "That's not something you should know. You're just a reserve member, try asking again later"

The king was surprised.

He had thought that the other party would tell him a few requirements so that he exerted himself more, but received such an answer instead.

...right, they aren't the one asking me to join them.

The king said right away: 「 Ah, excuse my rudeness 」

Gu Qing Shan nodded and said nothing else.

This topic ended here.

In the darkness, the stone slab continued to float forward approaching the corpse pillars.

They were just about to touch the first corpse pillar.

The king closed his eyes and went into thought.

「 Give me a bit of time, I think a secret is being unsealed in my mind 」

He lowered his head and thought for a long while, only showing an expression of understanding as they were about to go past the first corpse pillar.

「 I understand now, this place was used by our Deity in order to modify mythical creatures using the Abyss, they're all been sealed inside these corpse pillars 」

「 I need a bit of time to chant the incantation that will awaken them 」

The king raised the golden ring in his hand up high, chanting: 「 The God of Life granted you unique form, the power of the Abyss granted you weapons 」

「 You who had been waiting for this moment, it is now time for you to awaken! 」

The golden ring suddenly started glowing.

The king was filled with joy as he continued chanting.

At the same time.

Gu Qing Shan clutched his eyes.

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He suddenly felt an intense prickling pain originating from both eyes.

Laura noticed something wrong and held his hands, worriedly asking: “Gu Qing Shan, what’s wrong?”

“It’s nothing, a technique of mine is just becoming unstable” Gu Qing Shan smiled and replied.

He fell into thought.

Why did my eyes suddenly feel pain at this point in time?

Could it be some sort of reminder?

But this is a World Technique that I created, it wasn’t a living entity, why is it trying to remind me?

...that’s not right.

There is actually a consciousness within this technique.

The remnant will of a parallel world.

Because I helped it defeat [Chaos], it fused into my Iris Technique.

What is it trying to tell me?

Gu Qing Shan undid the black cloth and opened his eyes.

It was still completely dark; he still couldn’t see anything.

Wait.

A scene started to appear in front of Gu Qing Shan’s eyes.

Countless corpses that formed the gigantic pillars standing in the middle of endless darkness.

The forest of corpse pillars.

It was still this location, still the same situation.

This forest of corpse pillars looked exactly like the world he perceived within his inner sight, but there were also a few differences.

Gu Qing Shan’s eyes were observing the forest of corpse pillars while comparing it to the place he perceived within this inner sight.

—-the place was the same, but there were minute changes.

A few corpse pillars didn’t have the exact same corpses on them.

Furthermore, the forest of corpse pillars within his vision didn’t have the hovering stone slab, nor did it have their group.

As far as his vision could see, it was completely silent.

Strange, why am I seeing a different forest of corpse pillars?

While Gu Qing Shan was still doubtful, he suddenly heard faint ‘klik klak’ noises.

As if something was using its many legs to crawl along.

Gu Qing Shan looked up.

Only to see a gigantic grey maw opening up within the darkness right above the forest of corpse pillars.

This was an unimaginably enormous maw that would fully envelop the entire forest of corpse pillars in one bite.

The maw lightly inhaled towards the corpse pillars.

The pillars abruptly split apart to reveal various slumbering giant monsters within.

The maw opened wide.

Tens of thousands of long thin tongues shot out, quickly wrapping around the sleeping monsters.

The tongue retracted and scrunched the monsters inside into a giant ball of flesh that was still writhing nonstop.

Desperate screeches and screams resounded within the ball of flesh.

A few moments later.

The multitudes of tongues pulled away.

All the monsters had been devoured whole, not leaving even a single drop of blood behind.

The long tongues swiftly returned to the maw.

The maw then vanished as well.

The world returned to darkness.

Utter silence darkness.

Gu Qing Shan understood that his eyes just became blind again.

—-but when exactly did what I just saw happen?

He put the black piece of cloth back on and continued to ponder.

What did the scene I just witnessed have to do with the current situation?

Did I catch a glimpse of the future?

—-in other words, maybe I've awoken an ability to foresee the future like the Earth Creator?

While Gu Qing Shan was considering the information he just learnt, the king's voice sounded by his ears.

The king's incantation was about to finish.

His voice abruptly raised high and grandly declared: 「 Hybrid of Divine power and Abyssal power, heed the order of the God of Life, awaken from your eternal slumber and serve me! 」

The glow from the golden ring pierced through the darkness, illuminating the forest of corpse pillars as bright as day.

Crak, crik, crik, crik———

The corpse pillars split apart one by one to reveal what was inside.

Empty.

Every pillar was empty.

The so-called mythical creatures that the God of Life left behind didn't seem to exist.

「 Empty!? No! 」

The king loudly shouted in disbelief: 「 That can't be right! They were supposed to be dormant here, how could they have vanished! 」

Everyone else didn't care about what he was saying and swiftly looked up at the darkness above the forest of corpse pillars.

Although they couldn't see anything, they heard a series of 'klik klak' noises.

As if something was approaching.

The king recovered from his shock and joyfully said: 「 Ah, perhaps due to the long years of waiting, they've already awoken ahead of time 」

He looked up above fully of hope.

Gu Qing Shan's complexion went pale.

———the scene I saw just now was from the past!

That terrifying entity that devoured all the mythical creatures here with just its mouth.

It's coming!

Gu Qing Shan abruptly shouted: "Laura, [Shelter of Infinite Worlds]!"

Laura opened her flower umbrella without hesitation.

Chapter 1019

In the split second that Laura opened her umbrella.

Gu Qing Shan, Boss, Zhang Ying Hao, and Ye Fei Li all grabbed the umbrella with perfect coordination.

The five of them vanished at once.

The king spread his arms wide, grandly declaring to the gigantic grey maw: 「 Come, serve m——」

Before he could finish, something grabbed him.

He then vanished as well.

A split second later.

Over a dozen tongues lashed down from above in a blur.

Bam!

The stone slab emanated a mass of light to protect itself.

However, the light didn't manage to achieve anything before the tongues as it shattered instantly.

The entire stone slab swiftly followed, crashing down into the endless darkness below.

The darkness remained as thick and stifling as it always had been, once the crashing sound of the stone slab faded, it once again enveloped everything.

Absolute silence.

Beside the opened corpse pillars, there was nothing here.

All the corpses kept their heads slumped and remained motionless.

They weren't even screeching like they tried to do so earlier.

Clik clak clik clak.

The faint shuffling of numerous legs continued to resound within this space.

One tongue.

Two tongues.

Countless tongues poured down from above like tentacles, spreading all around searching for the origin of that power radiation earlier.

The tens of thousands of tongues licked through every corpse pillar, not sparing any of them.

Once it finished searching through the corpse pillars, the long tongues continued to reach around within the empty void like feelers, trying to find something.

They found nothing.

After a long while, the tens of thousands of long tongues finally returned into the gaping grey maw.

The 'clik clak' sounds were heard again.

The maw slowly retreated into the darkness, gradually fading away together with the faint sound.

The forest of corpse pillars returned to silence.

Time slowly passed.

Several figures appeared on the cliff right before the forest of corpse pillars.

The king was incredibly shaken as he collapsed to the ground, his complexion pale, his expression warped, large beads of sweat constantly forming on his forehead before dripping down his face.

Zhang Ying Hao asked: "Why do you look so pale?"

The king replied in despair: 「 It's all over, everything is over. The only chance to enter this place, I've completely wasted it 」

“It isn't that bad, we're still at the beginning” Laura tried to console him.

The king said in return: 「 You don't understand, that stone slab was the only beacon in this place. Without it, we're completely blind on how to move forward 」

“Then we can return first and discuss what exactly we should do” Ye Fei Li suggested.

「 Look behind us 」 the king said.

Everyone swiftly turned to look back at where they came from.

The secret passage had already vanished, the only thing left in their vision was empty darkness.

The cliff they were standing on was the sole point of reference within the lonely darkness, the rest was just emptiness, and there were no secret passages to be found.

“So, we can't turn back?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

The king sighed: 「 Yes, there is only one chance once we enter the ruin. Furthermore, there aren't any ways to return, only by making it to the deepest part of the ruin can we be transported back 」

Everyone went silent.

We can't return.

And there's no way to move forward.

What now?

Gu Qing Shan stood at the edge of the cliff, sensing the frigid wind within the void, he suddenly asked: “That monster just now, what does everyone think about it?”

“Overwhelmingly powerful, even more so than those monsters in the Strife Zones” Zhang Ying Hao commented.

Laura replied: “That monster wasn't depicted in the picture book of vicious monsters published by the 900 million World Layers committee. I assume it has never been seen before”

“That is indeed the case” Boss continued, “I've never seen that monster either. It isn't a monster of the Abyss or of the 900 million World Layers, neither was it from the Inner Plane or the Space-Time Mystery Nest. I think it's a monster that resided far within the void, where the Deities couldn't clean up in the past”

Everyone turned to him.

Gu Qing Shan said: “I heard that the Deities battled against the countless monsters within the space vortex in order to clean up a large area for the sake of places like Calming Soul Country”

“Indeed. The Deities left a lot of means behind to protect and conceal areas within the void—— this was the reason why the 900 million World Layers had been able to remain intact and generally peaceful for the past hundred million years” Boss replied.

He walked up to the edge of the cliff, standing next to Gu Qing Shan as he viewed the stifling darkness void in front of them.

“This place is actually a Land of Death Abyss” he said.

“What is a Land of Death Abyss?” Gu Qing Shan asked

“When the Inner Plane was destroyed, the Deities established their safe havens within the space vortex, Calming Soul Country being one of them”

“Afterwards, during their battles against the monsters of the space vortex, they were slowly afflicted by wounds that couldn’t be healed”

“It was then that the Deities discovered the Eternal Abyss’ unique property and wanted to use it to turn themselves into Eternal beings”

“With the joint efforts of the seven Deities, they managed to detach portions from the Abyss and used them to study its power”

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“After countless years, the Deities ended up deceased, unable to protect this place any longer—— and since it no longer belonged to the Abyss, the Abyss would also not protect it. Because of this, monsters that resided far within the void slowly managed to find this place and took over”

Everyone carefully listened, feeling as if they were listening to a mythical tale from countless years ago.

Boss raised his voice a bit: “This place is far more dangerous than we assumed. With the strength of us few, we might not be able to reach the very end”

Ye Fei Li looked around the cliff and commented: “But we no longer have any way to return”

“That’s right, now that we’ve made it here, we have no way to return to Calming Soul Country” Zhang Ying Hao also said.

“Wait a minute, let me check” Laura told everyone.

She searched inside her backpack and took out a compass.

After checking the needle and direction on the compass, Laura sighed: “It’s true. We’re currently in an extremely faraway location, any previously established teleportation methods would not be able to send us back through such a distance”

Gu Qing Shan spoke up: “Then let’s continue forward to the end of this ruin. The God of Life should’ve left a way for us to return”

The king sighed: 「 Didn’t you hear me earlier? That stone slab that could direct us on the right path has already been destroyed, we can’t go on 」

“The way forward...”

Gu Qing Shan mused briefly before patting Zhang Ying Hao’s shoulder: “Will depend on you”

Zhang Ying Hao drew a Card and lightly tossed it out.

The Card landed on the ground, manifesting a deep black hole.

Meow?

A gentle meow.

The black cat jumped out, landing on Zhang Ying Hao’s shoulder.

“Good boy, what do you want to eat today?”

Gu Qing Shan rubbed his hands displaying a flattering smile.

The black cat licked his paw and replied:

Meow meow meow meow!

“He said he’s very hungry, so anything is fine, as long as it’s delicious” Zhang Ying Hao relayed the message.

Gu Qing Shan thought for a bit, then asked around: “Are you hungry?”

“I think it’s just about time for dinner” Ye Fei Li replied.

Boss raised his hand: “Ah, now that you mention it, I want to eat the egg fried rice from last time”

“I want noodles” Laura replied.

“Some beefsteak is fine for me, and a bottle of liquor” Zhang Ying Hao replied.

Gu Qing Shan turned to the king.

The king took a step back, looked at these people in shock, then turned to the terrifying corpse pillars outside.

Although these corpses were currently motionless, one could occasionally notice them smirking eerily.

There was also a terrifying monster lying in wait within the darkness just above the corpse pillars.

—--*and you want to eat something in this kind of environment!?*

The king couldn’t help pointing at the multitudes of corpses and questioned: 「 You really intend to make something to eat right now? Can’t you see what’s going on over there? 」

Gu Qing Shan glanced over and said without care: “Don’t worry, if those corpses can still move that’s even better, they’ll be under my jurisdiction”

「 ...I’m not really hungry 」 the king could only reply this way.

So Gu Qing Shan ignored him.

Gu Qing Shan turned to the others: “Beefsteak is fine, egg fried rice is fine as well, Laura— noodles are out of the question, choose something else, and Fei Li, what do you want to eat?”

“I can’t choose noodles? Then I want a cake”

“I want noodles— wait, you’re not making noodles again? Then, I’ll take a bowl of minced meat rice with shiitake mushroom, and some ice cream. A cup of red ginger tea”

“Ah, Ye Fei Li is too sly, I want some ice cream too” Laura called out.

“Ice cream? That sounds nice, I want some too” Boss chimed in.

Gu Qing Shan wore an apron and nodded: “Good, I’ll get to it”

In this Land of Death Abyss that was unimaginably far away from the 900 million World Layers, within the God of Life’s ruin, in front of countless corpse pillars, the group had a heartwarming meal.

Gu Qing Shan made an extra portion of every dish, giving them all to the black cat.

The meal was finished.

Everyone was pleased.

The black cat was very pleased.

Meow meow, meow meow meow!

“He said it was delicious, if you want anything just tell him” Zhang Ying Hao translated as he took a sip of liquor.

“We’re lost here, please take us to the deepest chamber of this place” Gu Qing Shan said.

Meow meow!

“He said no problem”

“That’s great. Laura, open your umbrella; Ying Hao, let the black cat rest on the umbrella; Fei Li, pay close attention to our surroundings; we’re going to move forward like this”

“Got it!” everyone responded.

