

Paradise 1461

Chapter 1461: Anomaly in the Peaceful Ocean

After the meeting with Liu Ming, the Lin siblings' itinerary over the next few days continued as usual.

The information that was being spread on social media platforms did not give Lin Huang any cause for concern. He also did not continue monitoring the various noisy debates on the Internet; he merely checked the news every day as per usual before he went to bed.

On this particular day, Lin Huang clicked on the online news page like he usually did before he went to sleep.

The headline displayed on the Union Government's home page immediately caught his attention.

The title read, "Notice—Peaceful Ocean Off-Limits!"

"The Peaceful Ocean is off-limits... what on earth is going on?" Puzzled, Lin Huang immediately clicked on the notice.

"In view of all the monsters in the Peaceful Ocean becoming more powerful overall, the Union Government and the Hunter Association will be organizing a combined extermination campaign. From now on until further notice, the Peaceful Ocean is now a restricted zone; all cultivators below virtual god-level are forbidden to set foot there. After the extermination operation has been carried out, we will announce at the earliest opportunity when the area will be accessible again so that normal hunting can resume."

After Lin Huang had finished reading the notice, he could not help raising his brows.

His first reaction was that the Union Government was concealing the real reason for sealing off the Peaceful Ocean. This was because if they were really looking to mount an extermination campaign, it would not be necessary to make such a big fuss over declaring the place off-limits.

Something must have happened that the Union Government did not wish the outside world to know about, which was why they had made a strategic decision like this.

Somewhat puzzled, Lin Huang dialed Huang Tianfu's number.

Before the dial tone had even finished ringing, the video call connected.

"Your Majesty!" The minute Huang Tianfu saw Lin Huang appear on the call, he initiated greetings, a smile on his face.

Lin Huang gave a slight nod. "Tianfu, what's been happening lately over at Dynasty?"

"Everything is normal," Huang Tianfu replied, then extrapolated a bit further, "Mr. Fu and Lin Xuan are both still in closed-door cultivation. Other Virtual Gods are also in closed-door cultivation, and there are also some in the Royal wasteland. For the time being, there haven't been any unusual situations that have been reported back."

“Oh... I almost forgot; there’s also some good news. Huang Wuji has elevated to virtual god-level—it just happened in the last two days. I didn’t think it was anything particularly important, so I didn’t want to bother you with it.”

“With his talent and potential, his advancement is to be expected.” Lin Huang nodded slightly. Huang Wuji had initially been ranked with Chan Dou as one of the Five Princes and could be considered exceptionally gifted among the younger generation.

If Lin Huang had not suddenly appeared out of the blue, eclipsing the Five Princes’ brilliant talent, the Five Princes would probably have become the most formidable powerhouses of this epoch.

Moreover, if Lin Huang had not interrupted, Huang Wuji might very well already be holding the current position of Dynasty’s Emperor.

“The First Prince’s advancement is indeed a cause for celebration. Please reward him with a top-notch god relic weapon and a top-tier set of god relic armor. As for any other rewards, I’ll leave that up to you.”

“Very well, I’ll make arrangements.” Huang Tianfu nodded vigorously.

“Oh yes, today I saw the notice that the Union Government sent out regarding the Peaceful Ocean being off-limits. What’s happened over there?” After settling the matter of Huang Wuji, Lin Huang switched the topic of conversation to what he really wanted to ask Huang Tianfu.

“For now, I still don’t have any definite news...” Huang Tianfu finished speaking, then added, “However, I’ve heard that the Union Government has had several Virtual Gods dying in the Peaceful Ocean. This news hasn’t yet been verified, though; up until now I still haven’t received any information about what the actual situation is.”

“Once you have any news, remember to let me know immediately.” Lin Huang nodded.

The two men chatted for a little while longer before Lin Huang finally ended the call.

“Virtual Gods dying in the Peaceful Ocean...” Lin Huang was still more concerned about the matter of the Peaceful Ocean being declared a restricted zone. “It’s normal for Virtual Gods to die. Besides, there are numerous large and powerful monsters in the deep sea area of the Peaceful Ocean—not only that, after the World Rules were finally complete, those monsters would have become more powerful anyway.

“Sealing off the entire Peaceful Ocean right off the bat, however, means the situation is probably more complicated than it looks.” Lin Huang made this assumption because he had had dealings with Jiang Shan, Dongfang Bai, and the others more than once. He was very much aware that, based on the characters of these two men, they would not lightly make a decision like this.

Curious now, Lin Huang clicked on the black market forum.

Very quickly, he saw topics related to the Peaceful Ocean being sealed off; these topics were fairly numerous as well.

He investigated by clicking on a few posts that were trending more than the rest and discovered that all kinds of things were being bandied about.

Some people said that a powerful monster—suspected of being a True God—had appeared in the Peaceful Ocean and had slaughtered all the Virtual Gods that the Union Government had sent out for exploration purposes.

Some others said that a dimensional gateway from the great world had appeared in the deep sea area of the Peaceful Ocean, and armies from the great world were invading once more.

Still others insisted that the monsters on the seabed of the Peaceful Ocean had undergone abnormal changes, resulting in an explosive increase in power and turning the area into a zone forbidden to humans.

After Lin Huang finished reading all the posts, he still had no clue about what had happened in the sea areas of the Peaceful Ocean.

Although it only took a glance for him to identify the contents of many posts as being fake, there were also speculations in the contents of some other posts that could very well be possible.

After closing the black market forum, Lin Huang muttered irresolutely to himself for a while, then decided to push the whole matter of the Peaceful Ocean to the back of his mind for the time being.

The way he saw it, the matter had no real connection with him. Even though he was curious, he was not curious enough to immediately ask Jiang Shan or Dongfang Bai. Rather, he decided to wait patiently for news to come from Dynasty.

In the blink of an eye, another three days went by.

The Lin siblings departed from Magical Sky City, the grade-3A1 foothold where the Martial Hunter College was, and arrived at the grade-3A5 foothold of Wanbao City.

Lin Xin's reason for choosing Wanbao City was that it was No. 3 Zone's trade city, and it was also the largest trade center in the gravel world.

She wanted to wander around and see if there might be anything that she wanted.

After the siblings had eaten breakfast and found a hotel they could check into for a stay, Lin Huang's Emperor's Heart Ring suddenly began vibrating.

Lin Huang clicked on the communication page to take a look, and his brows involuntarily went up suddenly.

Initially, he had thought that the caller was Huang Tianfu, but he had entirely not expected that it would be the chief of the Union Government—Jiang Shan.

As soon as he saw that the caller was Jiang Shan, Lin Huang's first reaction was, 'Could this be related to the Peaceful Ocean?'

With this in mind, Lin Huang accepted Jiang Shan's video call request.

"Emperor Lin, I hope you've been well recently?" Although Jiang Shan wore a smile, there was something unnatural about it.

“I’m doing very well; every day I see beautiful scenery and eat good food,” Lin Huang answered with a laugh, “Traveling really is something that gives a person pleasure.”

Of course, Jiang Shan and the others were aware that of late, Lin Huang had been on vacation.

“I feel very bad about having to interrupt your holiday.” Jiang Shan’s smile held a faint touch of helplessness within it.

If it were not for the fact that he had encountered a matter that forced him into a last resort, naturally, he would not have contacted Lin Huang.

“Is it the matter of the Peaceful Ocean?” Lin Huang asked, quirking his brow.

“Yes, it is.” Jiang Shan nodded hurriedly.

“Tell me in detail then; what on earth is going on?”

“Around six months or so ago, we sent several Virtual Gods to the seabed of the Peaceful Ocean to search for... that entrance to the great world that you’d mentioned.” At this juncture, Jiang Shan lifted his head with a touch of embarrassment to gauge Lin Huang’s reaction. “It was a team of Virtual Gods, eleven in total, and the team leader was a Virtual God rank-4. The very day that they began their explorations, we lost contact with all eleven of them, one after the other.

“The third day after they lost contact, we gathered together two contingents, each headed by a Virtual God rank-6, and sent them to the Peaceful Ocean to investigate why the previous team had gone missing. Each contingent was comprised of twenty-five Virtual Gods, out of which four of them were intermediate-stage. On the second day after the two teams had descended into the Peaceful Ocean, we started losing contact with them again one by one. By the third day, we had lost contact with every single one of them.

“After this second investigation failed, it took us another week of preparation, then three days ago—the day the notice was sent out, in fact—we gathered together yet another large contingent and headed to the Peaceful Ocean. Last night, Guan Zhong reported to me, confirming that we had definitely lost contact with all of them...”

Chapter 1462: The Union Government’s Request For Help

After listening to Jiang Shan’s explanation, Lin Huang pondered over it for a moment before inquiring further.

“You said they lost contact one after the other—so that means during the journey communication was still taking place?”

“Yes, it was,” Jiang Shan affirmed, then added, “You’re also aware that there’s no signal in a vast majority of the areas in the Peaceful Ocean; it’s only possible to get a signal in a handful of place. That’s why we gave orders to the second and third exploration teams to report back the moment they reached an area where there was a signal, whether they discovered any anomalies or not.”

At this point in his narrative, Jiang Shan's voice paused for a moment, "However, this is the strangest part of the entire matter—all the messages that came back to us said that there was nothing out of the ordinary.

"Once the teams descended into the sea, apart from the first time when the number of people reporting back to us was normal, every other time the number of people sending back messages was always less. But not a single one of the messages that we received mentioned discovering anything unusual. It's like they never realized that the number of people in the team had gotten smaller.

"Not only that, once we discovered that the number of team members was decreasing, we sent out a warning and an order to retreat to those who were still sending back messages as usual, but we never received any responses. There was no way of connecting to any video call requests and communication calls; by the time we received news from them and tried to call them back immediately, there was no way to get through either. Their messages were only able to come through occasionally, and communication became entirely one-sided.

"We were only able to watch mutely as the minutes and seconds ticked by, seeing the number of people sending messages back decreasing continuously until finally, we lost contact with every single one of them."

Upon hearing this, Lin Huang furrowed his brow and sank into a long silence. Only after a while did he speak again.

"From what you've described, I can think of three possibilities.

"The first is, they fell under some sort of illusion and weren't able to discover that the numbers in their team were decreasing.

"The second is that something masqueraded as a member of the team, then more and more of the members were gradually replaced.

"The third possibility is that the people who sent messages back weren't the actual team members themselves.

"Another thing is that you mentioned there was no way for the other party to receive the messages that you sent out, and that both voice and video call requests could not connect—communication flow was only one-sided. This doesn't seem like something a creature living long-term in the deep sea would be able to do; they don't even know what an Emperor's Heart Ring is.

