

Daily Life 1001

Chapter 1001: Mother Juan's Dream

Although Mother Juan in this dimension was also the kitchen lady at No. 60 High, she was much younger and prettier than the one in the real world... Gazing at her face, Wang Ling wasn't used to it. It wasn't because she wasn't pretty enough, but that she was so pretty that he somehow felt it was all an act. Besides, Wang Ling felt that the real Mother Juan was more affable.

Though she was now going down the road of "black cuisine" in order to develop a new cooking style, she actually had very good intentions!

"It's noon; all of you haven't eaten yet, have you? How about following me to the canteen for a bite?" Miss Juan'er smiled.

"Will that be alright?" Wang Ming asked.

"You students are really strange. This is my first time seeing the weak students from the loser class being so polite. You're clearly the elite of all the losers, which is why you have the word 'Elite' on the back of your school uniforms," Miss Juan'er said.

Wang Ling: "..."

It turned out that the definition of the word "Elite" had been modified here...

This Palace of Mirrors was really a mystical world.

"Then let's talk while we eat," Wang Ming said.

"Then wait for me, I'm going to the washroom," Mother Juan said.

“Alright...”

Miss Juan'er quickly ran to the female washroom, and walked out a dozen or so seconds later.

Wang Ming was baffled. “So quick?”

Miss Juan'er: “If you pee standing up, of course it's quick.”

Everyone: “...”

Next to Wang Ling's feet, Dog Two was thoroughly shocked by this world.

Girls peed standing up... Then didn't that mean boys had to squat and use toilet paper? What kind of strange operation was this?!

...

Li Juan invited Wang Ling and the others to the canteen to eat.

Only then did Wang Ling realize that there was actually quite a number of teachers in the canteen, and Wang Ling and the others stood out. When the teachers saw Wang Ling, they all bowed obsequiously and weren't irritable despite knowing that they were students from the loser class.

There was no lack of courteous and easy-going teachers, but the entire system in the Palace of Mirrors was chaotic. Wang Ling couldn't help lamenting this difference.

This dimension, with all its confusion and disregard for rules and order, should never exist.

But Wang Ling had yet to determine who on earth was the person who ruled behind the scenes.

“Why are the teachers still at work?”

“The students rest from Monday to Friday. Naturally, some teachers have to work overtime to prepare lessons for Saturday and Sunday.”

Wang Ling’s heart couldn’t help feeling heavy when he heard this.

To be a teacher in this world was pretty miserable.

Although the 996-working hours system in the real world also wasn’t humane, it was nothing compared with this world!

...

As Wang Ling had thought, Mother Juan’s cooking was normal in the Palace of Mirrors. While the dishes didn’t look as good as in the real world, they were at the very least not poisonous.

Wang Ling took a sip of Mother Juan’s chicken soup and found it a little bland. Although it wasn’t poisonous, it tasted a lot worse... In the real world, it tasted and looked good, but could poison a person to death!

In No. 60 High, Mother Juan’s dishes, Super Chen’s mouth, Dopey Guo’s uncles... These were all secret weapons! Wang Ling even felt that these secret weapons on their own could rival Heavenly Dao.

“It’s tough being a teacher.” Wang Ming couldn’t help sighing as he ate.

Wang Ming had never gone to school; Old Qi had noticed him and taken him away when he was four years old. Since then, he had always grown up under Old Qi’s guidance. He completed all the cultivation school programs the year he turned five – all the diplomas and certificates he earned could be used to wallpaper a house.

It had to be said that learning wasn’t anything hard for the two brothers of the Wang family.

But there was a clear difference in their attitudes toward it.

Wang Ming was afraid that he wasn’t outstanding enough.

Wang Ling was afraid of being too outstanding and of getting full marks if he accidentally performed at his usual standard.

No one else could understand this sort of pain.

A person shouldering the weight of excellence at an age no one should.

Sigh.

The wine was bitter going down the throat, the heart ached.

The meal passed silently. The truth was that Wang Ling and the others still didn't know how to discreetly ask Mother Juan about the Palace of Mirrors.

Half an hour later, after almost everyone else in the canteen had left, Mother Juan was the first to break the deadlock. "You're actually not from this world, are you?" She was just probing, but hit the nail on the head. Wang Ling and the others froze on the spot at the question. They had thought that their disguise was flawless, and there was no reason for them to be caught.

"Don't be nervous, I mean no harm. It's just a kind of feeling that only native inhabitants of this world have." Mother Juan explained, "I sense something different about you compared with the others. Perhaps you've also noticed that the people who live in this world are like puppets on strings, moving completely to someone else's will. Even though they are departed spirits who floated over from elsewhere and were brought back to life, there is in fact no difference from when they were dead."

"How did you know these people are the souls of the dead?" Wang Ming was very curious.

"It seems I guessed right. From the moment I was born into this world, I had the vague feeling that something wasn't right. The people around me are like NPCs in a game: they say and do the same things every day. They come into this world, obtain new lives, enjoy the shared resources, and won't die or grow old. That's the scariest part. You've watched The Truman Show, right? It's that sort of feeling..."

Mother Juan mused, "I was just guessing about the foundation of this world, and it wasn't until I saw you today that I knew for sure. There've been times when I've wondered: if there was another 'me' in another world, what would I be like?"

"Then when did you first realize?" Guo Ping didn't expect things to progress this quickly.

Since they were already talking about it, he hastily got to the heart of the matter.

"When I was very young, lots of strange buildings appeared in this world. You've probably already seen them; they're called dream houses... These buildings for recruiting the souls of the dead popped up all over the place one day, like mushrooms after the rain. Since then, more and more shadow men appeared in this world, and the existence of the dream houses caused the local residents of this world to gradually forget their sense of self."

Speaking up to this point, Mother Juan held out a hand. "This is the mark of the dream house. I spent a tremendous amount to get this fake mark made in order to survive in this world... As long as I have this, my memories won't be assimilated."

"So this Palace of Mirrors... was invaded by someone else?" Guo Ping was astonished and the rest were similarly horrified to hear that. No one expected this to be an elaborate plan for decades in the making.

"That's right." Mother Juan nodded. "But it was a dream which warned me of this at the very beginning. I seemed to dream of myself in another world, where I was older and had put on some weight."

"..." Wang Ling looked up with a curious expression.

"It seems that you know me in that other world." Mother Juan smiled. "It was a very unusual dream. She told me a lot of things, and a large part of the reason why we could connect in a dreamscape had to do with her courting death..."

"Courting death?"

"That's right; I heard that she was inventing a lot of new dishes, and when she sampled them, she almost poisoned herself..."

“...”

Chapter 1002: Fang Xing's Idol Burden

In the Palace of Mirrors' Songhai city, Fang Xing was being held captive in an underground research institute in some unknown location.

The strong containment magic array set up in the underground institute suppressed Fang Xing's spiritual energy and prevented him from acting freely; it was as if this underground institute had been specially built for him.

But Bai Youquan, who had brought him here, didn't treat him disdainfully at all. The room was decorated in Fang Xing's favorite European style and had massive French windows. Although it was underground, he could adjust the holographic view outside the windows according to his preference.

Fang Xing's dinner tonight was a kun steak, cut from the meatiest part of an ancient vicious kun's belly and well done, and blood wine brewed with the fresh blood of a qiongqi. The wine smelled strongly of strawberries, which was the mark of genuine qiongqi blood.

Although Fang Xing had never had food made from ancient vicious beasts, he had learned of them from ancient texts.

But these culinary delicacies did nothing to improve his mood; on the contrary, his expression turned increasingly heavy.

The strength of the person behind the scenes already far surpassed his imagination.

To turn vicious beasts already long extinct into food was astonishing to Fang Xing.

While he was pondering as he was held captive in a room inside the institute, a large, high-tech door slowly opened.

“What’s the matter, Classmate Fang? You seem down? Your father was brought back to life in this world, you should be happy.” With a smile, Bai Youquan clapped his hands.

