

Emperor 1411

[Chapter 1411: Rampant Rudeness](#)

Xiaoxiao wanted to laugh at this charming spirit's description because it was her bandit appearance. Of course, she managed to restrain herself.

She solemnly asked: "What about this treat?"

The charming spirit immediately turned serious and coldly uttered: "You don't need to ask more. If you see it, report its location to our Spirit Abyss at once for a reward."

His attitude made the whole thing sound very forceful and unlike a type of reward. This was understandable. Who was the strongest in Godhalt? It was his lineage, the Spirit Abyss.

More amazingly, the disciples from the Spirit Abyss were completely unsuppressed in Godhalt. Thus, this was their world! As for the reason why they were spared from the suppression, this remained a secret even until now. The Spirit Abyss would never tell an outsider. One could only speculate that this might have something to do with their bloodline.

There were many charming spirit lineages in Heaven Spirit. However, not too many people would dare to claim that they had the oldest bloodline other than the Spirit Abyss. They even believed that they were the origin of the entire race.

Of course, the majority of the other charming spirit lineages rejected this notion. They would never agree that the Spirit Abyss was the source of their race. Alas, numerous charming spirits did accept that the abyss was the oldest lineage.

Perhaps this was the reason why Godhalt didn't suppress them and allowed their disciples to be unbridled across this land. No matter how strong one might be, there was no escaping the suppression, so they might require help from the abyss.

The Spirit Abyss might have limited influence in the other parts of the world, but they were the tyrants in Godhalt because of this. All the other sects and experts would have to give them some sensibility.

Of course, Ye Xiaoxiao didn't think so. As the favorite daughter of the Golden Isle, she simply couldn't lower her head to a disciple from the abyss.

She was amused at the start, but after seeing the disciple's outrageous attitude, her expression dimmed as she coldly uttered: "Why must we report to your Spirit Abyss?"

She had robbed a few disciples from the abyss, infuriating the entire sect. Who would dare to rob them in Godhalt? If dragons were here, they must coil; if tigers arrived, they must lie down! But now, someone dared to loom over their heads like this? How could the abyss not be angered?

From then on, the master of the abyss gave the order for all disciples outside to search for this treat. Moreover, any visiting cultivator upon finding the location of this person must report to the abyss as well for considerable rewards.

"Why?" This disciple's expression turned fierce as he declared: "Those who do not report are accomplices and will be subjected to our punishment!"

This disciple didn't know Ye Xiaoxiao, but that wasn't important. They had grown used to being the boss at Godhalt, so it didn't matter who was visiting. All of these newcomers must tuck their tails obediently at Godhalt!

"Such a big tone." Xiaoxiao felt angry. This young lady has never been afraid of anyone, so she sneered: "Your abyss thinks it can punish whoever they want?"

"You got it! In Godhalt, we make the decisions. Whoever doesn't listen is our enemy!" The disciple didn't give an inch and fiercely spoke with a cold glare: "It looks like the two of you must be that treant's accomplices. Will you submit or do I have to force you?"

Ye Xiaoxiao found this astonishing. She had met many unreasonable people, but this disciple was simply outrageous.

"Who says we are that treant's accomplices?!" She retorted with an angry expression.

The disciple acted imperiously and glared at her: "Little girl, this must be your first time at Godhalt. Here, our abyss' orders are unquestionable. If I say you are their accomplice, then it's a fact!"

"How tyrannical!" She snorted with rising rage.

On the other hand, Li Qiye was still nonchalant while standing there. He leisurely smiled and said: "Little girl, didn't you say you wanted to see how a withered transforms?"

This disciple had been in Godhalt for a long time, so he immediately understood the implications. With a greatly changed expression, he ruthlessly said: "You ignorant fool, you actually dare to run your mouth? I will enjoy teaching you two a lesson. Let's start by breaking your legs." Having said that, he grasped towards Li Qiye.

This disciple was full of contempt towards these two and treated them as if they were nothing. In his eyes, Li Qiye couldn't be any more ordinary while Xiaoxiao was only a little girl that couldn't reach the apex.

In fact, even if these two were strong, they would be under the suppression of Godhalt, allowing the abyss' disciples to slay them easily.

However, time seemed to have skipped several seconds after this disciple attacked. He didn't even touch Li Qiye's sleeve before being held by the neck in the air. He couldn't move at all and had trouble breathing as his face reddened.

Li Qiye insipidly said: "I was going to bring the brat to see a withered's transformation, but this is perfect since you have come along."

The disciple didn't expect to have kicked an iron wall. He became both angry and frightened, yet he still resoundingly spoke: "You, if you two dare to touch a hair of mine, our, our Spirit Abyss will definitely not let this go! Don't even think about leaving Godhalt alive—"

"Crack!" He had yet to finish his spiel before his neck was wrung by Li Qiye, breathing his last breath.

His eyes widened in disbelief. Not even in his dreams did he think that someone would actually dare to kill an abyss' disciple on Godhalt and oppose their sect.

“Spirit Abyss?” Li Qiye chuckled: “It is better to start acting smart or prepare to take out your full arsenal to even stand a chance at fighting me.”

This disciple died a blind death. He simply didn’t know the type of existence he had just provoked.

“Okay, ready to watch the transformation?” Li Qiye smiled.

“Of course! How do they do it?” Xiaoxiao didn’t mind offending the Spirit Abyss either. Due to the disciple’s attitude, she would have taught him a lesson if Li Qiye didn’t.

“This place is very close to the withered’s village, so I’m sure there are seeds around.” Li Qiye looked around then casually threw a corpse on the ground and smiled: “Wait and watch, something fun will come soon.” He pulled Xiaoxiao to one side.

The instant the body touched the ground, one could hear a strange noise.

“It looks like there are a lot of seeds here.” He waited with amusement while speaking to Xiaoxiao: “Watch carefully, especially the corpse’s forehead.”

She held her breath and carefully observed the mentioned location.

“Pop!” A very faint sound came about like a bean maturing with its shell cracked. A seed jumped out of the bean but made virtually no sound. One wouldn’t be able to hear it if they weren’t carefully waiting for it.

This seed jumped straight into the spot between the eyebrows of the corpse. It was incredibly small like a sesame seed which was why a keen observation was necessary. In a split second, this seed drilled into the forehead and disappeared.

After noticing the lack of change as time passed, Xiaoxiao asked: “This is it?”

He whispered: “Shh, be patient.”

The body actually moved a bit after he spoke. In the beginning, the fingers were slightly twitching. Next, the entire body trembled like someone having an epileptic seizure. The twitching became even more violently as if this was a grievously-ill person.

Xiaoxiao found this a bit difficult to believe. If it wasn’t for her seeing Li Qiye crush the person to death earlier, she would have thought that he was still savable at this moment.

In the end, the body arched up high and shaped itself like a bow with the chest pointing upward.

[Chapter 1412: Withereds Transformation](#)

Others would fear that this body would break its spine from the current arching posture.

“Crack!” Next was a burst of cracking sounds. However, it wasn’t the eerie breaking of bones, it sounded like they were loosening by the joints.

After a wave of loosening clicks like the frying of beans, the body that was lying on the ground actually started crawling.

Ye Xiaoxiao almost screamed after seeing this dead body suddenly start to crawl. The more timid crowd would definitely be scared out of their minds.

This wasn't a corpse monster but a type of resurrection! The dead disciple from the abyss actually came back to life. His eyes opened and looked just like a living person.

Xiaoxiao admitted: "This is a little scary." Even though she had heard stories about the withered, this was her first time seeing the transformation process.

"Did it actually come back to life?" She asked Li Qiye next to her, not daring to believe this scene.

"Look at his eyes." He answered: "This will tell you the answer. The eyes are the windows to the soul, a reflection of the mind."

With this reminder, Xiaoxiao carefully looked at this withered's eyes. In the beginning, she failed to notice anything, but it was only a matter of time before the incongruent signs were made clear.

Its pupils were different; a leafy-green shade was combined with a dry yellow resulting in a strange scene. More importantly, one would find that these eyes were like ashes with no signs of vitality, as if there was no hope or life.