Gu Qing Shan clapped his hands and spoke to the empty void: “You stay in front to scout, immediately tell me if anything happens”

Xiu~

The sudden response that came from the void of space startled the king.

He didn’t have time to think about what that was, because they were getting on the move.

Standing close around Laura, Gu Qing Shan looked around one last time and declared:

“Let’s go!”

Chapter 1020

Silence.

The black cat was sitting on the flower umbrella as he glanced around with a serious expression.

His ears were occasionally moving, his eyes seemingly able to peer through the void and observe the things that others could not.

Gu Qing Shan's group followed its directions and slowly flew forward.

Until finally.

They left all the corpse pillars behind and the only thing left in front of them was an empty void of darkness.

Intense wind was constantly howling within the darkness as if billions of souls were screaming and crying out without stopping.

Myao!

The black cat abruptly cried out.

Everyone immediately stopped and hurriedly took distance.

"The wind seems to be a bit too strong" Laura commented.

She randomly threw a metal shield towards the wind.

Sha—

In mere moments, the shield was shredded into metallic dust before being scattered.

And then the scattered dust was further shredded down into nothingness.

Laura opened her mouth wide and couldn't help but mutter:

"Could it be, the Winds of Chaotic Tribulation?"

"That's right. That is the Winds of Chaotic Tribulation. You can't approach it otherwise no one would be able to save you" Boss told them.

"Is there no way forward?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

Everyone turned to the black cat.

The black cat scoffed at the group and pointed its paw towards the void of space on their left.

The void?

Everyone was a bit confused.

Gu Qing Shan randomly unleashed a sword phantom to his left.

The arcing lightning slash flew through the empty void and quickly went far away.

But nothing happened.

Shannu spoke up: "Gongzi, I seem to sense something"

"Sense what?"

"I can sense that there's some sort of concealment technique within that empty void, but it can't be touched.

"Can you cut it apart?"

"I can, but it will also destroy that technique.

"Then forget it— seems like we're going the right way" Gu Qing Shan mused and told everyone: "However, it doesn't help if we only know the right way. We most likely need to find the appropriate method as well in order to head into the deepest chamber of the ruin"

At this point, the king spoke up:

「 Wait a moment, the sealed information in my mind is slowly undoing itself 」

Saying so, he closed his eyes.

Everyone could only wait.

A few moments later.

The king opened his eyes and took out a scepter that was half the length of his arm

The king spoke emotionally: 「 This is the King's Scepter, passed down through each generation of our royal family. Every king up to now had made sure to always carry it with them wherever they went, I had thought that this was simply an ancient etiquette and rule that my ancestor determined. Never did I expect that it would be used in this place 」

He wielded the scepter and heavily swung it against the empty void.

Bam!

A resounding sound of impact.

The scepter was knocked back.

Everyone's eyes lit up.

There was a door here!

"That sound was too loud, let's hurry" Zhang Ying Hao reminded him.

「 I know 」 the king replied.

He wielded the scepter and continued to pound the empty void.

Bam!

Bam!

Bam!

The resounding noise broke through the silence, echoing all around them.

Ye Fei Li's expression changed.

"I can hear that monster. It's quickly approaching us from above" he said.

Everyone was startled.

So, the monster still hasn't left.

Could it be that it couldn't find them so it had been staying above the forest of corpse pillars, silently waiting for its prey?

"Hurry up!" Gu Qing Shan loudly urged.

「 I know, I'm doing my best! 」 the king responded.

He grunted as he madly struck the empty void with the King's Scepter.

At this point, everyone could hear that sound.

——the 'clik clak' sound once again resounded in the thick empty darkness above.

The enormous grey maw that filled their vision once again appeared from the darkness.

Although [Shelter of Infinite Worlds] obscured all senses, the sound of the king striking the empty void of space allowed the grey maw to determine their location.

Dark grey runes began to manifest around Gu Qing Shan's group to thoroughly seal this area off.

"Sealing this space off first? How smart"

Zhang Ying Hao glanced at the runes around them and muttered.

The grey maw had opened towards Gu Qing Shan's group.

Tens of thousands of long slithering tongues shot out at once.

"We can't defeat it. Even if we go against it at once, we'd still die. Quickly come up with something" Boss quickly said.

"Let me"

Zhang Ying Hao turned his hand and summoned a large shoulder-mounted cannon, propping it against his shoulder.

He pointed the muzzle of the cannon right at the maw.

"Don't, Cannon Brother is our trump card, don't let it go yet" Gu Qing Shan stopped him.

Gu Qing Shan drew a Card from the void of space.

The Card turned and manifested as a crimson spear that gave off rays of sharp red light.

[True Crimson Demon Spear]!

“Yah!”

Gu Qing Shan shouted and performed a spear technique.

Rapid Strike style – Rain Shower!

This wasn't a particularly powerful technique, only the fastest one that Gu Qing Shan could find among the spear techniques that he had access to.

—-and he didn't particularly need a powerful technique, right at this moment, all Gu Qing Shan needed was for it to be fast!

Because the [True Crimson Demon Spear] was unstopably sharp!

The spear left layers upon layers of afterimages in his hand, forming a wave of red light that crashed against the intense rain of tongues from above.

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The red light clashed against the long tongues!

Sha sha sha sha sha sha sha—-—

Flesh and blood splattered everywhere!

The unstoppable demon spear completely decimated the tongues!

The pieces of severed flesh and blood continued to rain down from above.

Boss quickly shouted: “These things are highly poisonous, quickly blow them away!”

Laura swiftly pulled a fan out from her backpack and heavily swung it upwards.

A typhoon blew against the falling flesh and blood.

The pieces of severed tongues were swept upwards and fell back into the gaping grey maw.

The grey maw froze briefly.

Boss continued: “Gu Qing Shan, be careful. Just now it was due to how sharp your weapon is, but now it's really getting angry”

Gu Qing Shan put the demon spear away and asked behind him: “Done yet?”

The king responded: 「 Soon! 」

He raised his scepter and swung down on the empty void.

Bam!

Countless cracks appeared in the void of space that spread into their surroundings.

At the same time, behind the gaping grey maw, the sound of numerous feet were coming closer and turning increasingly rapid.

The figure behind the grey maw slowly appeared from the darkness.

“My god, what is that?” Zhang Ying Hao muttered.

“I don’t know, I’ve never seen such a thing before” Laura blankly answered.

Everyone turned speechless for a short moment.

The monster in the darkness had revealed half of its body.

— it had a huge gaping grey maw with a pair of long whiskers on both sides, with a human face at the end of each strand.

The monster’s body consisted of countless corpses stuck together, slithering forward like a snake, but unlike a snake, there were countless human hands on the sides of its body.

With a rough estimation, there were several thousands of these hands in their vision, all of which were pushing back against the darkness like the crawling feet of a centipede.

At a glance, Gu Qing Shan was unable to recognize what kind of entity this was.

He turned to Boss.

Boss was unusually nervous as he quickly explained:

“Damn it, this is a Void Deity, we can’t handle it”

Ye Fei Li was surprised: “It’s clearly a monster, why did you say it’s a deity?”

Boss replied: “It’s power is equivalent to a deity within the void, capable of crushing all of us with just its willpower”

Laura was unconvinced: “But Gu Qing Shan just now—”

“Gu Qing Shan only stopped its feeding, and we’re definitely going to die” Boss replied.

Zhang Ying Hao pulled out the cannon again and propped it against his shoulder.

This time, no one stopped him.

Sensing the indescribably eerie aura emerging from that monster, Gu Qing Shan wielded two swords and spoke behind his back:

“Your majesty, please hurry it up or we’re all done here”

The king also understood that it was a moment of life and death so he fully focused his strength and struck again with all his power.

「 Aaaaaa, open this thing! 」

BAM!

The cracks in the void of space thoroughly shattered into a hole.

The scene on the other side of the hole could be seen with the naked eye.

——it was a ruined structure that seemed to be a garden.

A luxurious water fountain stood in the middle of the ruined structure.

「Hurry, this hole will only remain for three breaths worth of time, we need to quickly go in!」 the king loudly shouted.

Just as he finished speaking, Gu Qing Shan grabbed him with his hand.

——Gu Qing Shan had caught the king, Laura was sitting on his shoulder with her umbrella opened, while Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, and Boss were all holding onto her umbrella.

Divine Skill, [Shadow Shift]!

A withered tree abruptly appeared where Gu Qing Shan stood before.

This was one of the trees inside the garden.

At the same time, the Void Deity seemed to have regained its senses and swiftly crunched down with its maw!

Over a thousand meters away, the withered tree uttered a short and curt screech.

It wanted to struggle but vanished right away.

The grey maw above it was slowly chewing something.

Soon enough, as if realizing something amiss, the Void Deity howled in anger.

At this point, Gu Qing Shan's group had arrived inside the garden.

While it seemed long, all of this happened in a single blink of an eye.

If Gu Qing Shan had been a split second slower, everyone would have been devoured by the monster.

The hole in the void of space gradually closed.

One breath's worth of time left!

The Void Deity charged forward like lightning.

It reached out with its two whiskers and bit onto the two ends of the hole with the human faces at the end.

『Don't even think of escaping』

The monster used telepathy to transmit its declaration.

Miraculously!

As the monster pulled with its two whiskers, the hole in the void of space began to expand again!

Everyone in the garden naturally saw this.

This Void Deity-class monster actually had the ability to rip open the void of space, seemingly about to follow them.

Once it entered, who would be able to fight against it?

Gu Qing Shan's inner sight swiftly scanned their surroundings and found that this was a completely sealed garden, the darkness around it seemed to act as a form of sealing restraint.

This was a closed-off environment.

Gu Qing Shan didn't hesitate any longer and shouted: "Zhang Ying Hao!"

"Got it!"

Zhang Ying Hao aimed at the hole in the void with Cannon Brother and pulled the trigger.

A low resounding voice echoed from inside the muzzle of the cannon:

[This is the moment to face a completely new challenge]

Boom!!!

A blinding pillar of light shot out from the cannon, heavily struck at the hole in the void and at the top of the monster's head!

The monster uttered a furious roar—

From the way it sounded, the impact didn't seem to cause it any pain, but this world-destroying force was too great—enough to make sure that it couldn't remain in place.

A split second later, the pillar of light enveloped the monster and disappeared from the front of the hole in the void.

The hole slowly closed up.

This time, it was truly closing.

Chapter 1021

The Void Deity was sent flying by the blinding pillar of light from Cannon Brother.

The large hole in the void of space that the king had broken through with his scepter finally closed up.

Everyone waited for a few seconds.

Nothing happened.

Obviously, that Void Deity had no way to break through this isolated barrier on its own.

Everyone sighed in relief at the same time.

"We managed to escape with our lives" Boss calmly commented.

Laura patted her chest: "If it had made it in here, we would have died without any doubt, right?"

“Naturally” Boss calmly replied.

“We were all very nervous, so why do you seem so calm? Did you have something else prepared?” Laura questioned him.

“There weren’t any preparations at all, I’m simply used to seeing grand sights, so I won’t be easily affected by matters of this degree” Boss calmly explained.

Saying so, he headed towards the water fountain first.

—-the black cat seemed to be pointing straight at this intact and luxurious water fountain earlier.

“What an impressive person”

Laura looked at his overall visage and said in admiration.

Zhang Ying Hao pointed at his back.

Boss’ clothes had thoroughly been soaked by his cold sweat, sticking closely to him and revealing every last muscle on his back.

—-he was clearly still shaken.

Everyone: “...”

Gu Qing Shan declared: “Alright, let us go over and take a look as well”

So everyone went forward together and carefully observed the water fountain.

A crystal-clear stream of water was trickling down the steps of the fountain.

The circumference of the entire fountain could be circled with 30 people’s arm length, a life-like and animated mermaid statue stood at the very center of it all.

The mermaid was smiling while raising a trident in her hands.

The water was flowing from the tip of the trident.

As he reached this place, the king slowly closed his eyes and muttered: 「 Ah, I know of this place, in my head, this place was left over by the God of Life...」

His voice slowly turned faint, clearly unsealing another memory.

Gu Qing Shan glanced at him, then at Boss: “Did you notice anything?”

Boss looked over the mermaid statue and shook his head: “It’s been too long, I have no way to figure out, let alone assess the current situation of this place. We can only wait until his memory unseals itself”

Gu Qing Shan sighed: “That’s true, the place we were at before had already been turned into the base of a Void Deity, who knows what kind of place this had become?”

Everyone had no choice but silently stand still and wait.

At this point, a deep voice sounded from Zhang Ying Hao’s shoulder:

[Place me on the ground]

“Yes, Cannon Brother”

Zhang Ying Hao carefully placed the shoulder-mounted cannon on the ground.

Cannon Brother spoke: [You’re a decent kid, and a hitman that has his own style. That’s why I helped you unleash just one shot. Otherwise, it would ruin my street cred]

“Yes” Zhang Ying Hao nodded respectfully.

Cannon Brother continued: [According to the rules that I set up, I can only help you once before I leave— now, call your handgun, I need to have a little talk with it]

Zhang Ying Hao took his assault handgun out.

“Greetings, Cannon Brother” assault handgun respectfully said.

Cannon Brother’s deep voice sounded again: [I’ve heard of you. You used to be an automatic machine gun with talents that far surpassed any weapons. Your path was open, your potential limitless. Unfortunately, you didn’t know to treasure it, wasting your days on flowering shrubs and making merry. When you finally ran into a hard rock, you stumbled and lost to the point that you couldn’t even save your body]

“...Cannon Brother is right. I’ve been very ashamed of myself”

[Hm, I’ve been watching over you for the past while. You are constantly training your abilities and had become a thoroughly changed gun, that’s why, before I return, I’ll give you a hand]

Clak clak clak—

With a slight noise, the entire shoulder-mounted cannon broke apart into numerous parts on the ground.

Cannon Brother’s voice sounded again: [I’ll leave these parts here for you. You had better think carefully about your path and perhaps find a new one]

Assault handgun practically cried out: “Thank you Cannon Brother for giving me a chance, I’ll definitely do my best”

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[Little handgun, from now on, don’t shout so loudly when you attack, it’s very shameful, got it?]