A slim man with delicate and pretty features and white hair that fell to his waist was pushed forward by two black shadow men. He wore a white long gown, and scales glittered on his neck.

“Dad?” Fang Xing was emotional.

But the expression of the man in front of him was completely unruffled. He looked at Fang Xing as if he was a stranger.

“Your father’s memories were altered after he was resurrected. He didn’t even witness your birth. To him, you’re just an egg – he has no impression of you at all. Even if he’s been resurrected, you’re nothing but a stranger to him.” Bai Youquan laughed coldly and said telepathically, “But thanks to your father’s research, we are at long last starting to see results in our own research. We’re having a celebratory feast tonight, so I won’t take your father away. You can use this time now for some father-and-son bonding.”

After speaking, Bai Youquan straightaway took the black shadow men with him and left.

He was very confident in his arrangement.

Even if the two of them were related by blood, he wasn’t worried at all.

How much could blood ties be worth?

Didn’t his own dad Bai Zhe use him as a dumbbell when he was a kid...

...

For a long while, the room was utterly silent.

True Immortal She Pi found a place to sit, his posture dignified and his manner demure.

Fang Xing had never seen his father's real appearance before. What he had seen was mostly in historical texts, and practically all of them were portraits. Fang Xing never expected his father to actually be so good-looking, unlike some famous figures like Zhu Yuanzhang 1, whose face was shaped like a shoehorn... The artist who had drawn his father's portrait back then must have belonged to the abstract school of art.

From his father's appearance, he was indeed a lot younger after being resurrected than Fang Xing had imagined; this was probably what his father had looked like when he was young.

"Dad..." Fang Xing called out tentatively.

Next to him, True Immortal She Pi looked alarmed. "Young man, don't randomly call anyone 'dad.'"

"..."

Fang Xing: "But you really are my father. Didn't you hear what that person just said..."

True Immortal She Pi blushed. "Don't try to trick me. I... I never married, how could I have a son?"

It was as Bai Youquan had said: True Immortal She Pi had practically no impression of Fang Xing after his memories were tampered with; he didn't even remember spitting out an egg.

"Do you truly remember nothing?" Fang Xing coaxed him patiently. "Back then, you gave birth to a male ball! That was me!"

"M- male ball..."

Actually, the male ball referred to the egg, but saying he gave birth to a male ball sounded a lot better.

Fang Xing just never thought that these words would make his father's expression change. "Young man, what kind of joke is that? I am a man – how can I possibly give birth to a child? There is no

freak in the world who can do that! Are you mocking me? I may look like this, but I'm a man! In all the cultivation research I've done, there isn't a spell that can make a man bear children!"

"..." Fang Xing was silent.

He had no idea at all how to explain this.

This was because back when True Immortal She Pi had given birth to him, his father's body indeed hadn't gone through any sort of transformation. To be precise, it had been an instinctual response to propagate. The unique White Night Spell immortal technique which they cultivated had a particular ability, which was to automatically and magically back up cells when their lives were in danger.

Just before death, the White Night Spell would recombine the best cells that had been put aside, which would grow inside the body and finally form an egg; the truth was that this egg was a massive cell formed from non-stop cell reproduction in the body!

It was very obvious that True Immortal She Pi didn't remember anything about the White Night Spell, likely because his memories had been tampered with.

In his view, Fang Xing was a strange young man who randomly called other people "dad."

So young... what a pity that he was an oddball!

And thus, Fang Xing got a headache.

This was a situation that was hard to deal with.

First of all, tampering with memories didn't mean memory loss. Before True Immortal She Pi was resurrected, Bai Youquan had somehow completely erased that part of his memory. That was to say, he had been reborn without that particular memory, and retrieving it would be a lot more complicated than dealing with memory loss.

Fang Xing sighed and stared at True Immortal She Pi's face as all sorts of solutions flew through his mind. He couldn't use any spells since his magic was restricted, so he had to think of a tangible way to prove his relationship to True Immortal She Pi.

No choice...

Fang Xing realized that now was the time to drop his idol burden.

In front of True Immortal She Pi, he opened his mouth wide.

It was a snake's mouth!

It could open up to a 180-degree angle!

He had never shown anyone this ability before! But today, for his father's sake, he decided he would do whatever it took!..

Chapter 1003: A Father and Son's Tacit Understanding

After his memories were altered, True Immortal She Pi might have forgotten the White Night Spell, but the Snake Form which was the foundation it was built on definitely wasn't something that could be erased from his mind; this was the root of all the magic True Immortal She Pi had developed. If his memory of the Snake Form was tampered with, he would lose all of his fighting strength, and Bai Youquan definitely didn't want that to happen.

Fang Xing could open his mouth so wide because he had been cultivating the Snake Form since young.

"How can you do that..." True Immortal She Pi gazed at the young man in astonishment. The Snake Form was the root of all his magic, and logically speaking, no outsiders would know it – he had been planning to pass this magic art down to the next generation after he got married.

"Dad... I know you won't believe whatever I say now, but I think you will if we fight it out," said Fang Xing.

He had been born with the memory of the Snake Form, because True Immortal She Pi had passed on some memories of his magic to him during the cell reproduction in the final moments of his life. The Snake Form and the White Night Spell, which included Immortal Mode, were passed on in that moment when True Immortal She Pi spat out the egg.

It could be said that these were things Fang Xing had inherited in his bones, and no one else could copy them!

Also, it was the best proof of their relationship as father and son!

“There’s an extremely strong restriction on your room, how can we fight?” True Immortal She Pi asked doubtfully.

“It’s simple. Let’s fight with words.”

After thinking for a bit, Fang Xing looked at True Immortal She Pi with a solemn expression. “Dad, I’m going to make a move...”

True Immortal She Pi: “???”

Right after that, Fang Xing started to use his glib tongue. “The moment I say I’m going to make a move, I suddenly kick out at your lower abdomen with my left leg. This is the Divine Snake Swaying Tail, where my leg instantly becomes countless phantom images which you can’t keep up with, like demon specters where you can’t tell what is real or false.”

So this was the battle of words...

Finally understanding Fang Xing’s meaning, True Immortal She Pi instantly replied, “But you didn’t expect that as you kicked out with your left leg, you would leave your right leg the most vulnerable. I swiftly circle around behind you with the Snake Shadow Step and wrap both my legs around your right leg. Not only do I evade your attack, you’re restrained by my consummate body techniques! I stretch out my hands to grab your head.”

Fang Xing: “Father’s reaction and body techniques are indeed extraordinary and would intimidate anyone. But against someone who has cultivated the Snake Form since young, this sort of physical restraint is nothing at all. I raise my hands to grab and block yours, and I relax my body to shed my outer skin before instantly pulling away several body lengths from you.”

“Shed your skin... You can actually shed your skin!” This was unimaginable to True Immortal She Pi. The various combat skills of the young man in front of him were extraordinarily similar to his – they could almost be said to have been cast from the same mold.

At this point in their war of words, Fang Xing was confident that his father True Immortal She Pi was becoming convinced of his true identity.

True Immortal She Pi’s memories had been altered and Bai Youquan had forced him to become a research lackey for their black shadow organization, but Fang Xing always believed that his father absolutely wouldn’t roll over for them just like that.

This was a man who had mastered all kinds of core technology back then. While the black shadow army had tampered with the man’s memories, Fang Xing believed that as long as his father wanted to, he would definitely be able to get his memories back.

After his resurrection, True Immortal She Pi was sure from memory that he didn’t have a son. However, every aspect of Fang Xing’s behavior was astonishingly similar to his.

Indeed, True Immortal She Pi started to doubt himself.

What was his name? Where had he come from? Where would he go after death? What was at the end of the universe?

Who killed him?

And who actually was he...

He fell silent at all these doubts and questions.

...