"Is it still dead?" Ye Xiaoxiao felt that although this disciple had turned into a withered, it still didn't look like a living person.

"That would depend on how you define life and death." Li Qiye smiled and elaborated: "For the disciple himself, he's definitely dead. However, the new withered is alive. Even though its eyes are void of any life, the longer it roots itself in this body, it will be able to light up the body's vitality and the eyes will be filled with life again."

He added: "Look, don't you see a little bit of life and hope there right now?"

Xiaoxiao glanced over again. Sure enough, behind the ashen eyes was a sliver of life. This spark of vitality seemed insignificant, like a small tree in the middle of a desert. However, it was able to light up the eyes and brought about hope.

At this time, the withered was sitting on the ground and seemed to be both confused and curious. It looked around everywhere as if it was it had just come to this world.

Li Qiye told Xiaoxiao: "It's beginning to change."

At this time, a sizzling voice came about. The withered's body began to turn into wood at certain body parts. Perhaps it was a process to grow.

For example, bark seemed to be growing in several locations on its arms. At the same time, branches forked out of the muscles. It was quite bizarre to see a tree grow from a living being. Some would feel creeped out by this strange, parasitic process.

Ye Xiaoxiao had to ask: "Could it be that those who die at the Divine Tree Ridge turn into these withered?"

“You can put it that way. If it isn’t a very dangerous location, then one will only turn into withered after death. However, if it is indeed a dangerous place, then this might not necessarily be the case. For example, if you are slightly injured and your blood drips onto a seed, then this seed will begin a hunt as if it was your shadow. It could dig into your forehead at any moment and turn you into a withered.”

“In the even more perilous places deeper in the ridge, these seeds could attempt to transform you even if your body is perfectly fine and quite strong. At a particular level, they could steal your body at any given time.” He finished with a grin on his face.

“Forcibly drill into the forehead?” She felt a tingling sensation on the back of her neck.

He quipped: “Oh? Are you scared now? It’s not too late to run back home if you are.”

“Hmph, stop using your dog eyes to look down on others, who says I’m afraid?!” She immediately glared at him: “I’m not afraid of the heaven or the earth!”

Li Qiye laughed. His appearance truly infuriated her, prompting a barrage of punches.

She stopped a bit after and turned to look at the confused withered: “Just what is this seed? Why does it take over people’s bodies?”

Li Qiye explained: “There are many different theories about these seeds. Of course, the specifics aren’t important. The crux of the issue is that it wishes to reproduce and survive from generation to generation.”

“Reproduce? Isn’t this incredibly simple? It can grow just like trees, doesn’t that count too? Don’t trees use seeds to pass on their progeny?”

He smiled and explained: “That’s not the same. A tree is still only a tree in the end. In a stricter sense, it can’t be considered a creature. At the very least, it can’t have intelligence like us. These seeds want to have their own minds and become a race, they don’t want to be mere plants scattered all over the world!”

She inquired again: “A race? Aren’t trees capable of becoming a race as well? After cultivating, they could become different branches of the demon race.”

Li Qiye shook his head: “That would still be different. Their origin doomed them from becoming something like the demon race, so they need to become a new race completely! Their start was only an experiment, a type of change. Yes, these seeds are all part of a single experiment.”

“Just what the heck are they then? They couldn’t come out of nowhere, what is their true source?” She was full of curiosity.

He smiled and winked: “I’m afraid no one can answer this question. Of course, as for your origin, maybe I will take you to solve its mystery.”

She glared at him and asked with suspicion: “You’re not plotting against me, are you?”

Despite her words, she wasn’t vigilant or cautious towards him since she didn’t feel that he would harm her.

“Why do you keep on thinking this? If I wanted to plot against you, I would have married you and, at that time, wouldn’t I be able to do whatever I want as your husband?” He revealed a sinister and implicating expression.

“Pervert, go die!” She gritted her teeth and shouted: “I’ll cripple you completely!”

Li Qiye laughed after seeing her fierce appearance.

At this time, the withered got up. He seemed that he still wasn’t used to this body, so he staggered and fell to the ground. However, he crawled up again.

He looked just like a toddler learning how to walk for the first time while tumbling about. However, he was learning very fast. It didn’t take long before he adapted to their body. Even though his walking motion was still tilted and unnatural like a puppet, his pace gradually grew steady.

The duo was following right after this withered as he headed for the village at the base of the mountain.

Xiaoxiao curiously asked: “Why is it going to that village?”

Li Qiye slowly explained: “What is necessary in order to become a race? In addition to breeding, it also needs a group with their own home and civilization just like us. Otherwise, how could they become an intelligent race? The lack of civilization makes them no different from beasts!”

While looking at the clumsy withered, she asked: “Can they reproduce?”

“It isn’t that easy to become a race. What are they right now? Only the dead, really. Do you think the dead can become a real race? This is fundamentally impossible, but they still have a chance.”

[Chapter 1413: Origin Of The Races](#)

Ye Xiaoxiao asked: “What do you mean?”

Li Qiye slowly explained: “Strictly speaking, no one can create a race out of thin air. Not only is this something heaven-defying, the race will also suffer an ultimate suppression! However, things are different at the Divine Tree Ridge.”

“Why is that?”

“The withered might wish to start their own race, but they aren’t appearing out of thin air. They require the seeds to capture the dead and use them as the base. By taking root in these corpses, they begin to create a life that belongs to them alone. Thus, these seeds can only be considered a side branch in the strictest sense. Part of their origin is related to regular trees. Because of this, they’re not truly created from scratch.”

He paused for a bit: “However, this is related to an entirely new experiment for a new race. For example, while on the verge of death, if you separate your limbs and add them to a different body and these limbs start anew and reproduce, this body can be considered a new copy of you and might use you as a reference in the future.”

She wondered: “So in a sense, these withered are a type of puppets made from parts? One could still trace back and find their origin.”

Li Qiye shook his head: "Yes and no. Even though these seeds have an origin, it didn't manipulate them. This was simply a test to see if they could live again and perhaps form a race and civilization. Their origin is only using them as a reference. As for how these withered got here in the first place, it's still highly debatable."

"Then will they become a race?" This was the question to ask.

A seed multiplying into a race was a wondrous matter. Will they be able to have their own home and civilization like the charming spirits, sea demons, and treants?

Li Qiye watched the withered walk around and slowly said: "It's difficult to say. If they can become a race, then they must successfully pass down their offspring for three generations or else it can't be considered a success. At least, in theory."

"Three generations? What do you mean?" She didn't understand.

He mused a bit before answering: "The first generation is the beginning, like these withered ahead. The seeds enter the body and turn them into the withered."

She asked: "When about the second generation then?"

He slowly explained: "The second generation is the offspring of two first generation withered and requires a very long process. First, these withered must gestate life in their own bodies. Only then would they be able to have their own life and blood and pass them onto the next generation. However, it is extremely rare to find someone who has died and is willing to reignite their flame for a progeny." His eyes turned profound at this point.

She asked: "They can still use a living person though, is it not possible to just take over someone alive?"

"It's not the same." Li Qiye smiled and shook his head: "What you are talking about is a parasitic development, they won't have their own bodies and bloodline. The seed in a living body would be resisted by the host. Even if a withered wants to reproduce, the host's bloodline and instincts will easily kill them! Because of this, even when they drill into a living being, they must kill them first in order to transform.

"For example, if this kind of takeover was easy, countless Godkings and Immortal Emperors could live on. Each cultivator has a different true fate. Even if someone else replaces your true fate with theirs, your body would still resist them. A human has three souls and seven spirits by nature, such a thing can't be taken over on a whim. Because of this, do you still think a seed can truly take over a body? They must kill the host. In plain words, they treat the corpse's body as a fertilizer so that they can grow up. These are the fundamentals."

"You still haven't talked about the second generation." Ye Xiaoxiao was still confused.