“Ah, yes, Cannon Brother”

[Good. I’m going back to Gramps Bullet, quite a few newbie young’uns that do not know any better have been trying to steal our spot, I have to give him a hand]

“Cannon Brother, I want to work under you from now on”

[Hak...]

With a single chuckle, Cannon Brother went thoroughly quiet.

“He left” Zhang Ying Hao commented.

“Hm, that’s right”

Assault handgun jumped down from Zhang Ying Hao’s hand and landed among the parts.

“In the past, I used to be a young’un weapon who had no rivals in any technological worlds, but now look at me——”

“I want to kill that guy! I want to use its blood to clear my name!”

With a loud shout, assault handgun broke apart into numerous pieces and scattered.

Something miraculous happened.

The parts that belonged to assault handgun and Cannon Brother started to merge together, automatically assembling with a series of loud metallic noises.

The gun parts almost seemed alive, constantly coming together, but would quickly scatter again whenever they were about to take shape, seemingly hesitant.

Zhang Ying Hao silently watched this, then suddenly spoke up: “If you want to take revenge, you must have the power to break through the toughest defense”

All the moving parts paused.

Clak clak clak clak clak clak!

An even more intense song of metallic noises resounded.

They seemed to have found a way, quickly merging together at breakneck speed, displaying both determination and resolve.

The parts were no longer scattered after they fused together.

A few moments later, all the parts had disappeared from the ground.

There was now a sniper rifle there.

This was a light-weight sniper rifle, despite seeming a bit simplistic and mobility-focused, it exuded a sharp sense of frigid killing intent.

The light-weight rifle returned to Zhang Ying Hao’s hands and spoke up: “I’ve just reconstructed myself, I need some time to rest”

And then there was no longer any sound.

Zhang Ying Hao put the rifle away with a clear joyful look on his face.

“Congratulations, your gun will gradually become stronger” Laura praised.

Gu Qing Shan and Boss also nodded with smiles on their faces.

After a while more, the king suddenly opened his eyes.

「 Ah... I understand now, this place itself is a Causality lifeform that the God of Life prepared for their holy country, she will help me triumph against all enemies! 」 the king excitedly said.

He began walking around the fountain while chanting an incantation.

He circled around the water fountain again and again.

Time slowly passed.

Once the king had circled around the fountain over a dozen times, he returned to the front of the group and grandly declared towards the mermaid in the fountain:

「 Awaken, servant of the God of Life, lady Tide Caller, I need you to help me win against the enemy of our Deity! 」

After saying so, the king cut open his finger and dripped his blood into the fountain.

「 I am an extension of the God of Life, a descendant of the Deity, you must show yourself before me 」 the king chanted in a low voice.

Hearing that, everyone else couldn't help but exchange glances.

It turns out that the royal family of Calming Soul Country were the descendants of the God of Life.

If that's the case—

It made sense why the God of Life didn't escape the Inner Plane's destruction by themselves and instead brought their entire holy country with them.

This was most likely the case for all 7 Deities, in order to establish a safe haven for their descendants, they had no choice but to struggle and fight against the monsters within the space vortex.

While everyone was thinking that, the mermaid statue inside the foundation began to emanate a holy light.

The grey color of stone slowly retreated from the statue as it regained motion.

Sensing something, Gu Qing Shan released his inner sight to observe the mermaid's eyes.

Only to find out that her eyes were clearly observing them!

Chapter 1022

The mermaid looked over the king and declared: "Descendant of the God of Life, I am a servant under Her Grace, the Tide Caller"

"If you want me to serve you, show me your proof"

The king raised his hand: 「 The ring of descendant is in my hand, surely you can see it 」

He was showing the golden ring on his finger.

The mermaid's gaze focused on the ring and nodded:

“Sure enough, it is the God of Life’s ring, that is indeed true, please hand it over”

The king took the ring off, then suddenly recalled something and shook his head: 「 I don’t remember such a step from my unsealed memory 」

He continued: 「 Now, please take us all—— 」

A black flash of light.

The trident pierced through the king’s body and pinned him closely on the ground.

Coughing up blood, the king cried out in desperation: 「 No! 」

The souls in his body had all been taken away by Ye Fei Li, so he only had one last life.

The mermaid displayed a cold expression and declared: “Hand over the ring, exchange it for your life”

Right after she declared so.

A gust of wind emerged.

Her head was severed and blown away by the wind.

The mermaid had a shocked expression on her face but was swiftly diced into pieces by another sword that had been waiting in the air.

“What’s the matter?” Gu Qing Shan walked up to the king and asked.

The black trident seemed to have some sort of mystical power, after stabbing the king for just a few seconds, his face had already sunken in so much that he looked almost like a skull.

The king seemed to have realized something.

He put the golden ring up to Gu Qing Shan’s face and said: 「 Help me pass it to—— 」

Clink clank!

The golden ring fell to the ground.

Before he could finish his words, the king was already dead.

Before anyone could even react to what just happened, the ruler of Calming Soul Country meaninglessly lost his life.

Gu Qing Shan waved his hand to take the golden ring into his hand and told everyone: “Prepare for battle”

“Hm? Didn’t you already kill that mermaid?” Zhang Ying Hao asked in confusion.

“No, it’s not dead” Ye Fei Li appeared to be listening as he continued: “I can’t hear any souls”

The group looked towards the water fountain.

Only to find the headless body swiping the void of space and taking out a small crimson shield.

The shield had a single vertical pupil that stared straight at the group.

A set of skin-colored armor filled with vertical pupils then slowly manifested on the headless body.

『 Fresh food... you've disturbed my slumber...』

A frigid voice resounded from the headless body.

Laura shrunk behind Gu Qing Shan and nervously said: "Gu Qing Shan, that thing is causing me to feel numb to my core"

Gu Qing Shan asked in return: "Boss, do you know what's going on here?"

"This is a kind of spirit within the space vortex, an Occultism entity that cannot be defended against—— it has the ability of parasitism. It can burrow inside the body of any creature, then transforms that body into a weapon and defensive equipment through consuming the entirety of that creature's flesh and soul!" Boss hurriedly explained.

"Why didn't you say that sooner!" Zhang Ying Hao shouted.

——*can't be defended against, leeching the body of any creature, then consume their flesh and soul*

How can anyone fight against that?

Its enemy wouldn't be able to do anything but wait for their death!

"I've only ever heard of it before; this is the first time I've ever seen it!" Boss answered.

Gu Qing Shan quickly asked: "Does its ability have any limits? Or is it simply a parasite that can leech any creature just by thinking about it?"

Boss replied: "I don't know either!"

Everyone's heart sank.

Gu Qing Shan abruptly grabbed the Earth sword from the void of space and swung it towards the black trident.

The Earth sword's ability—— [Sanctuary] was instantly activated, combined with Gu Qing Shan's full-power strike.

Kih!

An intense ring resounded throughout the surroundings.

The black trident turned into a black streak of lightning that ripped through the void of space and vanished.

『 Despicable! My Divine Armament! 』

A frigid and vicious cursing sound emerged from the headless mermaid body.

Originally, the black trident would have gotten extremely powerful from absorbing the king's soul and power.

But now, it had been sent flying into oblivion.

Gu Qing Shan shrugged: “I’m sorry, but I felt like it would be best to prevent you from being able to completely overpower us if there’s going to be any hope of achieving an agreement”

『 Agreement? 』

The voice paused briefly, then chuckled:

『 You misunderstand, there will be no agreement, and I don’t want to waste any words on any of you 』

『 You are nothing but my food 』

Gu Qing Shan was surprised.

An enemy who wasn’t even willing to talk was quite rare.

The headless mermaid raised its vertical pupil shield and howled: 『 Even without my trident, I can still massacre you without any efforts! 』

Countless black shadows abruptly poured out from the shield that went into everyone’s bodies like a sudden lightning strike.

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Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, Laura, Boss, and even the black cat all froze.

They quickly lost all signs of life and collapsed on the ground.

Only Gu Qing Shan remained.

The frigid voice resounded again: 『 You sent my weapon flying, that is a Divine Armament I spent countless years to craft 』

“And you killed my companions”

Saying so, Gu Qing Shan showed no emotion on his face.

Holding the Earth sword tightly in hand, he slowed his breathing down and carefully recalled the attack he used to kill the mythical [Chaos] creature.

Everyone else was already dead, he was left alone.

And he could feel the shadow of death over him.

Over his long years of fighting, this would turn out to be the most dangerous battle yet.

The monster slowly and mockingly spoke: 『 Coming here as a team, the difference in your strengths must be not that great 』

『 To make sure that you suffer the greatest degree of pain and torture, I shall have your companions band together and kill you 』

Black strings appeared from the vertical pupil shield and attached to the corpses of Zhang Ying Hao's group.

Zhang Ying Hao, Ye Fei Li, Laura, and Boss stood up.

They were all staring blankly at Gu Qing Shan.

"Die, Gu Qing Shan" Zhang Ying Hao muttered.

"We shall kill you together" Ye Fei Li called out.

"Do not resist, we've been your trustworthy companions for so long, after all" Laura said.

"You won't be able to win against the four of us" Boss declared.

They all headed towards Gu Qing Shan.

A chilling cold chuckle resounded from the shield:

『 Come, struggle against your companions, die in your despair, this is the end that I've arranged for you! 』

A second later.

Gu Qing Shan let go of the Earth sword and grabbed the Chao Yin sword from the void of space.

The sword swung forward.

Secret Art, [Life Seeker]!

Secret Art, [Crescent Slash]!

Both Secret Arts were performed at once, a crescent-shaped sword phantom flashed into existence for a split second and vanished.

His four companions collapsed at once.

—before they even got close, their limbs had already been completely severed by the multitudes of light blue sword phantoms that manifested from thin air.

The voice from the vertical pupil shield turned frigid again:

『 To kill your allies without a single bit of hesitation, what an iron will you have 』

Gu Qing Shan's expression remained emotionless.

He mused briefly before speaking: "And you still haven't killed me... it seems you've made two miscalculations"

Gu Qing Shan's eyes faced the vertical pupil head-on and continued:

"First of all, my companions are actually quite weak, I'm the only one that actually knows how to fight"

"Secondly, I'm sure that you didn't hold back just to torture me"

While saying so, he raised his finger that was wearing the golden ring for the other side to see.

The monster spoke: 『 This is the first time I've ran into an insect that is as arrogant as you are. I will have you understand that death isn't the end, but merely the beginning 』

Gu Qing Shan chuckled, then lightly stated: "You only attacked the king after he took off his ring"

He paused and glanced over the other party.

The monster didn't say a single word.

Gu Qing Shan continued: "It seems that you received quite a bit of recoil when you devoured the Tide Caller, then became trapped here by the oath of the servant of Deity"

Hearing that, the monster abruptly shouted in response, clearly angered:

『 Within this infinite void, nothing can restrain me! 』

Gu Qing Shan let go of the Chao Yin sword and let it hover in midair, continuing:

"Is that so? But you only demanded that the king remove his ring in the beginning, it wasn't until afterwards that you attacked and threatened him to exchange for his life with the ring"

"The ring is a crucial part of the God of Life's oath, and you seem to be affected by that oath"

While speaking, Gu Qing Shan continued to stay on guard.

However, aside from taking control of his companions to attack him, the monster hadn't tried to directly harm him yet.

Gu Qing Shan's tense heart slowly relaxed.

—--seems like my guess was correct.

After devouring the Tide Caller, for some reason, they took over an oath for the Tide Caller.

Since I'm wearing the ring, it couldn't attack me.

What a dangerous situation that was—--

I was literally a split second away from death.

Gu Qing Shan sighed and stared closely at the shield:

"So, you clearly understand what the ring is and what it does. And here I thought you were a straightforward monster, who knew you'd be so full of lies?"

The vertical pupil on the shield stared straight at him, then abruptly questioned: 『 Why is it that when I took control of your companions and forced them to kill you, not only did you kill them so easily without hesitation, but you could still also keep this insignificant matter in mind? 』

"Insignificant? What do you mean?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

『 The ring 』 the monster replied.

“Ah, so that was what you mean. Simply put, there’s no such thing as an insignificant detail in a battle”

Gu Qing Shan slowly replied.

Chapter 1023

As the trident that released water for the fountain had already been sent flying by Gu Qing Shan, there was no more trickling sound of water.

Everyone’s bodies stayed on the ground.

The only exception was the king——

Before Gu Qing Shan managed to react in time, this extremely powerful Demi had his soul and flesh fully absorbed by the black trident, leaving behind only a thin sheet of skin.

Everything in the garden returned to silence.

The headless mermaid was standing upright inside the water fountain with a raised shield in her hand.

The vertical pupil on the shield was staring intensely at Gu Qing Shan.

The vertical pupil noticed that the other party had already removed the black piece of cloth in front of his eyes and was now staring straight at it without any change in his expression.

This prey actually dared to evaluate me without fear.

『 Damn you...! 』

The vertical pupil mumbled in a grudgeful tone.

Gu Qing Shan acted like he didn’t hear that.

——as long as he was still equipped with the golden ring, this monster wouldn’t be able to harm him at all.

He no longer looked at the monster and instead controlled both the Earth sword and Six Paths Great Mountain sword to move back into the void of space behind him.

After that, he tapped his Inventory Bag to take out a cushion and sat on it.

The monster silently observed him, all the way up until Gu Qing Shan pressed his hands together, closed his eyes, and began to adjust his breathing.

As time went by, Gu Qing Shan’s breathing gradually turned stable and rhythmic.

Is he...

Sleeping?

The vertical pupil on the shield opened wide and took up the entirety of the shield.

『 Bastard! 』

The monster howled in anger.

The entire garden shook and trembled nonstop from its furious howling.

Some particularly cowardly trees even pulled themselves back into the ground.

Gu Qing Shan was naturally woken up.

He opened his eyes and looked at the monster in confusion?

“What are you roaring about?”

Gu Qing Shan asked.

『 That’s what I should be asking YOU! You dared to sleep in front of me, openly mocking me! 』 the monster angrily roared.

Gu Qing Shan asked strangely: “With how things currently are, you can’t kill me and I can’t kill you, what else do you want?”