At the same time elsewhere, Wang Ling and his group had made a breakthrough in their investigation. Mother Juan led Wang Ling and the others to the school staff dormitory where she stayed. Mother Juan had a single room, so she was the only occupant.

When she took out a world map from a drawer, Wang Ming and Guo Ping traded looks and smiled after looking at it. “Miss Juan’er, we already have a map like yours. We used high-precise equipment to do a scan, so our map might be a lot more precise.”

Mother Juan smiled enigmatically. “Then do you know about the Five Great Altars?”

Guo Ping was stumped by this question. “The Five Great Altars?”

“It’s understandable if you didn’t notice them. There are tons of barriers on the place, and unless you head over to see it with your own eyes, you’ll never find it with any sort of scan. The intruders behind the scenes here aren’t stupid,” said Mother Juan.

“Then, Miss Juan’er, where did you get your map from?” Dog Two on the ground asked.

“Someone gave it to me when I was a small child. He predicted that it would be the key to saving two worlds, and in order to do so, the Five Great Altars must be seized first.”

“Who was that person?”

“I don’t know, but I’m certain that this person wasn’t from this world. After his explanation, he disappeared like the light. He wore a gray cloak, and looked like he had stepped out of the ancient past. When we shook hands, I could even feel a piercing chill coming off him.”

“Was he also a soul of the dead?” asked Wang Ming.

“Definitely not.” Mother Juan shook her head. “Departed spirits don’t have such clear awareness. It was as if he could see into the future, and he was the one who told me everything I know. Also... he actually told me the reason why the black shadow army was absorbing the dead from other worlds.

“The Palace of Mirrors was built based on the five elements. They engender one another and create a balance between Yin and Yang. The real world is Yang, while our world is Yin. Thus, there is no place more suitable than the Palace of Mirrors for absorbing souls of the dead. After the black shadow army came, they built the dream houses and controlled the altars which maintain the stability of the Palace of Mirrors. Their ultimate goal is to complete the Five Elements Transfer Soul Array and combine the Yin and Yang worlds into one.

“When that happens, Yin and Yang cannot be separated and the universe will fall into chaos. The fusion of both worlds can only lead to destruction. The dead here are like puppets, and have no desires or needs. Once both worlds merge together, this attitude will definitely affect even more people.”

“What will happen?” Wang Ming’s expression was grave.

“A great number of people will go on strike and the global economy will come to a standstill. Celebrities won’t go on Twitter or Weibo because they won’t be bothered about their hype. Live stream gamers will no longer care about winning or losing, and won’t even be bothered to use cheats – they might simply quit live streaming altogether. Restaurants will shut down because no one is willing to cook, and people will have to live on snacks and frozen food. At that point, there might be a shortage of drinking water and fasting pills...”

Wang Ling’s expression changed when he heard these words.

From what Mother Juan was saying, all the people of the world would be affected by the dead and become like salted fish if the two worlds merged together.

Once all the snacks and frozen food in the world were practically used up, no one would be willing to continue producing them! Then, what would happen to his crispy noodle snacks???

No way!

He definitely couldn’t let that happen!.

Chapter 1004: The Legend of Little Chick

Backed by an unknown power, the sudden attack by the shadow army previously had caught not only Wang Ling but practically everyone off guard. The strangest thing for Wang Ling was that he hadn’t felt any sense of foreboding before it happened – even his eyelid hadn’t twitched.

Wang Ling vaguely felt that there was something unusual about it.

In any case, he had already planned to get to the bottom of the matter and couldn't afford to put it off any longer.

Borrowing Mother Juan's map, Wang Ming and Guo Ping divided the work between them and touched up their own map of the Palace of Mirrors before projecting it in the air as a holographic image. The Five Great Altars were located in five different positions on the map: connecting them together created a perfect circle.

Wang Ming examined the map carefully and began to mark it. It had to be said that Wang Ming was quite sharp. Looking at the marks, everyone's eyes instantly lit up.

"This is..."

"These are the locations of all the dream houses in the Palace of Mirrors. Connecting them as points, and combining them with the Five Great Altars on the outside... Don't you think this looks like an ancient magic array?" As he explained, Wang Ming started trying to connect the points together in different configurations.

"Mm... I got it." Guo Ping looked shaken. Connecting some of the dream houses together, he said decisively, "If the points here, here and here are connected, don't you think it looks very similar to the characters above the entrance to the Palace of Mirrors? While it doesn't completely explain everything, this indeed proves that Teacher Wang's guess is correct."

"What a crazy bunch..." Wang Ming tsked.

Such an outrageous and crazy idea of locking up the entire world in an array was ample proof of how powerful the person behind the scenes was.

The most direct thing they could do now was to take back the altars in the Palace of Mirrors that had been seized by the shadow army.

The world of the Palace of Mirrors was a complete opposite of the real world outside, but the Five Great Altars were unique to the Palace of Mirrors. In Wang Ling's world, the five elemental laws

were abstract – they were like cell molecules that had broken down and dissolved into spiritual qi that could be drawn upon.

In the Palace of Mirrors, however, the five elemental laws were just the opposite: the existence of the Five Great Altars here had led to the condensation of the five elements into substantial matter.

Guided by Mother Juan, Wang Ling and the others set out on Dog Two, whose body had grown to a massive size, and it ran very fast.

Sitting on Dog Two, they started to learn more about this world from Mother Juan on the way.

Dog Two didn't dislike being used as a mount. On the contrary, it enjoyed the feeling of Little Master Ling sitting on it...

In the Wang family's small villa, just being stroked by its little master was usually already an extravagance. For Dog Two, to be used as a mount was a sign of its master's trust and an exceptional honor.

Dog Two carried Wang Ling and the others all the way south. Their current destination was the Altar of Water in the south.

During the journey, Dog Two did its best not to shake so that Wang Ling had a comfortable ride. The only fly in the ointment was that Wang Ling had yet to give it a matching saddle and reins, which would have made it look even cooler.

"I'll go back to the demon world later and have my friend Little Chick give me two chicken feathers. A seat made from Little Chick's feathers is soft and cosy, and free of static," Dog Two abruptly said as it ran.

Guo Ping hadn't known much about Dog Two at first.

But since he was now one of them, Wang Ming gave Guo Ping a rundown of events on their journey. Guo Ping was deeply shaken when he learned of Dog Two's real identity.

Who would have thought that the world-shaking Sky-Swallowing Toad demon king, who had caused all of Huaxiu's immortal mobile troops to be collectively dispatched six years ago, would actually decline to this extent...

"A grand demon king, actually reduced to a mount." Guo Ping sighed.

"That's wrong, Professor Guo, what 'reduced to a mount'? I'm perfectly happy to be a mount! There's a big difference between 'being reduced to' and 'being willing,' okay?! 'Being reduced to' is to degrade yourself, but 'being willing' isn't the same! 'Being willing' is an honor! Professor Guo should also feel honored to sit on my back. If it wasn't for Little Master Ling's sake, do you think you would be able to?"

"..." Guo Ping pursed his lips, and in the end realized he was unable to respond.

"So you're saying that Little Chick is also a demon king? Why haven't I heard you mention this before, after the last time you went back to the demon world?" Wang Ming asked.

"When I returned to the demon world back then, Little Chick actually helped me a lot in secret. But Little Chick has always been very timid and doesn't dare reveal itself so easily. Recently in particular, 'chicken, you're too beautiful' guichu videos I have started appearing in the real world, which Little Chick finds very humiliating. I heard that Little Chick's Chicken King clan almost went into hiding a while ago."

"Is Little Chick male or female..."

"Male, but he doesn't have a crest."

"Why's that?"

"Early on, Little Chick was playing mahjong with some people... It was playing against First Generation Demon Saint, but Little Chick this fellow wasn't smart. First Generation Demon Saint just needed the chicken tile to win, but Little Chick stubbornly refused to throw it out. Later, First Generation Demon Saint grabbed its crest and cut it off, and because of this incident, also cracked down on gambling in the demon world. Forget 'a small wager pleases the soul, a large wager hurts the body' – a bet is still a bet: those who win want to continue winning, those who lose want to change their luck. There's no end to it."