Li Qiye elaborated: "This is a type of existence that is virtually impossible to see. The first generation might be able to ignite their own life force, but in the end, they still can't escape their shell that was initially a corpse. In a sense, they are still dead or someone on the verge of death. Such a status renders it nearly impossible to give birth to a new life. This probability is low enough to be ignored completely and, given the circumstances, the second generation won't be an intelligent being. From then on, they will be called treecorpses, a different type of existence."

“Treecorpse...” She repeated the name and took a deep breath.

Li Qiye nodded: “Yes, treecorpses are the failed offspring of the withered. However, they are very powerful. Meeting them will put you in great peril. Remember, they do not have intelligence and are just moving corpses.”

“So what if these treecorpses give birth?”

He solemnly said: “If the second generation can do so successfully, they will produce an existence with flesh. It means that they will have their own soul — this is the biggest difference between them and their parents! The second generation is probably the first form of a race. Of course, all of the prerequisites must be met.”

“Then is the third generation the successful final product?”

Li Qiye replied: “If a third generation can appear, then yes, they will be an entirely new race with their own unique characteristics. They will have escaped the constraints of the bloodline of the withered. Thus, they would be able to walk free and leave the Divine Tree Ridge.”

“You mean... the withered can only live at the ridge?” She realized something.

“That’s right, have you ever seen a withered anywhere else in the world? Of course not.” Li Qiye smilingly said: “Think about it, with just some seeds and corpses, how could they survive for thousands of years? They aren’t just parasites in host bodies. To a large extent, they still rely on their origin. If they leave this place, they wouldn’t be able to survive for long or pass down their offspring.”

He chuckled at this point and said: “In order to become a new bloodline, one must escape the restraints of the previous. If they can’t leave the ridge, they will never become a real race.”

She was slightly surprised and eventually asked: “Has any withered gotten out before?”

“It is still unheard of for now. In fact, for millions of years, very few second generation withered have shown up.” Li Qiye shook his head.

She said: “So they have no chance of being successful.”

“Not necessarily. They can be improved until it is just right. New withered are being improved every successive generation.” Li Qiye’s gaze turned profound.

At this time, the withered had reached the village below. Many villagers came out right away.

These villagers maintained the appearances of the hosts when they were still alive. The only aspect that was different were the parts that had turned into wood or the branches growing from their flesh.

Xiaoxiao wondered: “What are they doing?”

Li Qiye slowly replied: “Welcoming the new member who will be admitted into the family.”

The new withered was a little lost and overwhelmed. However, his instinct drove him towards the villagers. A tall and mighty old man with a perfect body outside of a woodified spot between the eyebrows came out. It was difficult to tell how he was different from another person in the other locations.

“That person must be from the Extreme Yang School, an elder level character.” Xiaoxiao took note of the uniform and waist ornaments.

It seemed to be the village head as it led the rest to welcome the new withered.

“Be careful, they have merit laws.” He smiled at her.

“They know how to cultivate?” This took her by surprise.

“They have digested the traces of the host and inherited a few things from them.” Li Qiye explained:

“For example, the cultivation and memories of when they were still alive. Of course, not all of them can inherit these things, and even if they do, it would only be a fragment of the whole.”

The village head held the new withered’s hands with a happy smile. It was difficult to imagine that these withered used to be corpses. They didn’t look much different from the other races since they also had emotions. It was a bizarre and very frightening spectacle!

[Chapter 1414: Transformation](#)

Li Qiye walked up when this village head wanted to bring the withered into the village.

The villagers were alarmed after seeing an outsider approach and didn’t hide their hostility at all.

He smiled and said: “Gentlemen, I am sorry to disturb your fun event, but I have to do something. My apologies.”

They maintained their unfriendly stares at Li Qiye.

Li Qiye didn’t mind at all and reached for the new withered. This withered naturally tried to dodge from instinct and actually used the stepping technique of the Spirit Abyss. However, the application was very clumsy and had a thousand openings.

How could it dodge Li Qiye? It was captured right away.

“Roar!” The village head shouted and attacked Li Qiye with the wrath of a lion. Its speed was amazing and tore through the wind. This was a great technique from the Extreme Yang School.

“I want to catch you too.” He smiled and immediately suppressed the village head with a single palm. Despite the extraordinary move, it was still no match for Li Qiye and was subdued.

“Roar!” The rest of the villagers screamed and had furious expressions. All of them launched themselves at him.

Li Qiye didn’t give them a second glance and casually pointed forward. In the blink of an eye, Space Quarantine emerged. They looked like they were very close to him, but their space was isolated and couldn’t close the distance.

“Clank—” In a split second, Li Qiye used laws to pin both the new withered and the village head to a tree.

He summoned the Myriad Heavenly Cauldron and created a knife made out of fire that he then used to cut up the two withered.

“What are you doing?” The dissection was so grotesque that Ye Xiaoxiao couldn’t bear to watch any longer.

This didn’t mean that she was a coward. In fact, she had been trained in this regard before as a member of the Golden Isle. She definitely had no fear of death or murder, let alone the sight of blood.

However, Li Qiye’s mastery of the knife left her in fear. Not only was each cut accurate, they were exquisite and refined. It looked like he had dissected living beings of other races before.

With the knife in his hand, he gave off the sensation that he was a great butcher. His mastery of the knife was perfect and would instill chills in any spectator that were to watch, letting them catch a whiff of the carnage.

In fact, Xiaoxiao’s instinct was on point. Throughout the long years, Li Qiye has indeed done things like this, especially on the Ancient Ming. He experimented on the Ancient Ming with the immortal skeleton inch by inch.

He quickly opened their skulls with his perfect technique. He started slicing from the forehead and when he reached the skull, no harm was done to the muscles. What was even more terrifying was that after a section of their skulls were cut off, they were still alive without showing any hint of pain. They were still blinking like before.

Li Qiye carefully looked at the insides. After a while, he smiled and told Xiaoxiao: “Do you see what is missing here?”

Xiaoxiao didn’t want to look at all. Even though blood didn’t even come out from this dissection, its stench was still present in her mind.

She had to take a look after being asked and resulted in her taking a deep breath. Both the village head and the new withered had something growing inside their skulls. It was a plant that looked like a ginseng with roots. The most bizarre part was that this ginseng had eyes just like a person.

Such a creature was taking root inside the brain of these two as if its roots also grew to the joints of the body.

“What is this?” She felt nauseous after seeing the ginseng.

“You can consider it the soul of a withered, something similar to our true fate.” Li Qiye chuckled: “The body is only a physical entity, the most important aspect to us is the true fate.”

“What’s the difference between them?” She didn’t have a strong understanding of this particular subject.

In fact, few people were privy to this knowledge. Li Qiye only knew because he had always been paying attention to the withered. Each time he came here, he would dissect these withered for a bit.

“There is a big difference. In my eyes, a remarkable improvement has been made in the last one or two generations.” Li Qiye smiled and explained: “Look, the village head’s soul clearly grew all the way to every part of the body from instinct. Meanwhile, this new withered is different. Even though it is still trying to grow to the rest of the body, it is mainly situated in the brain, very similar to our three souls and seven spirits. Their souls are improving and can eventually become something like ours.”

After this explanation, Xiaoxiao finally saw the difference between the two.

“What’s the significance behind this?” She asked while looking at the ginsengs growing in their heads.

“It means that success is near.” Li Qiye spoke with certainty: “If they can become like us with three souls and seven spirits — a true fate, then it would be a perfect transformation.”

He gazed towards the distance and continued: “I don’t know whether they can be successful or not and I might not be able to see it, but that day will surely come.”

“What day?” She was puzzled.

He smiled in response: “Heaven Spirit’s disaster or blessing, hard to say.”

“What kind of disaster?” She grew curious as she never heard about this in the past.

He shook his head: “You don’t need to know. You will follow me in the future, so you won’t see it either.”

“Bah, who wants to go with you!” She grumpily glared at him.

Li Qiye leisurely smiled and created a fiery string from his cauldron in order to stitch up the opened skulls.