The monster’s frigid voice replied: 『 You’re ignoring your companions’ corpses and won’t even try to take revenge for them, what a heartless person you are 』

Gu Qing Shan didn’t bother to reply to that and yawned, muttering to himself: “I’ve been staying up all night too much recently. It’s been quite long since I last rested, a nap is necessary”

He closed his eyes and prepared to go back to sleep.

The monster: 『...』

An unimaginable sense of anger welled up in its mind.

The monster couldn’t contain its anger and roared again: 『 Who allowed you to sleep!?! 』

Gu Qing Shan could only open his eyes again.

He complained: “You can’t even kill me, so what are you shouting for? Don’t you have something better to do?”

The monster coldly chuckled: 『 After you get stuck here for over 10,000 years, you’ll know what it means to have nothing better to do 』

Gu Qing Shan silently took note of that.

Seems like this monster hasn’t been here for very long, only around 10,000 years.

Regretfully, I don’t know if the other parts of the God of Life’s ruin have been taken over by other monsters.

When we battled against the Void Deity, I was able to use the [True Crimson Demon Spear] to cut off its tongue and Cannon Brother was able to send it flying.

But this monster is an Occultism entity, capable of devouring both the flesh and soul of others to turn them into its weapons and armor, I can’t come up with anything in order to kill it.

“Then we’re going to be neighbors forever it seems” Gu Qing Shan sighed.

The monster coldly replied: 『 An entity who's still struggling for their own survival like yourself will one day fall to the Law of Death, there's no such thing as 'forever' for you 』

Gu Qing Shan clapped his hand and chuckled: "Then you'd better treasure the time you have me. Otherwise, when I die, you'll fall back into eternal loneliness without anyone to even chat with"

The monster: 『...』

—what kind of conversation is this?

Is he insane?

Am I the monster, or are you?

The monster paused briefly, then spoke up again, full of malice: 『...Do you understand? Just now when I killed your companions, I already devoured their flesh and souls without leaving a scrap 』

Gu Qing Shan thought briefly, then waved his hand without care: "They're nothing but a rag-tag bunch, nothing to do with me— right, are you full yet?"

The monster scoffed: 『 That was hardly enough to even fill the gaps of my teeth. In the past when I still traveled the space vortex, drifting for countless years on end, eating whatever I liked, that was when I truly felt full 』

While saying that, the monster kept a close eye on Gu Qing Shan's expression, but didn't even see a speck of emotion on Gu Qing Shan's face.

Seems like those people really weren't his companions.

How ridiculous, and I even tried to have them kill him.

While it silently thought this, Gu Qing Shan had tapped his Inventory Bag again and took out a lot of fresh ingredients.

"I'm hungry, so I'm going to cook, you want something fresh to eat as well?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

The monster froze.

What exactly is this person thinking?

The monster felt like it had actually run out of words to say.

Right in front of it, Gu Qing Shan began to cook.

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And soon, he finished a whole table of dishes.

All of it was top-notch spirit cooking that contained natural spirit energy, greatly beneficial for any cultivator.

—since the monster likes to consume both flesh and soul, it would most likely not hate this sort of food.

Silently thinking this, Gu Qing Shan picked up his chopsticks and began to enjoy a hotpot before anything else.

“If you’re not full yet, come and eat together”

He told the monster.

Smelling the fragrance of the food, the vertical pupil on the shield slowly peered towards the table of food.

『 What inferior food you have 』 the monster mocked.

Gu Qing Shan shook his head: “Eating is a great way to kill time, and it’s up to you whether or not you want to eat. Regardless, I’ll be eating three meals a day from now on”

He grabbed a piece of braised meat from inside the pot, dipped it in soy sauce, then put it into his mouth, slowly savouring it.

After the meat, his chopsticks moved towards the steaming fish on the side.

After eating for a bit, he put his chopsticks down and took a sip of liquor.

The fresh and cool liquid inside contained a faint stinging sensation.

This was a cup of top-grade spirit liquor.

Hah—

“Such a good life, even immortals can only enjoy so much” Gu Qing Shan said emotionally.

He put his cup down and continued moving his chopsticks.

The monster silently watched.

For the last 10,000 years, it had been trapped in this empty garden without any solution.

Although it consumed a few souls just now, that wasn’t nearly enough to sate its hunger and worsened it instead.

This insignificant insect is truly weak, but he knows how to make food in order to kill time.

Killing time...

The vertical pupil on the shield slowly moved and focused on a steaming meat dish on the table.

A few moments later.

A black shadow flew out from the shield, swiftly making its way around the plate of meat.

The entire plate became empty instantly.

This was exactly the same way it attacked Zhang Ying Hao and the others.

The shadow returned to the shield and carefully savoured the taste.

Although the power contained within this food was pathetically little and was incomparable to living flesh and soul, it was still enough to convert into a single strand of energy after eating.

This strand of energy was so insignificantly little, but it was better than nothing.

Something is always better than nothing.

And the taste was quite decent as well.

Killing time...

With that thought in mind, the monster released another shadow that swept through the table.

Wherever the shadow went through, everything on the table vanished.

Gu Qing Shan complained: "Oi, you're eating a bit too much, leave a bit for me"

Hearing that, the shadow moved even faster

Everything on the table, be it braised, stir-fried, deep-fried, steamed, or anything else, even cut colds, fruits and liquor were being taken by the monster.

『 Pitiful fool, all your food is now mine 』 the monster mocked him.

"Oh no you don't!"

Gu Qing Shan shouted and hurriedly reached towards a bowl of noodles.

But no matter how fast he was, the shadow was faster.

When Gu Qing Shan managed to grab the bowl, the noodles had already been consumed without leaving a scrap behind.

There wasn't any food left on the table except a boiling pot.

The shadow flew back and returned to the vertical pupil.

Gu Qing Shan shrugged: "If you treat me like this, you think you're going to get any good food from now on?"

The vertical pupil slowly closed and savoured the food it just obtained while casually replying: 『 You were the one who invited me, not to mention, I still left you a dish 』

Gu Qing Shan angrily said: "That's just the cooking pot, it's not edible!"

The monster ignored him.

Gu Qing Shan couldn't really do anything, so he helplessly sighed.

He glanced towards the void of space.

Lines of glowing text were appearing on the War God UI:

[In a moment of danger, you have forcefully activated your Iris World]

[Your Iris World hasn't fully awoken so this technique's power is about to run out]

[This world can only last for 3 more minutes]

[After 3 minutes, this parallel illusory world will be destroyed, returning you and your opponent to reality]

[Seize your time]

Gu Qing Shan swiftly skimmed through it.

Three minutes.

Gu Qing Shan turned his gaze towards the monster and silently used [See you once again].

"Now, tell me, what are you exactly?"

Gu Qing Shan asked.

Chapter 1024

Let's rewind time briefly.

The mermaid pierced the king with her black trident, which absorbed all of his flesh and soul.

Gu Qing Shan took the chance to behead the mermaid in a single attack.

He immediately asked Boss about the monster's background.

Boss explained: "This is a kind of spirit within the space vortex, an Occultism entity that cannot be defended against— it has the ability of a parasite and stays inside the body of any creature, then transforms that body into a weapon and defensive equipment through consuming the entirety of that creature's flesh and soul!"

"Does its ability have any limits? Or can it simply parasite off any creature by thinking about it?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

Boss replied: "I don't know either!"

Everyone felt heavy.

If that were truly the case, this monster would be even more terrifying than the Void Deity they ran into in the forest of corpse pillars.

At this moment— --

Gu Qing Shan seemed to have realized something.

He immediately undid the black cloth over his eyes and glanced towards the monster.

The monster vanished.

At the same time, intense wind formed from Soul Points began swirling within Gu Qing Shan's pupils.

From the looks of it, he was activating something.

“Why did that monster suddenly vanish?”

Ye Fei Li asked in confusion.

Laura looked at Gu Qing Shan’s eyes and anxiously replied: “I think Gu Qing Shan might have done something”

Zhang Ying Hao repressed the chill he was feeling and tried to regain his calm.

Ye Fei Li and Laura both had very little experience with battles, so they weren’t like him who could sense the danger through sheer instincts.

Zhang Ying Hao took a deep breath and slowly said: “That’s impossible, that monster gave off the impression of being irresistible, Gu Qing Shan shouldn’t have the strength to get rid of it”

Laura shook her head: “You’re wrong, sometimes, strength doesn’t matter in combat”

“Strength doesn’t matter in combat? I don’t understand what you’re saying at all” Ye Fei Li felt even more confused.

— he had only just entered the 900 million World Layers so there were a lot of things that he didn’t fully understand.

Boss waved his hand to signal everyone to stop talking.

He had an extremely serious expression on his face, displaying an unusual level of solemnity.

“Laura, take out all of your strongest sealing artifacts and restrain this black trident” Boss said.

Laura turned towards the black trident.

After losing its master, the trident was automatically giving off faint noises.

“Got it” Laura replied.

She took out a bunch of sealing artifacts and threw them all towards the black trident without minding too much about finesse.

Clak clak clak—

Soon enough, all sorts of sealing artifacts had completely covered the black trident.

A mountain of treasures.

Being suppressed below such a thing, the trident could no longer let out any sound.

Boss sighed briefly and continued: “Fei Li, give me a drink”

Ye Fei Li handed him a bottle of Soul Points drink.

Boss drank it all in one gulp.

Throwing the can away, he flipped open his Book of Prophesized Destiny and pressed one hand against Gu Qing Shan’s back.

“What are you doing?” Zhang Ying Hao asked.

Boss casually replied: “Your senses are a bit lacking so most likely you don’t understand what’s going on”

He and Zhang Ying Hao paused briefly, then both nodded at once.

Indeed, the two of them both managed to sense how dangerous the situation was, similar to Gu Qing Shan.

Boss explained: “In that split second just now, we were just a hair away from death descending upon us. At the last possible moment, Gu Qing Shan undid the black cloth in front of his eyes and forcefully activated his technique”

Everyone turned to Gu Qing Shan, only to see him standing completely still, silently staring into the void.

Invisible winds were still drifting around his body.

Boss continued: “I can sense it, Gu Qing Shan’s technique hasn’t been fully completed yet, that’s the reason why he’s standing here——- this became his biggest weakness——- in reality, once this technique is ready, he should vanish together with the monster”

“In other words, we need to protect him now?” Laura asked.

“Fortunately, there aren’t any other monsters here, so we don’t need to protect him this time around”

As Boss explained, the Book of Prophesized Destiny in his hand flipped open by itself to display an image.

Gu Qing Shan and the monster appeared on the paper.

The first thing everyone saw was how Gu Qing Shan sent the black trident flying.

“This can’t be right, the black trident is still where we are, so why is it being sent flying here?” Zhang Ying Hao couldn’t help but ask.

Laura turned to the pile of treasures and confirmed: “The black trident is indeed still here”

Boss took a deep breath and muttered: “Perhaps, his technique used reality as a foundation to manifest both his soul and the monster into what is essentially an illusory parallel world dreamscape... what a bold way of thinking...”

The group continued watching the scene depicted in the Book of Prophesized Destiny.

In the book, the monster unleashed a series of black shadows and killed everyone.

None of them managed to retaliate at all!

The only person left standing in the garden was Gu Qing Shan.

At this point, the book became blank.

Laura urged: “Hurry, let us see what happens after that”

“I can’t” Boss shook his head, “This is a dreamscape that is as real as a parallel world, with my current powers, this is the extent of what we can see”

“Isn’t Gu Qing Shan in a lot of danger right now?” Laura worriedly asked.

“Don’t worry. This is his technique, if he dies inside, the technique will simply collapse and return both the monster and himself to reality where we are” Boss answered.

Everyone exchanged glances.

Ye Fei Li wielded his Forgetting River Soul Flaying Hook.

Zhang Ying Hao began to draw Cards from the void of space.

Laura searched through her backpack.

———*we need to make the preparations!*

Boss shook his head and sighed emotionally: “It’s useless, that monster is too powerful. Among the three of you, Laura is only one who truly understands the foundation of a battle, and even she doesn’t understand what a battle between Deities is like”

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“Then please tell us as much as possible about what a battle between Deities is like” Ye Fei Li said very seriously.

Boss crouched down and pressed his hand on the ground.

“A battle between mortals is indeed determined through strength, the more powerful one will most likely win”

While saying that, he had a contemplating expression, as if he was focusing his mind to sense something.

“If within the infinite space vortex, once you run into a Deity-level monster, you simply have no way to probe or find out what kind of ability it has”

“As soon as one side ran into the other, it’s always going to be a desperate battle—— because the other side wants to eat you, and you want to survive”

“Because of this, when it comes to battles between Deities, there’s only a single standard to determine strong and weak, or rather, victory and defeat”

At this point, Boss appeared a bit surprised, apparently realizing something, then expressed hesitation.

After a waiting while and still haven’t heard anything from Boss, Zhang Ying Hao couldn’t help but ask:

“What exactly is the standard to weigh a battle?”

Boss glanced at him, then replied: “Don’t try to weigh the outcome through strength, weigh it through who can survive”

After saying so, he closed his eyes and muttered: “And now, even I have to risk my life”

“Fortunately, this place is a portion of the Abyss, even if it was detached by the seven Deities, it still belongs to the Abyss”

“...Well done, Gu Qing Shan, since there are no monsters here to disturb me, I can do this...”

After muttering for a long while to himself, Boss abruptly shouted:

“Consciousness, descend!”

Boom!

The entire garden shook intensely.

About ten breaths’ worth of time later, the void of space itself abruptly shattered.

The grass, the fountain, the lush greenery around them, the entire garden itself vanished in the blink of an eye, gone without a trace.

The group had no choice but to stand in the middle of the void.

“What happened?” Laura asked in surprise.

“It’s nothing much, I allowed the Abyss to detect this portion of itself, so the Abyss summoned it back”

Boss reached his hand into the void and grabbed a sprite of blue glowing light in his hand.

“As the Abyss is being constantly corroded by the Apocalypse of a parallel world, to its current self, being able to regain a portion of its body is greatly beneficial, a great help in an emergency”

“And so, the Abyss granted me this as payment...”

The group turned to look at his hand.

——the blue glowing light seemed to contain infinite mystical properties, with a single glance, they felt themselves completely mesmerized by it, unable to turn their gaze away.