“What a profound lesson...”

“That’s not it!” Dog Two said. “After Little Chick was punished back then, a saying caught on in the demon world: don’t bet on cards, or your crown will fall 1 .”

Everyone: “...”

The truth was that Guo Ping had to admit that Wang Ling had a kind of magic that couldn’t be clearly explained with words.

He had realized it after his first encounter with Wang Ling.

Wang Ling was very aloof and taciturn.

But there was something mystical about him which people wanted to get close to and understand.

Thinking this, Guo Ping darted a look at Wang Ling, who didn’t seem the least bit nervous. Throughout the journey, while they were engaged in heated discussion on this side, Wang Ling acted as if it was nothing.

Was he really not nervous about what was happening, or did he have some trick up his sleeve?

Guo Ping didn’t know.

But he was now even more curious about Wang Ling.

Chapter 1005: The Altar of Water and the Sea of Reeds

As Dog Two ran like crazy, Wang Ling and the others drew closer to the Altar of Water in the south. The set-up of the world of the Palace of Mirrors was in fact very simple, but the shadow army invaded and forced it to become more complicated.

As they drew near to the Altar of Water, Wang Ling and the others stopped and approached in secret.

Wresting control of the altar now would mean regaining sovereignty over the world. Once the operation of the five element altars was restored, this swarm of shadow army invaders would be forcefully sent back by the nomological laws in the Palace of Mirrors to their original world. The departed spirits wandering around in this world would in turn return to their original worlds and rest in peace.

As for the innocent killed by the shadow army, they would become inhabitants of the Palace of Mirrors. The nomological laws of the world would create new bodies for them, and then strip them of their memories of this world before sending them back to their original world.

The nomological laws of the world were an order unto themselves.

When the order was disrupted, the world fell into chaos.

When order was reasserted, everything would return to what it was.

In the real world, Gu Shunzhi's role was to maintain the order of the universe.

But the Palace of Mirrors was obviously something Gu Shunzhi couldn't predict.

This was an unusual world which existed in between the cracks.

And an extraordinary world would usually only open in extraordinary circumstances.

So here was a new question for Wang Ling.

If the key figure behind the shadow army invasion wasn't the master of this world, then who on earth was the real master who created the Palace of Mirrors?

Each altar had its own characteristic.

The altar wasn't simply an array: its structure was far more complex.

Each altar was composed of three key constituents.

One: A material object of a highly spiritual nature that aligned with the altar's attribute.

Take the Altar of Water for example: its material object was very likely a river or a lake.

Two: Offerings had the same attribute as what was used to build the altar.

The offerings were usually magic artifacts with tremendous, ancient power. These sort of magic artifacts were mostly antiques that had already lost their original effects, but could still be used as sacrificial tributes. Dharmaraja's Holy Thunder Pill, for example, was a holy relic passed down in the Thunder clan for generations, and which was perfect as an altar offering.

Finally, the third and most inhumane key element: the altar envoy, who guarded the altar.

Altar envoys were like sacrificial offerings themselves: they were people offered up to the altar, who resonated with the altar's attribute and were carefully selected.

After becoming the guardian envoy of the altar, they would receive the altar's power and become immortal. On the other hand, they would lose their freedom forever.

The altar was like a prison for the guardian envoys; each one was imprisoned inside, where no light shone...

In the ancient cultivation world, various types of elemental altars were usually used to protect cities. Ancient cultivators used the power of the altars to defend their kingdoms.

However, with the onset of modern cultivation culture, the altar became an inhumane and forbidden technique.

Hundreds of years before the modern era, there were cultivators who had looked into upgrading the altars. After the upgrade, an alternative for the third key constituent was found: an "artificial

puppet.” However, these soulless puppets were, in the end, non-living things, and couldn’t exhibit even a tenth of the power of a living person. After the altars’ power was drastically reduced, they naturally phased out.

Later, with the advent of modern cultivation, the sacrifice of living things was added to the list of forbidden techniques banned under the Cultivation Convention.

Wang Ling had heard Old Antique talk about this part of history in class before, but it wasn’t a test point and was just a piece of additional trivia in the modern history of cultivation course.

Old Antique had vast experience far beyond what many people could imagine; he could be said to be erudite and well-informed, and could almost be described as omniscient. That particular lesson was still fresh in Wang Ling’s memory, because he had been eating a crispy noodle snack on the sly in that class before Old Antique found and confiscated it!!!

As everyone expected, up ahead was a marsh surrounded by a sea of tall reeds, which made it hard to see and could completely swallow up an adult.

“There’s a very strong aura.” Stopping in front of the sea of reeds, Dog Two frowned deeply and involuntarily bristled. This was a natural manifestation of its perception as a beast, which indicated that there was hidden danger inside the reeds.

“This is the Altar of Water. I explored it once before, and I got stuck and almost couldn’t get out of the sea of reeds.” Mother Juan shivered as she said this.

“You weren’t caught?” Dog Two was surprised.

“The shadow army have never done anything to the original inhabitants of this world; our status gives us immunity. I pretended that I lost my memory and entered this area by accident; when they found me, they brought me out,” Mother Juan said.

Mother Juan’s cooking skills were a little weaker in the Palace of Mirrors, but at the late Nascent Soul stage, her realm strength in fact wasn’t low. However, it was still very dangerous to approach the altar.

Perhaps the reason why the shadow army hadn’t silenced Mother Juan was because they knew that the original inhabitants of this world would gradually lose their sense of self.

“Don’t panic. Let me and Old Guo check it out first.” As they hid behind a rock, Wang Ming held out his index finger, and the metal covering it slowly opened. Several mechanical flies flew out directly into the sea of reeds.

These were tiny reconnaissance drones in the shape of flies. Dog Two swallowed when it saw them.

It had been a very long time since it had eaten big meat flies... it really missed eating them.

While Guo Ping was analyzing the terrain from the scans the drones sent back, he and Wang Ming jolted at a sudden shrill sound from their headphones which made them dizzy and their ears ring.

“What’s the matter?” Dog Two asked.

“The drones were intercepted... None of the twenty-nine flies made it...” Guo Ping checked the image from the last fly drone before it disappeared: a small, muddy hand broke the surface of the marsh and directly dragged the drone down into the marsh and engulfed it.

“It seems that passing through this sea of reeds won’t be as easy as we thought.” Looking at this scene, Dog Two shuddered.

It seemed that the sea of reeds was already under the enemy’s complete control. This sort of wide-ranging magical ability was very tricky, as there was no way to immediately find the spellcaster, while the other party could instantly start monitoring your position. Once you were dragged into the marsh, you might not be able to break free with your own power.

The nature of a marsh was that the more you struggled, the deeper you sank.

“Let’s go.” At that moment, Wang Ling stood up.

He walked toward the sea of reeds.

Then, an incredible miracle happened.

As Wang Ling advanced, the marsh parted to create a path...

The Great Sea-Parting Spell... This was one of Wang Ling's passive Heavenly Dao.

Chapter 1006: Listen, Would A Human Say That?!

Elsewhere, with Book of Sage Immortal's participation, the Office of Strategic Deception's offense went more smoothly than expected. Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal had perfectly suppressed the two imposters with the Royal Scepter which Odd Zhuo had discovered in the birthday gift boxes, but their lips were sealed tight, and so far they had refused to say a single word.

"We have no other choice." Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal shook the scepter and furrowed his brow. "Someone, torture them!"

"Senior Immortal... are we really going to torture them... Isn't that a bit inhuman?"

At that moment, it was as if Judge Bao had possessed Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal. "Since these two imposters are so stubborn, we need to torture them! Someone, remove his purple and gold crown and strip him of the imperial robe 1 !"

