

## A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality: Immortal Realm #Chapter 1: Fox Girl - Read A Record of a Mortal's Journey to Immortality: Immortal Realm Chapter 1: Fox Girl

### Chapter 1: Fox Girl

It was a vast and barren wilderness with not a single person in sight.

Aside from weeds and shrubs, the only things that were visible on the barren, yellow landscape were countless gray rocks, all of different shapes and sizes.

A scorching sun was hanging in the sky, baking the earth with its heat, and the air was filled with yellow dust.

A petite and frail figure gradually came into focus on the bleak, yellow landscape, and she was running forward as fast as she could.

It was a little girl who was roughly six or seven years of age, and she was wearing a light yellow robe that was embroidered with pink plum blossoms. Her black hair was arranged into a pair of buns, and she possessed a set of intricate features, consisting of a pair of large eyes with bright, black pupils, a petite little nose, and a pair of red cherry lips.

The little girl was holding a palm-sized pellet drum tightly in her right hand.

The pellet drum seemed to be quite old, with the skin on either side of the drum already yellow with age, and there were several azure snake designs on its surface. The pair of pellets attached to the drum by short cords occasionally clattered audibly into the drum head as she ran along.

Despite her young age, the little girl was very fast and agile, and after just a few long strides, she arrived at a clearing in front of a patch of long grass that was as tall as the average adult person.

She seemed to be in a great hurry as her fair forehead was already beaded with sweat, and a trail of sweat was flowing along her left cheek down onto her delicate neck.

She wiped the sweat away with her left hand, and her round cheeks were as red as a pair of ripe apples, but she didn't slow down in the slightest.

Right at this moment, a harsh male voice suddenly rang out in the distance.  
"Stop, you little witch!"

The little girl shuddered upon hearing this, and she was so frightened that her face instantly turned pale. She raised the pellet drum in her right hand before giving it a vigorous turn, and her lips fluttered slightly, upon which a layer of faint azure light immediately appeared over the surface of the drum.

As the pellets clattered onto the surface of the drum, a burst of azure light erupted forth, landing on a patch of tall grass right in front of her.

A layer of azure light immediately appeared over the surface of the tall grass, but the light vanished in a flash, having seemingly accomplished nothing.

The little girl turned the pellet drum a few more times, and one burst of azure light shot forth after another with each strike of the drum, landing on the tall grass around her, which also flashed momentarily with azure light before returning to normal.

After doing all of that, the little girl's face had paled even further, but she had no time to rest as she dove headfirst into the tall grass.

Not long after the little girl concealed herself within the tall grass, a dust cloud rose up over 100 feet away, and a figure sped forth at an incredible speed before arriving in front of the patch of tall grass.

The figure was a tall and burly man with a coarse beard who appeared to be in his forties. He was holding a shimmering podao in one hand, presenting a menacing sight to behold. [1]

His gaze fell upon the trail of petite footprints in front of the tall grass, and he immediately rushed toward the tall grass with his podao raised, but right at this moment, a burst of azure light flashed up ahead, and five or six long azure snakes shot out at once, opening their serpentine mouths to expose their sharp fangs as they pounced at the burly man.

The man faltered slightly upon seeing this, then quickly pulled out a talisman with his left hand before slapping it onto his own body. A white light barrier instantly emerged, and at the same time, he slashed the podao in his right hand through the air amid a loud buzzing sound.

A burst of light that was several feet in length swept forth from the podao, and three of the oncoming azure snakes were instantly sliced into two by the attack. As for the remaining azure snakes, they were repelled by the white light barrier around the burly man, following which they were also sliced in half by the man's podao.

In the blink of an eye, all of the azure snakes had been vanquished by the burly man, and their true forms were revealed to be several bunches of tall grass.

The burly man harrumphed coldly upon seeing this, and he was just about to continue rushing into the tall grass when his expression suddenly changed slightly, and he stopped in his tracks as he withdrew his podao.

A burst of rustling rang out from behind him, and two figures quickly arrived on the scene.

One of them was a tall and thin daoist priest who was wearing a slightly tattered gray robe and holding a white horsetail whisk in his hand, while the other was a short and well-built man with a long face that was carrying several bruises, and a head of disheveled hair.

"Are you alright, fellow daoists?" the burly man asked as he turned to the two men.

"As expected of the daughter of a demonic fox, she's truly a cunning little witch. Fellow Daoist Qi and I were a little too impatient to chase her down, and we almost fell into her trap, but thankfully, we managed to escape relatively unharmed. Why have you stopped here, Fellow Daoist Yan? And where is that witch right now?" the long-faced man asked with a puzzled expression.

The burly man offered no reply as he pointed at the tall grass up ahead, and the trail of petite footprints in front of the tall grass was still clearly visible.

"Then what are we waiting for? Let's capture her and end this!" The long-faced man stepped forward to enter the tall grass as he spoke.

"She's been on the run for a day and a night, so I'm sure she's close to completely spent at this point, but she's very adept at using wood-attribute illusion techniques, which means this patch of tall grass to her will be like water to a fish. I fear that it would be unwise to rush in after her recklessly," the daoist priest mused as his eyes narrowed slightly.

The long-faced man hesitated slightly upon hearing this, then stopped in his tracks as he said in an indignant manner, "Then are we just going to let her get away? She's already this cunning at such a young age, if we allow her to grow to full maturity, who knows how much of a menace she could become?"

"We are enforcers of justice, so we naturally can't shirk our duty and allow this demon to escape. There's no way we'll just let her slip away right under our noses!" the burly man declared in a righteous voice.

"It sounds like you've already worked out a strategy, Fellow Daoist Yan," the daoist priest remarked.

"This patch of tall grass covers quite a large area. If we enter it blindly, we'll still be able to capture that demon in the end, but it's most likely going to be a huge hassle. I heard that Fellow Daoist Feng recently purchased a Firecloud Talisman, and as we all know, Fellow Daoist Qi's mastery of the Windlure Technique is unmatched.

"With those two things working together, we'll be able to incinerate all of the tall grass in no time, and that demon will have nowhere to hide then," the burly man said.

The long-faced man was silent for a moment, then said, "Using my Firecloud Talisman is not out of the question, but after we capture that demonic fox, I'm taking its hide, you two can share everything else. What do you say?"

"No, that demonic fox must be captured alive," the burly man immediately refused with a shake of his head.

The long-faced man's expression darkened slightly upon hearing this, and he asked in a cold voice, "So you're asking me to sacrifice my Firecloud Talisman for nothing? This is a mid-tier elementary talisman that cost me a good chunk of my fortune!"

"No need to get agitated, Fellow Daoist Feng. If I'm not mistaken, Fellow Daoist Yan should be an outer sect disciple of the Blood Sword Sect. The Blood Sword Sect recently released a mission for the demonic fox to be captured alive, and the one who completes the mission will not only become an inner sect disciple, they'll also receive a reward of one Bloodcry Pill and 1,000 spirit stones, isn't that right?" the daoist priest said as he turned to the burly man with a meaningful look in his eyes.

The burly man's expression remained unchanged as he said, "I didn't think you'd know so much about our Blood Sword Sect, Fellow Daoist Qi. Let's not waste any time by talking in circles. If you two can help me capture this demonic fox alive, you can share the spirit stone reward evenly among the two of you. What do you say?"

"I have no objections to that proposal," the daoist priest replied as he casually laid his horsetail whisk over his own arm.

"In that case, let's not delay any further." The long-faced man pulled out a talisman as he spoke, and he took a wistful glance at it before tossing it forward and chanting an incantation.

A layer of red light immediately appeared over the surface of the talisman, following which it exploded into a cloud of crimson flames. It was like a fiery force of nature as it descended from the sky toward the tall grass down below.

As soon as the tall grass came into contact with the cloud of fire, it immediately erupted into flames.

At the same time, the daoist priest uttered a daoist prayer before abruptly sweeping his horsetail whisk through the air.

A loud howling sound immediately rang out as several gusts of fierce wind appeared out of thin air before proliferating outward in a fan-shaped wave.

The flames were fanned by the wind, rapidly spreading through the tall grass like an unstoppable wave, and dense black smoke rose up into the air while ashes flew in all directions.

The trio stared intently into the sea of fire in an unblinking manner, and all of a sudden, the daoist priest declared, "Over there!"

At the same time, he shot forth toward a certain direction like a speeding arrow, and with a flick of his horsetail whisk, faint azure light began to glow on the surface of its hairs.

The burly man and the long-faced man were both spurred into action upon hearing this, and they followed along closely behind the daoist priest.

Around 200 to 300 feet in front of them, a petite figure suddenly sprang out of the tall grass, which was quickly being eaten away by the sea of fire, and it was none other than the little girl from before.

At this moment, there were already many holes in her light yellow robe, and her face had also been blackened by the dense smoke.

The field of tall grass that she had been hiding in had previously covered quite a large area, and in order to not make any sound that would draw attention to herself, she had been carefully advancing through the tall grass while occasionally changing directions. There was no sound coming from behind her, so she had thought that she was in the clear, but never did she think that her pursuers would use fire to force her out.

A horrified look appeared on the little girl's face, and she rushed away as quickly as she could in a blind panic, coughing incessantly all the while.

However, she wasn't able to get very far at all before she felt a gust of cold wind sweep toward her from behind, following which countless azure threads emerged all around her.

Almost at the exact same moment, a whistling sound rang out overhead, and a black net that was around 10 feet in size descended upon her from above.

The panic in the little girl's eyes turned into despair, but all of a sudden, she caught sight of a small and withered tree that was over 100 feet in front of her. Her eyes immediately lit up, and she bit down forcefully onto the tip of her own tongue.

"We've got her now!"

The long-faced man was the slowest of the three, but he could see that the burly man and the daoist priest had worked together to trap the little girl, and he was naturally ecstatic.

The large swathe of azure threads swept over a distance of several dozen feet before surging back to ensnare the little girl, and at the same time, the black net in the sky also fell upon her.

However, right at this moment, the body of the immobilized little girl suddenly disintegrated into azure light before transforming into a small tree.

"She used a Wood Substitution Technique!"

The expressions of the burly man and the daoist priest immediately darkened upon witnessing this development, and they both descended from above.

"Over there!" The long-faced man hurriedly pointed at a spot up ahead.

The small and withered tree that had been standing there just a second ago suddenly blurred before transforming into the pellet-drum-wielding little girl, and she turned to take a glance behind her before continuing to flee the scene.

"Don't let her get away!"

Perhaps it was due to the fact that she had just unleashed a Wood Substitution Technique, but the little girl's face was now completely devoid of color, and her footsteps were also becoming heavier and more laborious. As a result, she was beginning to stumble regularly, so her speed was naturally severely impacted, and her three pursuers were quickly closing down the gap between them.

"Ah!"

All of a sudden, the little girl yelped as she was tripped over by a rock, and she flew forward before crashing into a huge gray rock that was around 10 feet tall before falling heavily onto the ground.

"Why don't you keep running?" the long-faced man goaded with a gleeful expression.

The three men slowed down, and they formed a triangle before slowly approaching her from three different directions, cutting off all avenues for escape.

At this point, the three men had already been chasing the little girl for a day and a night, and along the way, they had fallen for many of her cunning tricks, so they were naturally feeling very resentful and indignant. Out of the three, the long-faced man was feeling particularly vindictive, having just lost a Firecloud Talisman to the cause.

As the three men approached the little girl, she pressed her back tightly against the huge rock behind her before curling up into a ball, but her eyes were filled with resentment.

The three men were naturally completely unfazed by her hateful expression, and the long-faced man took a step forward as he raised a hand with a sinister expression.

"I can't kill you, but I'm going to teach you a good lesson for making a fool out of us!"

Right at this moment, an unexpected turn of events unfolded.

A loud crack rang out, and countless thin cracks appeared over the surface of the huge rock that the little girl was pressed up tightly against.

Many small rock shards came cascading down onto the little girl's head, causing her to flinch involuntarily.

The long-faced man was quite taken aback to see this, and he stopped what he was doing, keeping his right hand suspended in mid-air. The attention of the other two men was also temporarily drawn away from the little girl as they turned to inspect the giant rock behind her.

The three men watched as the cracks on the surface of the huge quickly spread like a system of cobwebs, and many shards of rock began to split off before falling onto the ground.

The little girl clearly wasn't expecting this strange turn of events, either, and she immediately closed her eyes in fear as she threw her arms over her own head, not daring to move even a single inch.

Finally, the giant rock completely shattered amid a rumbling boom, and large chunks of stone flew in all directions before landing on the ground, raising up large clouds of yellow dust.

The three men were all quite startled by this, and they retreated a few steps with wary expressions, but their eyes remained firmly fixed on what remained of the huge rock.

"Wh... What's that supposed to be?" the long-faced man stuttered with a stunned expression.

As the dust gradually settled, it became clear that the giant rock was already gone, and it had been replaced by a male figure who was remarkably tall and broad.

The man was wearing an azure robe, and his face and hair were coated in a layer of gray powdered rock, indicating that he seemed to have been residing within the giant rock. Even through the gray powder, it was still possible to make out a set of unremarkable facial features and a complexion that was slightly on the darker side.