With a more careful look, they found that the glowing light was actually a small luminescent insect with a pair of transparent cicada-like wings, it almost seemed cute with its slightly plump body.

The small insect was giving off wave after wave of bright blue light.

“How pretty, what exactly is that?” Laura exclaimed in wonder.

“The Star Firefly, a Causality-type life form—— it has no strength of its own, and is incapable of fighting”

“You mean, it’s only use is to look pretty?” Ye Fei Li asked.

Boss chuckled amusingly.

“Don’t look down on this little firefly. Through its death, it can force any other lifeform to also lose their life”

“In order to produce this Effect, there must be a Cause, and that is my own death”

Boss turned his hand around and put the flowing light away.

“So you’re already determined to die in battle?” Zhang Ying Hao asked in a low muttering voice.

“Of course, with our current strength, we wouldn’t be able to win against this monster” Boss casually admitted, “Rather than everyone dying here, it would be better if only I died”

Everyone stared blankly at him, feeling a wave of emotions washing over them.

“Oooooooooaaa, Boss, don’t die!”

Laura couldn’t help but tear up.

Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li were both speechless.

Ye Fei Li’s eyes were turning a bit red.

Zhang Ying Hao was clenching his fists tightly.

Seeing that reaction, Boss felt a bit awkward.

Truthfully, it’s been a bit tough lately— having suffered such heavy injuries and without any powers to use, there are a lot of things I couldn’t do.

But this time around, the monster was led away by Gu Qing Shan, leaving me enough time to spend contacting the Abyss and obtaining the Star Firefly.

— with this, I can finally regain a bit of my power.

So it’s best if I tell them about it first.

Boss couldn’t help but clear his throat and explained to the three of them: “Erm— my death isn’t the same kind that you’re thinking of— if I happen to die, you just need to take my corpse and keep it intact, after a short while, I’ll revive thanks to the power of the Abyss”

“”””WHAT!?””””

Laura, Zhang Ying Hao, and Ye Fei Li all shouted in shock.

They quickly recalled something.

Indeed.

There should only be a single kind of entity capable of reviving from death through slumber.

An Abyssal monster.

Was Boss actually an Abyssal monster?

As soon as they thought of that, the three of them were startled.

Then they started to panic.

“I-I-I-I, I can’t really tell if he’s boasting or not” Laura mustered her courage and asked while stuttering: “B-b-b-boss, who exactly are you?”

“Wait a minute, Laura, wasn’t it Gu Qing Shan and you who saved him? You didn’t know his identity?” Zhang Ying Hao felt like he was going insane.

“We did do that, but I-I-I-I’ve always thought he was just a person with a hard past—” Laura pitifully replied.

Ye Fei Li waved his hand indifferently: “Regardless, he’s standing out for us, so there’s no need for us to care about his identity”

“Fool! We just want to know the truth!”

Laura and Zhang Ying Hao both said in unison.

Watching their reactions, Boss sighed: “I thought that everyone besides Gu Qing Shan had already realized it, but it seems that was just my assumption”

“To be honest— in reality—”

“I’m the King of the Abyss”

Chapter 1025

From the beginning of time, for a single existing individual, or rather, for an individual with sentience, ‘what am I?’ has always been an eternal question.

And each activation of [See you once again] would only give the answer to a single question.

There were only 3 minutes left.

So Gu Qing Shan decided to ask that eternal question:

“What exactly are you?”

The vertical pupil on the shield fell blank and appeared to not know where to start.

『 I am...』

It paused, then slowly continued:

『 I was born within the source of Occultism, a location extremely far away from here. Ever since my birth several hundred million years ago...』

Gu Qing Shan scowled.

The answer to ‘what am I?’ is too broad, how would 3 minutes be enough?

If I want to find out more, then I have to...

Gu Qing Shan’s faced the vertical pupil straight on.

Within this parallel dream world created by his technique, he wanted to attempt activating the Iris Technique again!

This would be a technique within a technique!

Lines of bright red text immediately appeared on the War God UI:

[Warning!]

[Your World Technique hasn't fully manifested itself and is unable to withstand the Parallel Dream technique and Time Recollection technique simultaneously!]

[If you forcefully activate this technique within the technique, your eyes will be inflicted with an injury that would prevent you from using Iris Technique until it thoroughly heals!]

Gu Qing Shan quickly skimmed through it.

— the [Parallel Dream] technique was a dream that seemed as realistic as a parallel world, where everything and everyone seamlessly connected with reality to the point that it was impossible to tell the difference.

He first created an illusory parallel world, then pulled the monster into that parallel world.

— as there was only one ring from the God of Life, only Gu Qing Shan would be able to survive.

That was why the monster killed Zhang Ying Hao, Boss, and the others.

However, all of this happened in a dreamscape of a parallel world, while his companions were still alive in reality.

Gu Qing Shan's plan was to first use [Parallel Dream], then somehow use [See you once again].

And then use his memory reading technique to see through everything regarding the monster.

— [Time Recollection] was the Iris Technique that he had already grasped.

He once used this technique on Lin, saw Lin's past, and found out about what happened to her when she first entered the Abyss.

In the forest of corpse pillars, he also used [Time Recollection] to observe how the Void Deity devoured the mythical creatures inside the pillars.

Three abilities, one after another.

And then finish up this battle.

But now, right before the last step, the War God UI was reminding him that using [Time Recollection] at this point would cause him injury.

Gu Qing Shan unwillingly sighed before making his decision.

This was the only chance for him to probe the monster's secret, if he gave it up, there would really be no way to win against it.

Gu Qing Shan's eyes peered straight into the vertical pupil.

[Time Recollection] activate!

A split second later — — —

The fountain, the trees, the corpses on the ground, and the entire garden vanished from Gu Qing Shan's sight.

The entire world had vanished from his vision.

The only thing his eyes could see right now was the endless empty void, other than that, nothing else.

A split second later.

The emptiness vanished.

It was replaced by darkness.

Followed by a certain voice:

『 Everything is about to be destroyed, weaklings, flee. You cannot join the final battle 』

Right after that, Gu Qing Shan saw a black streak of light.

This black streak of light gave him a very familiar impression.

Yes, this was that spirit.

——the Occultism spirit that devoured the mermaid in the garden!

The black streak of light went through everything, entered the space vortex, and began its endless escape.

At this point, it had only just gained sentience so it didn't understand anything.

But the sensation of death and destruction at its back was urging it to flee with everything it had, trying to escape as far as possible from that location.

From that point on, this black streak of light, the Occultism spirit began to drift aimlessly through the space vortex.

Whenever it felt tired, it would search for a floating corpse somewhere and rested inside the shadow of those corpses.

Whenever it felt hungry, it would eat the other monsters that drifted through the void like it was.

Most of the time, before the other party could even notice anything, the Occultism spirit had completely devoured their flesh and soul.

A very long time went by.

During this period, the Occultism spirit followed its instincts and simply ran tirelessly without pause.

——it was fleeing from its place of birth.

Many battles occurred on the way.

Most of the time, it would be able to completely curb-stomp the other party.

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But it would also occasionally lose.

Whenever that occurred, the Occultism spirit would take advantage of its speed and run away with all its strength!

The shocking and soul-stirring battles really helped open Gu Qing Shan's eyes.

These were all unseen unique forms of combat among void monsters, as well as the most memorable battles in the Occultism spirit's mind, naturally providing Gu Qing Shan with considerable benefit.

How often could a mortal witness a single battle between Deities?

And Gu Qing Shan was watching all of it.

He carefully took notice of a few battles.

These were all the battles in which the Occultism spirit ran away with everything it had.

Gu Qing Shan silently memorized those battles.

Time quickly went by.

His technique was about to come to an end.

Lines of glowing text appeared in the void of space:

[Utilizing two World Techniques at once had far surpassed the limit of which you are able to endure]

[The world you constructed has undergone a certain level of stress]

[For the next short while, you cannot use your World Techniques again, or your constructed world will collapse]

[Attention please, 30 seconds left until your World Technique concludes]

Reading through that, Gu Qing Shan swiftly moved and melted into the void of space.

There wasn't much time so he needed to arrange a few things in reality in advance.

Only the Occultism spirit remained.

『...Hm? Where is he? 』

All the Occultism spirit remembered was that right after eating, it went into thinking briefly, then found that the other person had already vanished.

The vertical pupil on the shield quickly scanned through the entire garden.

Perhaps thinking of something, the vertical pupil had the headless body fly up, break through the world barrier, and leave the garden.

It was standing in the middle of the void, observing its surroundings.

Within the endlessly extending chaotic void, there was nothing but darkness and a bit of faint light, as well as the occasional breeze.

This was the space vortex.

That's right.

The Occultism spirit even managed to observe the faint mirage of various worlds.

It clearly recalled seeing these mirages years ago around this garden.

Everything was as it was supposed to be.

—then, where did that brat run off to?

...

On the other side.

Reality.

Gu Qing Shan regained his senses.

He found himself being lifted by Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li, hovering in the empty void.

"What happened?" Gu Qing Shan asked right away.

Boss gave a short explanation: "I returned that garden to the Abyss, so there's only the void here—where's that monster?"

Gu Qing Shan replied: "It'll show up in about 20 seconds"

Boss held the Star Firefly between his hands and said: "Leave it to me, just watch over my corpse after I'm done"

"Mutually perish? No need" Gu Qing Shan told him.

He turned to Ye Fei Li: "Only a bit more than a dozen seconds left, we'll be able to get rid of it if the two of us act together"

"How is that possible!?" everyone exclaimed in shock.

Ye Fei Li regained his calm and asked: "What do we need to do?"

Gu Qing Shan quickly explained: "Listen, that monster is possessing both the dead body and dead soul as a combination of the two, using a certain technique to protect itself and ensure that it's in a state of being unkillable"

"As soon as it appears, you and I will restrain it together. You'll flay its soul, I'll kill its body and soul, then I'll finish it off!"

Ye Fei Li seriously listened, then asked: "Can you confirm where it will appear?"

"In front of me"

"Got it"

They finished their discussion.

Ye Fei Li wielded the Forgetting River Soul Flaying Hook again.

On the other hand, Gu Qing Shan wielded the Six Paths Great Mountain sword and Devil King Warden Rod in both hands.

“5 seconds left, prepare yourself”

Gu Qing Shan declared.

Ye Fei Li held his breath and entered a combative state of mind.

Gu Qing Shan also turned solemn.

For some reason, at this extremely crucial moment in time, a completely unrelated thought popped up in his mind.

The Six Paths Great Mountain sword, the Forgetting River Soul Flaying Hook, the Devil King Warden Rod...

They are the three Divine Armaments from the Huang Quan path of the Samsara.

Just the two of us, by borrowing the power of these three Divine Armaments, can surpass the difference between mortal and Deity and prepare a plan to eliminate a terrifying entity on the level of the Occultism spirit.

Then...

How strong is the actual Samsara exactly?

Chapter 1026

Three.

Two.

One.

[Parallel Dream] ended.

The Occultism spirit had just returned to the garden from the void, looking to search carefully for that insect that knew how to cook.

All of a sudden.

An ear-piercing screech resounded by its ear.

—it was Ye Fei Li’s Soul Flaying screech!

『 Oh no! 』

The Occultism spirit uttered in fright.

It wanted to resist the screech, but as it was caught completely off-guard, it was helpless to do anything at all.

The monster's soul was paralyzed for a split second.

At this exact moment, without missing a beat, a hand reached out and touched its body.

Someone lightly uttered:

“Wakey wakey”

——Gu Qing Shan, Lightning Thaumaturgy, [Dreamjolt]!

The monster was completely paralyzed.

It discovered in horror that the trees, the fountain, the grass, the flowers, everything was fading into nothingness.

The entire garden was disappearing!

Even the space vortex around it was disappearing!

The headless mermaid found itself returned to the empty void with the vertical pupil shield raised in its hand.

The vertical pupil opened wide.

What happened?

The people that I killed are somehow still alive!

The vertical pupil was trembling, but unable to move even a single bit.

If possible, it wanted to scream out loud.

That's impossible!

I clearly devoured the flesh and souls of these people.

How are they still alive!?

They stood carefully around it, watching out for its every movement.

A khopesh abruptly reached outward, touched the shield, and firmly pulled back——

“Get over here!”

Ye Fei Li shouted.

The khopesh immediately pulled a light-grey mass of flesh directly out from the pupil shield.

Gu Qing Shan kept silent and traveled to stab the Devil King Warden Rod in his hand into the grey mass of flesh.

[Soul Dispersion] activate!

The Devil King Warden Rod slightly moved and began to give off a series of chewing noises.

The grey mass of flesh was visibly shrinking.

But no one showed any expressions of joy.

This thing was too eerie.

According to what Gu Qing Shan said, this thing was actually an amalgamation of the dead's soul and flesh, not the monster's actual body.

It was merely attaching itself to this thing.

Because of that, most of its enemies assumed that killing this writhing mass meant that they had dealt with the monster, not knowing that it was merely using a technique to control this amalgamation of soul and flesh.

The true monster was always hidden away, ready to act.

Usually, this would be the chance for the Occultism spirit to retaliate and turn the tables on its enemies.

But things were different this time around.

Through his two World Techniques, Gu Qing Shan had witnessed all of its battles.

It had no chance.

Gu Qing Shan raised his Six Paths Great Mountain sword——

Secret Art, [Full Moon Slash]

A light blue crescent-shaped sword phantom flashed in the darkness.

Followed by 30 more crescents that connected to one another, forming a full moon.

The full moon perfectly encircled the mass of fused flesh and soul.

——*sha!*

The autumn water clear blue steel sword flashed and vanished.

Something seemed to have been broken in the void of space.

It was the Occultism spirit's protective technique!

Against Shannu's [Law Breaker], its protective technique was completely destroyed!

The ear-piercing screech resounded through the void all around them.

A split second later, a black shadow leapt out from the full moon, lightly streaked away and out from the group's encirclement.

『 Insect, I will never forgive you! 』

The monster was clearly wounded, its voice filled with grudge and hatred.

Boss shouted: "Don't let it escape!"

Gu Qing Shan didn't answer him.