"Senior Immortal, it seems our sect doesn't have a dragon head guillotine 1 ..."

"Who said we'd be using a dragon head guillotine?" Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal shook the scepter. "Someone! Put headphones on them and play Irascible Dharmaraja's song! Tie them up and place them in front of the screen, and replay that basketball video 1 ten thousand times!"

"Too cruel..." Everyone couldn't help sighing.

... Listen, would a human say that?!

"Ai , who knows if these two will be able to take such torture."

In Wang Ling's bedroom at the Wang family's small villa, Odd Zhuo couldn't help sighing ruefully at the scene being played by Book of Sage Immortal. But things had already come to this point, and it wasn't possible for him to intercede on behalf of these two imposters; to sympathize with the enemy was to be cruel to yourself.

"According to my calculations, there's a 32% chance that the two imposters will surrender and confess under torture."

Book of Sage Immortal said, "However, there is also a 68% chance that the two will choose to surrender if Teacher Wang Jiao is involved."

"Senior Wang? Didn't they go back to their hometown?"

"Mr Wang did indeed go back, but not just to honor his ancestors." Book of Sage Immortal didn't say anything else after that.

But Odd Zhuo heard the implication in its words.

Although he didn't know why Father Wang had gone back, it was clear to him that it was for something momentous.

As expected, shifu 's family wasn't ordinary.

...

As Book of Sage Immortal said, Father Wang had indeed returned to his hometown.

The Wang family's ancestral home was a sea village which actually wasn't far from Songhai city. As a village by the sea, it was the most abundant in seafood and sea salt oranges. There was an orange orchard at Old Man Wang's place, which he usually attended to himself. However, since his stay at the Wang family's small villa was a little longer this time, he had gotten someone else to watch the orchard.

For Old Man Wang, his retirement was quite cozy — his children all had their own jobs and were living well, and he had grandchildren. As an old man, he had practically no regrets.

The only one he had was that he had no partner to grow old with him.

Wang Ling's grandmother had died early, before Wang Ling was born, and he had only heard about his grandparents' love story from his dad. He didn't know whether there were parts of it that were exaggerated, but his grandparents' feelings were absolutely an example for young people.

Looking at what happened with Old Man Wang and Teacher Pan previously, Old Man Wang had been a Casanova when he was younger — he had dated countless girls, but in the end, he chose his most beloved person to spend his life with, and that was Wang Ling's grandmother.

Wang Ling had always been deeply curious about his grandma since young.

But there was a limit to how much he knew of her.

To not be too nosy about one's elders was the most basic courtesy that a junior could extend to them, so Wang Ling wouldn't deliberately search out information on his grandma.

Old Man Wang was a "lord" in the sea village — this didn't mean that he was a tyrant, but that he was popular and respected by the villagers. As a young man, he had once served as the sea village's keeper of records. This was a high-ranking position in the village, and Old Man Wang had been able to assume this position despite his low realm purely because of how popular he was.

And electing Old Man Wang indeed proved to be a smart decision.

During his time in office, the sea village opened a market in every city which showcased the various types of dishes which Old Man Wang developed using sea salt oranges. Taking advantage of its geographical location, the sea salt oranges which the village exported were very sweet and large, and were a hit in the cultivation farmer's markets.

So, how popular were the sea salt oranges exported by the sea village in those days?

All kinds of people who saw the sea village's orange sellers on any train platform would go so far as to risk being hit by the immortal sword express as they crossed the tracks to buy the oranges 1 ...

Even to this day, the sea salt oranges exported by the sea village still took up a large share of the market, making the sea village one of the ten most affluent villages in Huaxiu nation.

When Old Man Wang retired afterward, he dove wholeheartedly into the culinary arts, a field he had always been the most interested in since young, and continued to develop new dishes all these years.

Although he didn't have a partner to accompany him, he actually didn't feel lonely in the village. His neighbors Old Second Wu and Old Liang were his mahjong partners, and they would play mahjong together whenever they were free. Conversely, the reason why Old Man Wang decided to stay at the Wang family's small villa was because he was too popular.

If someone had to be blamed, it would be the old women who drooled over Old Man Wang for so long... They would come over every now and then to nag him about taking care of himself, which he found a little unbearable — the village had even once arranged a matchmaking meet exclusively for him.

Sheep stopped one hundred meters from the village entrance, and Father Wang and the others got off.

Until now, Father Wang was actually still skeptical about the matchmaking issue. "Dad, was it really as exaggerated as you say?"

"You've never experienced it, of course you wouldn't understand." Old Man Wang still felt some lingering fear whenever he thought of the matchmaking interviews which the village had arranged for him.

The point was that he couldn't lose his temper in front of the villagers!

They meant well. On top of that, he usually gave the impression of being an affable person in the village — how could he get angry? Furthermore, even if Old Man Wang lost his temper, it wouldn't seem like it, given his temperament; instead, it looked more like he was throwing a tantrum...

After hiding out at the Wang family's small villa for half a year this time, Old Man Wang felt sure that the matchmaking interviews which the village had arranged for him should have already been shelved, which was why he was only brave enough now to come back for a visit with Father and Mother Wang.

In the end, they had just gotten off a hundred meters from the village entrance —

Father and Mother Wang were just about to help Old Man Wang off, when a broadcast rang out in the village.

“Attention, comrades! Old Wang has returned to the village! He’s one hundred meters outside the village entrance! Let us respectfully welcome Old Wang back!”

The voice resounded loudly throughout the sea village.

Old Man Wang was so frightened, he almost fell off the tricycle...

Chapter 1007: Really That Exaggerated?

Reality proved that Old Man Wang was indeed a popular figure in the village. As soon as he appeared at the entrance, his position was thoroughly exposed... This was largely because the sea village was rich enough to equip every main road with a surveillance camera, and the village was also part of the “Divine Eye Project”; generally speaking, remote villages wouldn’t have this sort of status.

But as the wheel of modernization continued to turn, there would come a day when even the most remote villages would become well-off.

With Old Man Wang’s return, the whole village seemed to become more lively.

Old women from every household came to the village entrance, each one beaming at Old Man Wang. Some of them had lost their spouses like Old Man Wang, while some had come to act as matchmakers... The most exaggerated were the old ladies who wanted to introduce their daughters to Old Man Wang...

“Yo, Uncle Old Wang has been gone for so long, but why do you look younger?” The very first person at the village entrance was an old woman called Wang Dongmei. Everyone in the village had

the surname Wang, since the sea village was established in ancient times by a noble Wang clan. Although the clan had gradually declined, the sea village community persisted.

Nowadays, there were some villagers with different surnames, like the old man's two mahjong buddies Old Wu and Old Liang. They were outsiders who had settled here and got along well with the other villagers. However, the villagers were still mostly made up of Wangs.

Seeing how someone had been keeping watch for him from so far away before he even stepped foot into the village, and that the person was Wang Dongmei, Old Man Wang's spirits instantly deflated, and he couldn't even feel emotional about returning to his hometown. Right now, he felt like those young people who went on blind dates in the corners of the cultivation community parks... but the difference was that they were free to choose their own matches, while Old Man Wang's partner would be selected by someone else.

"Uncle Wang, you're already so old and your daughter-in-law lives so far away. If you have someone to take care of you, wouldn't that be reassuring for your son and daughter-in-law?" Wang Dongmei pulled on Old Man Wang's hand as she earnestly tried to persuade him. Father and Mother Wang could only stand on the side and smile diffidently. Based on seniority, they had to call her aunt; as juniors, they didn't dare act rashly in front of this old woman.

It was largely this Aunt Wang who arranged the matchmaking interviews for Old Man Wang, and she was just as enthusiastic with other people... She was like a central heating system: not only was she like a torch that never went out, she also lit up the lives of others.