The man was staring forward with a blank expression, seemingly a little slow and dull, but he was significantly taller than even the burly man.

The little girl and the three men were all astonished by this sudden turn of events.

1. A podao is a Chinese single-edged infantry weapon that is basically a Chinese broadsword attached to a long wooden handle. 🗡️

## Chapter 2: Brother Rock

"Brother Rock!"

Right as the three men were looking on with stunned expressions, an elated voice suddenly rang out.

The little girl had already clambered up from the ground, and she immediately threw her arms around the imposing young man who had just emerged from the massive rock.

Given her short stature, the little girl's head only reached the young man's waist, and her delicate little arms were wrapped tightly around one of the young man's legs. Most of her body was concealed behind the young man, and she was looking up at him with her large, watery eyes.

The three men faltered slightly upon hearing this, then exchanged a bewildered glance before turning their attention back to the young man, only to find that he was displaying no reaction whatsoever to the little girl's voice, and he was still staring blankly at the three of them, much to their confusion.

A sense of unease welled up in the little girl's heart upon seeing this, and she frantically tugged on the young man's leg as she sobbed, "Brother Rock, I've

finally found you! Those bad people are trying to capture Le'er! You have to help me beat them, Brother Rock!"

This time, the young man seemed to have heard the little girl, and he lowered his head slightly.

The little girl looked into the young man's eyes, only to find that they were still completely blank and vacant, and her heart sank even further.

In contrast, this was a very encouraging sight for the three men.

They had already released their spiritual sense over the young man, only to find that there were no signs of magic power in his body whatsoever. There were only two possible explanations for this, the first of which was that the young man really was just a mortal who possessed no cultivation base at all, and the second possibility was that he was using a special secret technique or magic tool to conceal his magic power.

The strange circumstances leading up to the young man's emergence and the fact that the little girl was calling out to him for help made the three feel as if the latter possibility were more plausible, and there was a good chance that the man was perhaps also a demon.

The daoist priest rested his horsetail whisk on his arm as his gaze roamed back and forth between the young man and the little girl, and it was unclear what he was thinking.

At this point, the long-faced man had already lowered his right hand, and he had also taken a step backward to rejoin his two companions. At the same time, an object had fallen into his left hand, which was concealed up his sleeve, and he was still staring intently at the little girl.

The burly man gave his two companions a meaningful look, then declared, "May I ask your name, Fellow Daoist? I am Yan Cheng of the Blood Sword Sect, and I'm working with these two fellow daoists to capture this demonic fox. If this has nothing to do with you, then please be on your way."

The little girl was very alarmed to hear this, and she looked up at the young man with an imploring expression.

The young man slowly raised his head to face the burly man with a wooden expression, and he remained completely silent.

A hint of anger flashed through the burly man's eyes upon seeing this, but he suppressed it before repeating what he had just said, raising his voice a little on this occasion.

The little girl opened her mouth slightly, but didn't say anything. However, her palms were sweating profusely as she continued to hold tightly onto the leg of the young man's pants with her little hands.

The young man continued to offer no response.

The long-faced young man turned slightly to the side, then transmitted his voice to his companions as he said, "There appears to be something wrong with him. As opposed to wasting time here, why don't we..."

"In this area, the only people who would remain so calm after hearing the name of the Blood Sword Sect have to be complete idiots or unfathomably powerful. In any case, he's displaying an intention to protect that demon, so no one can say anything even if we kill him. Of course, the final decision is up to you, Fellow Daoist Yan," the daoist priest replied through voice transmission as his eyes narrowed slightly.

The burly man nodded in response, and a cold look appeared in his eyes as he tightened his grip around his podao. "Why do you not speak, Fellow Daoist? Are you looking down on us?"

His voice was like rumbling thunder, echoing incessantly across the barren plains, causing the nearby air to buzz incessantly.

A fearful look appeared on the little girl's face upon hearing this, and she reflexively let go of the young man's legs before tightening her grip on her pellet drum.

The young man continued to display no reaction, and it was as if he were deaf.

"Fine. If you insist on siding with the demonic girl, then we'll just have to take you down along with her!"

A fierce gleam flashed through the burly man's eyes, and his podao suddenly began to glow with blinding white light. At the same time, he raised his other hand, and a burst of black light shot forth in a flash, rising up into the air before descending as a huge black net.

The little girl was greatly alarmed by this, and she hurriedly tried to scurry away, but she was too close and it was already too late for her to get away.

The huge net descended like a dark cloud before rapidly closing in from all directions, encompassing the young man within it as well. At the same time, a flash of light emerged within the net, and a gleaming silver hook appeared on every single knot of the net, looking extremely sharp and menacing.

The little screamed as she opened her mouth to release a cloud of blood mist onto the pellet drum while turning it vigorously at the same time.

The sound of the pellet drum rang out, and azure light flashed over the little girl before her body abruptly disintegrated, transforming into a piece of dead wood.

The little girl then re-emerged out of thin air over 100 feet away before falling onto the ground. Around a dozen wounds had been inflicted onto her arms and legs from the hooked spikes on the black net, causing her to bleed profusely.

She rolled over before struggling laboriously to her feet, but she only managed to take a single step before she slumped feebly onto the ground again. Her face was deathly pale, and she was gasping for air.

At this point, the little girl was clearly a spent force, and the burly man didn't even bother to pay any attention to her. Instead, he made a hand seal with one hand, and the black net around the young man abruptly tightened.

At the same time, the daoist priest sprang up into the air, releasing around a dozen translucent flying needles with a flick of his wrist, and the needles shot forth like lightning toward various vital regions all over the young man's body.

"Look out!"

The little girl was unable to get up, so all she could do was yell frantically in the young man's direction.

A string of metallic clangs rang out, and as soon as the azure flying needles struck the young man's body, all of them were repelled away as if they had struck a rock.

"How is that possible?" the daoist priest exclaimed as he descended lightly onto the ground.

Even if the young man's body were actually made of stone, those flying arrows should've been able to easily pierce through him.

All of a sudden, a streak of golden light flew past the daoist priest before striking the young man's throat with vicious power.

"Hehe, what a fool! No one's ever taken a Golden Wasp Spike of mine and..." The long-faced man was slowly lowering his raised arm with a cruel smile on his face, but before he had a chance to finish what he was saying, the golden spike that had struck the young man's throat abruptly exploded into specks of golden light.

"Impossible!"

The long-faced man was left looking as if he had seen a ghost, and the burly man was also completely incredulous to see this.

The sharp hooks on the black net were capable of tearing through metal with ease, but they were unable to leave even the slightest scratch on the young man's body.

Right as the three men were looking on with disbelief in their eyes, the young man finally reacted to the string of attacks that had just been directed at him.

He slowly lowered his head to look at the net that was clinging to his body, and he seemed to find it a little cumbersome. He grabbed onto the net with both hands, and bursts of spiritual light erupted from its surface before it was torn apart with ease as if it were made from paper.

The two halves of the net gently drifted down onto the ground, and both the long-faced man and the daoist priest were so shocked to see this that their eyes were on the verge of popping out of their sockets.magic

Not far away, the little girl was also looking on with astonishment in her eyes, temporarily forgetting the excruciating pain that she was in.

"How dare you destroy my magic tool!" the burly man roared with fury, greatly anguished by the loss of the black net.

The black net was a powerful magic tool that he had borrowed from a good friend in the sect at a hefty price, so it was only natural that he was so furious to see it destroyed here.

The burly man gritted his teeth as he glowered at the young man with a livid expression, and he extended the index finger and middle finger of his right hand, upon which a purple talisman appeared between her fingertips out of thin air. He tossed the talisman forward as he chanted an incantation, and the talisman immediately flew through the air, arriving directly above the young man's head.

Immediately thereafter, the talisman exploded to form a dense black cloud.

The sound of rumbling thunderclaps rang out as light flashed within the black cloud, and a bolt of silver lightning that was thick as a bowl came crashing down.

The bolt of lightning struck the young man's body with a resounding boom, and countless arcs of lightning sprang forth in all directions, bombarding the ground around him to create a series of charred black craters.

The little girl closed her eyes in fear amid the rumbling thunderclaps, and somehow, she was able to muster up the strength to shift herself back slightly by pushing off against the ground with her hands, allowing her to just barely avoid being struck by the stray arcs of lightning by the tightest of margins.

She opened her eyes with lingering fear in her heart, and her mouth immediately sprang open in shock once again at the sight that she was greeted by.

The young man was standing in silence with countless black charred craters around him, but there was not even so much as a single scratch on his body.

The burly man was very alarmed to see this, but he didn't skip a beat as he continued to make hand seals while quickly chanting an incantation.

"Seal!"

Another bolt of silver lightning came crashing down above, but during its descent, it suddenly transformed into a series of intertwining lightning chains that wrapped themselves around the young man's body at an incredible speed, binding him firmly into place.

"What are you waiting for, fellow daoists?" the burly man roared as he raised his podao, and a layer of red light immediately appeared over its surface, following which he sprang forward with the tip of his podao aimed directly at the young man's face.

The long-faced man was initially also shocked by the fact that the young man was completely unharmed by the lightning, but he was ecstatic to see this, and he immediately made a hand seal before vanishing on the spot as a gentle breeze.

In the next instant, a gust of fierce wind was swept up beside the young man, and the long-faced man emerged out of thin air with a black metal ruler in his hand. There were several flashing white runes on the ruler's surface, and it was swung viciously toward the young man's shoulder, accompanied by a gust of ferocious wind.

Meanwhile, the daoist priest was looking on with a cautious expression, and instead of rushing forward like his two companions, he retreated a couple of steps before waving a hand through the air. A ball of crimson light flew out of his sleeve, then circled around in the air at an incredible speed before hurtling silently toward the back of the young man's head.

Even though the three of them had all unleashed their attacks at different times, their teamwork was flawless, and it was clear that this wasn't their first time working together.

The young man's eyes remained as vacant as ever, and he continued to remain completely still on the spot, seemingly unable to even detect the attacks that were being directed at him.

An elated look appeared in the burly man's eyes upon seeing this, and he injected even more power into his podao.

However, in the next instant, he suddenly felt something constrict around his wrist. As it turned out, he had been caught by the wrist by a large hand that felt as if it were made from steel, and not only was he unable to thrust his podao even an inch further, his entire body was also stopped cold in its tracks.

The young man had reached out to catch the burly man's podao-wielding arm by the wrist, and he had done so at such an unfathomable speed that no one was able to see his movements.

The burly man pulled back his arm with all his might, but it was completely locked into place, and it was as if he had been caught by an immovable mountain. His heart immediately sank upon seeing this, but a cruel smile then suddenly appeared on his face.

In the next instant, the long-faced man's metal ruler and the ball of crimson light unleashed by the daoist priest struck the young man's shoulder and the back of his head, respectively. Both blows landed almost at the exact same time, and piercing black light erupted from the metal ruler, while the ball of crimson light exploded into a large cloud of dense blood mist that encompassed the young man's entire head within it, giving off a nauseating stench.

The long-faced man burst into triumphant laughter upon seeing this, but in the next instant, he felt a rush of heat travel through his hand, and a burst of inexplicably immense power erupted out of the young man's body, traveling directly into his body along the metal ruler.

"No!"

A horrified expression appeared in the long-faced man's eyes, and he was involuntarily sent flying into the distance. A string of gruesome cracks rang out as he tumbled down onto the ground like a ragdoll, and countless bones had been shattered in his body.

Blood was also gushing incessantly out of his mouth along with fragments of internal organs, and by the time he drew to a rest, his entire body resembled a tattered rucksack that was riddled with holes, and he was as dead as dead could be.

"Impossible! How... Argh!"

The burly man was astonished to see this, yet before he had a chance to do anything, the hand that was locked around his wrist suddenly moved ever so slightly. Immediately thereafter, a burst of strange tremors rang through his body, instantly shattering every single one of his bones. The pain was so excruciating that it was like having his skin and flesh torn away by 1,000 cuts, and he couldn't help but let loose a bloodcurdling howl.

In the next instant, his body was sent flying involuntarily into the air, having been hurled viciously toward a large rock nearby.

Another bloodcurdling scream rang out as the burly man's body exploded into a pile of mincemeat against the huge rock.

All of this had taken place in the blink of an eye, and the daoist priest was horrified to see this.

He immediately turned around and frantically slapped five or six talismans of different colors onto his own body while fleeing with all his might.

However, he was only able to take a few steps before the air abruptly constricted around him, and the several types of protective spiritual light radiating from his body were snuffed out in a flash. Immediately thereafter, his entire body exploded into scraps of blood and flesh that came raining down from the sky, as if it had just been crushed by an invisible giant hand.

Meanwhile, the young man swallowed the cloud of dense black mist around his head, revealing his wooden features once again.

### Chapter 3: Departure

The little girl was staring blankly at everything unfolding before her with her mouth gaped open, seemingly still yet to recover from the shock of what she had just seen.

She inspected the remains of her three tormentors with a dazed expression, and all of a sudden, she collapsed onto her backside as tears began to flow down her face.