"So, either this is caused by human agency, or it's caused by monsters of high intelligence that have previously come into contact with the human race. Of course, the possibility of influences from the environment itself can't be ruled out entirely either."

"Is there any possibility that... the dimensional gateway you mentioned has been discovered, and invaders from the great world are breaking through into our gravel world from the Peaceful Ocean?" Jiang Shan hesitated for a moment, before directing his question at Lin Huang straight away with some amount of worry.

"My feeling is that the chances of that are fairly low." Lin Huang shook his head, but in his heart, he knew that the chances of that happening were absolutely zero.

Aside from the fact that there was currently no dimensional gateway on the Peaceful Ocean seabed any more, even if there really was one, any spatial fluctuations from another world teleporting into the gravel world would not be able to be concealed from the world will. If anyone teleported over, Lin Huang would sense it the moment it happened.

The only thing was, since Lin Huang had previously concealed the truth from the Union Government, he could not come forward now and tell them the actual situation. He could only find other means of vetoing the possibility of Jiang Shan's suggestion.

"The Thousand Snake Sect and Myriad Tribe Palace definitely won't find out so quickly about the failed invasion launched by Teng Ran's group. Not only that, the Thousand Snake Sect already has no more powerhouses above virtual god-level. If Myriad Tribe Palace were to invade, they would have sent their troops over the first day they discovered the existence of the dimensional gateway. They wouldn't need to wait for six months without any doing anything.

"If any other organizations in the great world discovered the gateway, at most they would explore for one or two days. Once they had confirmed that there were no issues with the dimensional gateway, they would have launched a general offensive right away—there would be no need to wait this long."

"This matter has already caused all the high-level personnel in the government to panic; we've lost a majority of our Virtual Gods and we have no way of sending anyone else out there to investigate." Jiang Shan's expression was full of anxiety. "I'm at my wit's end already... I hope that your Majesty might be able to lend us a hand and help us solve this crisis!"

The way Jiang Shan addressed Lin Huang had also changed. Previously he had always used the title "Emperor Lin", but now he referred to Lin Huang as "Your Majesty".

"Chief Jiang, there's no need for that. This matter definitely has something fishy about it; two Virtual God rank-9s have already gone missing, so it's useless for you to keep sending people out there." Lin Huang nodded slightly. "Since I'm still in the gravel world, I'll make a trip there and help take a look at things for you."

Only after hearing Lin Huang's answer did Jiang Shan feel vastly relieved.

At first, he had been afraid that Lin Huang would decline, or seize the chance this matter afforded to demand an exorbitant price while talking terms, but Lin Huang had not done so. In fact, he had agreed to look into the matter without hesitation.

If this had been previously, Lin Huang might actually have put forward a few terms and conditions to exchange his services for some cultivation or information resources. However, as far as the Lin Huang of the present was concerned, the Union Government did not have anything that he found desirable or that he wanted.

Another reason Lin Huang had agreed so readily to Jiang Shan's request was that the entire gravel world was already his own God Territory. Resolving the gravel world's issues meant resolving the issues of the God Territory within him.

Once he had agreed to look into things, Lin Huang then enquired about the details of some other matters before disconnecting from his call with Jiang Shan.

Lin Xin returned to the living room only after seeing that Lin Huang had finished his call.

“Brother, did Chief Jiang bring up anything important?”

“A problem’s cropped up over at the Peaceful Ocean,” Lin Huang explained briefly. “I need to make a trip there.”

“Can I go with you?” Lin Xin asked immediately, “I’m already Virtual God rank-9 so I should be able to help out.”

“It’s better you stay in Wanbao City and wander around to see if there’s anything you want.” Lin Huang shook his head, smiling. “The situation over there is somewhat complicated; I’ll feel better if I go alone.”

“You don’t need to worry, though. If it’s something quick, a day should be enough to resolve it; if it’s something that takes more time, two or three days should be sufficient to sort it out.” Lin Huang had just finished speaking when something occurred to him. “I’ll summon Little Witch to accompany you.”

By the time the words left his mouth, he had already crushed Witch’s card in his right hand, and her form was rapidly coalescing in the room.

“Little Witch!” As soon as she saw Witch, Lin Xin’s mood suddenly improved exponentially.

When Witch saw Lin Xin, she became excited as well.

Seeing the two girls rapidly begin chatting together, Lin Huang then pulled out two storage rings and passed one each to Lin Xin and Witch. “Inside these rings are some Divine Stones. If there’s anything you want to buy, just get it—don’t feel you can’t afford to spend the money. Little Witch too, buy whatever you want to buy!”

Within each of Lin Huang’s two storage rings were around a million Divine Stones, enough to buy even a complete set of top-notch god relics.

Moreover, apart from the three God Weapons that Lin Huang currently had on him, the rest of his equipment was fundamentally all top-notch god relics, so he had no need to spend any money in this respect.

Around a million Divine Stones’ worth of pocket money was definitely enough to spend.

Now that Lin Xin had Witch to look after her, Lin Huang could finally stop worrying. Even though his own sister was already a Virtual God rank-9 and her abilities were in no way weak, he was still afraid that Lin Xin might be at a disadvantage.

After he had settled Lin Xin’s affairs, only then did Lin Huang bid the two girls farewell. With a wave of his hand, he stepped into the Dimensional Whirlpool...

Chapter 1463: The Mysterious One-eyed Monster

From above the Peaceful Ocean, Lin Huang’s Divine Telekinesis spread rapidly. Using the boost from the world will, he scanned the whole sea area.

His Divine Telekinesis spread out like ripples on the surface of water, searching for anomalies inch by inch.

Unlike the Virtual Gods of this world, even though his combat strength was only at virtual god-level rank-6, the strength of his Divine Telekinesis was comparable to that of a ninth-rank True God.

With the added boost from the world will, even abnormalities at a microscopic level could be easily sensed.

With this level of scanning, nothing under the surface of the entire Peaceful Ocean could be hidden.

All the virtual god-level monsters took cover when they sensed this wave of powerful, overwhelming Divine Telekinesis, wanting to shrink their presence as much as they could. Many of the monsters even began physically trembling for fear that they would become Lin Huang's prey.

After only a few seconds of scanning the area with Divine Telekinesis, Lin Huang, who was floating above the Peaceful Ocean, suddenly raised his brows.

The next instant, his figure vanished from where he was; when he appeared again, he was already by a deep-sea trench.

Lin Huang spoke as he stared at a nearby reef.

"Come on out, you don't have to hide anymore. You didn't actually think you could elude being detected by my Divine Telekinesis using that little trick of yours, did you?"

A black shadow slowly moved through the reef and came out, quickly coalescing into a humanoid creature.

It was not a human being, but a humanoid monster.

Its single blood-red eye looked even redder under the brim of its conical bamboo hat—from its head down, its entire body was enveloped in a long black robe.

"Biologically speaking, you aren't a native of the Peaceful Ocean, are you?" Lin Huang commented, observing the other party. He quickly discovered that the other's aura gave him an inexplicable sense of familiarity.

"Where is this strange sense of familiarity coming from?" Lin Huang's confusion increased.

"It's you!" The one-eyed monster, on the other hand, began to seethe violently with killing intent after getting a good look at Lin Huang.

Before Lin Huang could figure out what was going on, he saw the other's figure suddenly spring forward. From under its black robe, a sword-wielding arm emerged, the weapon slashing down at him with a gleam like a black curtain.

Lin Huang pointed his finger, and his Sword Dao—enveloped in Divine Power—also transformed into a blood-red sword gleam as it shot out. The sword gleam of the one-eyed monster was instantly ripped apart, just like a piece of cloth being sliced through by a blade.

Seeing its sword gleam disintegrate immediately, the one-eyed monster hurriedly retreated.

However, the killing intent emanating from its entire being did not reduce in the slightest, and it clearly had no intention of giving up on its target, which was Lin Huang.

Although Lin Huang was baffled, he did not bother exchanging fruitless words with his opponent. Regardless of whether or not the other party was the culprit who had caused the disappearance of the Union Government's people, he would take it down first before any further talk!

Nevertheless, in terms of strength, this monster before him—whose combat strength was already at peak virtual god-level rank-9—had already mastered Sword Dao true meaning as well as two types of Water Enlightenment. It was indeed capable of taking out the Union Government's three waves of troops.

When Lin Huang was scanning the area with his Divine Telekinesis earlier, this one-eyed monster had the highest combat level in the entire Peaceful Ocean. That was why he was able to find it instantly.

Attack thwarted, the one-eyed monster's form immediately retreated. After narrowly avoiding the onslaught of Lin Huang's blood-red electric arc-like sword gleam, it found firm footing on a nearby reef. Its black robe inflated like a jellyfish, then slowly contracted.

The figure paused on the reef for only a moment. A second later, it launched off with a sudden burst of energy from its legs, and its form once again resembled a flash of lightning.

Almost at the same time, what was originally a single figure instantly split into dozens of figures, surrounding Lin Huang from different directions.

Lin Huang could not help raising a brow when he saw this.

More than thirty black-robed figures wielding black blades immediately surrounded Lin Huang, advancing until they were less than ten meters away from him.

Lin Huang appeared to be frozen with fright, remaining in place without moving a muscle.

He did not stir even when all the one-eyed monsters brandished their swords, and their web of black-colored sword gleams approached him with overwhelming force. Just when Lin Huang's form was about to be engulfed, he suddenly raised his hand again.

His movements were so fast that they seemed slow, even creating afterimages within the deep sea. The next instant, however, with just a lift of his hand and the pointing of a finger, a blood-red ray shot out at extreme speed. It pierced through the web of swords formed by the black-colored sword gleams and was swallowed up by the distant shadows.

With a soft muffled grunt, the black web of swords instantly disintegrated into a mass of debris.

"The illusions that you created using First Glimpse-level Water Elemental Enlightenment might be able to fool others, but they're not enough to fool me." Lin Huang shot an indifferent smile in the direction of the black shadows.

Within the black shadows, blood oozed continuously from the front of the one-eyed monster's black robe.

Its do-or-die second attack just now had been easily seen through by Lin Huang. Moreover, Lin Huang had only launched a very casual assault; not only was the monster unable to dodge the attack, but it also could not even block the onslaught entirely despite using all its strength.

Even with an attack as casual as this, the monster's combat effectiveness had been reduced to less than 70%.

The fury in the gaze of the one-eyed monster gradually faded, only to be replaced by apprehension, hatred, and a trace of dread.

Now that its thoughts were no longer controlled by anger, it quickly calmed down.

In fact, ever since Lin Huang had unleashed his Divine Telekinesis earlier, the monster had already known that there was a huge gap in ability between both of them. However, it still chose to test Lin Huang, and the result of its two attempts only served to make it feel even more hopeless, as the other was much more powerful than it had imagined.