His actions so far have incited the wrath of the villagers. They howled and wanted to attack him, but Li Qiye’s Space Quarantine rendered them unable to do so. Even if he was only an inch away from them, their attacks could only hit thin air.

After the stitching job was finished, not even a mark could be seen on the skulls. It was as if nothing had happened.

“You deviant, don’t tell me you do this quite often?” She couldn’t help but ask after seeing his skillful method.

“You’re right, the number of those I have dissected might not reach one million, but it would be at least eight hundred thousand.” He grinned.

“Ugh!” She made a disgusted face and exclaimed: “Stay away from me, I’m sure you must have a perverted mindset!”

Li Qiye laughed and let go of the new withered and village head: “Sorry for the trouble, forgive me. I’ll be taking my leave now.”

Xiaoxiao had no words for his current attitude. Being respectful after opening their skulls — this was simply too unreasonable.

Li Qiye coolly left before the withered could react. Even though Xiaoxiao told him to stay away, she quickly gave chase after him.

The villagers were extremely excited to see that the duo was fine despite their vacant stares and quickly took them inside the village.

Xiaoxiao and Li Qiye walked on. Along the way, they saw many villages and even small towns. They were all created and occupied by the withered.

Moreover, these beings more or less inherited some memories, instincts, and even merit laws from their hosts. Because of this, powerful withered presided over the positions of the village heads and town lords.

As they moved forward, Xiaoxiao even saw an extremely powerful town lord with the power of a Virtuous Paragon. This was because the host used to be an amazing God-Monarch!

After seeing this withered, she commented: "Many experts died in the Divine Tree Ridge. I heard even Godkings died here. If all of them become withered and gather, wouldn't that be quite a frightening force?"

"The strength of their former bodies isn't why they're scary. Them being able to rely on the ridge itself is the most powerful force." Li Qiye flatly responded: "In fact, the withered aren't evil, they just want to survive. Even though they don't mingle with other creatures and even deny cultivators from integrating with them, they do not attack people under ordinary circumstances. The scary beings are the treecorpses. They are even stronger than the withered and have greater numbers as well."

"Treecorpses? Aren't they the offspring of the withered? How come this failed generation doesn't live together with their parents?" She was a bit stunned.

"No, they do not live together." Li Qiye gently shook his head: "If a withered is a near-dead, then the treecorpses are truly dead beings! The dead and the near-dead won't live together, so the treecorpses stay together far away from the withered."

She asked: "How come we haven't seen any yet?"

"No rush, we'll see them soon." He chuckled: "At that point, you will see many, many treecorpses! If you go close to them, they will attack you first."

[Chapter 1415: Divine Tree Citadel](#)

The duo continued their journey at a relaxed pace. Li Qiye seemed to be measuring the area during the trip. What was even stranger was that he looked to be refining this place. Each of his steps aimed to leave behind an imprint.

He also took his time observing every village and town that had the withered.

After having to stop by each village and city, she eventually asked: "Ego King, why are you researching? What is your goal?"

"What goal? I'm just researching." Li Qiye casually smiled: "In fact, the withered are great references. From nothing to something, they are seeds that will give birth to a race. Even though they have all kinds of deficiencies and shortcomings, there is a lot of value in studying them."

"And then?" She was still puzzled. In fact, most cultivators wouldn't care about this issue even if they knew that the withered started from seedlings. The majority of them would worry about how to obtain treasures or how to cultivate certain merit laws. Thus, who would care about this trivial matter of the withered and their origin?

“It’s nothing.” Li Qiye smiled: “Just an interesting and valuable reference for the start of a race. What experience they need, how to change — this information is all priceless. They start by borrowing a body, so there is a huge issue right away. However, after transforming and changing, they become something unimaginable. Such a shift requires millions of years that cannot be exchanged.”

He became solemn as he went on: “Humans and treants don’t have the same strange origin as the withered. After all, the withered weren’t blessed by the heavens like the other races, especially the charming spirits. The other races were born and relied on the world. In contrast, the withered are not protected by the world and not loved, so they have no choice but to be born with this strange method. Nevertheless, from birth to forming groups — a gradual process of becoming a race, this is all interesting and worth exploring.” He sighed at this point.

“It sounds like you are trying to create a race.” Her demeanor shifted while looking at him.

Despite her tender age, she was still from a treefather’s lineage and understood the significance of this unbelievable task. Like Li Qiye had said in the past, creating life is the business of the high heavens!

If he could accomplish this task, it would be simply terrifying. Not even Immortal Emperors have accomplished this.

“Who says I want to create a race?” Li Qiye gently shook his head: “I only want to understand the world a bit more. As a frog at the bottom of a well, I want to understand what the damned heavens is thinking by exploring the creation of the withered.”

Such casual words would cause others to be astonished. Her knowledge far exceeded ordinary cultivators, so she realized something after hearing this.

Understanding the thoughts of the damned heavens! Such a nonchalant remark was more than enough to shock others.

Just think about it, how many cultivators would try to do so? This has exceeded their scope of comprehension. Only characters that have reached the emperor level would ponder about this issue.

“Trying to understand the heavens? What are you thinking, do you want to replace it?” Her eyes widened in disbelief.

“Who says that I want to replace it?” Li Qiye smiled: “What’s so good about being the villainous heavens? An ultimate state of indifference is nothing pleasant. However, some tasks need to be explored and accomplished in the end.” No one could see through Li Qiye’s unfathomable eyes at this time.

There were many towns and villages along the way. However, they were antagonistic towards outsiders and refused to allow any integration. Of course, there were exceptions, such as the Divine Tree Citadel! This city accepted everyone, even outsiders. It permitted all-inclusive trading as well.

At the same time, this was the largest establishment of the withered and one of the largest cities in all of Godhalt.

It was built at the intersection of two mountain ranges. If one could see the city with their own eyes, they would definitely be shocked by the spectacle. This place had two mountains pierced into the earth

and crossed each other all the way to the sky. The city itself was built in this intersection by the withered, so it was hanging spectacularly in the air.

Ye Xiaoxiao grew excited at the sight of the city and cultivators coming and going: "So the Divine Tree Citadel is built here. I had always thought that it would be on the ground."

Li Qiye smiled and brought her to climb along the mountain range. There were a few withered heading for the city along the way as well.

Xiaoxiao asked Li Qiye: "Why do the withered here interact with outsiders and even trade with them?"

Up until now, she had always asked Li Qiye whenever a question came up. She found that he knew much more than the ancestors of her sect.

He smiled: "This is a process that a race must go through to advance from a low to high-level civilization. Village to town to a great city... For these withered, the small villages are for recently transformed withered. Once they are independent, they can head to a town or even a big city like this one.

"How can one become a true race without trading and interacting with others? For example, even if they could stay independent like the charming spirit and human sects, they would still choose to communicate with others. This is a necessity in order to grow stronger."

She nodded repeatedly while listening to Li Qiye. After all, she was still too young and, despite her vast knowledge, she couldn't grasp all of it and the topic he was commenting on.

Eventually, they arrived outside of the city gates. There was a great tree protecting this citadel. It towered all the way into the sky with four extremely old roots supporting the base. Each root guarded one of the entrances.

When looking upward, an old face could be seen on the tree. It looked very benevolent and had a long, gray beard. Its features were friendly just like a neighboring grandpa.

At this moment, its eyes were closed as if sleeping.

She felt inquisitive and asked: "What is that? Another withered?"

"Yes and no. It can be said to be a withered but also something else entirely. It is the city lord of this place as well as the divine guardian of the withered." He smiled.

"They have a divine guardian too?" She was surprised by this revelation.

"It's unique. The other withered all transformed from corpses. Before becoming a divine guardian, it was already famous and was referred to by others as the Terminus Divine Ancestor. Its prestige once deterred the rest of the world."

"Terminus Divine Ancestor!" Despite not knowing this withered ahead, she was all-too-familiar with the name Terminus after hearing it many times in the past.

She asked with astonishment: "Isn't this one of the most powerful geniuses during the generation of the Golden Bamboo Ancestor?"

She knew this name very well because Terminus used to be the strongest rival of her own ancestor, the Golden Bamboo Ancestor.