"Aunt Wang, how about we chat inside?" Father Wang intervened gently as he did his best to prop up Old Man Wang. It was obvious that this Aunt Wang Dongmei was a huge psychological trauma for Old Man Wang when he had stayed in the village previously – he stumbled even at the mention of the matchmaking.

When everyone in the village found out that Old Man Wang was back, they poured out of their homes excitedly to line the street in welcome. It wasn't more than a kilometer from the village entrance to Old Man Wang's place, but hundreds of people had come over to stare, men and women, young and old...

"Uncle Wang is passing through, make way! Don't block his way!" Aunt Wang Dongmei cleared the way for them of her own enthusiastic accord. "Whose family's brat is this?! Hurry home and do your homework! Don't make things worse! Have you finished your summer homework?"

"I... I have!" a chubby kid among the crowd said weakly, a lollipop in his hand.

Aunt Wang Dongmei smiled as she looked at the kid. “Yo, so it’s Tiger Wang’s Fat Tiger! Our Fat Tiger is so well-behaved and has never been sloppy! Everyone, learn from him! I have to give him some reward!”

“Th- thank you, Aunt Wa-”

Fat Tiger flushed at the praise and was about to thank her for the reward when Aunt Wang went on to say, “Don’t forget to come to my office later to receive a copy of Summer Vacation Life 1as your reward.”

Fat Tiger was a little aggrieved. “But... but I’ve already finished it...”

Aunt Wang: “You’ll learn new things when you review the old, understand? You should write more! Taking notes is always better than having a good memory!”

Then came the sound of Fat Tiger’s crying in the crowd...

Seeing this, some of the villagers carried him off in a hurry.

Aunt Wang making a direct example of Fat Tiger scared some of the other brats watching, and they scattered in the wind to go hide at home.

Father Wang and Mother Wang: “...”

...

Old Man Wang’s place had been turned into an office when he became an official, and it had been overhauled several times. Someone would sweep the yard every now and then when he was away. Opening the door after the place had been vacant for half a year, Father and Mother Wang could see the dust that had gathered inside.

Aunt Wang Dongmei frowned and directly threw out a Dao talisman to thoroughly clean up the entire place. The bubbles formed by the talisman dissolved in the air and swept away all the dust in the room, leaving behind only a faint and pleasant fragrance.

Father and Mother Wang helped the old man into a bamboo chair. As Aunt Wang Dongmei directed people to get rid of the onlookers, she didn't see herself as an outsider at all and straightaway made tea. "Uncle Wang, since you brought your son and daughter-in-law back this time, let's not beat around the bush."

Father and Mother Wang: "..."

Aunt Wang sipped her tea and smiled. "Uncle Wang, in perfectly completing my work for the better part of these six months, I also found a lot of matches for you. Some are young and some are old. The young ones might not have experienced or understand as much, and the older ones might look a little frail, but they're all good at doing things, especially when it comes to taking care of you. How about..."

"Aunt Wang..."

Father Wang coughed at that moment.

Aunt Wang: "Go ahead."

Father Wang: "Aunt Wang, it's like this: my dad and I came back this time to honor our ancestors, and to see my mom... Arranging for my dad to attend matchmaking interviews now wouldn't be very good, would it? Also, my dad isn't actually interested in this."

"How do you know Uncle Wang isn't?"

Aunt Wang was unhappy. "Uncle Wang is the backbone of our village! When Uncle Wang is around, the sea village thrives! As a junior, it's best that you watch what you say! We're all hoping that Uncle Wang will have another child!"

Father and Mother Wang: "..."

But after saying that, Aunt Wang did feel that she was coming on too strong, and she softened her tone. "I actually do understand Uncle Wang's feelings... But Aunt Wang is already gone, after all, and can't come back! Our hope is for Uncle Wang to walk out of the shadows as soon as possible. If he isn't interested, we can talk about it another time."

Considering that she was at someone else's place and it was now an important time for the Wang family as they honored their ancestors, it was indeed a bit inconsiderate to force Old Man Wang to attend matchmaking interviews now... An idea struck Wang Dongmei as she decided to try for the next best thing.

Old Man Wang's brow had remained furrowed the entire time as he gazed at Father Wang with an expression that pleaded for help.

Father and son were united in heart.

Father Wang already understood.

It wasn't often that he came back to the countryside.

He really had to figure out a way this time to resolve this issue of his dad's matchmaking interviews for good... Otherwise, his old man might not even have the heart to honor their ancestors.

It was just that in terms of fighting strength, this Aunt Wang was indeed formidable and hard to deal with...

What should he do?

He didn't have any book fans here to help him out...

Father Wang suddenly felt a little worried.

Chapter 1008: The True Desire to Live

Just like Father Wang said, Aunt Wang was a character who was hard to deal with. She probably backed down this time only because Father and Mother Wang were here, and they had come back to

honor their ancestors. As soon as they left, Old Man Wang would probably continue to be bombarded by her matchmaking.

Of course, this was Aunt Wang's own wishful thinking... however, the root of this issue stemmed from the fact that most of the villagers depended on Old Man Wang. Back then, he single-handedly led the sea village out of poverty toward prosperity, and the villagers worshipped him like a big brother. It was because of this that the villagers believed in the importance of Old Man Wang as the pillar of the village.

But even a pillar would grow old one day.

Father Wang left the sea village to live in the city. Although he had used his earnings as an author to buy a suburban villa and settle down, this didn't give the villagers any sense of security... Actually, Father Wang felt that the villagers didn't have enough confidence in themselves.

Under Aunt Wang Dongmei's leadership, the sea village's growth hadn't stagnated at all in the last two years.

But Old Man Wang's existence was like a calming tonic which soothed the people.

"Aunt Wang, my father is quite tired after being on the road the whole day. Why don't we talk about this after the ancestral worship?" Father Wang knew that if she continued to hang around, his dad might not even be able to eat dinner; as someone wise in the ways of the world, Aunt Wang naturally recognized her cue to leave.

She took out a book from her chest pocket and placed it on the table with a smile. "Uncle Wang, I know you're not keen now, but that's fine! I'll leave this book here. Later, when you're interested, you can flip through it and have a look. If you see anyone you like, send me a photo and I'll immediately arrange for the lady to come to your place."

"You'll even bring her here?" Father Wang smiled.

Wang Dongmei: "Of course! Uncle Wang is so distinguished, we can't have him go over himself, right? Let me tell you, Uncle Wang is still young! It's just that he doesn't want to take youth-retaining pills. Actually, a lot of men take it nowadays, and I don't think it's a big deal! If Uncle Wang's appearance went back to what it was like when he was young, it would be an insta-kill for all the fresh meat out there! I'll leave this youth-retaining pill with you, Uncle Wang – I've kept it for you all this time!"

Father and Mother Wang: "..."

Aunt Wang's face was like a peach blossom as she spoke, and she started to blather on again before leaving. "Also, Uncle Wang, go through the photos in the book carefully. For some of the old ones, there are also photos of them when they were young. If you fancy their younger looks, I can also give them this youth-retaining pill!"

Father Wang and Mother Wang: "..."

After talking non-stop for five or six minutes, Aunt Wang finally left in high spirits.

Old Man Wang slumped down in his chair like Ge You; it was as if his life had already lost all meaning.

He sighed with extreme bitterness – as if he had watched the rotten ending of season eight of the Game of Thrones , he looked like he wanted to die.

"Tsk, Aunt Wang really knows how to use any opportunity."

Father Wang spoke mockingly, before he started flipping through that matchmaking book.

Father Wang's glasses slid down his nose at the range of photos inside.

"The heck... Aunt Wang's prep is so detailed..." Father Wang was stunned.

There were all kinds inside this matchmaking book! Even black girls...

"Agalia Mamatty, top graduate of Mixiu nation's Xia Fo Cultivation Academy, majored in spirit sword applied engineering and air flow technology, has a Michelin five-star chef certificate... even her BWH is included..." Father Wang stared blankly. This foreigner could be described as utterly invincible from this information alone... But Father Wang didn't understand – why would such an outstanding talent appear in this matchmaking book?

