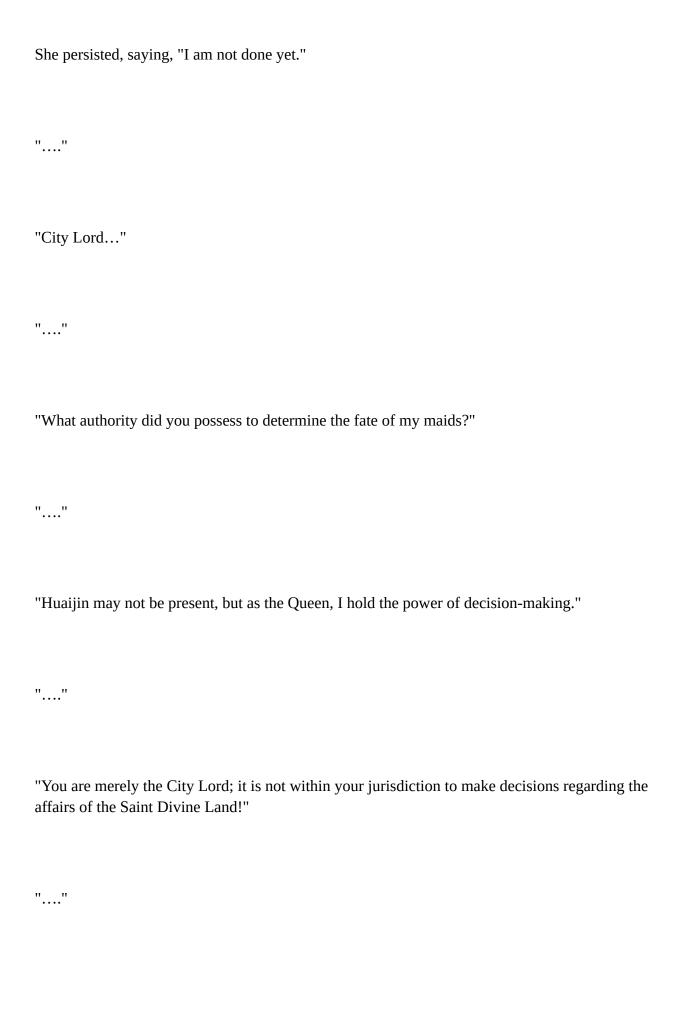
Divine 1831

Chapter 1831 Protection 4
Gu Chaoyan's voice resonated with authority as she addressed the gathered individuals.
"The maids from the Saint Divine Land may serve the court, but they are not of low class. According to the court's rules, when these maids reach the age of 25, they have the freedom to choose their own path. They can opt to leave the court and receive settlement money, allowing them to establish their own households, build their own houses, and even pursue marriage. Their choices are unrestricted and entirely their own."
A stunned silence fell upon the crowd.
"These maids may serve the court, but they are individuals with agency," Gu Chaoyan continued, her voice calm but resolute. "They have chosen to accompany me to Snow Territory, but their lives and choices remain their own, even after they turn 25."
She walked through the camp with a quiet confidence, ensuring that Lingyun assisted Sword One in adjusting the maids' clothes. It was a reminder to all that these women were not mere servants to be bullied at will. Gu Chaoyan was determined to make both the people of Snow Territory and the maids themselves understand this truth.
Wherever they went, these maids had someone to support them, someone who would stand up for their rights. There was no need for them to be afraid.
Though Huaijin was absent, Gu Chaoyan, as the Queen, would make the decisions necessary to protect their honor.

As her words sank in, she observed the pallor that spread across the faces of those from Snow Territory.
They had never anticipated such a response. They had regarded the maids as mere servants, easily disposed of.
But Phoenix Girl had stepped forward to defend them.
She had even gone so far as to sever the guards' arms.
Longqing was incensed and prepared to argue, but Ouyang Mingjing held him back, leaving him alone with his mounting anger.
Gu Chaoyan paid them no mind and continued her address. "Allow me to explain why these men do not deserve our women."
""
"They are supposed to be guards, responsible for protecting others."
""



Mediocre, at best.
Then, a glimmer of pride crossed Gu Chaoyan's face as she turned her attention to the hidden guards from Shadow Door. "Our hidden guards from Shadow Door, even in such harsh conditions, are still selflessly sharing their warm clothing with the women. That is the true measure of generosity!"
Chapter 1832 Protection 5
"It is our fault, and you have punished them, we cancel out," Ouyang Mingjing admitted, taking a step forward and deciding against further investigation.
On one hand, he acknowledged their mistake and realized they couldn't escape justice.
On the other hand, Ouyang Mingjing was overwhelmed with panic as he recognized the accuracy of Gu Chaoyan's assessment. She had perceived what he failed to see—those guards were truly narrow-minded, which explained their constant internal conflicts since he assumed the position of City Lord.
Ouyang Mingjing planned to deeply contemplate this matter upon his return to town.
However
Gu Chaoyan wasn't ready to let go of the issue so easily.