Even though Terminus couldn't become a treefather in the end, their illustrious achievements still shone across the nine worlds. Since she grew up in the Golden Isle, she had heard of the progenitor's tales, hence her familiarity with the name Terminus.

"Yes, that's the Terminus Divine Ancestor, your progenitor's rival." Li Qiye smiled: "After failing to become a treefather, he voluntarily merged with a seed here at the ridge. The most incredible part of this whole thing was that he stayed alive after fusing with one. Ultimately, he took root here and became the guardian of the withered and this city!"

[Chapter 1416: Terminus Divine Ancestor](#)

"It has been a long time since someone has mentioned that name." The moment Li Qiye finished speaking, the old face on the tree opened its eyes and smiled.

Ye Xiaoxiao stared at this strangely-fitting face on the tree and curiously asked: "What is the feeling of the seeds taking root inside you? Do you feel like a puppet?"

"No, I'm not a puppet." He kindly smiled like a grandpa next door: "I'm only another experiment. As for the feeling? It feels pretty good, like leaves returning to the earth. People will have to die in the end, but as for where and how... the choice is different for each individual."

"So you chose to stay in this place?" Xiaoxiao curiously perused the ancestor. For treants, only the treefathers would be able to take root in the earth. However, Terminus' current status was quite strange. He accomplished this magical task without being a treefather.

"Yes." Despite being a famous character, he was still talkative like an old man: "There is nothing bad about this place. At the very least, it gives me the feeling of being at home. People will inevitably feel nostalgic."

Li Qiye only smiled after hearing this. Of course, the situation wasn't as simple as the ancestor made it out to be. There were other reasons for him to make this choice.

"Young lass, you must be the descendant of the Golden Bamboo Ancestor, I didn't expect to see a friend's descendant after so many years." The ancestor carefully looked at Ye Xiaoxiao before smiling.

"A friend's descendant?" Xiaoxiao blinked doubtfully and asked: "It should be a rival's descendant. You won't attack me because of this, right?"

The ancestor loudly laughed in response: "Lass, there are some things that are different from how the descendants imagine them to be. Yes, your ancestor and I used to be rivals for the treefather's position. However, you juniors might not know that we were also good friends who were together all the time."

He sentimentally sighed after saying this. Despite the passing of the years, he still remembered the world he had left as he continued to nearly forget about many things. When this topic was brought up today, he recalled his youthful passion in the past, his heroic and fiery demeanor that soared to the sky.

Xiaoxiao charmingly smiled: "Really?"

"I don't need to lie to you." Terminus spoke while staring at her before being astounded: "Lass, your bloodline..."

"What about my bloodline?" She felt a bit happy after noticing that she might have found some clues and hurriedly asked: "Do you know my bloodline's origin?"

The ancestors from the Golden Isle had always been confused about the origin of her bloodline. They knew that it was very precious, but they couldn't pinpoint the exact reason.

But now, Terminus was able to see some clues, making her quite elated. Perhaps he could dispel the mysteries of her blood.

He looked at her for awhile before slowly answering: "Your bloodline is extremely ancient. If your ancestors were still alive, they would be very excited."

After hearing his insightful response, she quickly asked: "What bloodline is it and how is it useful?"

He looked at her and pondered for a bit before replying: "I'm not too certain of your bloodline since I have never seen such an ancient one, but I know there is a place—"

"A place like that indeed exists, but it depends on who brings her along." Li Qiye leisurely spoke before Terminus could finish.

This prompted the old tree to take another look at Li Qiye with a glint of surprise in his eyes. Anyone else aware of Terminus' identity would be scared out of their mind if they had to meet this gaze. However, Li Qiye was completely unperturbed and stood there with a smile on his face.

After taking a good look at him, Terminus' eyes suddenly changed. He stopped looking and fell into silence.

Ye Xiaoxiao, on the other hand, felt excited again and asked the ancestor: "What place?"

Terminus awkwardly laughed: "Ah, well, I have only heard about this legend. Alas, I am rooted here and cannot leave so I can't take you there. The young noble next to you, I'm sure that he can take you there instead."

She couldn't help but glance at Li Qiye then back at Terminus after hearing this strange response. She then showed a fiery glare while placing both hands on her slender waist and said: "Ego King, did you do something bad again? Hmph! You must have done something behind my back."

Li Qiye only leisurely responded: "Something bad? I didn't do anything suspicious at all."

"Hmph, you're still denying it?! Earlier, he clearly wanted to tell me about a place, but now he's all quiet. Who else but you could have caused the mischief? Tell the truth right now, what are you trying to do?" She gave him an ugly stare. Despite her young age, she was far from being stupid and understood that there was a reason for the sudden change in Terminus' attitude.

Li Qiye nonchalantly smiled: "Whatever you think then, but just know that you are wrongfully accusing a good person. Who is the Terminus Divine Ancestor? He took root here and isn't afraid of anyone, will he actually change his tone just because of a junior like me? I can't believe that you are suspecting a kind-hearted man like me, is there no justice in this world?"

Although Xiaoxiao felt that Li Qiye was up to no good, she carefully thought about it again and felt that her suspicion was without base. Terminus was the rival of her progenitor and couldn't possibly be afraid of a young junior like Li Qiye.

He noticed her hesitation and laughed while patting her shoulder: "Okay, little girl, you are viewing my kindness as malice. If you think I have ulterior motives, then you can stay and talk to the ancestor. Sigh, my feelings are so hurt." Having said that, he turned around to leave.

"Alright, alright, Ego King. I know I'm wrong, why are you in such a hurry to leave?!" She thought that she was wrongfully accusing him and quickly gave chase.

He stopped and looked at her with a grin on his face before pinching her nose: "Changing after knowing that you are wrong, good kid."

She gave him the side-glance and a kick as well before assuming her usual powerful posture: "Bah, don't take a mile after I give you an inch! Ego King, I'll follow you around, but you need to bring me to the place you mentioned earlier!"

She was talking about the place Terminus brought up. In fact, she had no clue as to where or what it was, but her intuition told her that it was very important to her.

Li Qiye chuckled: "Of course, why else would I be taking you to the ridge? However, we're not in a rush right now. I'll take you when the time is right."

After gaining some ground, Xiaoxiao felt quite content and proud. She smugly raised her delicate chin towards Li Qiye and said: "Hmph, that's more like it."

Her arrogant demeanor amused him: "We should go in now."

"Grandpa, see you later." Xiaoxiao waved towards Terminus. Despite her fiery temperament, she still had a cute side.

Terminus revealed a kind smile and took down a green branch to give to Xiaoxiao: "You can come to the Divine Tree Ridge and play whenever you want. Also, if there's any trouble, just let me know."

"Okay." She didn't think much of it and casually accepted the branch.

She naturally didn't know of its importance. As the divine guardian of the withered and this city, his branch would allow for Xiaoxiao to travel unhindered. It guaranteed her safety in many locations in this burial ground.

Li Qiye only chuckled and brought her inside the city.

Terminus couldn't help but ask before these two left: "Young Noble, how long will you be staying here?"

Li Qiye leisurely responded: "Well, I haven't thought about that just yet. I'm here to see a person, I wonder if they are still in this world? If possible, I would like you to help me arrange a meeting. If I am satisfied, I will leave immediately."

Terminus shut his mouth again after hearing this. Li Qiye laughed and finally walked into the city with Xiaoxiao.

Meanwhile, Terminus watched the two and murmured: “Such a magnificent bloodline, it looks like the Golden geezer has his successor.” He sighed with emotion after saying this.

[Chapter 1417: A Races Transformation Process](#)

Even though he wasn't completely sure of Ye Xiaoxiao's bloodline, he could still tell that it was absolutely marvelous.

If it was any other occasion, he would definitely try to guide her. Alas, today wasn't his day because he understood that she had been chosen by someone else. Even if he was stronger, he still wouldn't dare to try and steal her away.