He glanced through the War God UI, selected [War God Title] to change from the [Shen Wei General] title that increased his attack speed to [Starflame War God]

[Starflame War God] contained a Mystic-type Causality Skill!

Gu Qing Shan glanced towards the faraway void and focused on the mass of shadow that was about to move out of his range with his inner sight.

Title Skill: [Conquer], activate!

A few moments later.

The shadow had made a U-turn and was on its way back.

『 Ahahaha, you destroyed both my host's flesh and soul? That's perfect, I'm no longer bound by the God of Life's oath, I will kill you right here! 』

The shadow grunted: 『 Die, insect! 』

It shot straight at Gu Qing Shan.

The shadow was extremely fast!

When Gu Qing Shan noticed, it was already right in front of him.

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Gu Qing Shan could only mount the bare minimum level of defense at this point.

Defense...

Gu Qing Shan abruptly shouted in fury: "Die!"

In that split second, his viciousness was roused as he completely forewent defense.

He let go of the Six Paths Great Mountain sword and drew another sword from the void of space.

He thrust the sword forward—

Secret Art, [Swallow Returns]!

『 No! Why can't I enter your soul!?! 』

With a panicked scream, the shadow tried to retreat.

Struck by the intense impact, Gu Qing Shan couldn't help but take a few steps back.

He glanced through the notifications.

[You've received the protection of the Praise of the Winds of Chaotic Tribulation and Praise of the Evernight at the same time, successfully nullifying one of your opponent's attacks]

[Remaining protection: 2]

[Cooldown time: 3 days]

Gu Qing Shan sighed in relief.

Although he had prepared himself, traversing on the verge of death like that still caused him an unprecedented level of fright.

He glanced at the other party.

Having been struck by the first attack, as the shadow retreated, it was struck again by the slash manifested by [Swallow Returns] from behind.

Struck by two slashes head-on, the shadow froze completely.

『 That is... impossible... you are only an insect, my food...』

The shadow muttered in desperation and unwillingness to accept reality.

Gu Qing Shan shook his head and said: “You were born naturally stronger than any living beings, but your arrogance prevented you from doing a certain thing, which led to your outcome today”

『 What? 』

The shadow questioned.

Gu Qing Shan put the Earth sword and recalled what he saw throughout the shadow’s life before replying: “Having an infinitely long life, you only cared about eating without becoming stronger, that’s the reason you lost”

The shadow fell into silence.

No one had managed to kill it throughout these countless years.

And yet today, it lost its life in such an undignified manner in front of an insect.

It was speechless.

Its body slowly faded away, so it couldn’t say anything even if it wanted to.

It was dead.

Slain by the Earth sword’s Thaumaturgy: [Earth’s Choice].

[Earth Choice: Slay and extinguish all entities]

[The stronger the target you wish to slay, the more Soul Points Earth’s Choice will consume]

Gu Qing Shan checked his remaining Soul Points value.

Empty.

The Soul Points he obtained from killing this monster hadn’t appeared.

It seems the War God UI was trying to confirm something.

Gu Qing Shan shook his head and lightly sighed.

—intense exhaustion had struck him all at once, causing him to sigh.

From the beginning of this battle, he had used [Parallel Dream], acting, [See you once again], [Time Recollection], [Dreamjolt], [War God Title: Shen Wei General], [Crescent Slash] upgraded version [Full Moon Slash], the Devil King Warden Rod's [Soul Dispersion], the Six Paths Great Mountain sword's [Law Breaker], [War God Title: Starflame War God], his armor's Praises, Secret Art [Swallow Returns], the Earth sword's [Earth's Choice] as well as Ye Fei Li's Soul Flaying and Soul Paralysis. All to kill that monster.

In such a short period of time, he used up all his wits, means, and abilities, only to solidify victory at the very last second.

Even a person like Gu Qing Shan would feel drained after that.

Boss praised him: "If I didn't see it with my own eyes, I wouldn't have ever believed that a mortal would truly be able to slay a Deity"

He put the Star Firefly in his hand away.

Ye Fei Li slowly closed his eyes and stood still.

"What's wrong?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

"My [Chaos] UI is communicating with me, saying that since I participated in slaying a Deity, I'll soon receive the power of [Chaos] as a reward"

Saying so, Ye Fei Li's expression turned full of excitement.

Gu Qing Shan was startled.

He glanced back at the UI in front of his eyes.

Lines of glowing text were quickly scrolling through the War God UI:

[You've conducted a kill that surpassed your level]

[You killed the legendary Occultism creature: Parasite of Flesh and Soul (larvae form)]

[Although you have the identity of a God, you are still only a mortal]

[You've killed the mythical Chaos creature: Gloomy Devourer of God's Corpse, so this would be the second time you've conducted a kill that surpassed your level]

[As you've accomplished two extremely rare feats of combat, you've obtained the following chance:]

[You may have the War God UI consume your Unique Title: Enemy of Chaos (primary) in order to obtain the information regarding another Unique Title]

[Please pay close attention, the other Title contains the suffix of 'War God']

Gu Qing Shan was feeling a bit tempted.

That last line of text was a clear reminder to him, and Gu Qing Shan wasn't an idiot so he naturally understood the implications.

He couldn't help but ask in confirmation: "A Title on the same level as [Starflame War God]?"

The system didn't answer him.

Silence could be understood as tacit confirmation.

Gu Qing Shan fell into thought.

The Title Skill of [Starflame War God], [Conquer] is extremely impressive.

Any enemies targeted by this ability would be forced to attack me through their own justifications.

This was a Mystic-type ability, and also a Causality Skill that no one is immune to.

It was purely due to this Causality Skill that the monster couldn't escape.

——if I can obtain the information regarding a Title on the same level as [Starflame War God]...

With that in mind, Gu Qing Shan didn't hesitate any longer and replied: "I choose to consume the [Enemy of Chaos] title, please give me the intelligence"

Lines of glowing text appeared on the War God UI:

[Your Title: Enemy of Chaos (primary) has been consumed]

[You will obtain intelligence regarding the following Title:]

[Void War God]

Chapter 1027

The monster was now really dead.

Everyone sighed in relief.

The sudden sense of relief after extreme stress caused everyone to feel completely drained of their spirits.

Zhang Ying Hao took out a bottle of liquor, had a sip before speaking: "I'll keep watch, everyone rest up a bit first"

"Right"

Ye Fei Li replied.

He stared closely at the void of space, seemingly checking his [Soul Flaying Clown] UI for something that was pouring in.

All of a sudden, a grey flash of light appeared and enveloped Ye Fei Li.

"The power of [Chaos]" Boss muttered.

Ye Fei Li's presence continued to rise, seemingly undergoing an advancement through the aid of the power of [Chaos].

A few moments later.

The grey light all disappeared.

Ye Fei Li reappeared in front of everyone, looking a lot more spirited.

“You don’t seem that much stronger” Zhang Ying Hao teased him.

Only to hear Ye Fei Li reply: “That’s right, I exchanged a bit of my reward for quite a bit of Soul Points—
— this time, there’s going to be enough drinks for everyone”

Gu Qing Shan looked at the serious expression he had and couldn’t help but smile.

I’m glad I made an effort to communicate with him and not fight this Man Killer Fiend to the death.

This guy is a very decent person.

“Well done, my Duke, I’ll handle all of your equipment from now on”

Laura also patted Ye Fei Li on his shoulder.

“Thank you, your majesty”

Ye Fei Li smiled and handed an energy drink to Laura.

He handed one to everyone there.

Everyone took their drinks while hovering in the middle of the void.

After combat was over, there was indeed a need to replenish themselves.

Everyone slowly calmed down.

Gu Qing Shan looked around himself.

The garden had thoroughly vanished.

Within this void of space, countless images and mirages were floating and intersecting with one another, displaying countless unknown entities and worlds that aimlessly drifted about the infinite space vortex, like small bubbles that floated to the surface of an ever-expanding ocean.

Unfathomable.

Chaotic.

This place was filled with mysteries and unknown, not even the Occultism spirit who had been fleeing for its entire life had managed to discover the edge of it all.

Gu Qing Shan sighed, then suddenly recalled something.

“Ah, erm, where’s the king’s body?”

He asked.

Everyone exchanged glances.

Laura mused: "After being stabbed by that trident, I think only a layer of skin remained of him"

Ye Fei Li concurred: "Right, after that, Boss summoned the consciousness of the Abyss to take the garden away, and I haven't seen it again— perhaps it was taken by the consciousness of the Abyss?"

Boss refuted: "Definitely not, the Abyss isn't a trash collector that'll take anything"

Zhang Ying Hao pushed his sunglasses up and said: "I did pay some attention. The king's layer of skin was blown away by the void wind"

"What?" Gu Qing Shan exclaimed.

"Yeah, I saw it quite clearly, I even silently mourned for him for a split second"

Zhang Ying Hao nodded to express this confirmation.

Gu Qing Shan thought for a bit and asked: "Then do you know where the wind was blowing?"

Zhang Ying Hao replied: "You're not an amateur, why are you asking such an amateurish thing?"

Gu Qing Shan went silent.

The wind within the void was ever-changing in both direction and speed, so it was impossible to infer where that layer of skin would be blown to.

—originally, he intended to take the king into their group after having him go through a few tests.

After all, having so many Divine Skills, he'd prove to be useful in one way or another.

However, the monster they ran into this time was too terrifying, everyone's lives were hanging on a thread so not even Gu Qing Shan had the leisure to take care of his body.

The others didn't know what was going on.

And so—

It had been quite a bit of time since the king's death, so the layer of skin that was left of his body could no longer be found.

Gu Qing Shan sighed and could only give up on his original plan.

He sat down in the void, put a spirit pill in his mouth, and began to meditate.

In front of him, some lines of glowing text were being displayed on the War God UI:

[You've obtained the intelligence: Path of the Void]

[This intelligence is related to a certain event. It will only unlock once you trigger that event]

Gu Qing Shan silently asked: "Can I know what the Title Skill for [Void War God] will be?"

[No]

The War God UI replied very resolutely.

Being met with this attitude, Gu Qing Shan lost interest.

An event that he didn't know when would happen.

A Title that he didn't even know the benefits of.

—*too vague.*

Compared to that, Soul Points is more practical.

Gu Qing Shan's gaze focused on the next two lines of notification on the War God UI.

[You've slain the Parasite of Flesh and Soul (larvae form)]

[You've obtained 5,000,000 Soul Points]

The Gloomy Devourer of God's Corpse only gave 3,000,000 Soul Points.

And the Parasite of Flesh and Soul gave a whopping 5,000,000 Soul Points!

Seeing this number, Gu Qing Shan felt that his aching eye no longer hurt.

Worth it.

He put the black cloth back over his eyes and tied it up again.

—*let's just continue using my inner sight, I'm already used to it.*

"Ah, what's that?"

He pointed at a mountain-like pile of glowing treasures and asked.

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"That's Laura's seal, currently suppressing the Occultism spirit's black trident" Zhang Ying Hao replied.

Seal...

Gu Qing Shan glanced at the small mountain of artifacts again.

Even though he was already used to how Laura did things, it was still shocking to see an entire small mountain like this.

Gu Qing Shan recalled what the monster said and casually commented: "That trident seems to be a Divine Armament, but there's probably some danger"

Everyone nodded in agreement.

The king of Calming Soul Country was the most powerful Demi, and yet he was dead by merely being stabbed by this trident.

Not to mention, the trident seems to be sentient.

Boss spoke up: "That's right, none of you can actually use that weapon. While we still have some time, let me tame it"

At his signal, Laura took all of her sealing artifacts back.

The black trident appeared in front of everyone.

It gave off a sorrowful howl and trembled, almost as if ready to flee into the void.

Boss leapt forward with the Book of Prophesized Destiny in one hand and squarely caught the black trident with the other, shouting: "Halt!"

A seemingly bottomless flow of power appeared on his body.

—it seems that his power had been increased a bit after summoning the consciousness of the Abyss.

The trident's sound immediately stopped.

Boss simply hung it behind his back.

This completely stunned everyone.

"Hm? Laura, you look like you have something you want to say?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

Laura carefully looked at Boss, then said with a trembling voice: "Gu Qing Shan, y-you might not know, but Boss was actually the King of the Abyss!"

Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li both went silent.

Gu Qing Shan turned and looked at Boss.

Boss was still looking at the void of space with his back turned to them, his hands crossed behind his back as he looked up at a 45 degrees angle.

Gu Qing Shan slowly nodded and said:

"Ah..."

One word, nothing else.

Laura couldn't help but ask: "What did that 'ah' mean?"

"It means 'I got it'" Gu Qing Shan replied.

Laura opened her mouth wide, speechless.

She looked at the calm Gu Qing Shan, then at Boss who was about to lose his calm and hurriedly said: "Don't you have anything else to say?"

Gu Qing Shan casually replied: "We already know that he was some sort of big shot"

"Why?"

"When we saved him, he was fighting against the Soul Shrieker, then tamed the Demon Dragon right in front of us, even Lin listened to his orders to protect Anna. Not to mention, he knows more than both you and I, so he was naturally a person of considerable background"

Zhang Ying Hao and Ye Fei Li both paused.

That's true.

This man called Boss really isn't simple.

At this point, their gazes at Boss held a bit more respect.

Boss' lifted his chin even higher, maintaining the aura of a grand expert.

Gu Qing Shan came over and patted him on the shoulder, asking: "Hey, if you're the Abyssal King... why did you get beaten by the Soul Shrieker to the point that you looked like shit?"

Boss' posture completely crumbled, unable to stand up straight.

The aura and presence he tried to keep up completely vanished without a trace.

"If I'm shit, what are you?"

Boss glared at Gu Qing Shan.

Gu Qing Shan continued: "Me? I'm the one who picked up shit—— don't you forget, it took me a lot of effort to fish you up at the time"

"Pfft——"

Laura couldn't hold back her chuckle.

Although she wasn't sure if they were going to be beaten to death by the Abyssal King, she couldn't help herself.

Oh my god.

Gu Qing Shan, you're——

Oh no, even if I die here, I have to laugh first.

Boss simply glared at Gu Qing Shan without saying a word.

——hah.

It can't be helped.

Yes.

He did save me.