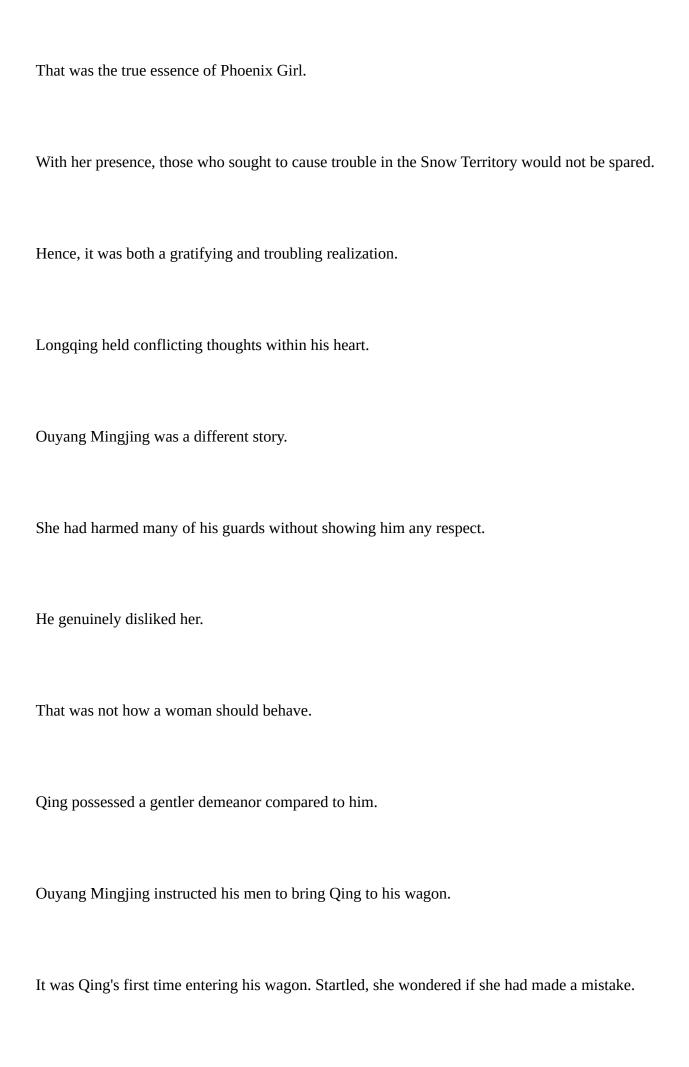




Sword One was taken aback by the weight of Gu Chaoyan leaning on her. Concerned, she asked, "Elder Miss, are you alright?"
Gu Chaoyan weakly shook her head and replied, "I'm fine, just a little exhausted."
She had been feeling unwell and had been suppressing her fatigue while dealing with the guards. Using almost all her energy, she had almost nothing left, prompting her to lean on Sword One for comfort.
They entered the wagon.
Gu Chaoyan instructed Sword One to change into fresh undergarments.
Unable to bathe or change clothes fully, they settled for a simple wipe-down. The spare clothes provided some relief, reducing her discomfort.
Before taking a rest, Gu Chaoyan emphasized, "By standing up for the maids, I may have unintentionally worsened their treatment from the guards. Be vigilant and ensure their safety."
With that, Gu Chaoyan closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep.
Sword One and Lingyun followed her instructions.

Chapter 1833 Qing's Ending 1

Time passed in this interlude.
Longqing utilized his magical abilities to preserve the armless guards. Though they had lost their arms, they managed to survive.
Longqing's emotions were complex as he looked upon these guards.
They had served him faithfully, displaying talent, skill, and dedication, aside from this one flaw. Longqing had overlooked their imperfections, but it seemed his leniency had unexpectedly irritated Phoenix Girl.
Well
Longqing experienced a mix of anger and satisfaction upon witnessing this scene.
Phoenix Girl appeared cold yet compassionate when treating her servants in such a manner, devoid of any airs of superiority.
However, today was different.
He witnessed a Phoenix Girl who exhibited no mercy.