Initially, she was only sobbing quietly, but she quickly began to cry louder and louder, as if she had thought of something tragic.

Soon, the floodgates completely broke down, and her bawling once again broke the silence in this once-peaceful area. It was like a heart-wrenching song of grief and tragedy, expressing to the heavens the tribulations and injustice in the human world.

After an indeterminate period of time, the bawling drew to an abrupt halt.

The little girl had already risen to her feet again, and her hands were balled up into tight fists. The soot and blood on her face had already been washed away by her tears, revealing her delicate features once again, but this time, there seemed to be something in her eyes that wasn't there before.

All of a sudden, she rushed toward another huge gray rock that was up ahead not far away.

At the foot of the large rock was a mangled body laying in a pool of blood, and one could just barely make out that the body belonged to the burly man. At this point, he was already long dead. Several dozen feet away from the giant rock was a male corpse that resembled a pile of sludge, and it belonged to the long-faced man from before.

As for the daoist priest, his entire body had exploded in the face of the punch that the young man had thrown from afar, so there was nothing left of his remains aside from scraps of flesh and blood in the nearby area.

The little girl leaped over to the foot of the huge rock, then raised both of her hands, and azure nails that were several inches in length abruptly grew out of her fingers, using which she viciously ravaged the burly man's remains.

Her nails whistled through the air, releasing one azure claw projection after another, all of which struck the man's already severely mangled body.

Blood splattered in all directions, and the man's remains were instantly reduced to a pile of broken flesh.

However, the little girl seemed to have been yet to vent all of her resentment, and she blasted a burst of green flames out of her mouth to incinerate the man's remains into ashes.

Immediately thereafter, she did the exact same thing to the long-faced man's body, and only after that did she finally relent.

After doing all of that, her knees gave out from under her, and she fell onto her backside again as she panted heavily, having just exhausted all of the slight amount of magic power her body had just recovered.

The little girl took a moment to compose herself, then knelt down toward a certain direction as she murmured, "Dada, Mama, Big Brother, Big Sister, one of these foul bandits from the Blood Sword Sect is finally dead.

"I wasn't the one to kill him, but a tiny amount of justice has finally been served for what they did to you. Rest assured, so long as still draw breath, there will come a day when I will go to Bloodlight Mountain and erase the Blood Sword Sect from the face of this world!"

Tears began to well up in her eyes again as she spoke, but she forced them back, not allowing herself to shed them.

"I won't cry anymore. Dada always says that crybabies never grow up. I have to grow up faster!"

Only after a long while was the little girl able to suppress the sobs that were fighting to break out of her chest, and she stood up again before taking a glance at the storage bags left behind by her three deceased pursuers.

A hint of disgust surfaced in her eyes, but after a brief hesitation, she still decided to pick up all of the storage bags.

As the sun moved westward, the sky began to dim, and the wind also grew stronger, howling incessantly as the air temperature began to drop.

Looking at her barren surroundings, the little girl was becoming a little afraid, and she curled up slightly before reflexively sidling up closer to the only other living person in the area, the young man.

After throwing that punch to put an end to the daoist priest's life, the young man fell still again, standing on the spot in a wooden manner as he looked down blankly at his own feet, seemingly completely oblivious to what the little girl had just done.

"Brother Rock..." the little girl called out in a slightly hesitant voice, and she didn't dare to get too close to him.

The young man displayed no reaction.

"Brother Rock, my name is Liu Le'er. Thank you for killing those three bad people just now. Even though you're also a human, Dada told me that there are good people even in the human race," the little girl said in a slightly fearful voice.

The young man finally displayed a slight reaction to her voice, and he raised his head slightly to take a glance at her.

The reflection of the little girl appeared in his pupils, and a faint gleam seemed to have flashed through his dazed eyes, but they quickly became glazed over again. However, his eyes were still fixed on Liu Le'er.

Liu Le'er was quite startled by this, and she hurriedly took a few steps backward.

However, all the young man did was stare blankly at her without doing anything else, remaining as still as a statue.

Liu Le'er heaved an internal sigh of relief, and she became even more convinced that there was something wrong with the young man's head. She then gradually mustered up some courage and drew closer to the young man, examining him with a curious expression.

She had been in a state of panic before, so she didn't get a chance to take a close look, and only after approaching the young man was she able to catch a clearer glimpse of him.

The young man was tall and broad with long and slim fingers. His body wasn't particularly muscular, but it struck the beholder with the sense that it contained limitless power.

Even though his eyes were dazed and soulless, his pupils were incredibly black, almost as if they were capable of sucking in one's soul if they were to look into his eyes for too long. His exposed skin was slightly dark in complexion and extremely smooth. Despite the fierce battle that he had just endured, not a single scratch had been inflicted onto his body.

His azure clothes appeared to be completely unremarkable, but they had also managed to remain unscathed in the wake of the attacks that he had been struck by.

All of this, in addition to the fact that the young man had just devoured that cloud of blood mist like it was nothing, indicated that he was definitely no ordinary person, and he certainly wasn't a mortal.

How could a mortal possibly have killed three cultivators wielding magic tools with such ridiculous ease?

The little girl sized up the young man with an absentminded expression, and she became more and more relaxed as the young man continued to display no reaction. Having just survived that grueling ordeal, her childish curiosity seemed to have returned, and she walked around the young man in a circle.

The young man's gaze remained fixed on Liu Le'er the entire time, as if there were something about her that attracted his attention.

Perhaps it was because the young man had saved her life and killed her three tormentors for her, but the more she looked at him, the closer and more intimate she felt with him.

All of a sudden, Liu Le'er caught sight of a small dark green accessory that was peeking out from behind the young man's collar. The accessory was glittering and translucent, and she couldn't figure out what it was.

She wanted to peel back his robe slightly to take a closer look, but she didn't dare to do so.

Right at this moment, the wind suddenly grew a lot stronger, and a thick blanket of dark clouds appeared in the sky, causing the surrounding area to become even darker.

A thick bolt of lightning tore through the dark clouds, illuminating the entire sky, and this was followed closely by a deafening thunderclap and the arrival of a heavy storm.

"Argh!"

Liu Le'er let loose an alarmed yelp as she reflexively sought shelter from the young man's body, throwing her arms around his leg as she trembled delicately.

She was a demonic fox, and she had an innate sense of fear toward natural lightning.

Another faint gleam surfaced in the young man's eyes, but once again, it quickly faded, he bent over slightly, using his large frame to cover Liu Le'er. It was unclear whether this was an intentional gesture or not, but in doing so, he was keeping out the rain and wind for her.

A hint of warmth welled up in the little girl's heart, and she no longer feared the rain, wind, and lightning. Instead, she was struck by a sense of warm serenity, much like the feeling of being in her father's arms.

The storm left just as quickly as it arrived, and it didn't take long before the dark clouds faded, and the refreshing scent of petrichor began to spread through the air.

Liu Le'er shook off the rain on her body, then giggled as she latched onto the young man's hand and brushed off the water that had gathered on his clothes.

She didn't know what material the young man's azure clothes were made from, but the rainwater that fell upon it formed a series of beads that were completely unable to seep into his clothes, much like one would expect to see on a lotus leaf.

As always, the young man displayed no reaction to what the little girl was doing, allowing her to do as she pleased with him.

"Brother Rock, you still haven't told me your name yet," Liu Le'er said as she tugged gently on his arm, trying to get him to sit down.

The young man slowly obliged and sat down, but he was still as silent as ever.

"Why are you here, Brother Rock?" magic

"Brother Rock, that punch you threw at the end was so strong! Can you teach me?"

"Brother Rock..."

Liu Le'er was determined to break the young man's silence, and she tried several different ways to communicate with him, but the young man displayed no reaction no matter what she said, and she was left feeling rather disappointed.

The little girl was silent for a moment before making up her mind, and she grabbed onto one of the young man's large hands as she implored, "Brother Rock, I don't know who you are, but you've killed someone from the Blood Sword Sect, so it's best for you to leave this place with me."

The young man was still as dazed and disoriented as ever, but with Liu Le'er making a series of gestures to illustrate what she was saying, he seemed to have understood what was being told, and he finally departed with the little girl.

Dusk slowly fell, and the dying sun basked the sky in a blood-red hue.

With the sun casting its final rays of light upon the landscape, the barren plains were bathed in resplendent golden light.

Two figures, one tall and one short, were making their way toward the setting sun, getting further and further away. The wind was picking up the sound of Liu Le'er's cheerful voice and carrying it into the distance.

"Brother Rock, I know you're really strong, but there are a lot more bad people in the Blood Sword Sect!"

"It's getting late, you must be hungry, right?"

"Once we get out of here, I'll catch a few wild birds that roast them for you. My cooking skills are pretty good!"

"Brother Rock, I'm going to treat you as my real brother from now on!"

#### Chapter 4: Interdependence

In a primitive forest on a mountain, glacial winds were howling incessantly, and the heavy snowfall had covered everything in a pristine white blanket.

Even though the sun hadn't completely set yet, the forest had already become extremely dim amid the heavy snow.

There was a winding mountain path in the forest that wasn't all that clear to begin with, and it was virtually unidentifiable under the thick blanket of snow. However, there was a fire that had been lit at the end of the mountain, providing a slight hint of warmth in this glacial landscape of ice and snow.

The flame had been lit in the only mountain god shrine in the entire forest.

Due to how inaccessible the shrine was, it had already been abandoned and unvisited for many years. The gatehouse and walls of the outer courtyard had already all collapsed, leaving only a dilapidated main hall standing in a lonesome fashion.

The gate of the main hall had long been absent, and there was only a tattered straw mat hanging on the doorframe to keep out some of the wind and snow.

Through the holes in the straw mat, one could see that aside from cluttered weeds and stones in the empty hall, there was a figure seated with his legs crossed.

This was a tall and broad young man in an azure robe, and even though he was sitting on the ground, his back was ramrod straight. However, his face was completely wooden and expressionless, much like the dilapidated mountain god statue behind him.

The young man's arms were hanging naturally down onto his lap, and Liu Le'er was laying in the cradle formed by his hanging arms.

Right at this moment, a faint moan suddenly rang out in front of the young man's chest.

Liu Le'er's rubbed her tiny head against the young man's arm, and her face, which was previously buried against his chest, peeked out slightly from the crook of his arm.

At this moment, her delicate features were tainted by an unnatural flush, and even though she was sound asleep, her brows were tightly knitted together, and tears were flowing incessantly down her face from her tightly shut eyelids. It seemed that she was having a terrible nightmare.

"No... Don't..."

Liu Le'er reflexively tightened her grip on the young man's arm as she moaned in her sleep.

One of her legs had also been kicked out from the young man's arms, and she was occasionally twisting around in a disturbed manner, clearly suffering greatly from whatever it was that she was seeing in her dream. Soon, she buried her face back into the young man's chest.

The young man was looking straight up ahead, but he seemed to have sensed the little girl's movement and lowered his head to check on her. A slight hint of confusion appeared in his vacant eyes, but they were still mostly vacant and dazed.

"Brother... Rock..."

The little girl continued to talk in her sleep in a barely audible voice.

Perhaps it was because the young man's face was being illuminated by the light of the fire, but at this moment, his features seemed to have become softer and more gentle, and there seemed to be an extra spark in his vacant eyes.

He remained seated on the ground, but slowly swiveled around on the spot until his back was facing the entrance of the hall, shielding the little girl from the cold wind. He then gently tucked the little girl's leg back into his arms before tightening his embrace around her slightly.

The little girl wiggled slightly in his arms and buried her head deeper into his chest, following which her movements gradually subsided, and her breathing returned to a slow and even rhythm.

At this point, it was already completely dark outside, and the wind and snow had gradually abated slightly.

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Halfway up a lush mountain that was over 1,000 feet in height was a cave that stood at over 30 feet tall, and a tall and broad young man was standing with his back facing the cave.

Liu Le'er was standing behind the young man with one hand gripping onto the corner of his robe while the other arm was wrapped around his leg. Half of her face was peeking out from behind him as she cast her gaze forward, and her complexion was a little pale from fear and anxiety.

Several dozen feet in front of the two stood a giant gray bear that was over twice the height of an adult human, and it was standing on its hind legs with its front paws raised in a menacing display.

There was a single jagged horn on its head, and the lips around its cavernous mouth had been peeled back to reveal two rows of sharp fangs, while a trail of putrid and slightly viscous drool was dribbling down the corner of its mouth as it snarled in intimidation.

The young man was far taller and more imposing than the average person, but in the face of this giant bear, even he was made to look like a small child.

However, he was completely unfazed by this situation, and he was staring blankly at the massive bear with a pair of inky-black eyes that were almost completely devoid of luster.

After staring back at the young man for a while, a humanized look of fear suddenly appeared on the giant bear's face for some reason, and it let loose a low roar before taking a couple of steps backward, then fell onto its front limbs before fleeing as quickly as it could on all fours.magic

Liu Le'er's expression eased slightly upon seeing this, and she heaved a sigh of relief, then scratched her own head with a rather perplexed expression. She stepped around the young man before raising her head to look up at his face, but even after staring at his blank and wooden face for a long while, she was rather disappointed to find that she couldn't spot any changes in his expression.