I can't actually get angry about that.

But I can't continue this topic either.

And yet, Gu Qing Shan continued with this topic.

He asked: "If you're the king of the Abyss, why are you intermingling with us for?"

Boss waved his hand dismissively, no longer keeping up his expert façade, and replied: "Weren't you also the Huang Quan Devil King of the Samsara? Identities and such are so uninteresting"

Gu Qing Shan relaxed a bit.

“Then——”

“I just wanted to heal. Ye Fei Li’s ability is extremely hard to come across, and he’s the only one who can actually help me recover”

“That’s why you joined us? So it was actually about the same as what you said when you first met us”

“Mostly, you guys seemed like an ok bunch, so I temporarily joined you, is there a problem?”

“Not at all, again, welcome”

This topic ended here.

From this one onwards, whenever they mention Boss’ identity as the Abyssal King and feel a sense of distance, they wouldn’t be able to help themselves recalling Gu Qing Shan’s words comparing him to ‘shit’.

And then——

The sense of distance would vanish.

Friendship continues.

Of course, that would be in the future.

As for right now——

“The king is already dead. From how things seemed, even if we continue forward, we wouldn’t be able to obtain anything inside the ruin. Not to mention we don’t know if we’d run into any monsters after this, so what should we do now?” Zhang Ying Hao asked.

“That’s no issue” Gu Qing Shan replied.

He raised his hand.

The king’s golden ring was right on his finger.

Chapter 1028

After Gu Qing Shan’s group ventured into the God of Life’s ruin.

Calming Soul Country.

Night had fallen.

A faint shadow appeared from the back entrance of the palace, then quickly flew towards another direction.

No one managed to discover the shadow as it went on its way.

The shadow stuck close to a complicated winding road and eventually made it to a secluded corner of the city, right outside Xuan Ya’s house.

The shadow paused briefly before heading inside.

Shiiiiii—

An invisible formation abruptly appeared and pushed the shadow back.

「 How careful, you actually arranged a cultivator's formation around your own home for protection 」

「 However, you think you can stop me with only this much? 」

The shadow muttered, then abruptly sped up and charged forward again.

Bam!

Without anyone sensing what means he used, the formation shattered.

If Gu Qing Shan was still inside Calming Soul Country, he could immediately notice the formation shattering.

And he could instantly arrive.

However, as he was stuck inside the ruin, there was no way for him to sense anything happening outside.

The shadow slowly walked forward step by step, then briefly flashed and reappeared inside the house.

「 It is still exactly the same... Xuan Ya, have you been waiting for my return? 」

The shadow sighed.

He walked up to the child's cradle and undid his camouflage to reveal his true face.

He was the handsome, tall prince!

The prince stared closely at the sleeping child and spoke in a gentle voice: 「 Xuan Ya, take a look. Can you see how well our child has grown, his visage and eyebrows are so familiar to you 」

However, the prince didn't know that Xuan Ya's wandering soul was standing exactly in front of him, across the cradle.

The soul displayed a sorrowful expression, seemingly having seen through something.

The prince continued: 「 Xuan Ya, this is a good child, I've always liked him a lot. In truth, I've always wanted to relieve you of your identity as a guardian, but regretfully, I later found out that this was a soul-bound covenant, and I'm helpless in changing it 」

「 Hah, yes, I'm helpless to change this... 」

Saying so, the prince took out a luxurious dagger engraved with gems of many colors from his sleeves.

「 A child born through the bloodline of a royal family member and a guardian, if they ever make it past three years old, will surely absorb the power of two royal family members 」

「 The only members left of the royal family are Father and myself 」

「 Xuan Ya, do you know what it means to lose one's power during this era? 」

「 You surely do, I don't want to become crippled 」

Hearing that, Xuan Ya's wandering soul couldn't contain herself and tried to say something, a lot of something, in fact.

But how could the words of a wandering soul reach a living person?

And Ye Fei Li wasn't here.

So the prince naturally heard none of it.

However, he seemed to have thought of something.

——perhaps it was the unresolved issue between himself and Xuan Ya.

Watching his child, the prince muttered in a low voice: 「 That's right, I shouldn't have gotten so close with you, and definitely shouldn't have conceived this child with you 」

「 But then, I had already fallen in love with you 」

His voice became emotional: 「 As excellent of a guardian as you were, even Father felt a sense of pressure, it was him who permitted me to come close to you 」

「 I have no regrets—— because you have truly become mine—— even if you are no longer of this world, even if your child is dead, that fact would never change 」

「 Forgive me 」

Saying so, the prince exuded intense killing intent.

He raised his dagger and suddenly thrust it towards the sleeping child!

Kih——

The long dagger was blocked by a layer of light.

The light protected the child.

「 This is—— 」

Before the prince realized what happened, the covenant had already been triggered.

The covenant between the royal family and the Blade Edge Pledge!

「 Aaaaaa! 」

The prince screamed in horror and pain.

「 No! How could you be a person of the Blade Edge Pledge!? You're only three years old, you can't possibly sign a covenant on your own accord! 」

The prince shouted in despair.

He had gone against their covenant on his own accord and tried to kill a member of the Blade Edge Pledge.

Earlier, both Laura and Boss had double-checked this covenant and confirmed that it was a very strict one without any loopholes.

And anyone who went against it would immediately lose their life!

The prince collapsed to his knees, his mouth opened wide as if someone was clutching his throat, unable to utter a single word.

The light that protected the child slowly expanded to envelop him as well.

Within the light, the prince turned into a pile of bones.

The light didn't fade away.

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The bones slowly continued to be eaten away until it was completely gone.

The prince was dead.

The child remained safe.

From now on, this young child would be the only royal family member in the entirety of Calming Soul Country.

Standing next to her child, Xuan Ya stood still and watched the prince until he was thoroughly dead.

She turned away, wiping the tears from the corner of her eyes.

...

At another location.

Looking at the golden ring on Gu Qing Shan's hand, Zhang Ying Hao was a bit confused: "It wouldn't do us any good with just the ring. Without the king's memories, we wouldn't be able to tell if we ran into any special locations"

Gu Qing Shan smiled.

"Do you think that there's a technique that would allow every member of the royal family to hold a piece of sealed memory in their minds since birth?"

Hearing that, Zhang Ying Hao hesitated to answer.

After so many years, the weapons, treasures, and even servants that the God of Life left behind had been rendered completely useless.

If that was the case, how could a technique cast by a Deity over a hundred million years ago persist and enable the pieces of unsealed memory to remain within the minds of every royal family member after all this time?

This was a bit far-fetched.

Gu Qing Shan continued: "This ring was the key to restraining the Occultism spirit, when I wore it, the Occultism spirit couldn't attack me at all—— so you can take a guess about what it's capable of"

"Do you mean that..."

"Yup, it had always been this ring that the king wore from the very start"

Gu Qing Shan replied.

In his vision, lines of glowing text had already appeared for a long while:

[God of Life's Ring of Memories]

[This ring contains the information left by the God of Life, only by arriving at the correct locations would the information inside be triggered and provided]

Gu Qing Shan skimmed through it, then looked at the rest of them.

But none of them showed any interest.

Gu Qing Shan was surprised: "What kind of expression is that? Aren't you interested in the ruin of a Deity?"

Ye Fei Li replied: "Well, how could any leftover treasures and such excite us anymore?"

"Hm? What do you mean?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

"We have her majesty, Laura"

"...That's true" Gu Qing Shan nodded and continued: "And in reality, we already signed a covenant with the king, we would help him explore the ruins in exchange for his help fighting against the four Deities, and the four fragments of the Card"

"Because of that, we can't take anything inside this ruin anyways. Right now, we can only follow the information of the ring to reach the deepest chamber of the ruin and teleport back"

Everyone nodded.

Laura appeared excited:

"That's great, this is a treasure trove leftover from a hundred million years ago, even if we can't take anything, it would still be quite an experience checking it out"

Boss asked: "However, before that, what should we do with this ring after we get out?"

"Return it to a descendant of the God of Life" Gu Qing Shan replied.

At this point, Zhang Ying Hao seemed to have thought of something and displayed a hesitant expression.

"What's with you?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

"My black cat can do more than just find the way to the deepest chamber of the ruin, we can actually find the direction to another place" Zhang Ying Hao replied.

“Such as?”

“Such as a different route to return”

“...Why do we need to take another route?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

Zhang Ying Hao cleared his throat and explained: “In the forest of corpse pillars, we ran into a Void Deity; in this garden, we met an Occultism spirit, who knows what else we would run into next? If we need risking our lives like this, we’ll really lose them”

Everyone else nodded in agreement.

Gu Qing Shan contemplated for a while before asking: “Boss, what do you think?”

Boss replied: “I’ll just say one thing. It is very rare for portions of the Abyss to separate from it. Just now, when I returned the garden to the Abyss, I obtained a Star Firefly, so if we can provide even more portions of the Abyss, we’d gain more benefits”

“What’s a Star Firefly?” Gu Qing Shan asked.

Boss explained it all again.

Just like Ye Fei Li and the rest from before, Gu Qing Shan also exclaimed in shock.

He then recalled something and asked: “That’s right, Boss, I’ve always had a certain question that I can’t find the answer to. Now that you’re here, I want to ask you about it”

“Go ahead”

“I’ve always assumed that the Eternal Abyss was a location, but from what I’ve learnt recently, I feel like it might actually be a type of advanced life form instead, so what exactly is it?”

After thinking deeply about it, Boss replied: “I can’t answer that, because entities that don’t belong to the Abyss cannot be allowed to learn the truth of the Abyss, unless—”

“Unless what?”

“Unless you draw the attention of the Abyss, manage to pass its test, become a part of it, and obtain a unique Abyssal form of your own”

“Only then would you be qualified to learn the truth of the Abyss”

Boss continued: “Don’t think of this as an easy task. Even after several ten thousand years, the Demon Dragon still hasn’t managed to obtain an Abyssal form— it could only retain its original form”

Hearing that, Gu Qing Shan recalled something Lin told him a while ago.

“Right, Lin once told me that the Abyss is observing me”

Gu Qing Shan commented.

The smile on Boss’ face vanished completely as he appeared very surprised.

“Is that really what she said?”

Chapter 1029

“Did she really say that?”

“She did”

Boss spoke in contemplation: “If that’s the truth, then things are quite interesting indeed...”

“How so?”

“It’s hard to say for now, but if you have drawn the attention of the Abyss, I suggest that we continue heading further into the ruin”

“Is there a reason?”

“This ruin itself was a portion that the Seven Deities detached from the Abyss, which means we only need to call upon the will of the Abyss for it to recall this portion of itself”

Boss continued to explain: “As the Apocalypse of the parallel world is consuming the Abyss; if we are able to help the Abyss regain portions of itself at this crucial point in time, we’d be greatly aiding it. The consciousness of the Abyss will surely descend once more and observe you”

“Observe me once again...” Gu Qing Shan chuckled: “Meeting once to get acquainted, twice to grow closer? Are you saying that the Abyss would assimilate it into itself just because I helped it out?”

Boss replied: “Not necessarily, but you should trust me, this is definitely a venture with endless benefits”

Gu Qing Shan asked: “Benefits? You mean like the Star Firefly you received?”

“Exactly” Boss’ gaze scanned through everyone here and spoke very seriously: “For all of us here, this will be beneficial”

Gu Qing Shan fell silent.

Everyone fell into contemplation.

Since they had already run into a Void Deity and an Occultism spirit, there was no telling what other kind of beings they’d run into next.

To continue heading deeper or not, this was a tough question as it was related to everyone’s survival.

Ye Fei Li suddenly spoke up: “Currently, we’re all too weak. If we can somehow obtain great power from doing this as feedback, then I think it’s worth our risk”

Zhang Ying Hao thought for a bit and also commented: “We can take a look, but we need to guarantee our safety before anything else”

Saying so, everyone turned to Laura.

— not even the Void Deity managed to discover Laura.

Her abilities when it came to concealment had been confirmed in a trustworthy manner.

Laura triumphantly said: “You guys handle the fighting; this empress shall handle the sneaking around”

Gu Qing Shan followed up: "Then we're going to keep going. Ying Hao, have your cat lead us; I'll use the ring to open the path; Fei Li can hear the sound of all things, so you're responsible for staying on guard of our surroundings; Laura will stay in the middle of everyone, ready to spring her umbrella at any time; Boss and I will be constantly ready for battle"

""Got it""

Everyone replied in unison.

The black cat laid on top of the umbrella, gazing around the void of space, then pointed his paw in a certain direction.

Meow!

"That way" Zhang Ying Hao said.

The group started to fly, slightly heading upwards in the space vortex.

Several dozen minutes later.

Meow meow meow!

The black cat softly cried out.

Zhang Ying Hao translated: "He said that we're at the right place, but he doesn't know where to enter"

"Wait a minute" Gu Qing Shan stepped forward and slowly raised his hand towards the void.

The golden ring began to exude a faint glow.

Gu Qing Shan closed his eyes to receive the information transmitted by the ring.

Boss also stepped forward, drawing the trident from his back, and wielded it in his hand while cautiously observing their surroundings.

A few moments later.

Gu Qing Shan opened his eyes: "I know the way. We need a unique incantation"

He then began to chant an incantation towards the void of space.

The void parted outwards.

A tattered, dusty, and moldy path made of rocks appeared in front of everyone.

"Is this a portion of the Abyss?" Gu Qing Shan asked in a whisper.

"That's right, they used the body of the Abyss to create this passage" Boss said emotionally: "Those Deities were quite the experts at both stealing and hiding things that belonged to others"

"Let's go in"

Everyone entered the passage.

The void of space slowly closed up behind them.

No one else would be able to discover his insignificant hidden path within the vast and boundless space vortex.

Plip

Plip

Other than the faint sound of water, the passage was completely silent.

The long years filled this place with a clear musty stench, forcing everyone to hold their breaths.

Gu Qing Shan released his inner sight to search further into the passage.

There weren't any mechanisms or items in their path.

Only a single casket of stone that was covered in green vines rested at the very end of the passage.

Gu Qing Shan stopped and touched the ring in his hand.

No reaction.

Seems like the ring will only transmit new information when we approach that casket.