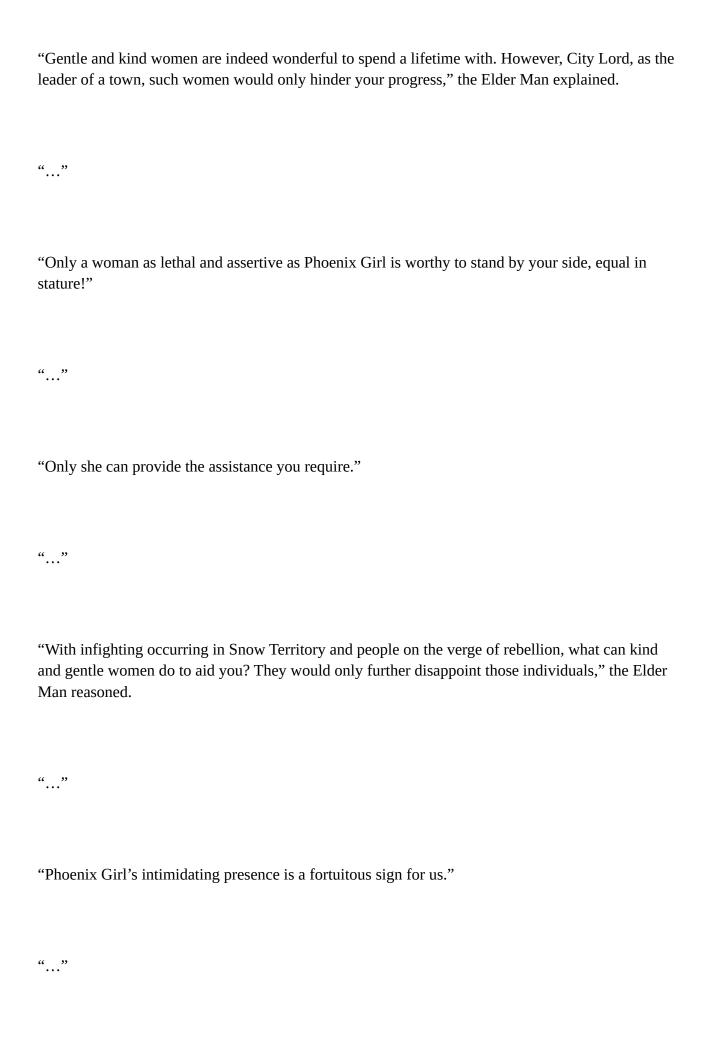


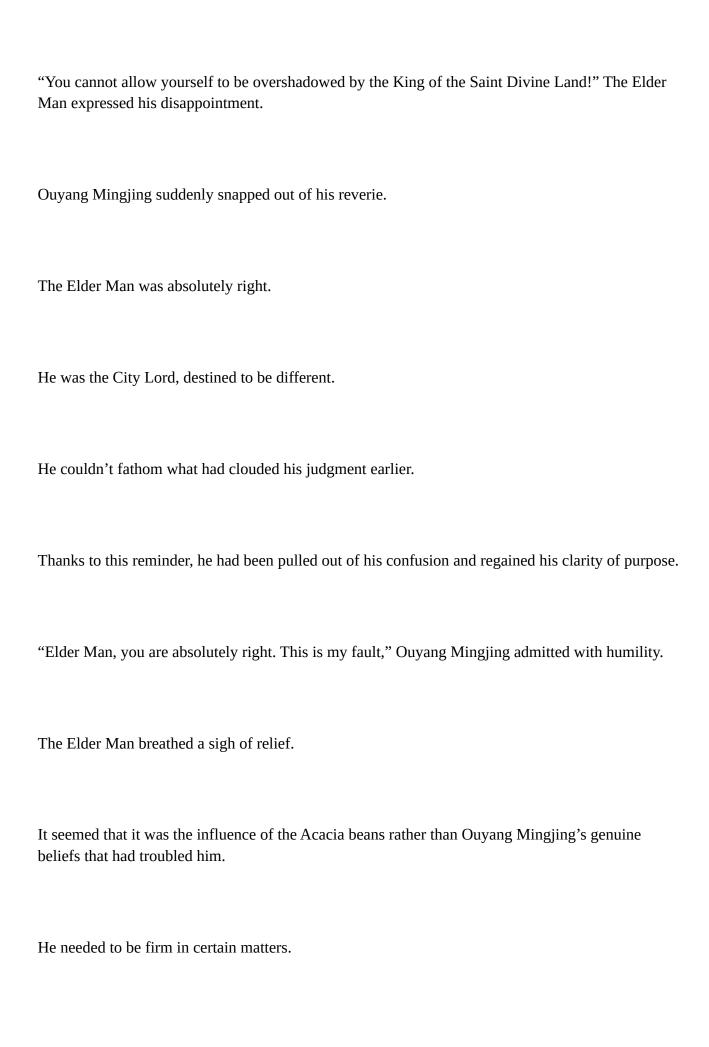
That was the embodiment of what a woman should be like—gentle and composed.
He was about to respond when Longqing's voice interrupted, "City Lord, Elder Men have arrived. They need to speak with you."
Chapter 1834 - Qing's Ending 2
After resolving the issues in Snow Territory following the ambush, the Elder Men had arrived, ready to return with Phoenix Girl in triumphant glory.
Ouyang Mingjing felt considerably better now that he understood the situation.
However, in that moment, his gaze fell upon Qing's face.
A proud smile formed on his lips.
He was on the verge of attaining everything he desired.
Deciding not to keep Qing hidden any longer, he spoke gently to her, "I still have a few matters to attend to. You may leave for now, and I will join you later."
" " · · · ·
"Remember what I told you about being by my side?"