"Brother Rock, I know you're not an ordinary person. It's a pity that you can't speak. Otherwise, it would be great if you could talk to me."

Liu Le'er heaved a forlorn sigh that was rather unbefitting of someone of her age, then latched onto the young man's hand before leading him into the cave behind them.

The young man didn't say anything, but his gaze fell upon the little girl's delicate hand that was holding onto his own, and he allowed himself to be led into the cave.

.....

On a vast grassland, spring was in full swing, and the area was teeming with life. New grass was already beginning to grow, and the unique, refreshing fragrance of grass was permeating across the entire grassland.

A little girl who appeared to be around eight or nine years of age was holding a bunch of thin vines that were riddled with small yellow flowers, and she was straddled atop the shoulders of a tall and broad young man as he made his way forward at a leisurely pace.

Compared with two years ago, the young man hadn't changed at all, and he was still wearing that same azure robe, but Liu Le'er had undergone some significant changes.

She had grown a lot taller, and her face had also lost some of its childish chubbiness. There was already a hint of gentle seduction in her eyes that was very rare to see in girls her age. It was clear that she was going to grow up to be a stunning beauty, perhaps the type that wars would be waged over.

Her fingers were moving rapidly as she wove the floral vines in her hands while humming a cheerful tune, and her voice was as crisp and alluring as the song of a yellow warbler.

"Done!"

Before she had a chance to finish her song, she had already finished weaving a beautiful floral wreath.

She held up the wreath with both hands, turning it to examine it from all angles, then nodded with a pleased expression before placing it onto the young man's head in a joyful manner.

The size of the wreath was perfect, and the part where the flowers were most concentrated was sitting directly above the young man's forehead.

The young man seemed to have detected what was happening, and he reached up to gently touch the floral wreath before slowly withdrawing his hand.

Liu Le'er was already accustomed to the young man's dull reactions, and she lowered her head to glance down at the thin green string around his neck. A mischievous grin appeared on her face as she quickly reached down to grab onto the string and lift it up, but the young man reflexively grabbed onto the dark green accessory attached to the string as if it were second nature for him, refusing to let it go.

"You do this every time, Brother Rock! Why are you so stingy? I just want to take a look at it!" Liu Le'er grumbled as she puffed out her cheeks in displeasure.

Despite what she was saying, she wasn't actually angry. Throughout the past two years, the young man hadn't spoken a single word to her, and aside from the very minor reactions he gave in response to external stimulus, the only times that he reacted in any meaningful way was when that accessory that he wore around his neck came under threat.

It was exactly because of this that Liu Le'er would occasionally goad a reaction out of him by playfully grabbing the string.

.....

Time passed by quickly, and several years flew by in the blink of an eye.

A gorgeous young woman who appeared to be 13 to 14 years of age was walking energetically over an official road paved with yellow sand. She was wearing a white dress and a pair of light gray boots. Her black hair spilled all the way down to her waist, and her hands were tucked behind her back as she walked along.

Behind her was a tall and broad azure-robed man who was following her at a lethargic pace with a wooden expression on his face.

The little girl was walking along far quicker than the young man, but due to the stride length advantage that the young man had over her, not much distance was opened up between them.

In the distance, Liu Le'er spotted a mighty gray city at the end of the official road. There were many people traversing through the city gate, and from this distance, all of them appeared to be as tiny as sparrows.

Her brows furrowed slightly as she drew to a halt.

"Farbright City..." she mused after peering into the distance through narrowed eyes for a long while.

The young man made his way to her side before also stopping and casting his gaze toward the imposing city.

"Looks like it's a major city of the human race," Liu Le'er murmured to herself with a hesitant expression.

During these past five years, the two of them had visited some human cities and towns to try and find a cure for the young man's mysterious condition, but never had they visited such a large city.

"Brother Rock, if we can cure you, you'll be able to take revenge for me, right?" Liu Le'er asked as she looked up at the young man, but it was unclear whether she was directing the question at him or at herself.

The young man seemed to have displayed some reaction to her question, slowly withdrawing his gaze before turning to look at the little girl, but he remained silent.

What nonsense am I spouting? No matter how strong Brother Rock is, there's no way he can beat all those bad people in the Blood Sword Sect.

A depressing thought seemed to have occurred to Liu Le'er, and she lowered her head with a dejected expression. Tears began to flow down her face before falling onto the yellow sand beneath her feet.

Right at this moment, she felt a warm sensation on the top of her head.

She raised her head slightly to find the young man gently stroking her head with a warm look in his eyes.

For some reason, this simple gesture made Liu Le'er feel incredibly at ease, and an indescribable sense of courage welled up in her heart, as if no hardships or obstacles would be able to strike fear into her heart anymore.

She wiped away her tears with the back of her hand while latching onto the young man's hand with her other hand, then strode toward the city gate in the distance with a determined expression.

## Chapter 5: Horse Beast

Farbright City was the third largest city in the Prosperous Nation.

The city was situated on a plain and took up an area in excess of 100 kilometers. To the south of the city was a large river, and transport via both land and water was very convenient, thereby giving rise to the flourishing city.

At this moment, there was a long line of people outside the city gate, and it was a very noisy and bustling scene.

Liu Le'er led the young man through the crowd, feeling rather anxious as she occasionally looked up above the city gate, which was several dozen feet tall.

An octagonal copper mirror was hanging there, and it was directly facing the city gate.

The sun was hanging high up in the sky, and the eight trigram diagram engraved onto the surface of the copper mirror was glowing under the light of the sun, giving off a sense of righteous energy.

All that was required for entry to be granted into the city was for a fee to be issued. The examination process wasn't very strict, and soon, it was Liu Le'er and the young man's turn.

The two of them arrived at the foot of the city gate, directly facing the octagonal copper mirror up above, and both of them were enshrouded in a burst of indescribable power.

Liu Le'er seemed to be quite stiff and anxious as she lowered her head, while the young man was staring directly at the copper mirror with a dazed expression.

Everyone failed to notice the faint glimmer of blue light that flashed through his eyes for an instant, and it didn't seem to have any effect on the mirror anyway.

A middle-aged city guard took a glance at the two of them, then asked in a lazy voice, "Where are you from, and why are you visiting our city?"

Liu Le'er immediately put on a bright smile as she replied, "We are from the Liu Clan Village located around 150 kilometers northwest of here. My name is Liu Le'er, and this is my brother, Liu Shi. We have come to Farbright City to visit some relatives and to treat my brother's condition."

Even though she and the young man had been living on their own for the majority of the past five years, occasional interaction with other people was unavoidable, so she had assigned the young man with the name of "Liu Shi" for the sake of convenience.

Liu Le'er pulled out some copper coins before handing them to the guard as she spoke, issuing a sum that was slightly more than the fee required to enter the city.

A pleased look appeared on the middle-aged guard's face upon seeing this, and he discreetly put the excess copper coins into his own pocket. He then took an extra glance at the dazed Liu Shi before waving them through.

"You two don't look like bad people. Go in now."

Liu Le'er gave a grateful response, then quickly led Liu Shi into the city. They walked for quite a distance, and only after reaching a secluded corner far away from the city gate did Liu Le'er slow down and heave a sigh of relief.

After making sure that no one was around, Liu Le'er pulled out an azure jade talisman as she murmured to herself, "It's a good thing that Dada gave me this Aura Concealment Talisman that can conceal my demonic aura so I wasn't exposed by the Demon Spotting Mirror."

The jade talisman was two inches in length and around two centimeters wide, with azure designs engraved all over its surface to form a complex array. Bursts of gentle azure light were surging over its surface like flowing water.

A hint of sorrow flashed through her eyes at the sight of the jade talisman, and she carefully stowed it away again.

After turning past two alleyways, the two of them arrived on the main street of Farbright City.

The street was wide enough to fit three horse-drawn carriages side by side with one another, and it was lined with countless large shops that stretched as far as the eyes could see.

However, there were very few brick and tile buildings in the city. Most of the buildings were constructed from wood instead, and even though the buildings weren't very tall or large, with very few of them exceeding even 100 feet in height, they were extremely intricate, and it was clear that there was great attention to detail in the craftsmanship.

This was the first time that Liu Le'er had ever visited such a large city, and she was pressed up tightly against Liu Shi as the dense crowds of people around her made her feel rather uneasy.

However, even though there were many people around them, they were all focused on their own business, and none of them bothered to interact with her and Liu Shi. As a result, she gradually became more at ease and began to have her attention drawn to all of the new things that she was seeing in the city. Soon, she was strolling along the street in tow with an intrigued expression.

"Look over there, Brother Rock! I've heard of that thing before, and it really does look as delicious as the stories I've heard!" Liu Le'er exclaimed while staring at a nearby stall that was selling sugar-coated haws.

The bustling scene in the city was reflected in Liu Shi's inky-black eyes, but he remained completely expressionless, seemingly unmoved by what he was seeing.

Liu Le'er was just about to drag Liu Shi over to the stall, but a hint of dejection suddenly welled up in her heart at the sight of his vacant eyes. She was immediately reminded of their objective for visiting the city in the first place, and she hurriedly tightened her ground on Liu Shi's hand as she said in an earnest voice, "Don't worry, Brother Rock. This is a massive city, there's definitely going to be a doctor here who can cure your condition."

Liu Shi's eyes flashed ever so slightly upon hearing this.

Liu Le'er led Liu Shi to a streetside food stall for a quick meal, then asked around and quickly secured the addresses for the two nearest medical clinics.

To the west of the city was the Li Family's medical clinic.

This medical clinic had already been around for over 100 years, making it a truly time-honored establishment in the city.

A middle-aged man in a long azure robe was seated atop a wooden chair with three of his fingers resting on Liu Shi's wrist to examine his pulse, while Liu Le'er was looking on from the side with an anxious expression.

The man's name was Li Changqing, and he was the current heir to the Li Family's medical clinic. He had already been practicing medicine for over 20 years and had earned quite a reputation for himself in the area.

After feeling Liu Shi's pulse for some time, Li Changqing withdrew his hand.

"Your brother's pulse is very strong and stable, and his energy is very abundant and well-balanced. It's clear that he's in exceptional physical condition. How did he sustain this condition? When did the symptoms first appear, and were there any external factors at play?" Li Changqing asked as he turned to Liu Le'er with furrowed brows.

"My brother and I have been apart for many years, so I don't know when he suffered this condition or the root cause," Liu Le'er replied with a shake of her head.

"That's rather problematic then. If I don't know the cause, then there's no way for me to administer treatment. My apologies, but with my limited skills, I am unable to help you," Li Changqing said as he stroked his long beard with an apologetic expression.

"Is there really no way at all?" Liu Le'er asked in an urgent voice.

"I'm afraid not," Li Changqing reaffirmed with a shake of his head.

Liu Le'er was very disappointed to hear this, and she extended a curtsy toward Li Changqing before departing from the clinic with Liu Shi.

She hung her head in dejection for a while, but then quickly turned to Liu Shi as she encouraged, "There are many more medical clinics in Farbright City. We'll visit them one by one, I'm sure one of the doctors will be able to cure you."

Liu Shi smiled in response, but it was unclear whether he understood Liu Le'er or not.

The two of them made their way in the same direction, passing through two streets before arriving in front of another medical clinic.

This clinic had gray outer walls with black roof tiles and a wide entrance, presenting a lavish sight to behold. The clinic was far more spectacular than the Li Family's medical clinic, and there were many people here for its services as well.

"Given how good this clinic looks, I'm sure the doctors here will be more skilled as well."

Liu Le'er led Liu Shi into the clinic with a hopeful expression, but Liu Le'er was left disappointed once again as the two of them re-emerged around an hour later.

"It's alright, there are still other clinics in the city." Liu Le'er quickly pulled herself together again.

Throughout the rest of the day, the two of them made their way through the entire city, visiting virtually all of the medical clinics, but none of the doctors were able to treat Liu Shi's condition.

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To the north of the city was a clinic by the name of Wild Chrysanthemum Clinic, and Liu Le'er and Liu Shi emerged slowly from inside.

Liu Le'er wore a dejected expression as she hung her head while fiddling with the corner of her dress.

The Wild Chrysanthemum Clinic wasn't the largest medical clinic in Farbright City, but it was said that the doctors there were quite adept at treating some rare and complex conditions. Unfortunately, even they were unable to diagnose Liu Shi's condition.

"Please wait a moment, little girl." Right at this moment, a voice suddenly rang out from behind them, and an azure-robed elderly man with a head of gray hair quickly rushed out of the clinic.

Liu Le'er was rather taken aback by this, and she stopped in her tracks before asking, "What is it, Doctor Liu?"

The azure-robed elderly man was none other than the doctor of the Wild Chrysanthemum Clinic who had just examined Liu Shi's pulse.

A hint of hope welled up in Liu Le'er's heart, and she hurriedly asked, "Could it be that you've thought of something related to my brother's condition?"

"Indeed, I have. After examining your brother's condition just now, I went to the back to do some reading, and I just so happened to stumble across a case that is rather similar to your brother's symptoms," the elderly man replied with a nod.