Terminus was an existence untouchable by even Immortal Emperors since he was rooted at the Divine Tree Ridge! However, he was aware that the most terrifying existence in this world wasn't an Immortal Emperor. Their wrath didn't make all others tremble.

He knew a bit about the darkness. This was a horrifying secret only privy to characters of his level. The more one was exposed to this type of secret, the more they understood about the inviolable taboo of this world. Because of this, despite knowing full well of her great bloodline, he still didn't dare to teach her!

Terminus murmured: “I hope Heaven Spirit will be peaceful for a bit longer. A few people better start praying. Sigh, those who are blind might face a genocide!”

In fact, he hoped that a few things would end quickly. Although the Divine Tree Ridge was one of the twelve burial grounds, it wasn't a threat to everyone. A few people would consider these burial grounds to be a treasure trove. For example, the legendary dark hand.

Xiaoxiao was full of curiosity from the novelty of visiting the citadel for the first time. She looked around constantly and found that this city hanging in the sky wasn't much different from the other cities in Heaven Spirit.

Even though the buildings and mansions here weren't exquisite, they were much better than the rough structures back at the villages.

Moreover, the numerous withered here weren't too different from the other races. They lived ordinary lives in this city. However, the withered here were actually very skilled at conducting business. One wouldn't be able to tell that they were a new race at all compared to the other races.

“The withered at the Divine Tree Citadel seem much smarter than the ones back at the villages. They can do anything.” Xiaoxiao carefully observed them.

Their speech was also excellent relative to the other races. The duo had been to many villages before, but the withered there simply didn't speak. Even if they could, only simple sentences came out. The ones here spoke in a very pleasant manner without any impediment.

Li Qiye answered: “It's pretty normal. The rebirth and transformation require some time for adaptation, and how long depends on the individual's talents. For example, when we are born, none of us could talk. The next development is a personal one based on the latent potential which could yield different results.”

They casually strolled through the many stores at the citadel. The owners were all withered selling all types of goods. The most common commodities were spirit pills and grasses.

Xiaoxiao noticed this and asked: “Why are alchemy ingredients the most popular here? Is it because the Divine Tree Ridge has them in abundance?”

“That’s one of the reasons.” He smiled: “There is another one, the withered are gifted at finding these materials — quite an extraordinary talent indeed. Moreover, there are also many treecorpses here.”

“What do the treecorpses have to do with this?” She was puzzled.

“The treecorpses travel in packs and like to live near alchemy ingredients. Their numbers are often proportionate, so that’s why there are corpse nests and lairs around here.” He paused a moment before continuing: “Despite the treecorpses being failed creations, the withered are still their parents so they can easily find these treecorpses. From this, it is easy to understand why the withered can also find alchemy ingredients at the ridge better than anyone else.”

“So that’s the case.” It dawned on Xiaoxiao right away after hearing the explanation.

Of course, alchemy ingredients weren’t the only items for trade at the citadel. Some withered even sold weapons, but they were in the minority.

“Can the withered cultivate?” This question came up since Xiaoxiao saw some stores specialized in selling merit laws.

“It’s hard to say.” Li Qiye understood why she thought so: “In fact, each generation, these withered are improving themselves, so the question regarding cultivation is still quite mystifying. They transformed by borrowing someone else’s corpse, so the seals and traces of their host are still there. For example, they can remember a few merit laws and techniques.”

He continued the explanation as they walked around the different shops: “These merit laws are collected in different manners. Some are from old memories so despite the quantity, most are imperfect and incomplete. They might be useful for the withered, but if cultivators try to train with them, it will inadvertently lead to qi deviation.”

Xiaoxiao was slightly dazzled by how big the citadel was. She found it much more interesting than the other places.

In fact, Li Qiye and Xiaoxiao weren’t the only two cultivators present in the city, there were other cultivators around. Some came from the Spirit Abyss while others from all other the world. There was no lack of experts.

Outside of coming to satiate their curiosity, they also wanted to buy some alchemy ingredients. As a burial ground, the ridge was full of medicines and grasses. Some even believed that this place had immortal medicines. Without a doubt, the market for alchemy was among the best across all of Heaven Spirit.

Although the withered weren’t especially powerful and lacked resources compared to imperial lineages and sea god inheritances, no one dared to cause trouble in the citadel. Everyone obeyed the rules for trading.

After all, Terminus was the divine protector in this place. To cause trouble here was equivalent to courting death. It was such an unwise move that even the Spirit Abyss would behave despite being able to do whatever they wanted in the rest of Godhalt.

Li Qiye purposefully observed the city. Because of this, they didn't only wander around but also looked for a place to stay so that he could peruse the withered.

In fact, across the long years, whenever he came to Heaven Spirit, he would visit the Divine Tree Ridge in order to make a comprehensive record of his analysis. He found them worth researching, unlike the other cultivators.

Originally, creation was a matter left for the high heavens, but due to all sorts of reasons, the Divine Tree Ridge caused a new race to come into being. Even though this race had all kinds of flaws and wasn't protected by the heaven and earth like humans or charming spirits, they continued to live on and have survived for generations.

So far, they still haven't fully developed a third generation withered and couldn't escape the constraints of their bloodline, thus being unable to leave the ridge. However, in each of his records, Li Qiye found immense changes with an inclination towards improvement. With ample time, a third generation would eventually appear!

On that monumental day, an entirely new race would be born. They would no longer be withered but something entirely new that wouldn't be inferior to the other races. It was completely unfathomable that something like this could happen without the involvement of the heavens.

Therefore, these records of the withered would help Li Qiye understand the mysteries of life. Moreover, he knew one more thing. If the third generation could successfully appear, a shift will occur within the ridge that shatters the balance of Heaven Spirit, helping it gain an advantage over the Maelstrom and the Bonesea!

Xiaoxiao noticed that he had been studying in the last few days, so she smiled and asked: "Don't tell me you want to capture a withered for research?"

[Chapter 1418: Treecorpse](#)

Li Qiye smiled and shook his head towards Ye Xiaoxiao: "There's not much value in capturing one for research right now. They are a gregarious race, so I must study them as a whole."

She pried: "Why are you so interested in these withered? It's not like you can create a new race. And even if you could, it takes a long time for them to multiply. For instance, these withered took many generations, you simply can't wait until that day."

Li Qiye only smiled without answering. She was too young to understand his purpose. Plus, there was no need for her to face this problem. They walked around for several more days while Li Qiye carried on his research of the withered instead of worrying about alchemy or treasures.

Today, they stopped at a withered's restaurant to rest. There were a few cultivators from all over the world in groups of three or five chatting it up.

Li Qiye sat by a window and had fun watching the waiters, bartenders, and manager being quite busy.

In fact, there was nothing worth watching here. Such a common restaurant could be found anywhere in Heaven Spirit; nothing stood out in particular about this restaurant.

In spite of this, he relished this observation session as if there was something going on in the background.

A cultivator suddenly ran in and told the members at a table: "Let's go, First Brother and the others found a corpse lair."

These cultivators quickly paid and left. The other people here suddenly grew excited as well.

"A corpse lair?" One of the excited cultivators blurted: "There must be valuable alchemy ingredients there. We'll go too." He also paid and left with his crew.

In just a short moment, the cultivators here left one after another. The majority of the visitors came for materials, so when someone finds a lair, it meant that there must be incredible spirit ingredients there.

Xiaoxiao naturally felt excited and quickly asked Li Qiye: "Should we go take a look too?" She had never seen a treecorpse or a lair before, so her inquisitive nature went into full play.

"Fine, let's go then." Li Qiye smiled and paid the bill.

The lair was found in a valley not far from the citadel. It was quite deep with old vines and pillaring trees resulting in a verdant scene. No one had a panoramic view of the valley due to the abundance of vegetation blocking their sight.

Many cultivators were already here when the duo arrived. They stood right at the entrance while gazing inside.

Many groups of treecorpses were entering as well, coming from some unknown direction. They looked like different groups going to a party since it was clear that they didn't come from the same place.

Treecorpses weren't that different from the first generation withered. The majority had human forms with some wooden parts. Of course, there was a clear distinction. A treecorpse's wooden parts were natural unlike the withered that have undergone a change from flesh to wood.