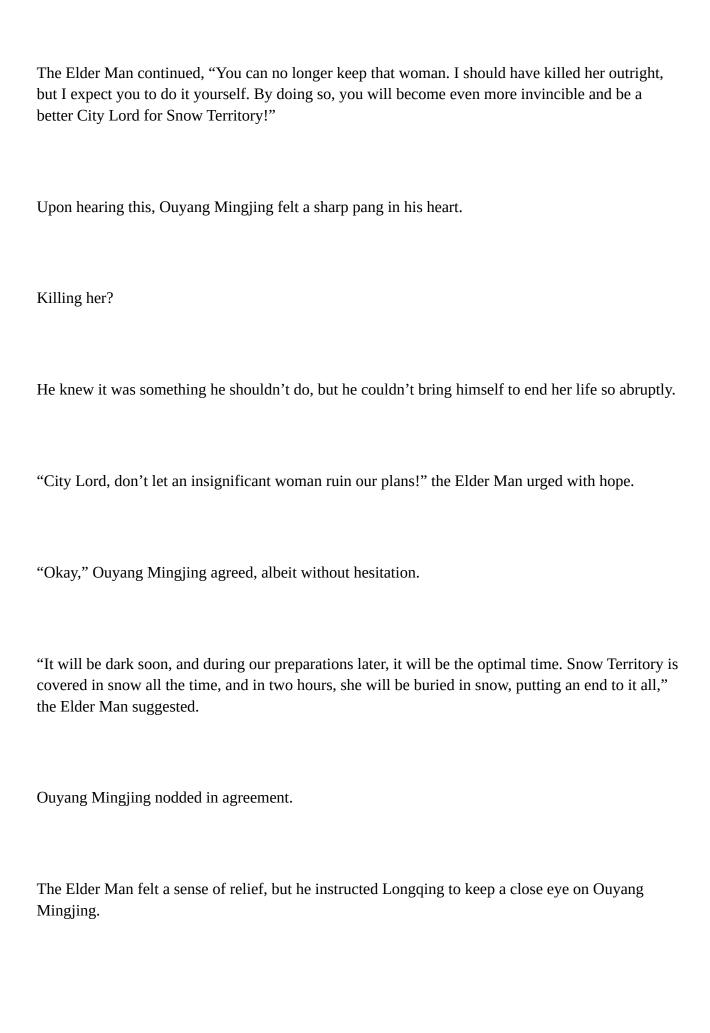
Qing didn't answer verbally but nodded in acknowledgment.
"Very well. Keep it in mind. It will happen soon." Ouyang Mingjing smiled, his expression filled with a sense of accomplishment.
Blushing, Qing's face turned as red as a beet, the color spreading from her cheeks to the roots of her ears. She couldn't help but feel bashful; her entire face displayed her embarrassment.
He hadn't spoken those words lightly. It was something he truly intended.
Just as Qing's heart raced, as if it were about to leap out of her throat, Ouyang Mingjing instructed her to depart.
Qing had just been escorted away when the Elder Men and Longqing entered. They had encountered Qing along the way.
The Elder Man appeared deeply displeased.
He halted his intended words and instead retorted, "City Lord, do you recall the promise you made to me?"
" " · · · ·
"You spared this woman's life because you didn't want to kill her. You also promised me that you would avoid getting involved with her."







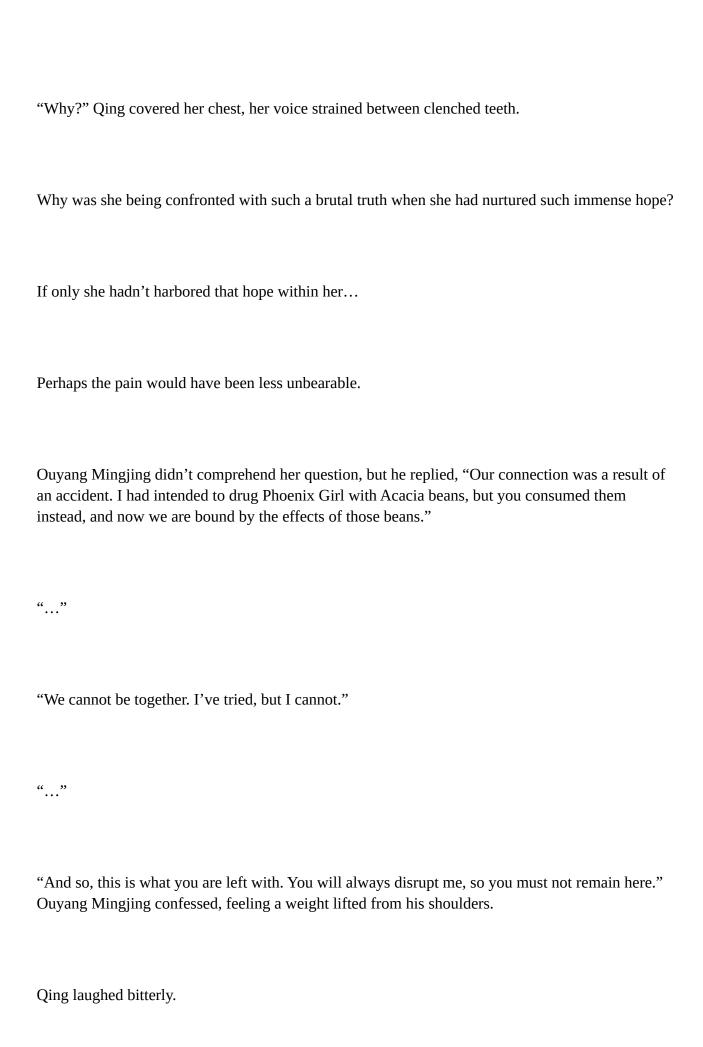




A man who was too soft-hearted would never accomplish great things, and there was a chance that the City Lord might change his mind upon seeing the woman.
After considering it further, the Elder Man remained uncertain.
He made up his mind to personally observe the situation. This matter needed to be resolved today.
Having solidified his decision, the Elder Man prepared some items and intended to present them to Phoenix Girl and her companions
That was compensation.
Though she had sought justice
Yet it was Snow Territory, and they needed to show their faith.
There was no need to make their relationship stiff because of this minor incident.
They soon found the place to start the camp as the day went darker.
Ouyang Mingjing told Longqing to get the girl out.