“Dad, what do you think these people want from you? The fact you’re old? That you don’t shower 1?”

“???”

Old Man Wang: “That’s Su Daqiang! I shower every day!”

Father Wang laughed. “I’m just joking, dad! I had a look, and the profiles aren’t bad. You haven’t lost any of your charm.” At this point, Mother Wang also covered her mouth and laughed; both of them were well aware of how Old Man Wang had been known as a Casanova back in the day.

Old Man Wang: “Hey...”

“Dad, don’t sigh.”

Father Wang hurried over and gripped Old Man Wang’s hand. “You are the pillar of Seigaku... Bah! the pillar of the sea village 1 !”

Old Man Wang rolled his eyes and sat up straight. “What do you know...”

“Then what do you think about this, dad?” Mother Wang asked softly as she also sat down.

The old man’s opinion was always the most important.

Although it did seem on the surface that Old Man Wang wasn’t interested in finding a new partner, they couldn’t rule out the slightest possibility that this was because of other factors; for example, that Old Man Wang might have his own concerns.

“Dad, if you really want to find a new partner, you don’t need to worry about me. I had thought about looking for a stepmother to take care of you before, which would be good. To be honest, I’m worried sometimes about you living in this sea village. Ling Ling took pains to cure you of your dementia; who knows if it’ll come back when you play mahjong with Uncle Wu and the rest – those two are pretty sly!” Father Wang whispered.

“Your mom was the reason for my dementia...” Old Man Wang rolled his eyes and poked Father Wang in the forehead. “You heartless thing. When your mother was alive, she treated you the best! You’re still thinking of finding a stepmother...”

“Aiyo.” Father Wang pretended to cry out in pain before he laughed. “Of course, I know how good my mom was to me. That’s why I’ve never skipped out on honoring our ancestors every year. I also know how you feel about my mom... but the problem is that so many people are eyeing you now. If you really aren’t interested, it’s best to deal with this quickly so that they’ll stop trying.”

Old Man Wang’s expression was melancholy. “Sometimes, we don’t know how to cherish something until it’s gone. Honestly speaking, when your mom was still around, she always ignored me, grumbled about me, and nagged me...”

“When she’s gone, my heart’s empty.

“Her voice always echoes in my ears.

“I can’t forget her, let alone let go...”

“I did think of looking for a companion, but I always felt that your mom’s soul is with me and hasn’t left.”

Father Wang felt tears welling up in his eyes.

But he didn’t want the atmosphere to be too heavy, so he wiped his tears and forced a smile. “You’re saying my mom’s soul never left?”

Old Man Wang rolled his eyes again.

But this time.

” Pa! ” The crisp sound of a slap suddenly rang out in the air.

The entire scene fell silent.

There was a handprint on the left side of Father Wang's face.

The sensation was familiar...

Father Wang was so frightened he broke out in a cold sweat on the spot. "Holy shit! Mom! You're really here! Mom, if you're here, please slap me again!"

Pa!

There was another handprint on the right side of his face.

And then... there was nothing.

Hugging each other, father and son trembled where they sat.

Mother Wang: "..."

Father Wang finally realized now why Old Man Wang had been so against the idea of finding a companion.

This... was a man's true desire to live...

Chapter 1009: Mother Wang's Second Pregnancy Plan!

Father and son held each other and trembled unconsciously for quite a while. Father Wang then weakly asked in a soft voice, "Mom? Mom... are you still there..."

After a long moment, there was still no reply.

His mother had stopped smacking him, but Father Wang unexpectedly felt a sense of loss.

“She probably left...” Old Man Wang gave a long sigh. “Your mother’s spirit comes and goes as it pleases: sometimes it’ll suddenly show up, and sometimes it’ll suddenly disappear. Who knows where it goes...”

“Dad, how long has this been going on for?” Father Wang couldn’t help asking.

“At the end of the seventh day after your mom passed away...”

“It’s been almost twenty years...” Father Wang was astonished.

“That’s right... Your mother has visited me from time to time in the last twenty years.” Old Man Wang smiled wryly. “But she doesn’t go anywhere else, and only haunts this house. Now do you know why I moved in with you? It wasn’t just to avoid the matchmaking interviews arranged by your Aunt Wang...”

Father Wang’s nose stung and he was close to tears. “Don’t say anymore, dad, I understand how you feel...”

Being henpecked was a trait of the men in the Wang family...

Actually, in the Wang family’s small villa, Father Wang was also pretty scared of Mother Wang...

The two men huddled together like two stalks of grass crying in a storm and bending pitifully in the wind.

Mother Wang: “Then... shall we get Ling Ling to check for us?”

“We can’t do that... What ghost hunter would catch their own grandmother?”

“So what should we do now?”

“Since mom wants to stay here, then let her... besides, I’m sure she isn’t some vengeful spirit or other.” Father Wang said, “Those two slaps just now were pretty strong! Just like when I was being naughty back then. It hurts the most in the first second after the slap, and a red handprint is left on

the cheek. It won't leave a scar, and will fade very quickly. The most important is how long the slap can last for: your cheek will feel like it's burning slightly, which can last up to forty-eight hours at the most."

Old Man Wang and Mother Wang: "..."

Father Wang said a little nostalgically, "No one in the world is better than mom at slapping." (At that moment, Father Wang didn't know that Wang Ling had already inherited from his grandmother that which had skipped a generation...)

After learning why Old Man Wang was afraid of the matchmaking interviews, Father Wang stopped asking questions about the matter that night.

Mainly because he didn't dare to...

God knew if his deceased mother was watching him from a corner. What if he opened a cupboard to find her squatting inside like Toshio in *The Grudge*? How scary would that be?

Old Man Wang went to bed early that night. Weary from a long day of travel, and coupled with Aunt Wang harassing him about the matchmaking interviews, he was already overwhelmed. The sea village was peaceful enough at night and public security here was excellent: guards from the village committee patrolled the village every night. The crime rate was practically zero, and the number of criminal cases that had happened in the sea village in the last few decades could be counted on one hand...

Mother Wang got the bed ready and started to do her skincare. This was something she had grown fond of after becoming a housewife. When she was still a writer before, she hadn't paid much attention to her skin. Now that she was no longer writing and had bailed on her readers, she had more time to take care of herself.

Mother Wang squirted some skincare lotion onto her palm and spread it evenly before gently patting her face. "What do you think we should do about dad's matter?"

"What else can we do? We can probably forget about the matchmaking. With mom coming by now and then, dad will definitely spend his last years single." Father Wang smiled bitterly as he scrolled distractedly through the news on his phone. He was glad that he had finished a stockpile of chapters before coming back here; with all these pesky things cropping up in his hometown, he really wouldn't have been able to type even a single word.

After taking a look at local news, Father Wang put the phone down absent-mindedly.

He thought hard about Old Man Wang's matter: the main problem now was figuring out how to deal with this once and for all. After putting an end to the matchmaking for his dad, Father Wang as his son still had to think of a way to make Aunt Wang herself give up on the idea of matchmaking for Old Man Wang.

"Hey... should we..." Just then, Mother Wang picked up a banana from the table and peeled it.

Father Wang was frightened by Mother Wang's behavior. "We shouldn't... Aunt Wang might be a little nosy, but we can't kill her. Skinning her or whatnot would be too cruel!"

Mother Wang's face was a little red. "What are you thinking... You know exactly what I mean..."

Father Wang: "You want to..."

Mother Wang: "Ling Ling is all grown up now and can take care of himself. How about... we have another child..."

Father Wang shook his head. "No! Absolutely not!"

Father Wang really was a little scared.

They had one child, and Earth was almost destroyed...

If they had a second one, wouldn't the universe explode...

"You did say before that Ling Ling's inability to control himself has a lot to do with his emotions. He's always been too tense; if we can give him a brother or a sister, he might be a little more carefree in the future. Wouldn't that be good?"