Initially, it had thought that its mastery of Sword Dao true meaning and several types of Water Elemental Enlightenment would allow it to at least put up a fight. However, after an actual exchange of combat, it finally realized how wrong it had been. Lin Huang's proficiency in Sword Dao true meaning and god rule far exceeded its own.

All kinds of thoughts flashed through the monster's mind for only an instant, before it turned around and fled without hesitation. Its figure transformed into a black shadow, then escaped silently in the opposite direction from Lin Huang.

However, as soon as it moved, a familiar voice was suddenly heard from close behind it, not even a hundred meters away from where it had just been.

"Hey, I don't remember saying that you could leave?"

As soon as it heard that voice, the one-eyed monster's heart dropped to the pit of its stomach. Just when it was preparing to ignore the voice and speed up its escape, it suddenly felt a faint chilly sensation on its neck. It immediately ceased all movement and stood stock-still on the spot, not daring to move an inch. It knew that if it were to make even the slightest movement, its head would part ways with its neck.

Only after forcibly calming itself down did the monster become very much aware that not only its neck, but also its four limbs, were entangled by an invisible thread. It had no idea exactly when this had happened. It could not move its body at all; just like a puppet, it was completely under the other's control.

That terrifyingly powerful human male finally came slowly around from behind the monster and stopped in front of it.

At the sight of that familiar face, the one-eyed monster could not stop its killing intent from surging up again. Although this was instantly suppressed via reason, it was still noticed by the man standing before it...

Chapter 1464: The One-eyed Monster's Secret

“You’re displaying obvious killing intent toward me, but why?” Lin Huang carefully scrutinized the other with some curiosity. “Not only that, you seem rather familiar to me...”

Lin Huang quickly searched through the memories in his mind. After a while, he finally recalled a similar monster in a memory from four years ago.

“One-eyed, wears a conical bamboo hat, uses a sword...” The way the monster looked in his memory gradually superimposed itself over the one-eyed monster in front of him.

“I vaguely remember now,” Lin Huang said slowly, staring at the one-eyed monster in front of him, “You were the first Life Fire monster from when I elevated to a transcendent—the Regal Sword Killer whom I killed four years ago!”

The reason for Lin Huang initially not remembering was that in his memory, he had killed this monster a long time ago, and he had subconsciously left out the monsters that he had slaughtered. Moreover, the other’s physique and build had undergone significant changes, so he did not recognize it right away.

Now, though, his recollections were gradually becoming clearer.

Lin Huang compared the aura of the monster from his memories with the aura of the one-eyed monster in front of him. Although its aura had changed a great deal, he was still rapidly able to locate similarities between them. He also became more certain of the other’s identity.

Not only was this one-eyed monster standing before him his first Life Fire monster from when he evolved to holy fire-level, but because he had killed it, he had obtained a complete Monster Card—Regal Sword Killer.

However, Lin Huang looked at the one-eyed monster in front of him with increased astonishment.

“I’m baffled. I was sure that I had killed you back then. How did you survive?”

Lin Huang was absolutely certain that he had completed a successful kill because Xiao Hei had clearly sent a fatality notification at the time, and he had even obtained a complete Monster Card.

Even if his opponent did possess revival-type divine abilities or powers, as long as he did not fully complete the kill, there was no way Xiao Hei would send out a fatality notification.

Nonetheless, the fact remained that he had obtained the Regal Sword Killer Monster Card, which served to prove that he had genuinely killed the other party.

As this logical paradox circled around in Lin Huang’s mind, he suddenly thought of another possibility.

Maybe the other really did die, but after Xiao Hei confirmed its actual demise, something unknown brought it back to life again.

At this point in his ruminations, Lin Huang looked at the one-eyed monster in front of him with gleaming eyes. He very much wanted to know how the other had resurrected after being certified as dead.

The one-eyed monster evidently also noticed the change in Lin Huang's gaze. Initially, the scrutiny that it received had clearly been one of slight puzzlement. Now, however, Lin Huang looked at it as if he had discovered something of interest, and was eager to dissect it and obtain its secrets.

The one-eyed monster swallowed. It did not like Lin Huang eyeing it in such a fashion—such scrutiny made the monster feel like a slab of meat on a chopping board, which made it shudder. It tried struggling a bit, but its limbs and neck were still firmly secured, with no way of breaking free.

It watched the corners of Lin Huang's mouth slowly turning up, his lips moving to utter a few words, "Look up and look into my eyes."

As if it had no control over its body, the one-eyed monster raised its head and looked into Lin Huang's eyes.

Those dark-blue eyes were as deep and unfathomable as a starry sky.

The next second, the huge scarlet eye of the one-eyed monster rapidly turned a deep shade of blue, as if it had frozen over.

The Control-level god rule "Brain-read" immediately set to work.

The progress bar of Brain-read slowly went up, and Lin Huang waited patiently.

After about a minute, the one-eyed monster's memories had been completely read and obtained.

Lin Huang quickly scanned through this chunk of newly-acquired memory, searching for the secret that he most wanted to know—how the other had been resurrected after being certified as dead.

Before finding the answer to this question, Lin Huang managed to read, within the monster's memories, the whole process of the monster hunting down and killing the Union Government's three waves of troops.

It had created illusions with Water Elemental Enlightenment and confused all the members of the troops, then followed behind them like a cat-and-mouse game, killing them off one by one.

Even the short reports of the troops' safety came as a result of being deliberately bewitched by the one-eyed monster's illusions, which made them cut off the communication signals of their Emperor's Heart Rings the moment they sent the messages.

The monster's purpose in doing so was actually very simple—it wanted to create a mystery that attracted more explorers to come and investigate, providing more prey for itself.

The reason the monster hunted down humans was not due to its enmity with Lin Huang either. It was so that it could learn human sword skills, and it just so happened that there were sword cultivators among all three waves of the Union Government's explorers.

As for the others, they had become innocent funerary objects to accompany these several sword cultivators in death.

The Union Government's mystery of its disappearing troops was now solved, and Lin Huang was not very surprised by this result. The moment he saw this one-eyed monster using Water Elemental

Enlightenment to create illusion clones, he had already guessed that there was an 80% chance it was the murderer.

Having the ability to create illusions meant that it also had the ability to take down the Union Government's troops.

Setting aside the case of the Union Government's disappearing troops for the time being, Lin Huang continued to hunt for the answer that he sought.

In short order, he located the scene that he most wanted to see.

The wind howled over the deathly silent Elam Island.

In the sky, moonlight calmly streamed down from two full moons—one red and one purple.

At midnight, under the black soil, at the very position of the Regal Sword Killer's ruptured heart, a faint golden light appeared.

On the entire island, black-colored death energy began wildly flowing backward from the wound on the Regal Sword Killer's chest into the golden light emanating from its heart.

During all this, the Regal Sword Killer's body was also undergoing extraordinarily drastic changes.

By the time it was four or five in the morning, the worry-inducing blackness over the entire island had completely dissipated.

When the first rays of sunlight shone down upon the island at dawn, the corpse of the Regal Sword Killer buried under the mud slowly opened its single scarlet eye...

"What was that golden light in its heart?" The dark-blue color of Lin Huang's pupils faded, and his gaze shifted downward, stopping at the center of the monster's chest.

He pondered for a moment, then quickly conjured up his God Weapon battle sword to hand.

During this time, the one-eyed monster had also fully recovered consciousness.

"You're also a sword cultivator, so I'll pay you my last respects!" As soon as Lin Huang finished speaking, he thrust the point of his sword forward. The long, narrow blade instantly pierced through the one-eyed monster's chest, once again ripping its heart apart.

Just when Lin Huang was about to bring his sword down to slice open the other's chest and dig its heart out, the one-eyed monster's body rapidly disintegrated. It dissipated in the air, turning into points of black-colored starlight that streamed into Lin Huang's body.

When the black starlight touched Lin Huang's body, for a moment, he contemplated whether or not to dodge. However, he did not sense any threat from the starlight, so he gave up on evasion.

He sank part of his consciousness into his body and checked the whereabouts of the starlight. He saw that the starlight headed straight to his card slots after entering his body, and all of them went into a specific card.

Lin Huang took a closer look. To his surprise, he found that this was the Regal Sword Killer card.

Just when the last of the black starlight was about to penetrate Lin Huang's body, a beam of golden light suddenly sprang out from within the black light, turning into a lightning arc that pierced straight through the point between Lin Huang's eyebrows.

It happened so quickly that Lin Huang had no time to react. He immediately checked to see where the golden light had gone.

He saw the golden light crash into his spiritual dimension like a meteor, heading straight for his Sword Soul, and finally entering the battle sword—formed from the Sword Heart—in his Sword Soul's hands.

After that, the golden seal tactics on the blade lit up again, and line upon line of golden divine patterns that resembled living creatures began to drastically transform at a speed visible to the naked eye, shifting around before finally consolidating into a more complex yet quaint seal tactic.

Lin Huang felt dizzy just looking at the seal tactic.

After the new seal tactic had formed, the golden light on the surface of the blade gradually disappeared, then slowly resurfaced on both sides of the sword hilt like relief carvings.

At that moment, Lin Huang suddenly sensed that his Sword Dao true meaning was getting increasingly stronger. In just the blink of an eye, he broke through his bottleneck at True Meaning Level peak-stage right away, reaching a whole new level!

The three levels of Sword Dao true meaning were True Martial level, True Meaning level, and True Self level.

Lin Huang had been stuck at True Meaning Level for quite some time now. He had even used the Time Cabin Card but still had not been able to achieve a breakthrough.

He had never expected that he would get his breakthrough at a time like this.

Amid Lin Huang's amazement, a notification tone suddenly came from Xiao Hei.

"Congratulations, the mythical-level rank-4 Monster Card, Regal Sword Killer, has evolved and advanced to supreme god-level rank-5!"

Chapter 1465: Imperial Sword Killer

Lin Huang did not expect to receive that many benefits just from killing a Virtual God rank-9 monster.

Not only did his Sword Dao advance to True Self Level and his abilities upgraded once again, but Killer also advanced to class-5 and became the second Supreme God-level monster card he possessed.

"Monster Card: Killer"

"Rarity: Supreme God-level"

"Name of Monster: Imperial Sword Killer"

"Type of Monster: Protoss"

“Combat Level: Sixth-rank True God”

“Major: Sword Dao”

“Major Skills: Killer, other sword skills, Sword Realm...”

“Minor Skills: True Illusion...”

“Sword Dao True Meaning: True Meaning ‘First Glimpse’”

“God Rule: Water Snap...”

“Elemental Enlightenment: Sea of Illusion...”