She laughed at her own foolishness and regretted the actions she had taken because of her own naivety.
She extended her hand and willingly allowed the sword to penetrate her body.
Then she shut her eyes.
"Qing!" Gu Chaoyan's voice rang out from behind as she hurried to the scene.
She had sprinted as fast as she could, but it was still in vain.
If only Qing hadn't acted so forcefully, she could have been saved. Yet, as Gu Chaoyan held the blood-soaked Qing, she knew with certainty that she couldn't rescue her.
She cast a piercing gaze at Ouyang Mingjing, as though he were her ultimate adversary.
Qing had always been devoted to her, a bond forged since their childhood. However, since Ouyang Mingjing entered the picture, Qing had gone beyond what was expected of her. Gu Chaoyan didn't hold Qing responsible for this, but she hadn't wanted her to reach this point.
Unexpectedly

It was all because of Snow Territory's plan. Qing had been the victim!
She had always felt some familiar look following her after she came to Snow Territory. She had thought that she had got an illusion, but no, it was never an illusion. It had been Qing all the time.
Qing was a kind girl, and she could have got married and given birth to her children. But now, she was dead in this cold land.
Gu Chaoyan stared fiercely at Ouyang Mingjing.
Chapter 1837 - Qing's Ending 5
It was no wonder that Qing had become so infatuated with Ouyang Mingjing after just two brief encounters, going to such lengths that were completely out of character. Gu Chaoyan could never have imagined that Qing would behave this way.
Little did Gu Chaoyan know that Qing had been manipulated and controlled by these people through drugs that had clouded her mind.
Now, she held Qing, lifeless, in her arms, overwhelmed with regret. Gu Chaoyan knew Qing so well, and she should have investigated when she noticed Qing's peculiar behavior. But instead, she had left Qing alone in the temple to face her struggles and battle her own mind without any assistance.
If only she had dedicated more time and effort to uncover the truth, Qing wouldn't have ended up like this, and the situation wouldn't have spiraled out of control.

And when she had seen that familiar figure, she should have probed deeper.

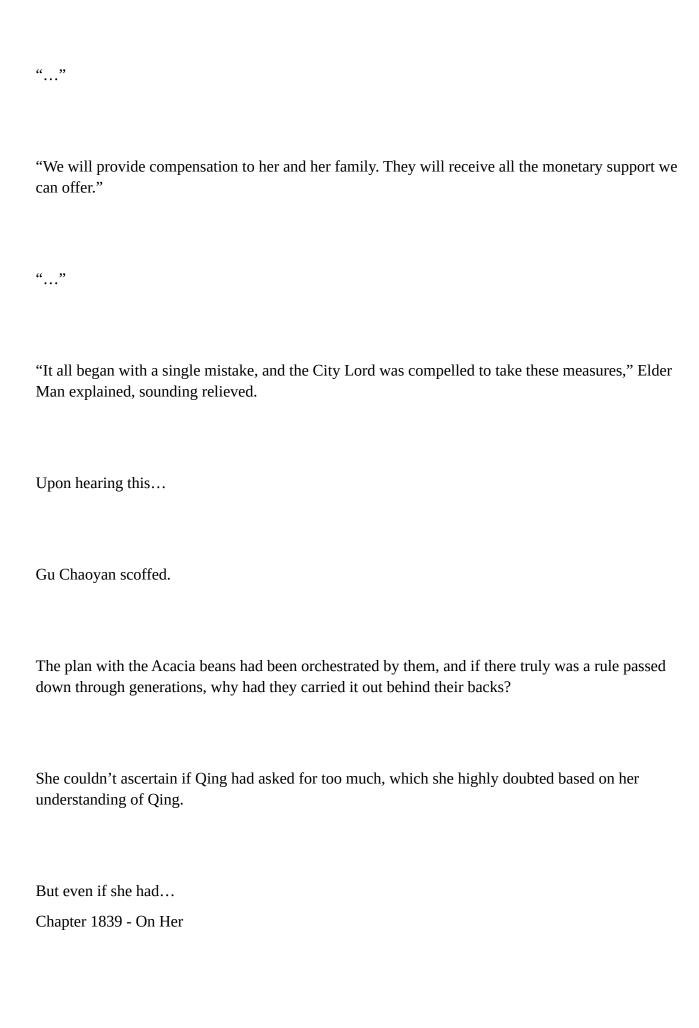
At the very least, she should have assigned someone to guard Qing when she was left alone in the temple, ensuring her safety.
Qing had been all alone in that temple, cut off from the outside world.
How had Qing learned about their journey to Snow Territory? And how had she managed to escape the temple and join the troops there?
It seemed she had been in contact with Ouyang Mingjing!
Well
Ouyang Mingjing was evidently involved in the scheme.
They had enticed Qing to Snow Territory, intending to use her for some purpose. However, upon realizing that Qing would become a liability, they mercilessly killed her.
Qing had been in Gu Chaoyan's service, and they had no right to commit such a heinous act against her.
Gu Chaoyan glared at Ouyang Mingjing, her voice filled with resentment. "City Lord, I demand an explanation."