Liu Le'er was ecstatic to hear this. "That's fantastic! Could I ask you to elaborate, Doctor Liu?"

"According to the records in the book, your brother's symptoms are different from what is normally seen in patients suffering from a debilitating mental condition. Instead, it seems more like he's been cursed or had a restriction

planted on him that's harmed his soul. This is not something that the average doctor will be able to treat.

"Only immortal doctors who are adept in this field will perhaps be able to administer the correct treatment. As for your brother's inability to speak, that's not a concern. I can see that there's nothing physically wrong with him, so he'll naturally recover his ability to speak once his soul is restored to normal," the elderly man replied.

Liu Le'er fell silent upon hearing this, and after a while, she forced a smile onto her own face as she said, "Thank you for your advice, Doctor Liu."

"You're welcome, little girl. Doctors like us have an obligation to do everything we can for our patients," the elderly man replied before returning to the clinic.

Liu Le'er and Liu Shi continued on their way, and the former was feeling rather dejected.

"So Brother Rock really has had his soul harmed by someone," she murmured to herself.

As a demonic fox, even though she was still very young, she had a certain level of understanding of matters related to cultivation, and judging from Liu Shi's symptoms, she had already deduced that there was a chance that his soul had been harmed. magic

In order to treat him, she had to seek out the assistance of a cultivator adept in the way of the soul.

However, cultivators who fit that description were all extremely powerful, and she wasn't confident that her Aura Concealment Talisman would be able to keep her identity a secret in the presence of such a cultivator.

She had come to Farbright City to seek out medical treatment on the slim hope that she was incorrect in her assessment, but her worst fears had been confirmed.

Liu Le'er was rather hesitant about how to proceed.

Right as she was walking along the street in an absentminded manner with her brows furrowed, a commotion suddenly rang out up ahead, and everyone immediately erupted into a panic.

"Look out! There's a horse beast on a rampage!"

A cry of alarm rang out up ahead, and everyone frantically dove to the sides of the street to avoid the oncoming danger.

Not far away, there was a silver carriage being drawn by an azure horse-like beast with scales all over its entire body. It was galloping along the street as if it had gone insane, and it just so happened to be charging directly toward Liu Le'er and Liu Shi.

The horse-like beast neighed in a deranged manner, while the carriage behind it was swaying violently from side to side. The coach driver's face was as pale as a sheet, and he was pulling on the reins with all his might, but to no avail.

Liu Le'er was greatly alarmed by this, and she immediately tried to drag Liu Shi away to avoid the rampaging beast, but it was already too late.

A putrid stench wafted through the air as the horse-like beast reached within 10 feet of Liu Le'er and Liu Shi in the blink of an eye. It was so close that Liu Le'er could even see the globules of white froth that were flying in all directions from the sharp fangs in the beast's mouth.

## Chapter 6: White-robed Young Man

"Argh!"

Liu Le'er wanted to unleash an ability to stop the horse-like beast, but in her panicked state, the magic power in her body wasn't circulating correctly, and she couldn't help but let loose a cry of alarm.

In this dire situation, she suddenly felt a shadow being cast over her. As it turned out, Liu Shi had abruptly stepped forward to shield her with his body, and at the same time, he had reached out with one hand like lightning, grabbing onto the horse-like beast's thick neck before turning his body to the side to collide head-on with the beast.

A loud thump rang out as the horse-like beast let loose an almighty neigh, and its enormous body was stopped cold in its tracks as if it had crashed into an immovable mountain.

Due to the excessive momentum that it had built up, a few of the hard stone slabs that the street was paved with were shattered under its thundering hooves.

At the same time, the carriage was propelled forward by its momentum and crashed into the beast's backside before flying several feet away to the side, then fell onto the ground with a heavy thump.

The carriage wasn't completely tipped over, but it had been significantly warped from the collision, and many pieces of its frame had come flying off before clattering onto the ground.

The coach driver was almost thrown off the carriage from the impact, but Liu Shi was standing completely still on the spot as if he had been nailed into place.

All of the nearby bystanders were astonished to see this, and a faint exclamation of surprise rang out from a certain teahouse.

Liu Le'er patted her own chest with a hint of lingering fear in her eyes, and a rush of warmth surged through her heart at the sight of the reliable figure standing before her.

During the past few years, whenever she encountered any danger, Liu Shi would always instinctively step in to protect her. Even though they weren't related by blood, they were just as close as blood relatives.

After being stopped cold in its tracks by Liu Shi, the azure horse beast became even more agitated, and it neighed furiously as it lowered its head before charging directly at Liu Shi's chest at full speed.

"Look out, Brother Rock!" Liu Le'er exclaimed in alarm.

Liu Shi remained completely expressionless as he locked his hand around the beast's neck, then exerted downward force with his arm.

The horse-like beast's legs buckled beneath it, and its enormous body was instantly flattened, causing it to fall to its knees, shattering all of the stone slabs on the ground around it in the process.

It felt as if its entire body were being crushed under a mountain that was threatening to shatter all of its bones, and the deranged look in its eyes immediately faded, replaced by a sense of fear.

In the face of Liu Shi, who possessed far superior strength to itself, the horse-like beast finally calmed down, sitting on its haunches in a docile manner, not daring to move.

"What incredible strength! With the momentum it built up, that horse beast had to have crashed into him with no less than two tons of force, yet he was able to stop it with ease!"

"Incredible, indeed!"

"Whose manor does this carriage belong to? How dare you drive it through a busy market so recklessly? If that man hadn't stepped in, who knows how many people could've been hurt or killed?"

Only after hearing this did everyone come to realize the severity of the situation, and they all erupted into spirited discussion.

Meanwhile, Liu Shi released the beast's neck in a wooden manner and fell still again.

Even though the horse-like beast had been released, it was still panting heavily and didn't dare to stand up.

"Are you alright, Brother Rock?" Liu Le'er hurriedly approached Liu Shi to examine his body, and she was very relieved to see that he was unharmed.

The coach driver had already turned as pale as a sheet, and now that the beast had been tamed, all of the energy seemed to have been drained from his body at once as he collapsed feebly onto the carriage.

Right at this moment, the door of the carriage was flung open, and two pale-faced young men emerged from within.

The first of the two men appeared to be around 20 years of age. He was quite handsome, and was wearing a white scholarly robe.

The other man appeared to only be 17 to 18 years of age with a complexion that was as fair as jade. The black pupils and whites of his eyes formed a very

distinct contrast, as did his pearly white teeth and red lips. He was wearing a long white robe with a jade belt around his waist and a jade hat on his head. A pigeon-egg-sized jewel was embedded onto the hat, and he possessed far more style and flair than his companion.

"What the hell's wrong with you, you useless piece of trash? I almost died in there!"

The young man in the scholarly robe had a look of lingering fear in his eyes, and he snatched the horsewhip away from the coach driver before giving him a vicious beating with it.

With each strike of the whip, a bleeding gash appeared on the coach driver's body, but he didn't dare to evade the punishment and could only kowtow incessantly while begging for forgiveness.

The young man became even more incensed upon seeing this, and the whip fell with increased venom.

"Shush! They're from the Yu Manor!"

"This is none of our business, so let's all stop talking about it."

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Once the two young men who had emerged from the carriage were identified, the discussions ringing out nearby immediately subsided. Everyone was looking at the two men with timid expressions, and it was clear that they all knew who the two men were.

"Let it go, Brother. Azure Wind Horses are low-grade demon beasts that are very wild in nature and difficult to tame, so he can't be blamed for this."

A hand suddenly reached out before grabbing the young man by the wrist, preventing the whip from falling again. It was the younger of the two men who had stepped in, and his voice was as pleasant to the ears as flowing spring water.

The whip-wielding young man took a glance at his companion, and his lips twitched slightly, following which he gave a cold harrumph before tossing the whip away.

"Thank you, Young Master!" The coach driver hurriedly began to kowtow toward the white-robed young man.

"Here, take this silver and compensate all of the people and shops that have been harmed by our carriage. If you can do a good job of that, you'll be spared harsh punishment," the white-robed young man said as he pulled out a bag before handing it over to the coach driver.

"Yes, Young Master." The coach driver hurriedly nodded in response as he took the bag of silver, then made his way toward the people who had been injured during the Azure Wind Horse's rampage.

"Thank heavens you were here to tame this Azure Wind Horse. It wouldn't be a big deal if my brother and I were injured, but it would be a travesty if we were to bring misfortune upon others," the white-robed young man said as he turned to Liu Shi with a smile, then cupped his fist in a salute.

The young man in the scholarly robe also turned to Liu Shi, only to find that he was completely unremarkable in appearance with a slightly dark complexion and was wearing a simple azure robe that was rather shabby in appearance. A hint of disdain appeared in his eyes upon seeing this, and he cupped his fist in a rather half-hearted salute.

Liu Shi remained completely silent as he stared blankly at the two young men.

The scholarly-robed young man had never been ignored like this before, and he was just about to flare up with rage again, only to be stopped by the white-robed young man.

The young man took a closer look at Liu Shi, and his heart stirred slightly upon noticing the strangely vacant look in Liu Shi's eyes.

More and more people began to gather in the surrounding area, and Liu Le'er was beginning to feel rather uneasy. She gently tugged on Liu Shi's arm as she said in a quiet voice, "Let's go, Brother Rock."

Only then did the white-robed young man notice Liu Le'er, and his eyes immediately lit up at the sight of her gorgeous doll-like features. He hurriedly stepped forward to stop them as he said, "Please wait a moment."

"What do you want?" Liu Le'er asked as her brows furrowed tightly in her best attempt at a menacing expression.

"My name is Yu Qi. The carriage from just now belongs to our manor, and I sincerely apologize for putting you through such an ordeal," the white-robed young man said with a warm smile. [1]

"It's fine. Get out of our way so we can leave," Liu Le'er said with a hostile expression.

"If your brother hadn't stepped in, the consequences could've been catastrophic, so I would feel very guilty if I couldn't repay you somehow. The Yu Manor is not far away from here. Would you be open to paying our manor a visit so we can repay you with some hospitality?" Yu Qi asked.

"There's no need for that. It was the least that we could do in that situation. We still have other important matters to attend to, so we'll be on our way now." Liu Le'er shook her head without any hesitation, then began to skirt around the white-robed young man with Liu Shi in tow.

However, Yu Qi immediately positioned himself in front of the two of them again, then took a glance at Liu Shi before asking with an earnest expression, "Hold on. Could it be that by important matters, you're referring to seeking treatment for your brother?"

Liu Le'er was quite taken aback to hear this, and she asked with a surprised expression, "H... How did you know about that?"

"I was born with a very sensitive nose. Judging from the medicinal scent on your bodies, I presume you just came out of the nearby Wild Chrysanthemum Clinic. Your brother possesses incredible strength, but it looks like he's suffering from some type of mental ailment, and that's what led to my assumption. It looks like I was correct in my guess," Yu Qi explained as he cast his gaze toward the nearby Wild Chrysanthemum Clinic with a smile.

Even though he was a man, there was an indescribable hint of seduction in his smile.

As a young girl in her early teens, Liu Le'er was momentarily entranced by his smile, but she then immediately turned to Liu Shi to gauge his reaction. Liu Shi was still as expressionless as ever, and for some reason, that instilled her with a sense of reassurance.

The white-robed young man's smile faded as he continued, "Our Yu Family is a decently influential family in Farbright City with connections to many

renowned doctors, so if it's medical services that you seek, then perhaps we can be of help to you."

"We did come to Farbright City to seek out medical services, but my brother's condition isn't something that can be cured by the average doctor," Liu Le'er said with a shake of her head.

Yu Qi's brows furrowed slightly upon hearing this, but after some contemplation, he smiled as he said, "It sounds like your brother is suffering from a rather unusual ailment. However, we should still be able to help. Our Yu Family has an immortal guest elder who's very adept in the way of medicine, far more so than the average doctor. How about we get him to take a look at your brother's condition?"

Liu Le'er's eyes immediately lit up at the prospect of seeing an immortal doctor, and she was rather hesitant about how to proceed.

"Please don't turn down my offer. Just allow me to repay you for your efforts. I don't wish to come across as arrogant or boastful, but even though there are other immortal doctors in Farbright City, no one would dare to claim superiority in the way of medicine over our guest elder," Yu Qi proclaimed in a proud manner.

In the end, Liu Le'er was lured in by the white-robed young man's offer, and she reluctantly agreed, "Alright, we'll go with you, but we're leaving right away if that immortal doctor can't cure my brother's condition."

Yu Qi was ecstatic to hear this, and he said, "Of course. By the way, I still haven't had a chance to ask your names."

Liu Le'er hesitated momentarily before introducing herself and Liu Shi.

The scholarly-robed young man had been ignored for quite some time now, and he was clearly feeling rather disgruntled. Finally, he couldn't help but interject, "Brother, we've only just met these two and have no idea about their past, how can you just offer to bring them to our manor? Are you really going to get someone to treat him?"

"No need to worry, Brother. I know what I'm doing," Yu Qi replied in a casual voice with a dismissive wave of his hand.