“Summon Authority: Activated”

“Card Remarks: Train with maximum effort!”

1

Lin Huang immediately summoned the Killer card for inspection. Its rarity has changed from its initial Mythical level to Supreme God-level, and the name of the monster had also changed from the original “Regal Sword Killer” to “Imperial Sword Killer”.

Additionally, Killer’s Sword Dao True Meaning was only at True Martial Level originally and has now been upgraded to True Meaning Level. God Rule and Elemental Enlightenment also increased by three functions, clearly inheriting One-Eyed Monster’s God Rule Power. To cap it off, a lot of sword skills have been added to the information page of the skill slot.

After examining the card information on Killer, Lin Huang kept the card quickly.

Once again, he immersed part of his consciousness into his body in order to look over the details of the massacre of the small teams from the Union Government by the One-Eyed Monster. The culprit had been dealt with, but since he promised Jiang Shan to fully resolve this problem, he still needed to find the corpses of the victims.

Following the scenes he saw in his memory, Lin Huang soon found the location where One-Eyed Monster was hiding the dead bodies.

There was a bright flash and, a second later, he showed up at the corpses’ hiding place that was not far away. At the nearby depths of the ocean trench, numerous corpses lay suspended underwater, bound together by a kind of seaweed and spiraling round and round in a helical fashion.

After moving closer, Lin Huang noticed that the rattan-like seaweed was wrapped around the corpses’ necks.

There was nothing unusual with the seaweed; clearly it was just being used by One-Eyed Monster as a rope replacement.

Lin Huang examined the corpses. There were a total of 99 people. Three troops and four small teams, not a single one spared. However, all the Godheads within the corpses had been taken away,

undoubtedly by One-Eyed Monster for refinement. Thankfully, all the Emperor Heart Rings and other belongings of the deceased were left untouched.

After examining the state of the corpses, Lin Huang quickly stored the corpses into a storage ring one at a time.

After sweeping one wave of Divine Telekinesis to ensure that he had not missed anything, Lin Huang left the place with a flash.

The moment he departed from the Peaceful Ocean, Lin Huang immediately activated the Dimensional Whirlpool and reappeared instantly at No. 1 City before hurrying toward the Union Government Headquarters not too far away.

A moment later, when Jiang Shan, the chairman of the Union Government, saw Lin Huang in the living hall, he was rather astonished.

“Emperor Lin, why didn’t you let me know in advance that you were coming?” Jiang Shan quickly masked his misgivings, proceeding to exchange pleasantries with Lin Huang cheerfully while secretly trying to guess his intentions.

“The matter has been resolved, hence I came straight here.” With that, Lin Huang produced the storage ring containing all the corpses and placed it directly on top of the coffee table.

“The matter has been resolved?” Jiang Shan appeared flabbergasted when he saw Lin Huang reveal the storage ring. He stared blankly for a moment, his reaction rather delayed.

“Your three small squads were attacked by a monster. That monster’s combat level was at the peak of Virtual God rank-9 and was adept with an Illusion-type Elemental Enlightenment. Its abilities were comparable to an ordinary First-rank True God...”

“All the victims’ bodies should be inside this ring. If the number of people you previously reported to me is accurate, then not a single one of them was spared. The bodies are virtually unscathed, and their personal belongings are more or less intact. The only thing is that their Godheads have all been dug out by that monster, most likely for refinement...”

Jiang Shan hastily picked up the ring and used Divine Telekinesis to explore its contents. Almost instantly, his expression fell.

“Ninety-nine Virtual Gods, all dead...”

The worst-case scenario he had dreaded still ended up happening.

Truthfully, before he saw the corpses, he had been holding onto a flicker of hope that there would be survivors. He did not dare to optimistically believe that the group was just trapped somewhere, all alive.

Although this outcome was foreseeable from the very beginning, in the moment of seeing the corpses first-hand, Jiang Shan’s expression cracked.

“What about the murderer? Is it still alive?” After regaining his composure a moment later, Jiang Shan raised his head and asked Lin Huang.

"I killed it," Lin Huang replied mildly.

"Can you hand over the body for us to deal with? We can purchase it for ten times the market price." Jiang Shan pressed.

"It's not that I don't want to give you the body. After I killed that monster, its body disintegrated on its own." Lin Huang's tone was somewhat resigned. Before heading over, he had predicted that the Union Government would want him to present the murderer, but he could neither produce the body, nor could he tell them the truth. His only option was to fabricate a lie. "I think that the monster was possibly just a clone."

Jiang Shan did not probe further and readily believed this explanation.

It was abnormal for such a formidable monster to suddenly show up in the gravel world itself. If it were a clone of some formidable being from the great world, then that explained everything perfectly.

"If it's just a clone, is it possible for its primordial form to be hidden in the gravel world?" Jiang Shan asked somewhat worriedly.

"Unlikely." Lin Huang shook his head. "For its clone to grow to this stage, there isn't much reason for its primordial form to remain in the gravel world. It would only be able to seal itself, and its abilities would not be much stronger than its clone."

"Before I leave the gravel world, I will do another round of careful examination. If its primordial form actually is hidden in the gravel world, it cannot escape undetected by me.

"Also, bury the people in the ring well..."

"I will make the arrangements."

Jiang Shan nodded with a grim expression. Really, there was no need for Lin Huang to mention this. Any fallen Virtual Gods of the Union Government would be buried properly and with great dignity.

Just as Lin Huang was preparing to leave, Jiang Shan suddenly asked a question.

"Is it possible that the sudden appearance of that monster has something to do with the dimensional gateway at the bottom of Peaceful Ocean?" He still believed in what Lin Huang had said previously about a gateway at the bottom of the Peaceful Ocean.

Lin Huang paused for a moment before shaking his head. "I'm not sure. I didn't find that gateway when I went into the ocean this time."

Since it was his lie to start with, he had to see it through all the way.

He had personally announced that there was a dimensional gateway at the bottom of the Peaceful Ocean. Therefore, despite knowing everything about the One-Eyed Monster, at this moment he could only play dumb in front of Jiang Shan.

"Don't waste your time and effort on looking for that gateway. I'll definitely be able to find it before I leave. I'll send you guys the coordinates then."

In order to prevent the Union Government from wasting their time and resources, Lin Huang followed up with this statement.

Jiang Shan merely gave a small nod and smile and did not say anything, silently watching Lin Huang leave.

After ensuring that Lin Huang had left, he opened the communication page of his Emperor's Heart Ring and dialed a number.

"Get someone to do an autopsy..."

5

Chapter 1466: Lin Xuan Comes Out Of Closed-Door Cultivation

Lin Huang had taken no more than half an hour to settle the matter with the Union Government. Now, he rushed back to Wanbao City without delay.

When he returned to the hotel, both Lin Xin and the Witch were not in the room.

After deploying a wave of Divine Telekinesis, he located the two ladies at a nearby commercial district shopping for clothes while drinking milk tea. He hesitated slightly for a moment, then decided not to disturb the two ladies and their shopping.

Leaving the hotel, he walked straight into a nearby café, ordered a cup of black coffee, and sat down to look up the news and browse social platforms.

Although the Union Government had banned all news about the Peaceful Ocean three days ago, it was still the most talked-about matter online and its popularity had yet to die down.

Around midday, Lin Huang looked at the time. "It's almost 12, the two girls should be about done with their shopping."

Using Divine Telekinesis again, he discovered the two ladies trying on shoes at a shoe shop.

Lin Huang switched off the web page on his Emperor's Heart Ring and appeared with a flash at the entrance of the shoe shop before walking directly toward the two ladies.

"Bro?!" Lin Xin was visibly astonished seeing Lin Huang appear all of a sudden—she did not expect Lin Huang to be back so soon. Little did she know, Lin Huang had already returned to Wanbao City over three hours ago. "You're back so soon?"

"I returned as soon as I settled the matter." Lin Huang nodded with a smile. "After you ladies are done browsing this shop, let's have lunch."

"Okay!" Lin Xin readily nodded.

The two women tried on shoes for a while and eventually bought a pair each. After Lin Huang settled the bill for them, he turned to the two women. "What would you like to have for lunch?"

“We saw a hotpot restaurant just now. There were quite a number of people lining up. I’d reckon it must taste pretty good,” Lin Xin suggested.

“What about you, Little Witch? What would you like to eat?” Lin Huang craned his neck to look at the Witch next to Lin Xin.

“I’m okay with anything.” The Witch did not offer an opinion, for a Card Monster like her did not need to eat or drink at all. Moreover, due to the fiend-like tendencies which haunted her, she had extreme tastes when it came to food preferences. She liked to drink blood and eat her meat raw, her favorite being sashimi made from the offal of mammals. However, she could not share these sorts of preferences in front of Lin Huang and Lin Xin.

Thankfully, offal was also served in hotpot, albeit boiled, but this was still within the boundary of the Witch’s food preferences.

Seeing that the Witch did not object, it was decided then that they would have hotpot for lunch.

Lin Huang brought the two ladies upstairs and quickly found the hotpot restaurant Lin Xin mentioned on the sixth floor. There was still a long queue at the entrance.

The three of them had to wait for more than half an hour for their hotpot and finished their food at around one. Lin Huang initially thought that he could return to the hotel immediately. However, the two ladies who had eaten to their hearts’ content began strolling around the commercial district again enthusiastically, and this time they insisted on dragging Lin Huang along with them.

The three of them wandered around until the skies turned dark. When they finally returned to the hotel, Lin Huang felt like he was about to collapse from exhaustion.

As night fell, the two ladies started fussing about wanting to have supper. Lin Huang was adamant on not leaving the hotel and managed to send them away on their own after a fair amount of effort.

In the days in Wanbao City that followed, Lin Huang was dragged along every day by the two ladies to window-shop until the end of the daylight hours. He was starting to regret summoning the Witch.

Initially, when Lin Xin was all by herself, she did not have much interest in window-shopping. In the month and a half that the siblings had been touring around, there were times when it was Lin Huang who had to drag her out for a stroll. Who could have known that, now that she had the Witch as her close friend, Lin Xin completely let herself go to enjoy herself.

The three of them lingered in Wanbao City for five days before finally leaving. Within this short period of five days, not counting the Witch’s purchases, the amount of stuff that Lin Xin alone had bought was several times more than her purchases in the last month and a half.

After leaving Wanbao City, Lin Huang resisted the urge to send back the Witch and instead continued accompanying the two ladies to tour around for more than a week, before finally receiving news about Lin Xuan coming out of closed-door cultivation.

As soon as Lin Xuan came out of closed-door cultivation, he got in touch with Lin Huang.