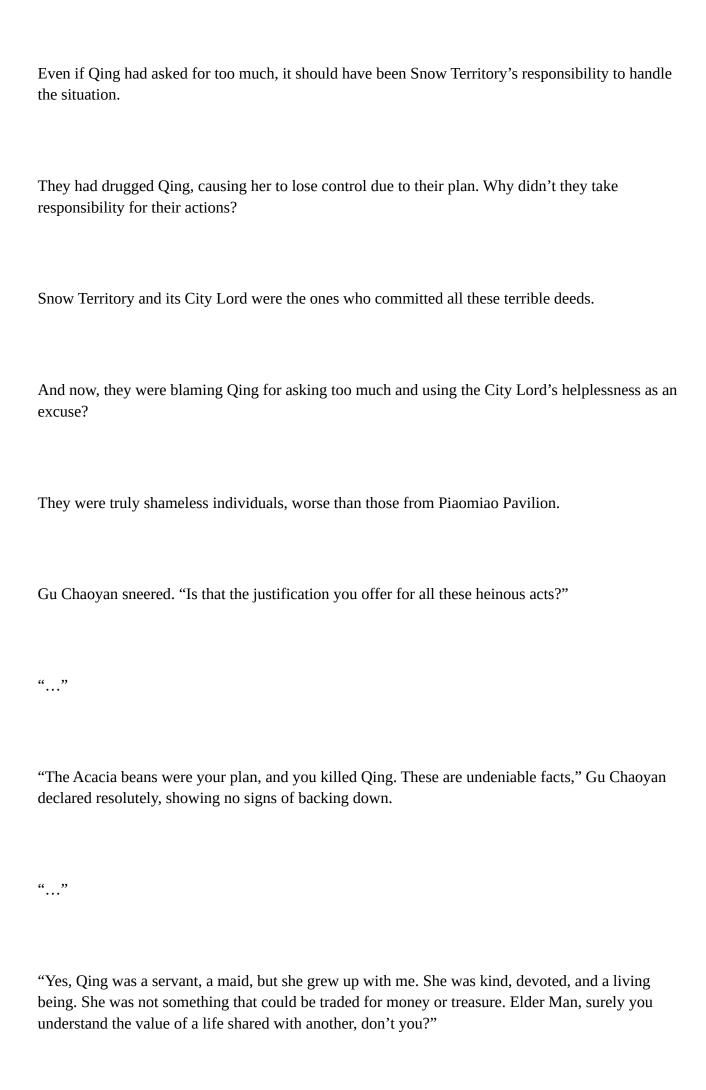
Ouyang Mingjing locked eyes with Gu Chaoyan, displeased with the way she looked at him. She regarded him as an enemy.
She was merely a maid, and he held the position of City Lord in Snow Territory. Why was Gu Chaoyan giving him such a hostile gaze, as if seeking retribution with his life?
He preferred the way she used to look at him when he aided her in reclaiming the monsters back in the Saint Divine Land.
She held a grudge against him.
And it signified that attempting to reach a compromise would be utterly futile.
However, in the Snow Territory, he held the power to do as he pleased.
What was the point of providing an explanation?
Upon hearing this, Longqing was taken aback.
"What are you hesitating for?" Ouyang Mingjing interjected, growing increasingly displeased by Longqing's lack of response.
Soon enough, Longqing proposed that the guards should step forward to escort the girl away.

Gu Chaoyan was restrained and instinctively resisted, causing the hidden guards from the Shadow Door to unsheathe their swords and advance towards her. Chapter 1838 - Freeing
"I will handle her funeral, and there is no need for you to concern yourself with it," Ouyang Mingjing remarked to Gu Chaoyan, paying no heed to the approaching hidden guards.
Gu Chaoyan seethed with fury but managed to maintain her composure, instructing the hidden guards to remain composed.
Most of those hidden guards had suffered severe injuries during the ambush and were still recovering. Half of them had yet to fully regain their strength.
Their resentment towards Snow Territory had grown due to what had happened to Qing, and Gu Chaoyan was determined to seek revenge for her.
However
She couldn't afford to panic at this moment. She wouldn't allow the hidden guards to sacrifice their lives for a fleeting grudge.
They were no match for the guards from Snow Territory, and Ouyang Mingjing had already revealed his sinister side, indicating that he wouldn't show mercy against any attack.
There was still time.