The scholarly-robed young man seemed to be rather fearful of Yu Qi, and he seemed to want to say something further, but refrained from doing so in the end.

Right at this moment, several well-dressed guards equipped with swords and blades hurriedly rushed over from afar.

All of the surrounding bystanders immediately scattered upon seeing this, seemingly quite fearful of these guards.

The guards paid no heed to the bystanders as they hurriedly extended a collective respectful bow toward Yu Qi's duo.

"Please forgive us for arriving so late, young masters." [2]

"We're fine, there's no need to make such a big fuss. Take the carriage back to the manor, and don't make a big deal out of this," Yu Qi instructed in an indifferent voice.

"Yes, Young Master."

The guards immediately did as they were told, quickly tugging the Azure Wind Horse to its feet before departing.

After that, the white-robed young man turned to Liu Le'er and Liu Shi with a smile as he said, "Please come with me."

He then turned to lead the way, and Liu Le'er took another glance at Liu Shi, then tightened her grip on his hand before following along behind Yu Qi.

The scholarly-robed young man looked on as the three of them departed, and his expression became darker and darker. After remaining on the spot for a while longer, he gave a cold harrumph before also following along.

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"Interesting! Isn't she the one who the prime minister of the Prosperous Nation is doing everything in his power to send to the Cold Flame Sect? I've heard she possesses decent cultivation aptitude."

All of a sudden, two people emerged from a discrete corner of a street not far away. They were led by a black-robed young man with a pair of long and

narrow eyes, and he watched with a sinister expression as Yu Qi and the others departed into the distance.

The black-robed young man was accompanied by a man in gray who was as thin as a stick, and there were several bulging beasthide bags hanging from his waist. He was also looking in the same direction as he cautioned, "Be careful, Junior Martial Brother. I've heard that the Yu Manor houses multiple vagrant cultivators, so we can't take them too lightly."

The black-robed young man brushed off his concerns as he said, "I know what to do, Senior Martial Brother Fan. This is my first training mission, and you've only been sent to assist me. Unless any special circumstances arise, there's no need for you to step in. I'll take care of everything on my own."

The man in gray could only fall silent with a wry smile upon hearing this.

He knew this junior martial brother of his very well. Even though his cultivation base was nothing exceptional, he was directly related to one of the elders of the sect, thereby giving him a powerful backer, so he was always looking down on his fellow martial brothers.

All of a sudden, the two of them blurred before vanishing on the spot.

1. The "Qi" in Yu Qi's name is the Chinese character for 7. Earlier, he was referred to as the "seventh young master" when the coach driver said: "Thank you, Young Master!", so the accurate translation is actually "Thank you, Seventh Young Master", but that's not very idiomatic, so I decided against it. Hence, we can deduce that Yu Qi is the seventh young master of the Yu Family. 📖

2. Here, the two men are being referred to as "seventh young master" and "second young master", but once again, translating that literally wouldn't be very idiomatic, so I've just used young masters here to refer to both. From this, we can extrapolate that they are the second and seventh young masters of the Yu Family. 📖

## Chapter 7: Yu Manor

The white-robed young man was quite talkative, and on the way back to the manor, he told Liu Le'er many interesting stories about the city, but Liu Le'er was rather distracted and only gave half-hearted responses.

The group passed through several streets and quickly arrived at the central area of Farbright City.

It was a rather quiet area with clean streets that were lined with barely any shops. Instead, the area was home to many large courtyards, and it was clear that this was where the wealthiest families in the city resided.

After making their way forward for a while longer, the group arrived outside a red manor.

In contrast with the other buildings in the city, this manor took up a massive area, and the bright red gates, which were around 20 feet tall, gave off a very majestic and imposing appearance. On either side of the gates were a pair of stone lions that were each around 10 feet tall, and the large gates were riddled with shiny copper nails that glistened under the light of the sun.

There was a guard wearing a suit of resplendent armor standing on each side of the gate. These guards were dressed the same way as the guards from before, but they were equipped with spears as opposed to swords.

All of this was a reflection of the status of the manor's owner.

There was a large golden plaque hanging above the gates, upon which the words "Yu Manor" were inscribed in large golden characters.

Liu Shi raised his head to take a glance at the manor before him, but then quickly withdrew his gaze.

Meanwhile, Liu Le'er was inspecting the manor with a slightly awestruck expression and a hint of unease in her heart.

She had never seen such a massive manor before, and it was clear from this manor that the Yu Family had to be a family of extremely high standing in Farbright City. In fact, there was a very good chance that they had ties with the Prosperous Nation's imperial court.

The white-robed young man could see that Liu Le'er was rather uneasy, and he asked in a gentle voice, "What is it, Sister Liu?"

Liu Le'er forced a smile onto her face as she said, "This place is huge, and it has so many guards! I'm sure your family is no ordinary family."

"You really bright young girl, Sister Liu. My father is none other than the prime minister of the Prosperous Nation, and that's why we have all of this. Otherwise, how could we afford a resident immortal doctor?" Yu Qi replied.

Liu Le'er's eyes widened in shock upon hearing this, while a proud look appeared on the scholarly-robed young man's face.

"Young masters!" The two guards at the gates immediately approached the group upon catching sight of them, then extended respectful bows.

Yu Qi gave a slight nod to acknowledge the two guards, then led Liu Le'er and Liu Shi through the gates.

After entering the manor, the scholarly-robed young man harrumphed coldly, "Father is going to be furious when he finds out you brought these two outsiders into our manor. Don't blame me for not warning you."

He then stormed off with a disdainful expression, but Yu Qi remained unfazed as he led Liu Le'er and Liu Shi toward another direction the manor. "Don't pay any heed to him. Please come with me."

The interior of the Yu Manor was enormous, with pavilions, pagodas, and gardens everywhere.

The ground was paved with top-tier paving materials such as white jade and azure jade, making for a surface that was as smooth as a mirror and as hard as iron, further displaying the luxury enjoyed by the affluent family.

Yu Qi seemed to be quite an authoritative figure in the Yu Manor, as evidenced by the fact that all of the servants that they encountered bowed respectfully toward him, and some even fell to one knee.

Liu Le'er took a glance at Yu Qi upon seeing this with a distracted look in her eyes, and it was unclear what she was thinking about.

The fact that she and Liu Shi were trailing along behind Yu Qi naturally attracted a great deal of attention, particularly given Liu Shi's imposing frame and strange demeanor, but no one dared to look at them for too long for fear of irking Yu Qi.

Shortly thereafter, the three of them arrived in a long corridor, where they were greeted by a tall and slender servant in a green dress.

A joyful smile immediately appeared on the servant's face at the sight of Yu Qi, and she bounded over to them in a spritely manner. "Welcome back, Young Master!"

"There are guests with me, Xiao Wu! Don't be so cheeky," Yu Qi scolded in a displeased voice.

The servant stuck out her tongue in a sheepish display, but she wasn't actually afraid, so it was clear that she was different from the other servants that they had encountered.

Yu Qi took a resigned glance at her, then said, "You came at just the right time, Xiao Wu. These two are esteemed guests that I've invited to our manor. This is Sister Liu Le'er, and this is Brother Liu Shi. Prepare a place for them to stay in the western courtyard."

Only then did Xiao Wu notice the two people behind Yu Qi, and she was rather taken aback by Liu Shi's wooden demeanor. However, her eyes then immediately lit up as her gaze fell upon Liu Le'er, and she giggled, "What a pretty little girl you are!"

"Stop being so rude! Sister Liu is an esteemed guest of mine! My apologies. Xiao Wu has been serving me from a young age, and I've spoiled her rotten." Yu Qi scolded Xiao Wu before turning to Liu Le'er and Liu Shi with an apologetic smile.

"Fine, I'll behave," Xiao Wu conceded, but she made a funny face at Liu Le'er while Yu Qi's back was turned.

Liu Le'er couldn't help but burst into laughter, and she hurriedly clapped a hand over her mouth to silence herself, but a great deal of the tension and anxiety that she had been feeling had been alleviated.

Yu Qi took a glance at his surroundings, then drew closer to Xiao Wu as he whispered, "By the way, I'll be out for the next few days, so..."

The two of them were standing together in a very intimate manner, and Xiao Wu didn't seem to be opposed to this.

Liu Le'er pursed her lips slightly upon seeing this, and what little positive feelings she had developed toward the white-robed young man instantly evaporated.

After a brief, hushed conversation, Xiao Wu gave a nod before departing.

"Please follow me," Yu Qi said as he continued onward.

Moments later, the three of them arrived in a small courtyard, where they were greeted by Xiao Wu again.

Even though it was referred to as a small courtyard, it was only small in the context of the entire manor. In reality, it was quite spacious with a small cobblestone path, to the left of which was a pine tree, while to the left was a cluster of bamboo trees.

A gentle breeze blew past, causing the pine tree and the leaves of bamboo trees to rustle incessantly.

The furnishings in the room were quite simplistic, but all of the furniture reflected exceptional craftsmanship.

The tables and chairs were spotless, and it was clear that they had just been cleaned.

"You two look rather tired, so why don't you take a rest here? I'll arrange a feast later to welcome the two of you to our manor," the white-robed young man said as he turned to Liu Le'er with a smile.

"There's no need for that. All I want to know is when that immortal doctor can attend to my brother," Liu Le'er said as she inspected the room around her.

Yu Qi was silent for a moment before replying, "Alright, in that case, I'll get Xiao Wu to bring you your dinner later. As for the immortal doctor, that'll have to wait until tomorrow."

"I see." Liu Le'er was rather disappointed to hear this.

"By the way, if you need anything else, feel free to speak to Xiao Wu. Have a good rest, I'll be taking my leave now," Yu Qi said as he took a glance at Liu Shi.

Liu Le'er nodded in response with an absentminded expression.

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Outside the courtyard, Xiao Wu asked with a curious expression, "Young Master, who are those people? Judging from the way they're dressed, they seem to be commoners. Why are you treating them with so much respect?"magic

"Don't judge a book by its cover! Earlier today, the Azure Wind Horse drawing the carriage that my brother and I were in went on a rampage, and Liu Shi managed to subdue it with one hand and stop the carriage," Yu Qi replied with a faint smile as gave Xiao Wu's delicate chin a light pinch.

"He stopped an Azure Wind Horse with one hand? That's incredible!" Xiao Wu exclaimed.

"Now you know why I invited them to our manor. If I can get someone with such extraordinary strength to serve me, it'll surely be immensely beneficial to me in the future. On top of that, that little girl, Le'er, is sure to become a stunning beauty once she grows up. I

" can't bear to let a beauty like her wander out in the world with no one to depend on, so it was only natural that I brought her back to our manor as well. Make sure to look after them well. No slacking off, understood?" the white-robed young man instructed with a smile, then turned to depart.

An embarrassing thought seemed to have made its way into Xiao Wu's mind, and she blushed as she hurriedly replied, "Understood."

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Inside the courtyard.

Having walked the entire day and enduring that close call with the Azure Wind Horse earlier, Liu Le'er was feeling rather weary, and she led Liu Le'er into the bedroom to rest.

Even though it was normally considered taboo for two unrelated members of the opposite sex to stay in the same room like this, the two of them had never been apart the past few years, eating and living together, so Liu Le'er saw nothing wrong with this.

As night fell, Xiao Wu delivered a lavish dinner to them.

Looking at the entire table full of delicious dishes, Liu Le'er was salivating incessantly.

She had never enjoyed such a sumptuous feast, and even though the unfamiliar environment of the prime minister's manor made her feel rather uneasy, she still couldn't help but dig in for a massive meal.

In contrast, Liu Shi didn't display much of a reaction to the feast laid out on the table.

As the sky grew darker outside, the moon gradually rose up.

Liu Le'er laid on the bed, tossing and turning, unable to get to sleep. Her mind was completely preoccupied with thoughts of the treatment that Liu Shi was going to be receiving the next day.

She shuffled over to the side of the bed, then asked in a quiet voice, "Brother Rock, do you think that immortal doctor will be able to cure you?"

Liu Shi wasn't laying down. Instead, he was seated with his legs crossed and his eyes closed by the side of the bed.

He had done this every single night for the past few years, not laying down to sleep even once.

Liu Shi remained completely expressionless and his eyes also remained shut, as if he hadn't heard what Liu Le'er had just said.

Liu Le'er was already accustomed to this lack of response, and she whispered, "Don't worry, Brother Rock. If the immortal doctor here can't cure you, then we'll go somewhere else. I'm sure we'll be able to find someone who can cure you."

A reassured smile then appeared on her face, and she slowly closed her eyes, falling asleep soon thereafter.

Meanwhile, Liu Shi continued to remain completely still like a statue in the darkness.

After an indeterminate period of time, Liu Shi suddenly opened his eyes before casting his gaze toward a certain direction in the Yu Manor. At the

same time, he instinctively raised a hand to stroke the dark green accessory that he was wearing around his neck.

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As it turned out, there was an underground secret chamber in the Yu Manor in the direction that Liu Shi was looking in.

There were dark red runes engraved onto the walls of the secret chamber, converging toward the center from all directions.