Mother Wang smiled, and her expression gradually turned cold as she gazed at Father Wang. "Or are you saying... you don't want to have a baby with me? You want to have a baby with someone else?"

Father Wang raised his hands ㄐ(?!?)ㄐ . “Your Majesty, you got me wrong...”

He did want... but he didn't dare!

“Then that's fine.”

Mother Wang chuckled. “If I do get pregnant, Aunt Wang's attention will most likely be diverted; she just wants us to have more people in our Wang family.”

Father Wang smiled. “What are you thinking... It's not that easy to get pregnant... Ling Ling wasn't conceived right off the bat back then!”

“If once isn't enough, we just need to try a few more times.”

“...”

“Why are you spacing out? Why don't you get to work?”

“You want to do it tonight... ?? Dad is resting, and the soundproofing here isn't great!” Father Wang was taken aback.

“If we're looking for excitement, we should go all the way.”

“You're so frisky...”

...

At the same time, at the Altar of Water in the Palace of Mirrors, Wang Ling, who was approaching the altar, suddenly shuddered.

An odd and indescribable feeling welled up in his heart.

He looked up at the sky as if he was pondering something.

“What’s wrong?” Wang Ming looked at Wang Ling.

Wang Ling asked quietly, “What is it like to be a brother?”

Chapter 1010: Help From All Quarters

“The five element altars... you have to shut down the five element altars if you want to stop us.” Inside the barrier around the Office of Strategic Deception, the two imposters had already confessed. Their skins were torn and pulpy all over after their bodies broke down from watching guichu videos and listening to electronic music. They were puppets at the core, and were like glutinous rice wrapped in leaves after cloning.

However, under a powerful attack from two major “weapons of physics,” their leaves had fallen apart.

“Please, don’t do this!” The imposters begged for mercy. They were stripped of their false appearances to reveal their inner cores, which were composed of a crystal-like substance which none of the people present had seen before.

“Who are you to tell us what to do?” Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal stared at the imposters in front of him, the Royal Scepter in his hand.

“This should be something from the Palace of Mirrors; my guess is that it’s some sort of compound substance.” Fatty Luo crouched down to touch the crystal, and one of the imposters rolled around on the ground in pain. “To be able to create this sort of substance, this person is truly a genius.”

Fatty Luo's admiration was sincere.

As a renowned expert in research on magic treasures, Fatty Luo had previously been officially invited by President Qi to study the human replica magic treasure Head of State 001, and he thus knew a thing or two about human cloning and bionics.

Finding a compound substance in the cultivation world suitable for making man-shaped puppets had always been a critical scientific research issue. The structure of the human body was very complicated, and even if lotus root or spirit clay was used to create prosthetics, these had a shelf life and wouldn't last in the long term. In addition, these prosthetics were relatively fragile; cultivators who switched to them were as good as giving up on body techniques, and couldn't fight as freely as other cultivators.

"What are the five element altars?" Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal asked again.

"They're part of a magic array which maintains the stability of the Palace of Mirrors, but which are currently under our control. Once the Five Elements Transformation Spell is activated, the Palace of Mirrors will merge with the real world: the two main worlds will become one, inseparable from each other." The imposters told them everything.

"Looks like we've really run into trouble this time."

Grenade-Throwing Senior Immortal frowned deeply, the Royal Scepter in his hand.

They then obtained a map of the Palace of Mirrors from these imposters. The five altars were located in five different positions.

“To activate the Five Elements Transformation Spell, it looks like the Five Elements Array has to be shut down at the same time – but shifu should be able to do it, right?” In Wang Ling’s bedroom, Odd Zhuo was also observing the situation at the Office of Strategic Deception via Book of Sage Immortal’s screen.

“Perhaps not.” Book of Sage Immortal seemed concerned. “If this was a normal Five Elements Array, my lord’s strength would naturally be more than enough. However, this Five Elements Array holds an entire world together – intruding on an array consumes a great deal of my lord’s spiritual energy. With his strength sealed, shutting down the five array points simultaneously will indeed be difficult. But if the seal is removed and his spiritual energy bursts out, the Palace of Mirrors and Earth might be instantly destroyed.”

“No way...” Odd Zhuo couldn’t believe it.

...

Meanwhile, in the Palace of Mirrors, Wang Ling had also realized this problem.

The black shadow army guarding the altars actually wasn’t hard to handle – the real difficulty was that he had to shut down all five altars at the same time. Counting in Mother Juan, Dog Two, Wang Ming and Guo Ping, they had four people and one dog, which was just nice. The problem, however, was that except for him, the other four combined weren’t strong enough to shut down even one altar.

Wang Ling had to admit that this was his first time feeling torn.

He thought he could fix everything with his own strength.

What should he do?

Undo the seal on his power?

As long as he undid the talisman seal on his power and used the Great Cloning Spell to send clones to the five altars, it would be no problem at all for him to shut down the five altars with his spiritual energy at its peak.

But the issue was whether he could truly control his spiritual energy output...

If it went berserk –

The consequences would be unimaginable.

Wang Ling sunk into silence for a long moment in front of the Altar of Water.

He was wondering whether to undo the seal.

In that moment, facing an unprecedented dilemma, Wang Ling felt deeply unsure.

Was he thinking too highly of himself?

It turned out that there actually were things he could feel helpless about...

Wang Ling gazed at the Water Altar nearby, and his eyelids dropped slightly.

A cool breeze whooshed through the ocean of reeds next to him, and it was as if the entire world fell silent.

“Enemy attack! Enemy attack!” Up ahead, some of the black shadow soldiers guarding the Altar of Water noticed Wang Ling and the others and rushed to surround them.

Guo Ping and Wang Ming immediately entered battle mode as several cannon muzzles appeared on their armor as they aimed at the back shadow army.

“Why did Student Wang suddenly stop moving?” Guo Ping was baffled by Wang Ling’s sudden hesitation.

“Who knows. He’s sensitive sometimes.” This was also a huge headache for Wang Ming. He thought he knew Wang Ling well, but the truth was that even after hanging around Wang Ling for so long, there were times when even Wang Ming felt that Wang Ling was like a stranger. Perhaps, his little brother had never truly opened his heart to anyone.

“Insolent hooligans, you dare invade the Altar of Water?” At that moment, a figure emerged from the marsh up ahead. This was the guardian envoy of the Altar of Water, Yin Jiuquan, who was also a member of the black shadow army.

The original guardian had been killed when the black shadow army seized this place.

Marked with Fate Dao runes all over his body, Yin Jiuquan glowed with tremendous power. “You bunch of hooligans, you have no chance of winning. You’ll need to use all your strength to deal with me! You can’t stop Master’s plan to merge the worlds. As long as one of the five altars is in operation, the others can be instantly restored even after they’re destroyed. The probability of shutting down the five altars at the same time is zero!”

As he spoke, he got ready to attack Wang Ling.

But as he was about to activate the Fate Dao runes, there were several massive waves of energy in the air, and several golden passageways opened!

This was Lord Ma’s transmission ability!

The sound of many voices then came out of the space tunnels. “Brother Ling, to stop the black shadow army, you have to shut down the Five Great Altars at the same time! All our Office of Strategic Deception’s personnel are coming to help!”

Then came Gu Shunzhi’s voice. “Ling Zhenren, I, Gu Shunzhi, bring aid from the ten major clans of the Domain of the Gods!” He stepped out of the space tunnel, and was followed by none other than Wang Zhen and Liu Qingyi.

“Ling Zhenren, on Demon Saint’s command, I, Shen Wuyue, bring battle aid from the four territories!”

As soon as Shen Wuyue finished speaking –

A pure and holy light appeared in the sky, and a Winged God slowly descended from the clouds.

The god's voice resounded in the vast sky. "Ling Zhenren, on Lord Thousand-Winged God's command, I have come to aid you..."