For example, a withered's wooden arm looked very stiff, as if it had been embedded and not something that was a part of its body.

This wasn't the case for treecorpses. Their wooden arms looked just like growing branches — full of life and very natural.

Xiaoxiao thought of a particular question and asked Li Qiye while watching the groups of corpses enter the valley: "What are the differences between treecorpses and second generation withered?"

"Nothing in terms of appearance." Li Qiye answered: "Treecorpses might be dead, but from another perspective, they aren't really corpses. Their bodies still have a hint of life in them. Of course, it is easy to distinguish a second generation withered and a treecorpse. Look at their eyes, the ones without life belong to the treecorpses."

With his reminder, she carefully looked and found that the eyes of the treecorpses were different. They were hollow as if nothing was there; a pair of eyes engulfed by death energy. Logically speaking, only corpses would have this type of energy.

She murmured while watching: "They don't have a soul!"

She had never seen a second generation withered before. After all, the probability of meeting one was exceedingly low in the Divine Tree Ridge. Moreover, rumor has it that these second generation withered were heavily protected, so outsiders couldn't see them.

"Yes, they don't have a soul." Li Qiye nodded: "People say that the eyes are windows to the mind. One just needs to look at the eyes to see if a soul is present. For example, why is it that animated skeletons have red eyes? That's their soul flame. Treecorpses might have a body that isn't too different from the other races. The issue is that they do not have souls. Without souls, there is no need to talk about bloodlines and reproduction, they are only moving corpses."

She had to ask: "Why are they born with a body but no soul?"

Li Qiye smiled: "They owe both success and failure to the first generation withered. These first generation withered are born from corpses due to the seeds taking root in the brain that eventually turns into a soul. Despite possessing this type of soul, they still can't be considered a complete form of life, they're merely a near-dead existence. Because of this, the odds of producing offspring with souls are negligible."

She contemplated and had a better understanding of how the withered handle birth and transformations. It made it clear just how difficult it was to start a new race.

"The same phrase applies, life creation is the business of the heavens. It is impossible to create life just by creating a body. Like many cultivators, a body can be rebuilt, but if the true fate is destroyed, that will be certain death. One would have nothing without their true fate since it is impossible to rebuild because they're not the heavens! There is no way to reshape the true fate because this is something that belongs to the realm of life creation." Li Qiye had a rare, solemn expression.

Ye Xiaoxiao quietly listened while nodding her head. It was a bit too early for her to think about this topic. Normally, only characters of the Immortal Emperor level would muse this question.

"Strange." Li Qiye murmured while looking at the corpse groups entering the valley.

Her wits returned from contemplation and she curiously asked: "What's the matter?"

He stared at the valley and replied: "This place probably isn't a lair."

"Why? Don't treecorpses like to gather? There are many running here at the moment, so this should be their lair, right?"

Li Qiye gently shook his head: "No, treecorpses are different from the withered. They are the favorite children of the Divine Tree Ridge and can take root anywhere here even without souls. They are infinitely connected to the ridge, so they can stay in their lair forever without coming out, unless someone attacks them. Once a lair is formed, the members could stay there until death. This is one of the reasons why lairs are so difficult to find. Under normal circumstances, treecorpses won't leave their

lair unless the lair is destroyed or is under heavy attack. But now, this many are coming to this valley — this is indeed a bit strange.” He began to speculate after seeing this.

[Chapter 1419: Treecorpses Mark](#)

“Maybe another lair was destroyed and the lucky survivors are moving to this one?” Xiaoxiao speculated after hearing him.

He smiled and shook his head: “A corpse lair can’t be found so easily. Plus, it is virtually impossible for one to be breached, let alone destroyed. Unless it is a powerful legion of an emperor, even an ordinary imperial lineage wouldn’t be able to attack a large number of lairs in the Divine Tree Ridge.”

With a flash in her eyes, she thought of another possibility and excitedly spoke: “Didn’t you say corpses like to be around alchemy ingredients? Maybe there is an immortal medicine inside this valley.”

“You wish!” He played with her little nose and said: “Even if the ridge has immortal medicines, they don’t want to live with the corpses. Plus, even when it is a willing cohabitation, these medicines would be occupied by extremely powerful treecorpses, the others can’t have any part in it.”

“Then why are there so many running here?” She felt disappointed after Li Qiye poured a bucket of cold water over her idea.

“Wait and see. Look, people are attacking right now. Let’s watch to see how they will die.” He chuckled while looking at the valley.

In fact, many cultivators that were waiting outside were very curious about the large number of treecorpses gathering here.

Some had the same idea as Ye Xiaoxiao and blurted: “There might be an immortal medicine in there that is attracting all of these corpses!”

“Immortal medicine!” Everyone became spirited after realizing this possibility. Next, their eyes lit up with unrestrainable excitement and even greed. Saliva was on the verge of dripping down.

One cultivator swallowed and said: “There’s a high chance for an immortal medicine to be here. Why else would all of these corpses come here? If it really is an immortal medicine, then we’re about to be rich.”

“Kill our way in!” A different group reacted faster and immediately took action to beat the others inside.

“Kill!” The others saw that group take the initiative and didn’t want to be outdone. They roared and rushed in as well.

“Kill them all!” The ambushing cultivators outside of the valley chose a direct attack and issued battle cries. Everyone scrambled inside, unwilling to be the last one in.

An immortal medicine was too tempting for any cultivator. They would be instantly rich and on the rise after obtaining one.

“Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!” Long roots suddenly shot out from the ground like snakes. Some also flew out like arrows.

The treecorpses have finally attacked. These were formidable attacks with a power that shouldn't be underestimated.

As Li Qiye had said before, even though treecorpses were soulless, they were the favorite children at the Divine Tree Ridge and had been granted protection. Despite the lack of cultivation, they were still instinctively powerful.

"Ah!" A burst of screams resounded shortly after. Some cultivators were pierced by the vines and dragged into the ground with seeds entering their foreheads.

"Kill them!" A few people noticed that their companions were being invaded by the seeds and were about to transform into withered. They shouted in horror and quickly destroyed the corpses.

"Ah!" Many seeds the size of sesame seeds sprung out from the ground. Some cultivators' blood fell onto these seeds, causing them to immediately shoot for the forehead. The cultivators couldn't dodge in time and were immediately infected.

One cultivator fell to the ground and convulsed as cracking sounds came from all over his body. At the same time, his scream before death echoed across the valley, instilling fear into all the shuddering listeners.

"This is horrible." Xiaoxiao was startled to see a living cultivator being infected then killed.

Li Qiye didn't find this surprising at all and insipidly explained: "Locations with a lot of treecorpses will have more seeds. These seeds will be much stronger and ferocious. On the other hand, the seeds near the locations of the withered won't attack people. They would wait until you are dead before drilling into your forehead."

"Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!" The sizzling of fire came about. A treecorpse actually spewed out a blazing flame towards the cultivator.

Some of them used fire while others preferred ice for an assault. Some cultivators were frozen completely.

Xiaoxiao was a bit dumbfounded to see this and asked Li Qiye: "Didn't you say the treecorpses don't cultivate? Aren't they using merit laws right now?"

"No, this is just part of their nature." Li Qiye shook his head: "They were born with these types of fire and ice."

"How can that be?" She was stunned again. If a cultivator could be born with these natural gifts, wouldn't they be exceedingly powerful in the future?

"This is all thanks to their parents." Li Qiye elaborated: "The marks of the living cultivators still remain after the transformation process of the first generation. For example, when the corpse was alive, they might have cultivated an ice art. Because of this, when the first generation took over, they would pass on the mark of this cultivator to the second generation, allowing them to have this innate gift of ice."

"So it's like that." She murmured: "Doesn't that mean a successful second generation capable of cultivating would be immensely powerful?"

He flatly responded: "Definitely, but it is also bad in a sense. All in all, the cons outweigh the pros. There's no need to be envious, such innate gifts aren't necessarily a good thing."