At the center of the secret chamber was a black pill furnace, beneath which was a firepit that was holding a scorching flame.

At this moment, the pill furnace was giving off a black glow, and its lid was trembling gently as if it could fly off at any moment.

An elderly man was standing beside the pill furnace, watching it with an anxious expression.

The elderly man was wearing a set of gray daoist robes and a lotus crown on his head. He had a pair of deep-set eyes and a thin and gaunt face. There was a long goatee trailing down from his chin, and his hair and facial hair were all completely white, indicating that he was of quite an advanced age.

Right at this moment, a dull crack rang out from within the pill furnace, following which a burned smell wafted out from within.

The elderly man's expression changed drastically as he swept a hand through the air to release an incantation seal that snuffed out the fire, following which the lid of the pill furnace flew off at his behest.

The pill furnace was still burning hot, but he reached in directly with his hand, only to re-emerge with a handful of black powder, and his expression instantly darkened significantly.

A strong medicinal fragrance intermingled with a burned smell was wafting out from the powder.

The elderly man was furious to see this, and he immediately erupted into an incensed tirade.

Chapter 8: Daoist Master White Stone

The next morning, the sound of footsteps rang out from the western courtyard of the Yu Manor.

There were three people slowly making their way through the corridor leading to another courtyard.

The two people leading the way were walking shoulder by shoulder. One of them was an elderly daoist priest in a gray daoist robe with a lotus crown on his head, while the other was a woman wearing a light yellow palatial dress.

Trailing along behind the two was a young woman in servant attire, holding a three-layered hamper made from sandalwood.

The daoist priest was walking along with his white brows slightly furrowed, seemingly a little displeased, and his eyes were looking directly forward, clearly indicating that his mind was elsewhere.

The woman in the palatial dress was quite young, appearing to be around 17 to 18 years of age, and even though her body still wasn't fully developed, it was very well-proportioned. She had a set of beautiful facial features that were capped off by a pair of eyes that were as bright as stars, leaving a lasting impression on all those who saw them.

In addition to that, she had applied some rouge to her face, adding a hint of color to her fair cheeks that gave her an even more alluring appearance.

"My sincerest apologies for interrupting your pill refinement, Daoist Master White Stone," the woman said with an apologetic expression.

The elderly daoist priest temporarily set aside his train of thought as he replied, "I don't mind, but I'm just perplexed about why you insist on getting me to attend to a mortal with a mental ailment?"

"Allow me to explain. Yesterday..."

A faint smile appeared on the woman's face as she gave the daoist priest a brief recount of how Liu Shi had stopped the Azure Wind Horse the day before.

The elderly daoist priest listened with a thoughtful expression, and he raised an eyebrow slightly as he heard about how Liu Shi had managed to stop a rampaging Azure Wind Horse cold in its tracks with just a single hand.

"Seeing as you're somewhat indebted to him, I suppose I'm obligated to examine his condition," the elderly man said in an indifferent voice after hearing the young woman's story.

The young woman smiled in response as she extended a slight curtsy.

As for the servant, she was holding the hamper rather anxiously, trailing along behind the two in an obedient manner without making any sound.

Inside the western courtyard, Liu Le'er had already finished getting dressed and washing up, and she was seated on the edge of the bed, having another one-sided conversation with Liu Shi when she suddenly heard the sound of door-knocking ring out.

Once the trio arrived at the western courtyard, the servant immediately strode forward to knock on the door, then called out, "Sister Le'er, our young mistress has brought the immortal doctor here to see you."

Liu Le'er rose to her feet, but she didn't immediately open the door. Instead, she asked in a rather perplexed manner, "Who's this young mistress that you speak of?"

"It's me, Sister Le'er."

The voice coming from outside was rather familiar, and Liu Le'er's befuddlement was even further exacerbated.

After a brief hesitation, she made her way to the door before opening it.

As soon as the door was opened, she immediately caught a whiff of a faint medicinal scent, following which she was greeted by the sight of the three people standing outside.

First, her gaze fell upon the elderly daoist priest, and after ascertaining that the medicinal smell was coming from him, she turned to the servant, only to find that it was Xiao Wu, the personal servant of Yu Qi's that she had met the day before.

Finally, Liu Le'er turned her gaze toward the woman in the yellow palatial dress, and initially, she faltered slightly, following which her mouth gaped open in shock.

"You're the young master from the day before!" she exclaimed as she threw a hand over her own mouth.

"That's right. You can call me Sister Qi if you'd like," the woman in the palatial dress said with an amused smile at the sight of Liu Le'er's surprised expression.

Liu Le'er also smiled upon hearing this. "No wonder I felt like you were a little..."

"A little what?" Yu Qi asked as she raised an eyebrow.

"A little... not like a man," Liu Le'er replied in a tactful manner after a moment of deliberation.

"You can avoid a lot of unnecessary trouble by posing as a man. You'll know what I mean once you're all grown up in a few years," Yu Qi said with a faint smile.

Liu Le'er didn't quite understand what Yu Qi was referring to, but she still nodded in response before inviting the trio into the room.

"Sister Le'er, this is the immortal doctor I told you about, you can call him Daoist Master White Stone. Daoist Master White Stone, this is Liu Le'er, and that man over there is her brother, Liu Shi," Yu Qi introduced as she turned to the elderly daoist priest.

Liu Le'er had already guessed that the elderly man was most likely the immortal doctor, but her heart still jolted slightly upon hearing confirmation of her suspicions from Yu Qi, and she hurriedly lowered her head as she extended a respectful salute, not daring to meet Daoist Master White Stone's gaze. "I pay my respects to the esteemed immortal doctor."

Meanwhile, Liu Shi remained seated on the edge of the bed, displaying no reaction to the trio.

Daoist Master White Stone took a brief glance at Liu Le'er, then directed his gaze toward Liu Shi. He made his way over to Liu Shi's side before stepping over to his other side, examining him carefully from head to toe before focusing his gaze on Liu Shi's glabella.

A moment later, Daoist Master White Stone closed his eyes before raising a hand, joining his index and middle fingers together as he extended them toward Liu Shi's glabella.

Liu Le'er was quite taken aback to see this, and she couldn't help but let loose a cry of alarm.

Daoist Master White Stone's arm instantly stiffened, and she turned around to give her a displeased look.

"There's no need for alarm, Sister Le'er. Daoist Master White Stone is examining your brother's condition," Yu Qi hurriedly explained as she gently tugged on Liu Le'er's arm.

"My apologies, Daoist Master White Stone. I didn't do it on purpose," Liu Le'er hurriedly apologized.

Daoist Master White Stone's expression eased slightly upon hearing this, and he closed his eyes before extending his hand toward Liu Shi's glabella again.

As he extended his fingers forward, a burst of azure light emerged on Liu Shi's glabella, and circular ripples were spreading outward from the azure light, much like the ripples that would arise from a stone being tossed into a lake.

A short while later, a slightly befuddled look appeared on Daoist Master White Stone's face, and he withdrew his hand before slowly opening his eyes.

"How is my brother? Can you cure him?" Liu Le'er hurriedly asked.

Daoist Master White Stone took a glance at her out of the corners of his eyes and offered no response.

Yu Qi gently patted the back of Liu Le'er's hand in a reassuring gesture, indicating for her to be patient.

Liu Le'er reluctantly fell silent and asked no further questions, but her gaze remained fixed on Liu Shi.

Liu Shi seemed to have sensed her gaze, and he turned his face toward her before swallowing the pastry in his mouth, then gave her a faint smile.

Daoist Master White Stone contemplated the situation momentarily before flipping over a hand to summon a rather old copper mirror.

"Go!"

Azure light flashed from the round mirror, and it immediately rose up into the air at his behest, flying over to Liu Shi before coming to a halt directly above his head.

Daoist Master White Stone then began to chant an incantation while swiping his joined fingers through the air, seemingly inscribing some type of mysterious runes into the very air itself.

Shortly thereafter, his fingers fell still, and he pointed directly at the copper mirror.

The suspended copper mirror immediately began to tremble violently, and a layer of azure light emerged, causing its slightly rugged and uneven surface to become smooth and pristine.

Liu Le'er was scrutinizing the surface of the mirror intently with an anxious expression, and she could see that some changes were taking place within the azure light. It seemed that a rather murky image was about to appear.

However, after waiting for a short while, the azure light within the mirror's surface was still as murky as ever, and she was unable to discern anything from it.

Liu Shi also seemed to be rather annoyed by the mirror hovering over his head, and he raised his hand before swatting it through the air as if he were waving a mosquito away. Even though his hand didn't make direct contact with the mirror, it caused the azure light on the mirror's surface to flicker and become even murkier.

"Impossible!"

Daoist Master White Stone's expression changed drastically upon seeing this, and he immediately swept a sleeve toward the copper mirror, upon which it instantly flew up his sleeve, vanishing without a trace.

Liu Le'er was itching to ask more questions, but she learned to hold her tongue this time.

"Have you identified the problem, Daoist Master White Stone? Is his condition curable?" Yu Qi asked.

There was a rather uncertain look on Daoist Master White Stone's face, and he replied, "It's not impossible, but..."

Liu Le'er was ecstatic to hear this, and she hurriedly implored, "Please cure my brother, esteemed immortal doctor!"

"If you have a way to treat this man, then please do everything in your power, Daoist Master White Stone. I will cover all of your expenses," Yu Qi said.

Liu Le'er turned to Yu Qi with a grateful expression upon hearing this.

Daoist Master White Stone stared at Liu Shi in silence for a long while before finally making up his mind. "In that case, I will be sure to do my best. However, let me make this clear in advance: his soul is in a sealed-off state for some unknown reason, and it'll be very difficult to restore it to its normal state.

"Only by casting a spirit awakening array will there be a chance for his condition to be cured. In order to administer such a treatment, I require an independent secret chamber."

Liu Le'er hesitated momentarily before asking in a low voice, "Can I be there while you're administering the treatment, Daoist Master White Stone?"

"Why do you want to be there? To get in my way? Do you not trust me, you little brat?" Daoist Master White Stone's voice instantly spiked up a few octaves in indignation.

Liu Le'er's heart jolted upon hearing this, and she hurriedly waved her hands in response. "I wouldn't dare, Daoist Master White Stone! I just want to be by my brother's side. All I'll do is watch from the side, I'll make sure not to get in your way."

"Fine, do as you wish. A spirit awakening array is not just a run-of-the-mill array, so I have to go back and make some preparations," Daoist Master White Stone said as he turned to Yu Qi.

"Thank you for your efforts, Daoist Master White Stone," Yu Qi replied with a respectful curtsy.

Liu Le'er hurriedly followed her example, extending a curtsy of her own, but by then, Daoist Master White Stone had already departed from the room.

Following Daoist Master White Stone's departure, Yu Qi and Xiao Wu also left shortly thereafter. Before departing, she offered some words of reassurance to Liu Le'er, telling her not to worry about Liu Shi's condition.

## Chapter 9: Array

On the morning of the third day, Xiao Wu arrived at the western courtyard, informing Liu Le'er and Liu Shi that Daoist Master White Stone's preparations were complete, and that he was ready to treat Liu Shi.

With Xiao Wu leading the way, Liu Le'er led Liu Shi through a series of corridors, passing through four small courtyards and emerging from an archway before finally arriving in the backyard of the Yu Manor.

Liu Le'er was already in awe of all of the winding courtyards and corridors, but only after seeing the small lake in the backyard, which was laden with lush lotus leaves, did she truly realize just how massive the Yu Manor was.

The lake was referred to as a small one, but only relative to all of the large rivers and lakes that Liu Le'er had seen in the past. In reality, the lake was at least 3,000 to 4,000 feet in area, certainly far larger than a pond that one would find in the backyard of the average wealthy man's estate.

"That's where Daoist Master White Stone cultivates and refines pills," Xiao Wu introduced as she pointed at a small island at the center of the lake.

Liu Le'er cast her gaze toward the direction that Xiao Wu was pointing in, and she was greeted by the sight of a bridge constructed from white marble, arching over the teeming lotus leaves and leading all the way to the small island.

The island wasn't very large, but it was filled with lush greenery and enshrouded in cloud and mist, making it impossible to get a clear look at it.

The thought that the island could hold the key to curing Liu Shi immediately filled Liu Le'er with excitement, and her thoughts began to wander with her emotions.

Xiao Wu could see that Liu Le'er was rather distracted, and she smiled as she said, "Servants like me aren't allowed to encroach upon Daoist Master White Stone's territory, so you'll have to go on your own from here."

Liu Le'er returned to her senses upon hearing this, and she hurriedly said, "Thank you, Sister Xiao Wu."

Seeing Liu Le'er so excited put Xiao Wu in a good mood as well, and she gave Liu Le'er a cheerful wave before departing.

Liu Le'er cast her gaze toward the small island, and she laid a hand onto the railing of the bridge, but she didn't immediately step onto it. For some reason, a thought had suddenly occurred to her.

Will Brother Rock leave me once he's cured?

A hesitant look appeared on her face as this thought occurred to her, but her heart was immediately put at ease again as she looked up at Liu Shi's familiar features.