“Bro, I’ve leveled-up to True God.” These were the first words Lin Xuan said to Lin Huang the moment the communicator got through.

After nearly two months of closed-door cultivation, Lin Xuan finally succeeded in a breakthrough to the True God level.

Upon hearing this, Lin Huang looked at the projection of Lin Xuan in front of him with a gratified expression. "Well done, boy! You're the first person in the gravel world to level-up to True God since the new era!"

"Two months ago, Xin Er told me that we'll wait for you to come out of closed-door cultivation before returning to Winter City together to stay for a few days." Lin Huang said with a smile. "It's already the end of December and it'll be a new year in just a couple of days. Although there's still some time before the end of the year, we can celebrate New Year's Day in Winter City."

"Since you've already come out of closed-door cultivation, Xin Er and I will finish up our trip here in these two days and hurry over to Winter City. Let's meet up there then."

"Okay!" Lin Xuan agreed without much hesitation.

After ending the conversation with Lin Xuan, Lin Huang immediately contacted Lin Xin who was out shopping.

As soon as she received the news about Lin Xuan coming out of closed-door cultivation, Lin Xin dragged the Witch along with her and hurried back to the hotel.

"Xiaoxuan has really come out of closed-door cultivation?" The moment she returned to the hotel, the first thing Lin Xin did when she saw Lin Huang was to shriek this question.

"It's true." Lin Huang nodded.

"Have you told him about going back to Winter City together?" Lin Xin asked instantly.

When she spoke to Lin Huang through the communicator a while ago, Lin Xin immediately rushed back after hearing the news about Lin Xuan coming out of closed-door cultivation. They had not gotten to discussing other matters.

"I've told him."

"What did Xiaoxuan say?" Lin Xin pressed.

"He said 'okay'." Lin Huang repeated Lin Xuan's exact words.

"Then...are we going back to Winter city now?" Lin Xin asked with an eager expression.

"There's no need to rush. I've already told him that we'll wrap things up here in these two days and go there to meet up. We can stay there until New Year's Day. There's still more than a week between now and New Year's Day." Lin Huang explained cheerfully.

"There's nothing to wrap up. I'll pop over to the bathroom and pack all my toiletries. Then we can leave." With that, Lin Xin sprinted to the bathroom.

Only then did Lin Huang turn his attention to the Witch who was still rooted to the same spot. "Little Witch, your holiday ends today then."

With that, the Witch nodded and burst spontaneously into golden specks of light, before transforming into a card in Lin Huang's hands.

He was returning the card to his inner world when Lin Xin emerged from the bathroom with her toiletries packed.

"You really are an impatient one." Lin Huang shook his head with a resigned smile.

"I haven't been to Winter City in nearly a year. I went back once in February at the end of the Lunar New Year and cleaned the house. But I didn't even stay and returned to Emperor City on the same day itself." Lin Xin said all this mildly, but Lin Huang could detect some bitterness.

"Alright, let's stay there a few days longer this time then." After saying this, Lin Huang quickly checked out of their hotel room on the Heart Network before summoning a Dimensional Whirlpool with a wave of his hand. He clutched Lin Xin along with him and stepped into it.

In the next moment, the two of them stepped out from the Whirlpool onto thick piles of snow.

Looking at snowflakes fluttering down the sky, as well as the three-story villa not too far away, Lin Huang was slightly lost for words. It was like he had returned to that wintry Lunar New Year four years ago...

Chapter 1467: New Year's Day

It was now the last third of the lunar calendar's twelfth month, and Winter City had long since been transformed into a snowy-white world, just like it had been four years ago at the end of the lunar year.

The Lin siblings were in the midst of watching snowflakes drifting down from the sky, their faces full of mixed emotions, when the door of the villa was suddenly opened by someone.

Standing in the doorway was none other than Lin Xuan.

"I expected both of you to arrive two days later; I had even planned to use all of today to pack, then go buy some things for the festivities and decorate the house a little." Lin Xuan's face bore a warm smile.

"You arrived really quickly—we were delayed by less than ten minutes, and you've teleported over already," Lin Huang returned, going toward Lin Xuan as he spoke.

"I'd previously used a portal to set coordinates for this place. Since there wasn't anything particularly pressing, I notified Huang Tianfu after ending the call and came over immediately," Lin Xuan explained with a chuckle.

At this point, Lin Xin came over to stand in front of Lin Xuan, craning her neck to look up at the young man who towered over her by more than half a head. "Xiaoxuan... why does it feel so strange now, calling you by that name?"

"If that's the case, you may as well call him Daxuan from now on," Lin Huang suggested from where he was standing beside them.

Lin Xuan's expression was wordlessly eloquent, but he did not object. Since in appearance, he now looked to be five or six years older than Lin Huang, he himself felt awkward at being called Xiaoxuan by Lin Xin.

"Daxuan honestly rolls off the tongue a lot smoother, so from now on I'll call you Daxuan instead." The minute Lin Xin finished speaking, she added hurriedly, "Your name might have changed, but don't you go forgetting that I'm still your big sister, Daxuan!"

Even though she was willing to let Lin Xuan change his embarrassing name, Lin Xin still steadfastly refused to abandon her position as the older sister.

Lin Xuan's expression indicated he did not have much of a choice, but he did not object either.

"Alright, let's hurry and tidy up the house for a bit," Lin Huang suggested quickly, dispelling Lin Xuan's awkwardness.

Given that they had not met for the past four years and Lin Xuan had experienced a great deal in that time—as well as awakened Mo Kui's memories—having him re-integrate so quickly into this family was definitely hard on him.

Lin Huang was more than willing to give Lin Xuan some time to let him slowly settle in.

Under Lin Huang's guidance, all three of them very quickly began spring cleaning.

It took the three of them one whole afternoon before they finally managed to clear the house, both inside and out.

"The bedsheets and quilts in the cupboard have been there for quite a few years; let's just get new ones. The toiletries in the bathroom are also past their expiry dates. Everything in the fridge can be tossed out..." As he spoke, Lin Huang jotted down the things that they needed to buy. "Both of you look around and see what else needs to be changed."

Lin Xin and Lin Xuan mentioned a few things; Lin Huang wrote them all down and made a checklist.

The three of them went out to eat lunch then headed straight for the supermarket. They purchased everything on the checklist, went home, and did another round of decorating so that the house, with its faintly forlorn air, now had an atmosphere of festive cheer.

For the next few days after that, neither of the three siblings went out much.

Lin Huang spent most of his time cultivating the Seamless technique and increasing the number of his telekinetic threads.

Lin Xin coaxed Lin Xuan to engage in combat practice with her. Naturally, their training ground was not in Winter City. Given that one of them was virtual god-level rank-9 and the other a first-rank True God, the mere aftermath of a combat session could easily destroy Winter City entirely. Their combat battlefield was in Lin Xuan's God Territory.

In the blink of an eye, a week or more passed by very quickly.

Lin Huang's telekinetic threads had increased by another twenty thousand strands, bringing the total number to around two hundred and fifty thousand strands. Lin Xin's combat skills had also gone up a level under high-intensity face-to-face training.

Currently, her abilities were no weaker than Mr. Fu's before he went into closed-door cultivation.

As New Year's Day—the first day of the first lunar month—drew closer, Lin Huang finally halted his cultivation of the Seamless technique; Lin Xin and Lin Xuan also stopped their combat training.

New Year's Day was actually the new era's new year, but everyone was accustomed to celebrating the end of the lunar calendar's old year, so New Year's Day was slightly less significant in comparison.

At present, however, there were still two months before the end of the lunar year. Lin Huang was not planning to remain in the gravel world for much longer, so he had chosen New Year's Day to step into the new year.

On the night of New Year's Day, Lin Huang showed his two siblings how to wrap dumplings.

Although there were dumpling shops in the gravel world, this was the first time that Lin Xin and Lin Xuan had made dumplings on their own. Both of them were very interested to learn and displayed great enthusiasm in the wrapping process.

The dinner that the three of them had was also very simple—each person had a bowl of dumplings, and they did not eat much more than that. The remaining uncooked dumplings were all packed and stored in the freezer.

That night, heavy snow fell outside the windows once again.

Lin Huang and his two siblings sat around the fireplace, happily chatting about the amusing experiences that they had gone through over the last few years until the wee hours of the morning ushered in the new year of the new era.

Only when they heard the melodious sound of the New Year's Eve bell did the three young people break off their conversation, turning their heads to look outside the window at almost the same time. Right at this moment, from not too far off, countless fireworks soared into the air in quick succession, bursting into gorgeous displays of light in the heavens.

Although the temperature was twenty degrees below zero, Winter City was currently bustling and lively even in these early morning hours.

The merchant street not far from Lin Huang and his siblings' small district was full of people coming and going; there were even a great many individuals who stopped where they were to watch the fireworks.

In the Lin house, however, everything was unusually quiet.

The flames flickering in the fireplace cast a warm yellow light that illuminated the faces of all three Lin siblings brightly.

None of the three said anything; they just quietly watched the fireworks soaring into the sky outside their window, bursting into bright blooms.

The fireworks display lasted for over half an hour before finally stopping. Only then did Lin Huang and the other two finally tear their eyes away.

“Four years ago, they let off a similar display of fireworks at the end of the lunar year,” Lin Huang was the first to break the silence.

“That’s right, I remember it very clearly—it was just like this. We lit the fireplace in the house as well...” Lin Xuan nodded, smiling.

“I remember it a little differently. Daxuan and I ran to the window to look at the fireworks for a little while. Then it started to snow all of a sudden, so we ran outside to have a snowball fight,” Lin Xin reminisced, laughing, “By the time we came back after we were done, the fireworks display had finished a long time ago.”

Lin Xuan gave a faintly embarrassed chuckle. Of course, he remembered these things, but he felt awkward bringing them up again.

The three of them chatted idly for a while longer before Lin Xuan abruptly turned to Lin Huang and asked, “Once New Year’s Day is over, when do you want to go to the great world?”

Upon hearing this inquiry, Lin Xin perked up her ears as well.

“We’ll stay for one more day. On the 3rd, we’ll go back to Emperor City first. Let me sort out my remaining affairs, then we can go.” Lin Huang obviously already had a clear-cut itinerary planned out.

When Lin Xin heard this, she fell silent for a moment, then asked suddenly, “Brother... in the future, can we still come back to the gravel world to visit?”

“Of course you can.” Lin Huang smiled and nodded. “If both of you want, you can come back here any time you wish.”

“Returning from the great world doesn’t seem as if it’s an easy thing, right?” Lin Xuan furrowed his brow slightly as he asked this. He felt that Lin Huang was saying this merely to humor Lin Xin.