"Let's move on" Zhang Ying Hao said.

"Wait a minute"

Ye Fei Li suddenly stopped them.

"What's the matter?" Boss asked.

"Hm... I hear the sound of crying, at the very end of the passage" Ye Fei Li told them.

"The end of the passage? There is indeed a casket there, but I can't hear any sounds" Gu Qing Shan spoke up.

Everyone exchanged glances.

"Can you hear anything?"

"No, what about you?"

"I can't either"

"Which means, only Ye Fei Li can hear it"

"If that's the case..."

Everyone slowly understood.

It was clear...

What Ye Fei Li heard was the sound of a crying ghost.

This place has already been sealed for over a hundred million years.

What kind of entity would that crying ghost be?

Laura shrunk in fright, holding tightly onto her umbrella and clutched Gu Qing Shan's sleeve tightly.

"Gu Qing Shan, I'm a bit scared..." she muttered.

"It will be fine. The worst thing that'll happen is another battle, and you don't need to participate" Gu Qing Shan consoled her.

Zhang Ying Hao thought for a bit, then drew a Card.

He tossed the Card out.

The Card turned into a cloud of white fog.

Then manifested as a grey old tiger in front of the group.

The old tiger opened its deep green eyes and looked around the dark passage.

「 Hm? Zhang Ying Hao, where are you? 」 the tiger asked in a low voice.

Zhang Ying Hao's voice came from the void of space: "I'm here"

The old tiger turned to the direction of his voice and asked:

「 What did you call me here for? 」

"There seems to be a wandering soul ahead, please help us take a look at what its ability is"

「 Very well, but since this place is giving me an extreme sense of unease, I'll leave right away after I use my ability 」

"Hm, if you would please"

The old tiger nodded in satisfaction.

It turned around, staring far into the silent passage with its deep green eyes and silently shouted: 「 Ghosts! 」

Two corpses dressed in tattered robes manifested on either side of the tiger.

One of the corpses wielded a large blade.

The other corpse wielded a heavy metal mace.

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「 Go to the end of the passage, kill what you see 」 the old tiger ordered.

Receiving their orders, the two corpses slowly made their way towards the end of the passage.

The old tiger slightly nodded to Zhang Ying Hao, turned back into white fog, then vanished from the passage.

Not too long later.

The two corpses made their way to the end of the passage.

They stood in front of the casket, raised their weapons, and were about to attack——

When the vines that wrapped around the casket abruptly moved.

A green afterimage appeared.

The two corpses vanished without a trace.

Their weapons fell to the ground and were grabbed by the vines. Like a piece of ice in the middle of a hot summer day, they quickly melted and disappeared.

Everything happened in just a few moments.

Everything returned to how it was before as if nothing had transpired, both the corpses and their weapons seemed to have completely disappeared.

“Quite troublesome” Boss commented as he watched what happened from his Book of Prophesized Destiny.

“Hm, quite troublesome indeed” Gu Qing Shan agreed.

They clearly saw what happened just now, the vines were able to consume the two corpses as well as their weapons in the blink of an eye.

It was quite unusual to run into fellows that could eat anything, but once you did, their preferred unit of food would usually be ‘worlds’.

Monsters like this were always frighteningly tough to fight against.

While the two of them were thinking, they noticed something else happening at the end of the passage.

Two skeletons manifested in front of the casket.

They turned around and started to make their way towards their group.

“Not only can it consume its enemy, but it can also reanimate and use them as servants” Gu Qing Shan commented.

“Indeed, this has gotten even more troublesome, because it’s impossible to tell what it had eaten before” Boss also scowled.

“I’m scared that it might have consumed the corpse of a Deity” Gu Qing Shan added.

The two of them fell silent.

The skeletons were slowly moving forward in the passage.

They were looking left and right, trying to observe everything in the passage.

Quite obviously, the monster released them in order to check the situation of the passage.

“What now? Quickly make a decision” Zhang Ying Hao said.

Gu Qing Shan paused for a second.

“Boss, how long do you need to return this place to the Abyss?” he asked.

“A bit more than a dozen seconds, what about it?” Boss asked in return.

“Begin now” Gu Qing Shan said.

Boss froze briefly, then suddenly realized.

That’s right.

The monster can’t see or detect them at all.

The fact that it sent two skeletons to check the situation proved this to be true.

And according to the covenant, our group can’t take any items from the ruin——

Then...

Why do we need to fight it?

We can simply dedicate this entire passage to the Eternal Abyss.

As for the monster——

It wouldn’t be able to do anything but would be forced to find a new hideout within the space vortex.

“But I need over a dozen seconds to finish, what if the monster unleashed an area of effect attack?” Boss asked.

Gu Qing Shan drew the Earth sword and replied: “Leave it to me”

I have a few million Soul Points right now.

No matter what kind of attack the other party unleashes, I should be able to hold it back for a few dozen seconds.

Boss then immediately knelt on one knee, pressed one hand against the ground, and shouted: “Consciousness, descend!”

Oom——

The entire passage began to tremble intensely.

Noticing this, the two skeletons hurriedly sped up.

They were now flying in the passage.

Gu Qing Shan silently evaluated the situation.

They’ll probably need 7-8 seconds more to reach this place.

Let’s wait a bit.

He lowered his sword and silently waited.

7 seconds later.

The figures of the two skeletons could now be seen in the darkness of the passage.

Boss still had his hand pressed on the ground to call upon the consciousness of the Abyss.

“Don’t make any sudden movements, leave it to me”

Gu Qing Shan informed everyone else.

He silently watched the skeletons until they were about half a meter away from the group.

Gu Qing Shan raised his sword and lightly swung.

The two skeletons were erased by the Earth sword.

Immediately, the casket at the end of the passage sent out countless green vines that filled the entire passage, heading towards Gu Qing Shan’s group at a speed that far surpassed the skeletons.

Three seconds.

Gu Qing Shan silently counted.

Three more seconds until they reach this place.

He raised the Earth sword in front of himself and muttered: “Together now”

「 Got it 」 the Earth sword replied.

Gu Qing Shan triggered his sword seal.

Secret Art, [Torrent].

Earth sword, [Earth’s Choice].

Intense Lightning-infused sword phantoms flickered and flowed like a tsunami against the end of the passage.

Boundlessly flowing sword phantoms.

Countless writhing vines.

They clashed against one another at the center of the passage.

Hoh---

The vines were slowly being overwhelmed by the flickering sword phantoms.

The sword phantoms continued to flow towards the end of the passage and only completely faded away as they reached the casket.

Ye Fei Li abruptly covered his eyes.

“It’s screeching in anger. It’s going to attack with its full power” Ye Fei Li reminded them.

“Ignore it, it’s all over”

Saying so, Gu Qing Shan put the Earth sword away.

Boss also pulled his hand away from the ground and followed up: "That's right, there's no need to risk our lives in a fight, it's done"

As soon as he said that, the entire passage vanished without a trace.

Everyone reappeared within the space vortex.

Laura kept her umbrella opened and flew with everyone in another direction, while the casket covered in vines simply fell downwards into the space vortex.

"From the looks of things, it was quite heavy" Zhang Ying Hao commented.

"I hope it'll find a new home soon" Ye Fei Li also said.

At this point, Boss' Book of Prophesized Destiny abruptly flew up by itself and quickly flipped through its pages.

"What are you doing?" Gu Qing Shan asked.

"It's not me. It's the consciousness of the Abyss, I think it has something to tell us" Boss replied.

Everyone looked at the Book of Prophesized Destiny together.

Only to see Anna and Lin being displayed in the pages of the book.

Chapter 1030

The Book of Prophesized Destiny flipped open.

Everything that had happened to Anna and Lin was quickly displayed for everyone to observe.

They continued forward through a sea of flowers, finally discovered a flower with 36 petals, and entered the final site of inheritance for the God of Death.

—on Gu Qing Shan's side, the king had used his scepter to strike the void of space until he found the path heading into the God of Life's ruin.

While Anna and Lin discovered the final site of inheritance for the God of Death within a field of flowers full of vitality.

There was life hidden within the void.

And there was death within vitality.

A Deity's act always hides implications that others cannot detect.

—Even if the Deities were no longer of this world.

Gu Qing Shan's group carefully watched Anna and Lin's side, only to see that after countless years, the God of Death's site of inheritance had been kept relatively intact. For the most part, it wasn't like the God of Life's ruin where countless void monsters had taken over.

However, since it was still a secret location created from the body of the Abyss, in the time period of over a hundred million years, it had given birth to many unique entities.

Lin continued to protect Anna from these creatures throughout the entire journey until finally, they reached the God of Death's site of inheritance.

It was a jet-black mountain.

At this point, Lin had received considerable injuries.

And Anna had exhausted all of her strength.

They had apparently sensed something, as they didn't rest for very long until they began to climb that black mountain.

The Book of Prophesized Destiny flipped over to the next page to display another scene.

A monster was flying through the void of space.

It had a huge gaping grey maw with a pair of long whiskers on both sides, with a human face at the end of each strand. Its body consisted of countless corpses stuck together, its body slithering nonstop like a snake.

Human hands grew from both sides of its body, several thousands of them, that were constantly moving about to stabilize its body.

The monster roared and wiggled, but was helpless to fight the momentum acting on it.

Until it crashed into a sea of flowers and sunk into the ground.

After wiggling for a while, it finally flipped itself over and looked around at this new location it found itself in.

Soon enough, it found that unique flower.

The monster began to attempt opening the world inside the flower.

A line of text appeared on the book:

[This Void Deity will be able to enter the world of the God of Death's flower in 20 minutes]

Gu Qing Shan: "..."

Zhang Ying Hao: "..."

Boss contemplated: "If that's how it is, the God of Life's ruin and the God of Death's site of inheritance should be quite close to one another"

Everyone thought a bit and nodded in agreement.

Laura glanced at the looks on Gu Qing Shan's and Zhang Ying Hao's faces before commenting: "This seems to be the result of a certain someone saying to 'fire', and another certain someone following it..."

Gu Qing Shan and Zhang Ying Hao both facepalmed.

At the time, they only wanted to send the monster flying so that it wouldn't enter the garden with them.

Who knew it would be sent flying all the way to the neighboring God of Death's place?

There was no way for anyone to predict this, who could be blamed?

The Book of Prophesized Destiny flipped over to the next page.

Lines of text began to appear on the book:

[Due to regaining portions of its body, the Eternal Abyss' power had grown]

[The Apocalypse of the parallel world had discovered this change and found its source]

[Yes, the ruins of the God of Life and God of Death have been exposed]

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[The Apocalypse of the parallel world had begun to send forces towards the God of Death's site of inheritance and the God of Life's ruin]

[The force of the Apocalypse will be enough to cause the complete destruction of both locations.
Estimated time of arrival: 19 minutes]

Everyone couldn't help but exchange glances when they read up to this point.

Gu Qing Shan asked: "Boss, why did the Abyss suddenly send us this information?"

Boss didn't say anything and simply pointed at the Book of Prophesized Destiny again.

More text appeared in the book:

[The Eternal Abyss has predicted the outcome of death for you and the girls, at the same time found the only path to survival for both parties]

[The Eternal Abyss had once more created a ring of vow for Lin. By borrowing the power of the Book of Prophesized Destiny, this ring shall be transported straight to your location]

[Following that, the Abyss can only transport one of you to the God of Death's ruin. One of you must be chosen to bring the ring of vow to Lin]

[Attention, you must move on both paths. One person shall deliver the ring, while the others shall follow the Abyssal King to the deepest chamber of the God of Life's ruin—— that location is safe. Once there, you must summon the power of the Abyss to help you fight against the forces of the Apocalypse as well as returning a lost portion of the Abyss to it]

[There is not much time, for the sake of survival, you must immediately take action!]

After the text fully manifested, they swiftly faded away from the Book of Prophesized Destiny.

Within the boundless void of darkness, a pillar of light abruptly arrived from afar and struck the Book of Prophesized Destiny.

The Book of Prophesized Destiny was enveloped by the light and started to tremble.

“What’s going on?” Ye Fei Li asked.

Boss explained: “The Eternal Abyss is currently sending that ring through spatial warp”

As soon as he said so, the light on the Book of Prophesized Destiny became brighter.

A ring with a black spider carved on it silently sat on the Book of Prophesized Destiny.

Lin’s ring of vow.

Boss looked over at everyone else and said: “I have to remain to call upon the power of the Abyss at the deepest chamber of the ruin, which one of you will deliver the ring?”

Gu Qing Shan waved his hand to take the ring.

The bright light shifted from the Book of Prophesized Destiny to his body.

“I’ll do it” he looked at Boss and said.

Boss nodded.

As Laura walked up and was about to say something, Gu Qing Shan removed the king’s golden ring and put it into her hand.

Gu Qing Shan smiled and said: “Laura, your ability will surely be able to take everyone to the end of this ruin. Didn’t you say you wanted to take a look at the treasures of this ruin? Go ahead”

Laura hurriedly spoke up: “But then, you—”

Gu Qing Shan waved his hand to signal her to listen to him.

“The situation on the girls’ side is both dangerous and complicated. You don’t know how to fight, so if you run into an enemy with an area of effect attack, you’d run into danger as well”

“Go, bring everyone to the last chamber of this ruin, only then can we both escape and regroup again”

Laura bit her lip, swallowed back the words she wanted to say before scoffing:

“Gu Qing Shan, don’t you dare lose your life, otherwise, I’d have to think of a way to find your soul”

Surrounding by the intense light, Gu Qing Shan smiled and softly told her: “Don’t worry”

Boom— — —

The light enveloped him fully and shot far away, swiftly traversing a long distance in just the blink of an eye.

In just a breath’s worth of time, the light had completely vanished into the space vortex and could no longer be seen.

Laura stared blankly at the faraway silent darkness, unable to say anything.

Boss told her: “Don’t worry, that guy is slyer than any devil and is the strongest one among us. If he can’t make it, none of us will be able to”

Laura put the golden ring on her finger and muttered to herself: "Right, if he can't do it, then no one would be able to—- rather than worrying about him, we should focus on our job, lest he would have to worry about us instead"

"Ahaha, that's more like it. Then, let us move forward!"

"Let's go!"