"Let's go, Brother Rock."

With that, she stepped onto the bridge, leading Liu Shi toward the small island.

As the two drew closer and closer to the island, Liu Le'er began to feel rather anxious. In contrast, Liu Shi's expression was as calm as ever, and his gaze was occasionally drawn to the carp popping up out of the water beneath the lotus leaves.

After arriving on the island, Liu Le'er was struck by the feeling that the mist wasn't actually as dense as it had seemed from afar. There wasn't much sound on the island, and it was a very peaceful and elegant environment.

The end of the stone bridge was connected to a small, winding path that was paved with stone slabs, extending all the way into the heart of the island.

Liu Le'er and Liu Shi made their way along the path, and there were no other branches that diverged from the path, so they arrived directly in front of an archaic daoist temple with black and white walls.

Daoist Master White Stone was waiting for them outside the temple, and upon their arrival, he instructed them to come in before making his way toward the temple's rear hall.

The two of them followed Daoist Master White Stone through three halls before arriving at the temple's backyard, where a huge fake mountain was standing.

Daoist Master White Stone made his way over to a certain part of the mountain, then pressed a hand onto its surface, and a thick and heavy stone door slowly opened to reveal an opening tall enough to fit an adult human.

The two followed Daoist Master White Stone into the fake mountain, following which the stone door behind them slowly fell shut.

A cave had been excavated into the interior of the fake mountain, and it wasn't a very large space, only slightly larger than the room that Liu Le'er and Liu Shi were staying in. There were several lit lanterns on each of the four walls, and they weren't releasing any smoke, leading Liu Le'er to wonder what type of oil was being burned in the lanterns.

There was an octagonal diagram engraved onto the ground at the center of the cave, and it resembled the eight trigrams, but was somewhat different.

The engravings on the ground were extremely deep, and not only did it hold designs of some peculiar birds and beasts, there were also some strange lines interspersed among those designs. Liu Le'er had a feeling that this was some type of ancient text.

There was a dark red triangular flag situated at each corner of the octagonal design, and these flags also bore peculiar patterns inscribed in golden thread.

Daoist Master White Stone took a glance at Liu Le'er, who was inspecting the array, then urged in a cold voice, "What are you waiting for? Get him to sit down at the center of the array!"

"Yes, Daoist Master!"

Liu Le'er hurriedly withdrew her gaze before guiding Liu Shi to the center of the array, where there was a ring-shaped design.

"You're definitely going to be cured, Brother Rock. I'll be here with you," Liu Le'er said in an earnest voice as she looked into Liu Shi's eyes, then stepped out of the array and planted herself against one of the stone walls off to the side, where she looked on with an anxious expression.

"Stay there from now on. Don't make any sound to distract me, and don't move even a single inch, do you hear me?" Daoist Master White Stone instructed with a serious expression.

Liu Le'er hurriedly nodded in response.

Only then did Daoist Master White Stone make his way over to the array, and he raised a hand in front of his own chest in a daoist prayer, then walked a lap around the array while chanting an indecipherable incantation.

As he began to chant the incantation, the golden lines on the eight small flags around the array lit up with dazzling golden light in unison, then extended toward Liu Shi from all directions.

Liu Shi was inspecting his surroundings, and his body abruptly shuddered as the golden light enveloped his body. It was as if he had been electrocuted, and he instantly sat bolt upright.

Liu Le'er's heart jolted upon seeing this, and her eyes were filled with concern and anticipation.

The golden light began to swirl around Liu Shi's body, forming a series of strange golden patterns. At the same time, there also seemed to be specks of golden light converging within his eyes, presenting quite a peculiar sight to behold.

All of a sudden, Daoist Master White Stone's chanting drew to an abrupt halt, and he suddenly switched to a different hand seal as he yelled, "Restrict!"

The golden light that was revolving around Liu Shi abruptly solidified before enveloping Liu Shi like a layer of golden paper.

Through the golden light, it could be seen that Liu Shi's brows had furrowed together, indicating that he was in some pain.

A loud sizzling sound rang out as bright golden light radiated from the eight flags around the array, and plumes of black mist surged out of the flags before converging toward the center of the array.

Liu Le'er's expression changed slightly upon seeing this, and for some reason, she was struck by an instinctive sense of discomfort as soon as the black mist appeared.

All of a sudden, Liu Shi gave a muffled groan as his facial muscles spasmed slightly.

Liu Le'er couldn't help but let loose a cry of alarm upon seeing this, but she then immediately clapped a hand over her own mouth with a fearful expression.

"Shut up! I told you not to make a sound!" Daoist Master White Stone scolded in a cold voice.  
magic

Liu Le'er's heart shuddered slightly, and she didn't dare to say anything, but the fear in her eyes didn't abate in the slightest.

The plumes of mist were like living creatures, forming a series of tentacles that wrapped around Liu Shi before completely inundating him.

Immediately thereafter, Daoist Master White Stone made a hand seal and resumed his chanting.

More and more black mist poured out of the flags, and it was becoming denser and denser.

A perplexed look appeared on Liu Shi's face, following which his eyelids began to droop, and he slowly closed his eyes, falling asleep in an upright position.

An elated look appeared on Daoist Master White Stone's face upon seeing this, and he switched to another hand seal as he opened his mouth to release a ball of blood essence, which disintegrated into specks of crimson light that vanished directly into the black mist.

A strong bloody scent immediately began to waft out of the mist, and a series of crimson runes rapidly appeared.

Liu Le'er's expression changed drastically upon seeing this, and her instincts were screaming at her that something wasn't right. However, she was rather hesitant about how to proceed for fear of offending Daoist Master White Stone.

However, right at this moment, Daoist Master White Stone let loose a low cry, and the temperature of the black mist abruptly plummeted, forming a giant black of black ice that sealed Liu Shi within.

"Stop! What are you doing?" At this point, Liu Le'er could see beyond a doubt that Daoist Master White Stone's intentions were impure, and she stepped toward the array with an alarmed expression as she made a grabbing motion. A palm-sized pellet drum appeared in her grasp amid a flash of light, and she immediately attempted to shatter the block of ice to save Liu Shi.

## Chapter 10: Crisis

However, before she had a chance to do anything, Daoist Master White Stone swept a sleeve through the air to release a golden shadow that shot forth like lightning.

In the blink of an eye, the golden shadow transformed into a shimmering golden rope that bound Liu Le'er tightly.

As a result, Liu Le'er was tripped over and fell onto the ground with a dull thump.

"What are you trying to do, you old bastard?"

Liu Le'er glowered intently at Daoist Master White Stone while struggling with all her might, but the golden rope only constricted even tighter around her body as if it could feel her resistance.

Liu Le'er's expression became twisted with agony, and tears welled up in her eyes, but she gritted her teeth tightly and refused to make a sound.

All of a sudden, her ears abruptly vanished, but a pair of pointy triangular fox ears poked through the black hair on the top of her head.

A burst of potent restrictive force was released by the golden rope, completely sealing her magic power.

"What am I trying to do? Hehe, you naive little demon fox! Did you really think you could fool me with that magic tool of yours? What a joke!" Daoist Master White Stone said in a cold voice as he took a glance at Liu Le'er out of the corners of his eyes.

"So you already saw through my identity?" Liu Le'er's heart sank even further upon hearing this, but she still had a stubborn and unyielding look on her face.

"Hehe, is this the time for you to be worrying about that? You were brought into the manor by the young mistress, and the fox race is quite a powerful race in our Spirit Domain Realm, so I originally planned to turn a blind eye, but who could've anticipated that you would bring such a priceless treasure straight to my doorstep?"

Daoist Master White Stone cast his gaze toward Liu Shi as he spoke, and a hint of irrepressible excitement appeared in his eyes.

"Wh... What are you going to do to Brother Rock?" Liu Le'er asked in a trembling voice.

"Don't worry, I couldn't bear to kill this brother of yours. His body is more powerful than any that I've ever seen before, and to make matters even better, his spiritual sense has been harmed, reducing him to an imbecile! All I have to do is use a secret technique to erase what remains of his consciousness, and I'll be able to refine a puppet with boundless potential!" Daoist Master White Stone said with a triumphant expression.

A trail of blood began to trick down from the corner of Liu Le'er's lips upon hearing this, and a desperate look appeared in her eyes as a layer of crimson light emerged on her face. She arched forward violently as an animalistic snarl erupted from her lips, and her pupils began to glow green while large tufts of white fur sprouted all over her entire body.

Every single strand of fur was glowing with translucent light and was extremely hard, making it seem as if she had suddenly transformed into a white hedgehog. Furthermore, the fur on her tail was flashing with arcs of white lightning.

All of a sudden, the white fur abruptly stood up on end to force the golden rope away from her body slightly, and dazzling white light began to glow from her furry tail.

Countless strands of white fur were fired through the air, hurtling directly toward the block of black ice like a barrage of flying needles.

"Insolence!"

Daoist Master White Stone turned around with a furious expression before releasing an ovular black shield, which shot forth as a streak of black light at

an incredible speed, arriving in front of the block of black ice just barely before the barrage of white fur arrived.

The ovular shield then immediately expanded to several times its original size to cover the entirety of the block of ice.

A string of loud clangs rang out as the barrage of fur struck the black shield, causing it to tremble incessantly, but ultimately, the attack was kept at bay.

The green light in Liu Le'er's eyes flickered violently upon seeing this, but before she had a chance to do anything else, the golden rope around her suddenly glowed brightly as its constrictive force increased by almost twofold, flattening the white fur against Liu Le'er's body. At the same time, countless finger-length golden needles emerged from the rope, piercing deep into her body.

"Argh!"

Blood began to flow incessantly out of her body, staining large sections of her fur red. However, she gritted her teeth and paid no heed to her own injuries as she swept her tail through the air once again with all of her remaining strength.

Another barrage of white fur was released, but this time, it dispersed before flying toward the block of ice from all directions.

The black shield was like an impregnable wall, but it couldn't cover the block of ice from every direction at once.

Daoist Master White Stone was furious to see this, and he opened his mouth to release a ball of black light, within which was enveloped a serpentine flying sword that flew into the air above the block of ice in a flash.

The flying sword circled through the air, manifesting a burst of black sword qi that formed a wall of sword projections, which enveloped the block of ice.

At the same time, the black shield glowed even brighter as it expanded further in size, protecting the block of ice alongside the sword projections.

A string of metallic clangs rang out, and most of the needle-like fur was kept at bay by the flying sword and the black shield, but there were still some that managed to sneak through the gaps and strike the block of black ice.

The block of ice trembled violently, and many thin holes were punched into it. Several cracks appeared on its surface, and they were rapidly expanding.

Right at this moment, Daoist Master White Stone arrived beside the block of ice in a flash, then raised his hands to release a vast expanse of black mist out of his sleeves. Some of the mist fused into the block of ice, while the rest formed a protective barrier around it.

The cracks on the block of ice immediately stopped expanding, then quickly began to seal, and after just a few seconds, it was already back to its original state.

Daoist Master White Stone heaved a sigh of relief upon seeing this, then turned to glower at Liu Le'er with a furious expression.

Liu Le'er was laying on the ground with an indignant look in her eyes.

All of the fur on her body had already vanished, and her aura was severely diminished. It was clear that the two attacks she had just unleashed had already exhausted all of her magic power.

"Looks like I underestimated you!" Daoist Master White Stone harrumphed coldly.

If he had reacted even a split second later than he had, the block of ice would've most likely been shattered.

With a vicious sweep of his hand, Daoist Master White Stone conjured up a palm of black light, which slammed into Liu Le'er's body.

Liu Le'er was instantly sent flying before crashing into the wall of the secret chamber, and she threw up a large mouthful of blood before falling onto the ground in a heap.

Her entire body was stained with blood, and her hair was completely disheveled. Her face was deathly pale, and she was clearly in terrible condition.

If it weren't for the fact that Daoist Master White Stone intended to sell her for spirit stones, he would've already killed her with that strike.

"Brother Rock..." Liu Le'er raised her head in a feeble manner as she cast her gaze toward Liu Shi, but her body then suddenly spasmed, and she fell unconscious.

Daoist Master White Stone swept a hand through the air to release several talismans, which flew over to Liu Le'er before adhering themselves onto the ground around her.

A vast expanse of black light erupted from the talismans, forming a ball over her body.

Only after doing all of that did Daoist Master White Stone turn his attention back to the block of ice, and he couldn't suppress the smile that crept onto his face.

"Once I successfully refine this puppet, none of my current rivals will be a match for me!"

His smile faded as he raised his hands to release eight more talismans, which fell onto the ground near the block of black ice.

Inky black light rose up from the talismans to form an array, which lifted the block of ice around a foot off the ground.

Daoist Master White Stone then flipped a hand over to produce a black gourd.

There was a circle of blue runes engraved onto the gourd that were giving off a cold light, and it sounded as if there were some type of liquid sloshing around inside it.

He pulled out the gourd cork and carefully tipped it over to pour out a black liquid that gave off an aggressively nauseating stench.

There were specks of black light shimmering within the liquid, and it was squirming incessantly as if it were alive.