“Don’t worry—since I’ve said it, I definitely can do it.” Lin Huang chuckled and patted Lin Xuan on the shoulder; he did not extrapolate further.

When he heard Lin Huang say this, Lin Xuan still harbored some doubts, but he did not pursue the matter any further, choosing to believe Lin Huang. After all, this man had managed to accomplish far too many things that other people were unable to achieve.

Chapter 1468: I Want To Resign From My Position As Emperor

On the 3rd of the first month, Winter City’s consecutive days of heavy snow finally cleared up, and the city welcomed the rare warmth of the winter sun.

After finishing breakfast, the three Lin siblings did not linger for too long but headed straight back to Emperor City.

Over two months had passed between the invasion of the Thousand Snake Sect and the present. According to the plans Lin Huang had drawn up for his itinerary, it was almost time to go back to the great world.

Upon returning to Dynasty's headquarters, Lin Huang called a meeting the minute he arrived.

Apart from Mr. Fu and a few others who were either still in closed-door cultivation or at the wasteland ruins and were unable to be contacted, all the other Virtual Gods arrived within half an hour of being notified.

Although Huang Tianfu had not given the reason for Dynasty calling everyone together when he sent out the notification, practically everyone guessed that the Emperor was about to return to the great world. This time, when Lin Huang departed, it was impossible that he would be back in the gravel world within a year—he might be parting from them forever.

Lin Huang arrived promptly at nine in the morning.

Everyone in the conference room rose to their feet.

Lin Huang's gaze swept over his surroundings. With a slight nod to everyone present, he began to speak unhurriedly.

"Please take a seat."

Lin Huang only resumed speaking after everyone in the conference room had seated themselves.

"I'm quite sure that all of you have guessed my purpose in calling this meeting... The threat to the gravel world has been temporarily resolved, and my vacation is almost at an end. However, before I return to the great world, I would like to talk about my plans for Dynasty's future one last time..."

"First of all, I hope that Dynasty will continue to remain neutral. Since Dynasty is fundamentally a dark organization, it's not realistic to expect everyone to change and become upholders of justice. However, I also hope that I won't see any among you return to embracing the dark side. Just remain as a neutral organization, unbiased toward either side. If you feel something is right, do it—if you think it's wrong, then don't. There's no need stand in line..."

"My next point is possibly something that everyone should be a bit more mindful of. What I want to say is that I will give Dynasty access authorization to Royal; I also won't remove your registrations from Royal's records. Given that I have a larger quota for affiliate organizations in Royal and I myself am not likely to establish several dozen or even several hundred organizations, these quotas may as well be put to good use.

"Huang Tianfu will still be responsible for access authorization; Wunan and Tufu will assist in managing things."

When they heard this, Huang Tianfu and the others finally breathed a sigh of relief. Their greatest worry had been that Lin Huang's departure would signal the termination of any affiliate relations with Royal. If that were the case, they would be denied access to Royal entirely.

Losing Lin Huang's protection meant that Dynasty had only two paths open to them. Either they seceded from Royal and returned all the resources that they had obtained there, or they became a leaderless

affiliate organization that was subjected to the lowest level of resources and treatment. Furthermore, they had a limited period by which to become vassal to another Royal member. If they exceeded this length of time, Dynasty and all its members would be entirely considered Royal's private property.

"My third point is that in the future, I hope Dynasty can become a training base for me to nurture and train talent. I will also be establishing my own organization in the great world, and I extend an invitation for Dynasty to send talented people to me in days to come. Of course, the standards of this organization that I will be establishing are higher, and the lowest level of combat strength will be virtual god-level. In the future, these standards may get even higher."

When they heard this, the eyes of numerous individuals present began to gleam.

As an affiliate organization of Royal, all of Dynasty's members naturally hoped that they might become official members of Royal someday. However, Royal's selection process for members was extremely difficult; practically nobody in Dynasty was qualified for admission.

If they joined Lin Huang's organization, it would clearly be so much easier.

It must be noted that most of the people present had become acquainted with Lin Huang's abilities while in the Abyss Brink. Huang Tianfu and a few others were even aware that those several hundred true god-level sword cultivators were not reinforcements from the great world; they were Lin Huang's own Sword Servants.

This was also to say that the organization Lin Huang was going to establish in the future already had several hundred true god-level guardians. Furthermore, with Lin Huang and his astoundingly talented potential, a developing organization like this was something that Huang Tianfu and the others dreamed of joining.

Even the ones present who did not know about the Sword Servants were also optimistic about Lin Huang's future and were looking forward to joining his organization. Moreover, they had witnessed as Lin Huang took charge of a Dynasty originally in decline, and developed it into one of the present six giant organizations.

"Fourthly—if at all possible, don't reveal Dynasty's connection with Misery. Although the Union Government and other organizations have already noticed, unless it's really a last resort, best not to bring it to light.

"My fifth point is that I hope to see Dynasty continue to develop peacefully. Since you now have access authorization to Royal, there won't be a lack of resources, and skirmishes over such will decrease significantly. Furthermore, the World Rule is continuously being restored; the next few decades will see an explosion of prodigies and geniuses. This will also be when everyone sees a surge in the advancement of abilities. Stay low-profile and keep growing—if there's no need, don't take the limelight.

"Of course, not taking the limelight might sound like a bit of a mockery coming from me, since I've already taken way too much of the limelight in the gravel world..."

The meeting continued for over an hour. Lin Huang brought up more than a dozen points, and the majority of everyone present listened attentively.

“My hopes and expectations for all of you are generally outlined in these dozen or so points. After today, I will not continue to hold the position of Emperor. Your future path will be up to all of you now...”

When Lin Huang finished speaking, he retrieved the Emperor Crown, the Emperor Saber, and the dragon robe from his space storage, placing them on the conference table.

“Your Majesty, whether or not you are willing to accept it, as far as Dynasty is concerned, the position of Emperor is forever yours!” Huang Tianfu was the first to speak.

“Tianfu is right! Furthermore, according to Royal’s rules, as long as Dynasty remains under your name, you will always be our Emperor!” Honest, straightforward Huang Tufu stood up hurriedly and chimed in.

Lin Huang could not help teasing them when he heard this, “So, Tufu, what you mean is, you still want me to break off the affiliation with Royal?”

Everyone present broke out in a cold sweat, and even the hitherto calm Huang Tianfu betrayed a discomfited expression.

“That’s not what I meant...” Huang Tufu waved his hands, slightly flustered.

“That’s alright, I know what you meant.” Lin Huang smiled and nodded.

“Your Majesty, I feel that you really don’t need to resign from your position as Emperor. You’ve also mentioned that in the future, you hope Dynasty might be able to become your base for training up talent and potential. When you’ve gone to the great world, even though we can’t directly serve you, the very least we can do by proxy is to expend some effort on your behalf. We also hope that Dynasty will continue to be your training base and that our relationship won’t be just cut-and-dried, cold cooperation,” Huang Wunan also spoke up to dissuade Lin Huang.

After being dissuaded by everyone, Lin Huang finally gave up but did not take back the pieces of equipment on the conference table.

“Very well then, I’ll continue as Emperor. However, I won’t hold onto this equipment any longer; with my abilities now, I have no need for them.”

After such a difficult time persuading Lin Huang to continue as Emperor, everyone present finally breathed a sigh of relief.

At this moment, Huang Wuji—who had been the first to arrive at the meeting and who had not said much the entire time—suddenly came to his feet.

“Your Majesty, I would like to join your organization and go to the great world with you!”

Chapter 1469: Meet at Nine o’Clock Tomorrow Morning

Huang Wuji was the First Prince of Dynasty, and one of the Five Princes of the younger generation.

Excluding Lin Huang, he, along with Chan Dou and a few others, were gifted geniuses who possessed the most powerful talent and potential in practically the entire gravel world. He was even considered by Dynasty to be the one most likely to inherit the position of Emperor.

Currently, he had also advanced to virtual god-level, just like Chan Dou.

Whether it was talent, potential, or combat power, he fully met Lin Huang's recruitment criteria.

Upon hearing Huang Wuji's words, a lot of Dynasty's members had shocked expressions on their faces.

As he was the former First Prince, even though he was unable to take the position of Emperor, he would definitely be Huang Tianfu's heir in the future, and it would only be a matter of time before all of Dynasty was within his grasp.

Many people believed that Huang Wuji was the one who looked forward the most to seeing Lin Huang leave the gravel world because once Lin Huang departed, he would become the main training focus for the whole of Dynasty.

Most people would never have expected that he would give up everything he could obtain in Dynasty and journey to the great world with Lin Huang.

Even Lin Huang was a little startled by his decision.

"Are you sure you want to go to the great world with me?" Lin Huang asked after a moment of silence. As Emperor, he had already discussed future development plans with Huang Tianfu and the others. He knew better than anyone how much attention and training Huang Wuji would receive from Dynasty after he left.

"Maybe there are a few things that I wasn't clear about. If you want to join my organization, you'll really need to consider it carefully. Since the organization is in the initial stages of being established, you'll need to obtain most resources yourself." Lin Huang glanced over at everyone present, then directed his gaze back toward Huang Wuji and continued, "With your natural talent and potential, you'll get the best resources for training if you stay in Dynasty. If you follow me, you won't have the luxury of resources or privileges."

"I understand," Huang Wuji did not hesitate, "I've never been one to pursue privileges; I've only sought to grow stronger."

"I'm also very much aware of the kind of training I would get if I were to stay in Dynasty. If I stayed in the gravel world, perhaps within a short time, my combat level would increase even more than if I went to the great world. However, in the long run, going to the great world is the better choice for me, because only in the great world will I face more challenges—even more difficult ones. Only then can I truly become stronger through repeated trials and not just elevate my combat level."

"What I want is a bigger stage. I hope that you'll grant me this opportunity, Your Majesty!" Huang Wuji's gaze burned, and he clearly had already steeled his heart to leave the gravel world.

Lin Huang stared at him for a while; when he saw Huang Wuji's resolute attitude, he nodded. "Since you're determined to do this, come with us then."

Seeing Huang Wuji successfully join Lin Huang's organization, the others that were present could not help feeling stirred as well.

Huang Tufu was the first to stand up. "Your Majesty, I... I also would like to go to the great world with you!"

As soon as he said that, he stole a glance at Huang Tianfu and Huang Wunan, who were next to him.

Huang Wunan maintained a poker face, but the expression on Huang Tianfu's face darkened considerably.

"Enough of that now—I'll save places for all of you. Once you've reached virtual god-level rank-9 and your successors have been chosen, then you can join any time." Lin Huang glanced over at Huang Tianfu, Huang Wunan, and Huang Tufu.