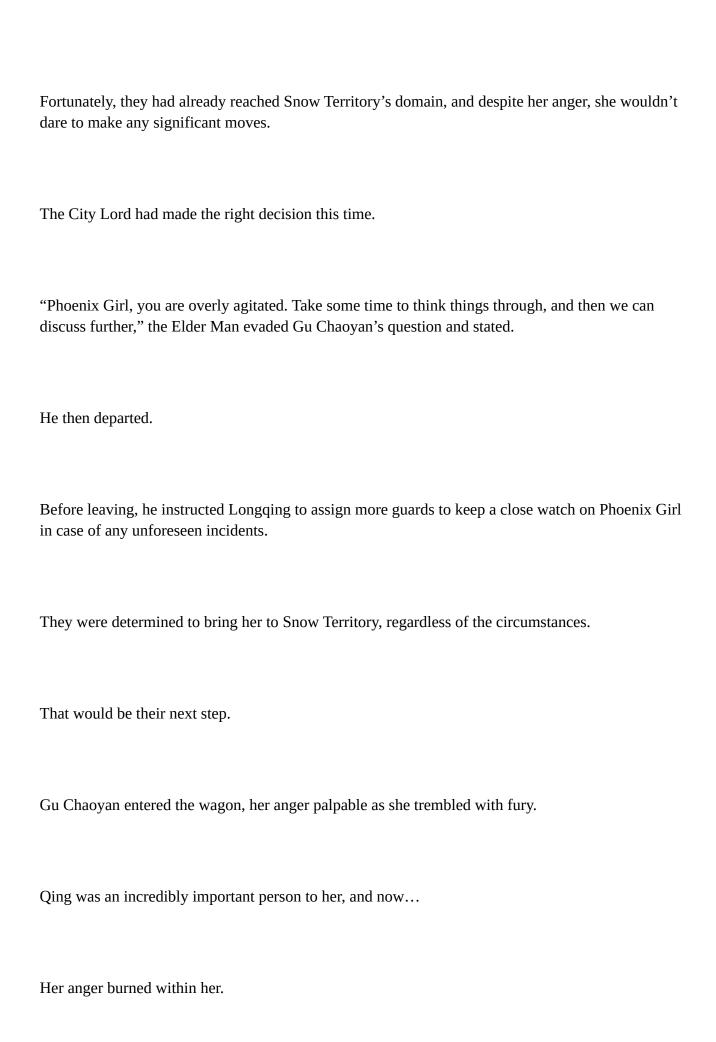
Huaijin was still missing, and they couldn't sever all ties completely.
They needed to bide their time and gather their forces.
Gu Chaoyan seethed with anger, but she kept herself composed.
Because she needed to maintain the calmness of her men.
Elder Man observed Gu Chaoyan's retreating form and glanced at Ouyang Mingjing. It seemed like a prudent approach to handle the current situation. Phoenix Girl cherished her servants, and the loss of her beloved maid at the hands of Snow Territory's people would undoubtedly leave her deeply dissatisfied. However, attempting to appease her now wouldn't serve any purpose. They had to wait a little longer for the situation to calm down before making amends.
Nevertheless
It had been an excessively ruthless act.
Elder Man contemplated for a moment and decided to intervene.
As the guards from Snow Territory escorted Gu Chaoyan toward the wagon, Elder Man approached them.







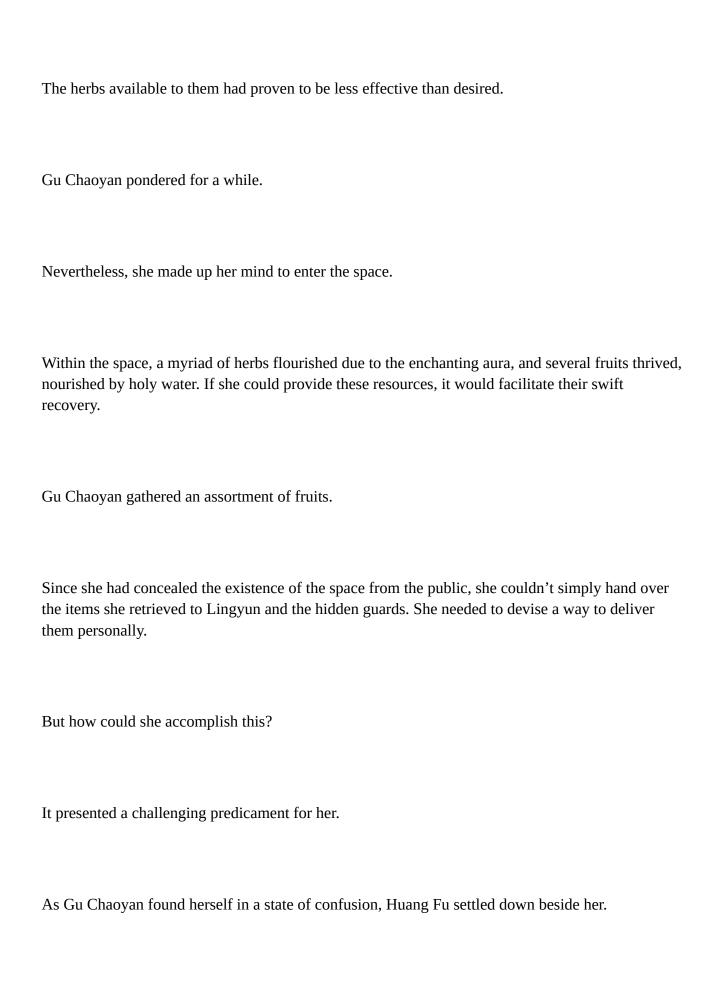
The Elder Man involuntarily flinched.
Gu Chaoyan's gaze was piercing, and even he couldn't help but feel a sense of fear.
They had treated the girl far too callously.
They had assumed that she was nothing more than a servant, and killing her would sever the City Lord's ties with her.
However, they had not anticipated the accident unfolding in this manner.
Phoenix Girl had witnessed everything and grasped the situation, placing them at a significant disadvantage.
She had already been furious about the guards mistreating their own subordinates, and now she was further agitated.
Things might not proceed as smoothly as they had hoped.
The Elder Man grew increasingly concerned.
But