"Why not?" She found this surprising.

"It is precisely because the first generation carries the mark of the host that the second generation can't be successful." He explained: "Even a successful second generation with a soul and natural gift of ice has a negative prospect. This is because these are marks that belong to a different race, not the withered. To a certain extent, it reduces the intelligence of these second generations."

He paused for a bit before continuing: "At the same time, due to these foreign marks, even if the second generation could cultivate, they would be alienated from the dao. Their foundation at the start is too convoluted and needlessly complicated, making it easy for them to suffer qi deviation."

Li Qiye had studied the withered from one generation to another. He had absolute authority in this field; no one in the nine worlds understood this race more than him.

"But there are the same as interracial marriages in Heaven Spirit." Ye Xiaoxiao asked: "There are no problems there. Sometimes, the bloodlines would become even more powerful. For example, charming spirits and humans would allow for an easier reproduction of the spirits' bloodline."

"That's a different scenario." Li Qiye shook his head: "The marriage between those two races is a type of bloodline fusion. Meanwhile, the first generation relies on corpses to come into being. They can't fuse with marks from other races. Because of this, the remnant marks do not belong to them, so they can't integrate it into their own blood."

"Ah, I see." Her understanding of the withered grew deeper after this explanation.

"Ah!" More screams echoed across the valley. At this time, the battle has come to an end. This group of cultivators overestimated their abilities and were wiped out before being able to penetrate the valley. All of them were turned into first generation withered after death.

"Let's go inside now." Li Qiye chuckled after seeing this scene and said: "We'll take a look at what they are doing."

In the blink of an eye, the duo went inside and was immediately met with aggression from the treecorpses.

Xiaoxiao couldn't help but say: "Should, should I prepare or something? It would be bad if a seed drills into my forehead...." She felt nauseous after recalling the scene of a living person turning into a withered.

Li Qiye laughed and replied: "Don't worry, even the most powerful seed wouldn't dare to touch you since you have the supreme bloodline. You are completely untouchable at the Divine Tree Ridge. Your blood will absolutely crush them!"

[Chapter 1420: Treecorpses Transformation](#)

Xiaoxiao stared at him and demanded: "What is my bloodline? You surely know the answer, just tell me already."

Li Qiye only responded with a smile: "It's not that I don't want to tell you, but the time isn't ripe. After a couple more days, I'll take you to a place. At that time, you will find out your bloodline even if I don't say anything. A few things can't be expressed with words, you will need to feel it." Having said that, he pointed at his heart.

"Only with that will you be able to know what your bloodline is as well as its true mysteries. Otherwise, you won't be able to understand what your bloodline is carrying even if I speak one thousand or ten thousand phrases. It is all useless." He spoke with sincerity and didn't lie to her at all.

"Hmph, whatever." She glared at him and stepped on his foot again.

Li Qiye cheerfully spoke: "Okay, little girl, get ready, we're going in."

With that, he grabbed her tiny hand and rushed into the valley with incredible speed. The Soaring Immortal Physique had no equal in terms of speed. Even Xiaoxiao couldn't react in time.

"Whoosh! Buzz!" His intrusion was met with attacks from all the treecorpses. Some roots flew like arrows while others used their signature fire and ice elements.

However, Li Qiye's speed was countless times faster than them as he invaded the valley. Not to mention harming him, they couldn't even touch his sleeve. In one moment, Xiaoxiao could still see herself standing outside of the valley, but in the next, the scene changed completely. It only took the blink of an eye due to a speed that surpassed time and everything else.

Deep in the valley was a small flat ground with a boulder in the middle surrounded by many treecorpses. The ones that were able to sit here were clearly older than the other corpses and much more powerful as well.

There were more than ten of them sitting near this seemingly common stone that looked like a table in this flat area. Perhaps the treecorpses didn't know what a table was and used this boulder as one by chance.

It was quite strange. They weren't protecting any alchemy ingredients at all. Judging by their expressions, this seemed to be a debate. This was quite an unbelievable scene because they didn't have souls or intelligence and only relied on their instinct the majority of the time.

Moreover, this looked like a high-level meeting as well. Even Li Qiye found this surprising.

While looking at the dozen corpses, Xiaoxiao curiously asked: "What are they doing?"

He looked as well and murmured: "Until now, I have only been researching with a great emphasis on the withered while overlooking the treecorpses. Along the years, they have undergone changes as well and have obtained a certain level of intelligence."

This scene made one thing clear, the treecorpses weren't soulless creatures like before. Regardless of what this meeting was about, they have evolved as well.

Until now, Li Qiye thought that only the withered had a chance to become a new race. His research was lacking for the treecorpses because of their inferior characteristics. A soulless creature had no chance to develop intelligence. In terms of turning into a new race, the withered were a hundred times more likely compared to these corpses.

According to his study, if the second generation withered can't successfully produce a third generation, they wouldn't be able to become a new race. If that was the case, it was simply impossible for these corpses. The dead can't become a new race.

Thus, this scene took him by surprise. He didn't expect for some corpses to have a little intelligence. Although it looked quite limited, this was still a good start.

The corpses stood up and stared at the intruding duo. Li Qiye noticed and smiled: "A bit interesting, do you want to fight?"

They were far stronger than the ones outside. Moreover, the rest of the corpses surrounded this area completely and seemed to be ready to pounce at any moment.

Anyone else would be scared out of their minds under this perilous situation. However, Li Qiye was still calm and could speak normally.

In a short amount of time, countless gazes were on them. Xiaoxiao felt a bit frightened from all the unwanted attention. This wasn't due to her being timid, it was because this scene was too bizarre and creepy.

It was one thing to be stared at by the living, but staring at her were countless eyes from the dead. It was a completely different sensation. Their hollow eyes carried a ghastly energy. There was nothing but death.

"Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!" Right when Xiaoxiao thought that these corpses were about to attack them, they dug into the ground and disappeared from sight.

"What's wrong with them?" She found this astonishing and didn't know why they didn't attack.

"They fled." He chuckled and walked towards the boulder that they were sitting around.

"Fled?" This took her by surprise: "Why did they flee? Are they afraid of us?"

However, she felt that this wasn't plausible since they attacked all the other cultivators that entered the valley.

"Soulless they might be, their instincts are quite keen. They know who they can and can't mess with." Li Qiye understood what she was thinking and smiled.

He was suddenly attracted by something on the boulder and carefully observed it as if it was a supreme artifact.

"What is it?" She found it strange to see his focus and quickly looked over as well.

There was nothing on the boulder outside of a few shallow traces. These traces had been carved by a small stone. Moreover, they were quite new, so it was apparent that the corpses from earlier drew them.

It was completely indiscernible and abstract. They weren't dao runes or magical runes and were very few in number as if the corpses just drew them randomly.

Ye Xiaoxiao failed to understand them while Li Qiye relished this moment as if it was an earth-shattering mystery. He circled around the boulder, seemingly turning a deaf ear to Xiaoxiao.

She found his current expression incredible. These faint marks were nothing, a drawing from a child would be much more interesting in comparison.

“Just what is it?” After a good while, she couldn’t help but ask again while Li Qiye was still immersed in his observation.

He eventually regained his wits. However, he didn’t turn his gaze away from the marks as he replied: “They’re writings.”

“Writings? The corpses’ writings?” She was a bit startled to hear this.

“You can put it that way.” He continued to study them carefully: “In fact, it is still a bit early to call them text. However, in addition to instinctive expressions, these corpses have another way of communicating. These words are still very simplistic. This is only the inception and it still hasn’t fully formed yet, but maybe a real system will come out from this.”

The withered also had writings. However, their system came from the other races in the nine worlds. They studied and used the common texts like the others. Alas, it was different for the treecorpses. They started from scratch, and so did this particular writing system. These shallow markings on the rock were the corpses trying to express something.

“What is written here?” She simply couldn’t decipher the intent.

Li Qiye gently shook his head: “I don’t know. This type of text is still in its early stages, it’s not even finished yet. I’m afraid no one can truly understand what they are trying to say.”