The reason he turned Huang Tufu down was that the three of them were the backbone of Dynasty—the ones who maintained its normal operations. The absence of either one of them would result in Dynasty being unable to operate normally for at least a certain amount of time. Moreover, the positions that the three of them held within Dynasty were not ones that could be easily replaced by anyone else.

This was why Lin Huang set out two conditions for them—one was to reach virtual god-level rank-9, and the other was to train suitable successors.

"Alright," Huang Tufu seemed to have already expected this result beforehand, commenting with a chuckle, "I was initially thinking of slacking off a bit and escaping my responsibilities, but I didn't expect that your Majesty would see through my little plan."

"The reason I agreed to take Huang Wuji with me is that his departure won't affect Dynasty's normal operations. The three of you would still do best to stay behind and properly build up Dynasty. Dynasty is my talent-training base, as well as an important part of the organization that I'm putting together."

After Huang Tufu's unsuccessful request, several people in the conference room also asked to join Lin Huang's organization, but Lin Huang turned them all down.

His response was, "You should elevate to high-level Virtual God first."

Although Lin Huang had given virtual god-level as the entry requirement, it was aimed at super geniuses like Huang Wuji. For those whose talent and potential were insufficient, if their combat level did not reach that of a high-level Virtual God, it would be extremely difficult for them to survive in the great world. Lin Huang setting out this condition was actually for their own good.

As soon as the meeting with Dynasty was over, Lin Huang went straight to Misery.

At Misery, he also set out the same conditions as with Dynasty.

Misery was also included in the talent-training plan.

After the meeting, several people also expressed their desire to join Lin Huang's organization but were all tactfully turned down by Lin Huang on the grounds that they had to "elevate to high-level Virtual God first."

After leaving Misery, Lin Huang summoned Sword103.

“How’s the formation of the Sword Alliance going?”

“In the past eight months, we have recruited 23 super geniuses and 318 other geniuses in thirteen safe zones. Most of the sword cultivator geniuses already belong to an organization, and most of them are part of major organizations such as the Union Government and the Hunter Association, so it’s unlikely that they’ll change sides.”

“Persuade the ones you can, but don’t force the ones you can’t. Also, don’t use physical violence to persuade them,” Lin Huang exhorted, then fell silent for a moment before continuing, “You should also pay attention to other gifted geniuses who are not sword cultivators, and recruit any suitable ones as well.”

Previously, Lin Huang had wanted to form the Sword Alliance because he had obtained a large number of Sword Dao inheritances. Furthermore, all the Sword Servants were strong sword cultivators, so it was easy for them to train new sword cultivators.

At that time, he had not considered recruiting other people because he was afraid of holding back other types of cultivators. Now, however, his thinking was more open. Although he had obtained very few other types of inheritances, the Sword Servants were all top-tier Heavenly Gods, who almost certainly possessed other types of inheritances from their previous combat levels. Besides that, they had also fought against other types of powerhouses before, and their ability to make discerning judgments could in no way be compared with that of ordinary cultivators. Therefore, they were actually entirely capable of teaching newcomers who were below virtual god-level.

Moreover, whether from Dynasty or Misery, the gifted geniuses that they would send to his organization in the future would not all be sword cultivators, so a more diversified expansion was still necessary.

After Sword103 had departed, Lin Huang turned his head and looked in the direction where Mr. Fu was undergoing his closed-door cultivation. He could vaguely sense that Mr. Fu was on the verge of breaking through to true god-level.

“From the looks of it, he’ll be able to break through in a few days...” Lin Huang had a pleased smile on his face.

The ‘spiritual energy recovery’ of the gravel world had undoubtedly benefited Mr. Fu a great deal.

That night, on the grounds of going into closed-door cultivation for a few days, Lin Huang quietly placed the gravel world within him, then teleported himself back to the Great Heaven Palace.

After coming out of the Great Heaven Palace and following the map Bloody had provided, he traveled on his own for several days and went through dozens of teleportation points before finally reaching the great world’s human domain.

On an uninhabited and remote border planet within the human domain, Lin Huang opened a gateway to the gravel world. The other side of the gateway was connected to a cave at the bottom of the Peaceful Ocean that was hidden by a massive shipwreck.

After finishing these preparations, Lin Huang returned to the gravel world again.

Upon his return, Mr. Fu had already successfully evolved to True God and come out of closed-door cultivation two days ago.

As soon as he pushed open the doors of the Emperor Palace, Lin Huang heard Mr. Fu's voice transmission in his ears.

"You've finally come out of closed-door cultivation, my good apprentice."

"Congratulations on successfully evolving to True God, Teacher!" Lin Huang smiled and replied via voice transmission.

"I never expected that I would actually be able to break through to true god-level in this lifetime." Mr. Fu's voice was full of joy.

After a momentary pause, Mr. Fu asked directly, "When do you want to go to the great world?"

"A little impatient, aren't we, Sir?" Lin Huang laughed.

"After evolving to True God, I suddenly feel that everything in the gravel world is dull..." For some reason, there seemed to be a hint of melancholy in Mr. Fu's voice when he said that.

"Then, let's set it for nine o'clock tomorrow morning. I'll notify the others," Lin Huang set the time right away.

Before returning to the great world to make arrangements, he had already informed Lin Xin and the others in advance, telling them that he would set a departure time once he came out of his closed-door cultivation. This was so that everyone could quickly prepare for departure within those few days.

After the exchange with Mr. Fu, Lin Huang quickly composed a message and sent it out to everyone.

"Let's meet at the square at the entrance of the Emperor Palace at nine o'clock tomorrow morning..."

Chapter 1470: Departure from the Gravel World

At half-past eight in the morning, Lin Huang ate an unhurried breakfast before returning to the Emperor Palace.

"It's almost time to send out the coordinates."

He glanced at the time, opened the address book in his Emperor's Heart Ring, selected Jiang Shan, Huang Tianfu, and Ku Ji's names, then composed a message and sent it to them.

The contents of this message contained the coordinates of the dimensional gateway that led to the great world.

Lin Huang had really put a lot of effort into this dimensional gateway.

First of all, in order to prevent the people of the gravel world from being teleported into the God Territory, he went through quite a number of places before setting the teleportation point in the human domain.

The next step was to prevent too high a mortality rate of the gravel world's Virtual Gods after they reached the great world.

After connecting this dimensional gateway, he secretly modified the surrounding area on the gravel world side of the dimensional gateway and, using a divine pattern, enveloped it with an Ice-sealing Elemental Enlightenment.

If an ordinary living creature were to approach within a certain distance from the dimensional gateway, they would slowly be frozen by the cold that radiated from the divine pattern.

For individuals who had not mastered God Rule Power, only those whose Divine Power exceeded Virtual God rank-6 (not including rank-6) could use their Divine Power to overcome being frozen and enter the dimensional gateway.

Those who had mastered God Rule Power could easily resist being frozen by the cold. Since the Elemental Enlightenment that Lin Huang had housed within the divine pattern was only First Glimpse-level, the chill that the divine pattern exuded would not be from the power of the Elemental Enlightenment itself. Instead, it would be pure cold that was isolated from the Elemental Enlightenment.

As for cultivators who were below high-level Virtual God and had not mastered God Rule Power, as long as they retreated in time, the frost from the Elemental Enlightenment would automatically fade away quickly. However, if they were to push through regardless of the cold, they would eventually freeze completely.

Nevertheless, Lin Huang did not tell anyone that he was the one responsible for this. He only vaguely mentioned in the text message that he sent to those few individuals, "The area surrounding the dimensional gateway is enveloped in cold, so Virtual Gods who are not high-level should not enter."

This set-up was done for the good of everyone in the gravel world.

This was because most of the great world's resources were monopolized by various major and minor organizations.

Anyone below high-level Virtual God would find it difficult to join a major organization in the great world. Even if they were lucky and managed to join a grade-3 or grade-4 organization, they would basically only be able to rely on odd jobs for a living, and it would be extremely difficult to obtain cultivation resources.

If one were to be a Lone Ranger, not only would the mortality rate be extremely high, but they would have to hand over at least 50% of their gains every time they entered a secret zone ruin owned by someone else—some ruthless organizations would even take more than 70% of those gains. Even if, once in a blue moon, one were to encounter a secret zone ruin with no owner, it would be full of reckless rogue cultivators who were not afraid of death. Without an organization to maintain order, the degree of danger would only be higher.

The exceptions were those who had amazing talent and potential like Chan Dou and Huang Wuji, who could get various organizations to prioritize their training merely at the sight of them. In the meantime, everyone else would have to slowly go through all kinds of trouble and hardships.

If this had been the past, Lin Huang would definitely not have spent so much effort on such matters. He had always been someone who did not like trouble.

However, now that he had refined the gravel world, his thinking had changed slightly, and he had the vague idea that 'these people are my people.' That was why he had worked hard and spent several days making these arrangements.

The people who received the message were in varying states of mind after reading it.

Huang Tianfu and Ku Ji had no doubts about the message that Lin Huang sent, and they also did not doubt the warning he had given them. Lin Huang must have had his reasons for stating that those below high-level Virtual God should not try to pass through the dimensional gateway, so they would follow what he said. Lin Huang had also told them not to spread this information, so they would keep it strictly confidential.

On the other hand, Jiang Shan's reaction after reading the message was completely different.

"He sent the coordinates over so easily? No concrete requirements or trading conditions?" Jiang Shan's first reaction was to doubt the authenticity of the coordinates, as Lin Huang had given out the information too easily. Even so, he banished this idea in an instant because false coordinates would be too easily exposed. All he had to do was send someone to the coordinates to check, and he would know whether they were real or not. This process would take less than half an hour.

"The area surrounding the dimensional gateway is enveloped in cold, so those who are not high-level Virtual Gods should not enter?" Jiang Shan was also skeptical of this warning. "So, those who are low-level and middle-level Virtual Gods can't enter the dimensional gateway?"

As for the part of the message that mentioned not spreading this information, conversely, Jiang Shan did not doubt that at all. This kind of information was top-secret in itself and could be sold at a high price. Why would he spread it for free?!

After carefully reading Lin Huang's message three times and confirming that there were no hidden messages, Jiang Shan closed the text. He then dialed the communication numbers of the two vice chiefs as well as other senior officials to call for an emergency meeting.

...

By nine in the morning, everyone was already gathered in front of the Emperor Palace.

Huang Tianfu and the other senior officials of Dynasty stood nearby and looked on quietly.

In addition to Lin Huang and Lin Xin, Mr. Fu, Lin Xuan, Xiao Mo, Chan Dou, and Huang Wuji were all present as well.

As for Yi Zheng and his sister Yi Yeyu, Leng Yuexin, and Li Lang, their combat levels were still at imperial-level, and they had not elevated to virtual god-level yet, so Lin Huang did not want to take them with him.