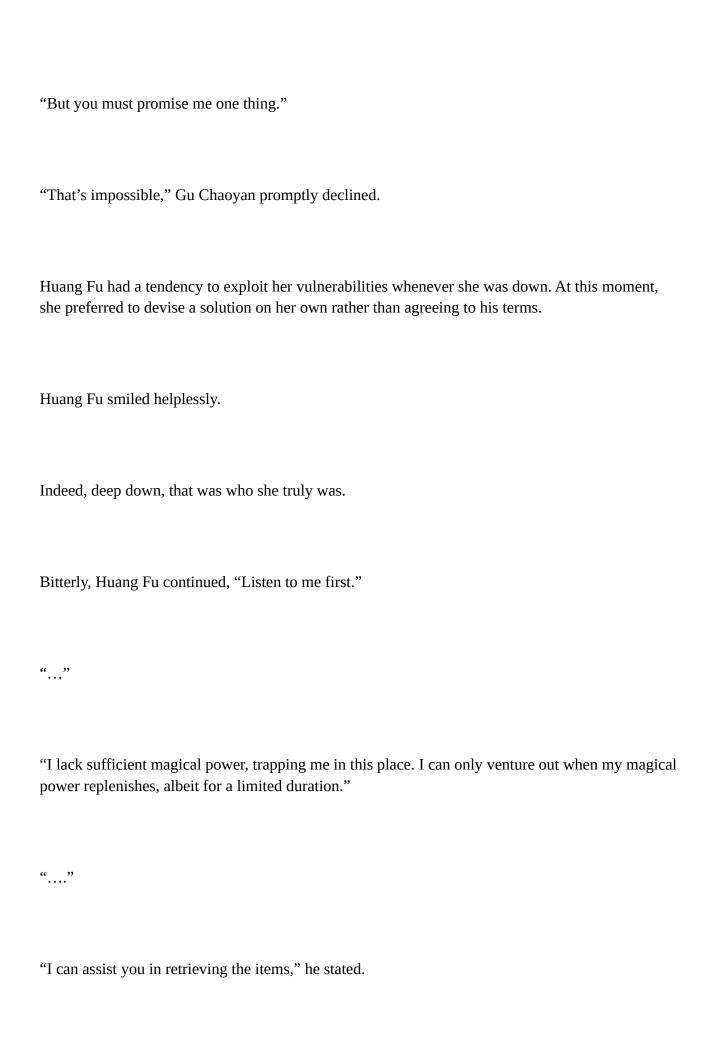


As the dawn approached, the guards from Snow Territory urged them to continue the journey, seemingly eager to reach the town of Snow Territory as swiftly as possible.
Just as Gu Chaoyan had stepped onto the wagon
She felt another familiar gaze upon her.
Chapter 1840 - Condition 1
This time, she didn't hesitate but fixed her gaze in that direction.
Behind a small hill, the sight of a familiar figure greeted her.
Huaijin?
Fu Bao!
Accompanying Huaijin were a few discreet guards, undoubtedly separated from the group to ensure his safety. Surprisingly, none of them seemed injured or harmed, having managed to find their way back to their team.
Gu Chaoyan stole a quick glance at them, cautious not to attract attention from the guards of Snow Territory.

Maintaining an air of nonchalance, Huaijin discreetly gestured toward a wounded spot, signaling Gu Chaoyan that they required assistance.
Gu Chaoyan observed the injury and committed it to memory, nodding subtly in response.
Taking cover within the hills, they concealed themselves, opting not to reveal their presence again.
Gu Chaoyan returned to the wagon and whispered, "Lingyun, fetch some medicine to staunch the bleeding and gather herbs known for their cooling properties. Inform the covert guards to discreetly leave them in the snow. They're in need."
" " · · · ·
"Mr. Head and the others?" Sword One inquired excitedly. Gu Chaoyan motioned for her to lower her voice, and Sword One complied, understanding the need for discretion.
They silently organized the arrangements.
However, Gu Chaoyan found herself in a state of hesitation.
The condition of the hidden guards was dire, and Huaijin's well-being seemed far from optimal.
They had suffered severe injuries in an ambush, and their resources were scarce in this icy, snowy land. Enduring the bitter conditions, they had faced immense hardships.



Donning his red robe, he still exuded an air of arrogance, albeit less pronounced than before.
During these days
He had been contemplating his actions.
He and Feng Le held grievances against each other, but she had chosen to forget. He had been pressuring her to make amends, but she couldn't comply.
Perhaps they could take things slowly.
When this thought crossed her mind
Dealing with that could be put off for now.
"You're unsure how to deliver it to them?" Huang Fu queried.
Silence followed.
"I may not like him, but I can assist you this time," he offered.
" " ···



"	,,			
•	• • •			

"I have a different request this time, one that diverges from my previous statement."

"···"

"I simply wish to..."