As for Fatty, even though he had good potential after using the Flawless Card, he spent a lot of time in his restaurant, so the amount of time he could devote to cultivation was far less than the others. Just a few days ago, he had contacted Lin Huang to inform him that he had broken through to transcendent. He was still a long way from virtual god-level.

Lin Huang glanced around at everyone present, then nodded slightly. "We're all here, so let's get going!"

After saying that, he stretched his hand out, and a whirlpool like a black hole automatically coalesced out of thin air.

Chan Dou and the others were all taken aback when they saw this; it was the first time they had seen this kind of ability.

Lin Xin and Lin Xuan took the lead and disappeared into the whirlpool. Mr. Fu and the others followed behind them and stepped in one after the other. Lin Huang was the last one to go.

Before entering the whirlpool, he turned to look at where Huang Tianfu and the others were standing, then gave them a slight nod.

"Take care, Your Majesty!" Huang Tianfu and the others shouted, waving to Lin Huang.

Only then did Lin Huang turn around and step into the whirlpool.

After a moment, the whirlpool in front of the Emperor Palace slowly disappeared.

"We don't even know when His Majesty will be back again..."

Huang Tianfu and the others watched with forlorn expressions as the whirlpool disappeared; only after a long while did they turn and leave.

Upon stepping out of the whirlpool, Lin Xin and the others found themselves in a deep sea.

Not far away was a massive shipwreck that was half-buried under sand and silt, and they could only faintly make out the shape of a large ship.

After a while, Lin Huang walked out of the whirlpool as well.

His gaze lingered on the shipwreck in front of him for only a moment before he suddenly turned his head to look in a certain direction.

At this point, Lin Xuan also frowned slightly. "Is someone coming here?!"

"It's the Union Government's people. I sent the coordinates to Jiang Shan half an hour ago," Lin Huang explained with a calm expression, "They've probably come to check on the dimensional gateway."

As Lin Huang spoke, he slapped his hand down on Huang Wuji's shoulder, imbuing a portion of Ice-sealing Elemental Enlightenment into his body.

Mr. Fu and Lin Xuan were both True Gods, while Lin Xin was a Virtual God rank-9. Xiao Mo and Chan Dou were both Virtual God rank-3s, but both had mastered Rule Bending Power. Huang Wuji, who had only just elevated to Virtual God rank-1, was the only one who had not been able to learn Rule Bending Power yet. He was also the only one who could not enter the dimensional gateway on his own.

Huang Wuji merely felt a chill within his body, but it was quickly replaced by a different mysterious sense soon after. Before he could perceive it in more detail, though, the Union Government's team had arrived.

Surprisingly, the leader was Lin Huang's old acquaintance—Guan Zhong, the head of Agency EA.

At the sight of Lin Huang and the others, the expression on Guan Zhong's face betrayed visible embarrassment.

"Your Majesty!" Despite this, he still took the initiative to greet Lin Huang. "Are you getting ready to leave now?"

Lin Huang glanced at the troop that Guan Zhong was leading. There were not many members—only six of them—and their combat levels were all different. They were at virtual god-level rank-1, rank-3, rank-4, rank-6, rank-7, and rank-9, respectively.

Although Guan Zhong was only a Virtual God rank-4, he obviously held the highest position among them.

"Yes." Lin Huang gave an indifferent nod. He did not have any particular opinions about Guan Zhong, nor was there any conflict between them. It was just that they had different standpoints, so it was difficult for them to be friends.

"Then... will you all go first?" Of course, Guan Zhong did not dare to jump Lin Huang's queue.

"Don't worry, I really want to see the results of your exploration trials in this area," Lin Huang replied with a smile.

Guan Zhong obviously had not expected Lin Huang to say this, but he quickly responded nonetheless.

"Then hold on for a moment, Your Majesty. We'll try it out first."

Once he finished speaking, he let the Virtual God rank-1 and rank-3 enter the shipwreck first.

The Virtual God rank-1 approached the shipwreck, but even before he could get within a hundred-meter range, a layer of white frost began rapidly condensing on the surface of his body without any warning. He tried taking two more steps forward, and the speed at which his body was being frozen began to accelerate rapidly. It was too late for him to retreat.

At this point, the Virtual God rank-9 from the Union Government suddenly made a move. A long rattan vine lashed out, wrapped around the other's waist—as yet still not completely frozen—and pulled him out.

Fortunately, the Virtual God rank-1 had not been completely frozen; after leaving the shipwreck, his body slowly began to defrost. However, his face was full of fear and terror. "It's so cold, it's like the chill is freezing my soul along with my body... After I took the last two steps, I couldn't move at all—I couldn't get away even if I wanted to..."

After seeing what had happened to his companion, the Virtual God rank-3 was obviously more cautious, and he took very small, slow steps.

As soon as he was within a hundred-meter range, his body also began swiftly freezing, but he frantically fought back using the Divine Power within him. Even so, the cold was all-pervasive, and his Divine Power was being rapidly consumed with every second that passed...

He moved forward slowly, step by step. As soon as he was within a fifty-meter range, his body began to freeze even more quickly. Remembering his previous companion's misfortune, he did not dare to rashly advance any further. He decided to ignite his Divine Power, sending his body flying backward in retreat.

"It's no good. I can only make it to about a fifty-meter range at most. I think I'd be completely frozen if I were to take one or two more steps forward..." His body was shaking with cold, and he shook his head at Guan Zhong.

Guan Zhong hurriedly handed him a Divine Crystal so he could replenish his Divine Power.

The Virtual God rank-3 could only reach about fifty meters, so the Virtual God rank-4 did not even have to try. He turned his head and nodded at the Virtual God rank-6.

The Virtual God rank-6 looked solemn, but he still began to approach the shipwreck one step at a time.

A few minutes later, he finally arrived at the shipwreck, but the moment he set foot on the wreck itself, a layer of white frost suddenly crawled up his legs and ankles like a living creature, then quickly spread upward.

The Virtual God rank-9 from the Union Government already had his rattan vine on hand, ready to come to the rescue at any time.

The Virtual God rank-6 activated the Divine Power within his whole body, but after only a moment of resistance, his Divine Power was completely exhausted. Seeing the frost rapidly enveloping his teammate's body, the Virtual God rank-9 made a move again, and the rattan vine lashed out.

Just as the rattan vine came in contact with the Virtual God rank-6's waist and was about to pull him back, the frost started to spread onto the vine as well. The moment the Virtual God rank-9 pulled on it, the part of the vine around the other's waist disintegrated.

"Crap!" The Virtual God rank-9's heart thumped hard in his chest.

However, at this moment, the body of the Virtual God rank-6 suddenly rose into the air, as if he was being pulled back by some invisible object, and flew backward.

Those from the Union Government activated their Divine Telekinesis; only then did they discover an invisible telekinetic thread wrapped around the Virtual God rank-6's waist. Their gaze followed the telekinetic thread as it retracted, finally landing on Lin Huang.

"No need to thank me." Lin Huang gave them a faint smile.

He took it upon himself to save this individual because this was his doing after all. Furthermore, its purpose was not to kill people but to prevent those who were not powerful enough from hastily charging into the great world.

After the Virtual God rank-6 had been settled, the Virtual God rank-7's expression darkened slightly, but he still moved forward steadily and walked toward the shipwreck.

His Divine Power surged throughout his whole body, and he quickly stepped onto the shipwreck. The moment his feet made contact, frost began to condense on both his legs but was suppressed by his Divine Power.

He hesitated for a moment but decided to move forward. After entering the hole in the shipwreck, he kept going down, following the coordinates given by Lin Huang.

Fortunately, things went relatively smoothly this time.

After entering the shipwreck, the Virtual God rank-7's aura did not significantly weaken.

After about ten minutes, he withdrew from the shipwreck, his body covered in frost. Although he had an exhausted look on his face, he was obviously relieved.

"How was it? Did you see the dimensional gateway?" Guan Zhong promptly asked.

"I saw it." The Virtual God rank-7 nodded.

"How intense was the cold?" The Virtual God rank-9 asked from the sidelines.

"At the current strength of my Divine Power, I could barely pass through the area enveloped by the cold. However, just entering and exiting once has depleted almost all of my Divine Power," the Virtual God rank-7 explained, "Also, the closer one gets to the dimensional gateway, the stronger the chill, and the greater the consumption of Divine Power. My guess is that a Virtual God rank-6 wouldn't be able to pass through even if they took a large number of Divine Crystals with them because the rate of Divine Power absorption would be far lower than its consumption rate."

"I'll go check it out." The Virtual God rank-9 nodded slightly, then walked straight to the shipwreck, evidently preparing to try it out himself.

Although the Virtual God rank-7 had come back alive, the Virtual God rank-9 was still very cautious as he walked. It also took him about ten minutes before he came out of the shipwreck.

He went back to Guan Zhong, and the two exchanged a few words through voice transmission.

After a short while, Guan Zhong turned his head and looked at Lin Huang again.

"Your Majesty, I apologize for holding you up for so long."

After that, his gaze came to rest on Xiao Mo, Chan Dou, and Huang Wuji for a moment. "You've seen the results of our trials. I'm afraid that it'll be difficult for you young men to pass through."

Seeing the results of the Union Government's trial explorations, Chan Dou and the others were indeed a little worried.

"Thank you for the reminder." Lin Huang nodded slightly at Guan Zhong. He did not refute Guan Zhong's words either, merely led his group toward the shipwreck.

Guan Zhong and the others fixed their eyes on Chan Dou and the other two, waiting to see what Lin Huang would do after they froze. Instead, to their surprise, Lin Huang and his group all proceeded smoothly until they stepped into the shipwreck—none of them showed any signs of becoming frozen.

Within the shipwreck, Chan Dou and Xiao Mo had long since understood what was happening. The moment the two of them were within a hundred-meter range of the shipwreck, the Rule Bending Power within them automatically activated, completely isolating the chill so it was on the outside of their bodies.

As for Huang Wuji, who had yet to learn Rule Bending Power, Lin Huang had imbued a small trace of Elemental Enlightenment into him for protection. Because of that, he had a common origin with the Ice-sealing power, so he did not feel the chill at all.

Those from the Union Government watched on as Lin Huang and his group entered the shipwreck. A moment later, there was a wave of spatial fluctuations from under the shipwreck, and the auras of Lin Huang and his group vanished.

Guan Zhong and the others fell silent for a moment.

“How did they do that?”

At this, the Virtual God rank-9 spoke up, “It’s probably due to Rule Bending Power. Lin Huang imbued the two Virtual God rank-3s and that one Virtual God rank-1 with Rule Bending Power to protect them...”