

Es. Benefits 401

Chapter 401: A Mere Two Hundred Thousand Troops, Nothing to Fear_3

At this moment on the city walls, soldiers were setting up cannons. Seeing the huge metal tube beside her, Chen Wanrong finally couldn't help but ask directly, "What is this?"

Lu Chen replied with a smile, "You'll know once the war starts."

Seeing that Lu Chen didn't answer directly and instead put on an air of mystery, Chen Wanrong felt a bit emotional. She was already his woman, and yet he was still so guarded against her.

She would be by his side for the time to come, and when these things were used, she would be there to see them, so what was there to hide? Telling her now would be no different.

Just then, Mu Changtian and other military generals arrived on the watchtower, Mu Changtian holding a map in his hands. A soldier immediately brought over a table, and Mu Changtian laid the map on it.

"Prince, the scouts report that the Tianqi King has not divided his forces. Their main army is following behind the vanguard cavalry."

"And their cavalry are heading straight for Ningbei City. They could reach Ningbei City in just a few days at most. As for the main army, it won't take half a month for a high likelihood of their arrival at Ningbei City."

Hearing this, Lu Chen approached the map, glanced at it, and the current positions of the Tianqi King's army were already roughly marked on the map.

Lu Chen said with a laugh, "I thought the Tianqi King's army would reach Ningbei City before us. It looks like I have overestimated their marching speed."

Hearing this, Mu Changtian replied, "Prince, the marching speed of the Barbarian Tribe is already not slow. It's just that they need to find water sources for supplies in the grasslands, hence their delay in arriving."

Lu Chen said, "That is true, water sources indeed pose a problem."

At this, Lu Chen fell into deep thought. Initially, he was considering whether they should pursue the Tianqi King's army should they retreat after being defeated.

Mu Changtian's words suddenly calmed Lu Chen down. In the grasslands, the situation was complicated, and supplies were hard to come by. It was better not to rashly give chase.

Just then, a Jinyiwei Guard came before Lu Chen, "Prince, intelligence from Yan County."

Lu Chen took the envelope from the Jinyiwei Guard, opened it, and after scanning the intelligence in his hands, he said, "It seems that after the civil war within Great Sum is over, the North Country will face a true test."

Curious, Mu Changtian asked, "Prince, is there some movement from the court?"

Lu Chen said indifferently, "Hmm, the court has dispatched troops to the north, to be stationed in Qi Country."

At this, everyone was momentarily stunned before Mu Changtian said, "The Qi Prince surely won't allow it, right?"

When they were heading north, the envoys from the Aristocratic Families of the South were still in the Qi Prince's territory, hoping to persuade Qi Country to send troops south and flank the Imperial Army in a pincer move with the southern rebels.

And now, in such a short time, the court was actually planning to send troops north and be stationed in Qi Country. If the troops were stationed there, would the Qi Prince still consider rebellion?

Moreover, the court now has to deal with the southern rebels. How could it spare the forces to be stationed in Qi Country?

Continuing, Lu Chen said, "This matter has not been settled yet. However, the court has already issued an imperial edict, requesting Qi Country to cooperate with the stationing of the army."

At this point, Xiao Pengthian spoke from the side, "Prince, in your view, will the Qi Prince rebel this time?"

With North Country having dispatched troops northward to resist the Barbarian Tribe, Qi Country has no need to worry that North Country will march south to support the king in time. At this juncture, they certainly could march south to attack the Capital City.

Moreover, if one Seignior begins to rebel, it is highly probable to trigger a chain reaction, and the other Seigniors itching for a revolt will likely follow suit.

Lu Chen said, "It's hard to say. The Qi Prince has shown no signs of movement yet, and it's unclear whether he will rebel. If he doesn't rebel, he will certainly agree to the court's request and allow the troops to be stationed in Qi Country."

"Now, we can't worry about so much. Let's first drive the Tianqi King out of the North Land."

Lu Chen was curious in his heart. The court wanted to station troops in Qi Country at this time. Was it to guard against North Country, or to probe Qi Country?

If it was to guard against North Country, he was now leading an army of two hundred thousand to the North Land to fight the Barbarian Tribe, posing no immediate threat to the court. Moreover, the court was at a critical moment in quelling the southern rebellion, and there was no need to dispatch a large force to station in Qi Country at this point.

So Lu Chen had an inkling that the Sum Emperor was testing Qi Country, wanting to see whether the Qi Prince harbored rebellious intentions. If Qi Country rejected the stationing of troops, it would mean the Qi Prince had agreed to the southern rebels' proposition and intended to rebel.

However, if Qi Country accepted the court's stationing of troops, it would prove Qi Country did not intend to rebel, at least not yet.

Of course, all these matters were not of great significance to him for now, as their immediate primary task was to resist the eastward advance of the Barbarian Tribe.

Meanwhile.

In the grasslands of North Land.

A gigantic eagle was circling in the sky, and beneath the clear blue, there were countless military tents. In a short while, the eagle descended, landing on the shoulder of a robust man who then removed the fur tied around the eagle's leg and proceeded towards the Main Commander's tent.

Inside the Main Commander's tent, the Tianqi King and his men were drinking and feasting, not seeming to be in any particular rush.

In their view, the wealth and women of North Country were already within their grasp, merely waiting for them to come and take possession. Thus, their lack of urgency.

"Great King, a missive from the scouts up front!"

The robust man handed the fur that was just untied from the eagle to the Tianqi King. After receiving it, the Tianqi King opened the fur and scanned the content written on the inside.

Then, bursting into laughter, he declared, "A mere two hundred thousand soldiers, aspiring to halt the advance of this king, are utterly delusional!"

While Lu Chen and his men were gathering intelligence on the Barbarian Tribe, the Barbarian Tribe too was collecting information about North Country. The news of North Country's military review had spread throughout the region, and the spies of the Barbarian Tribe naturally learned about Lu Chen leading an army of two hundred thousand northward.

To the Tianqi King, that posed no significant threat. In his eyes, the people of Great Sum had always been weak. Before the establishment of the Da Yue Dynasty, their Barbarian Tribe had directly attacked Great Sum, even occupying many of its cities. The Great Sum people had paid a hefty price to redeem their lands back.

However, that was before the division of the Barbarian Tribe. Afterward, the Barbarian Tribe's royal court declined and split into several factions, with the North Land falling under the dominion of the Sky Wolf King, which prevented the Tianqi King's tribe from moving eastward.

Even though the Barbarian Tribe had fragmented, the impression of Great Sum's people being weak was still entrenched in the Tianqi King's mind, so he didn't consider North Country a serious threat.

A mere two hundred thousand soldiers, nothing to be afraid of.

Chapter 402: It's time for her to let it go_1

Although every major dynasty had its internal issues to varying degrees, they were all more or less focused on the situation in the North Country.

Ever since the North Country's military parade ended, people had been eager to know just how much combat power this 200,000-strong army really possessed and whether it could withstand the Tianqi King's forces.

The Tianqi King was not like the Sky Wolf King, nor the North Fre King, the Tianqi King was a true Grandmaster, and he had quite a few Grandmasters under his command, not to mention a large number of high-quality warriors.

Though the Tianqi King had suffered defeat within the Da Yue Dynasty, this did not mean that his strength was weak.

The Heavy Cavalry of the North Country were indeed formidable, but they seemed somewhat insufficient when faced with the Tianqi King's 400,000-strong army.

For the time being, the only ones not focusing on the North Country were the rebels of the South from Great Xia, who, led by Lu Shuyun, had been under tremendous pressure lately. Their forces were simply no match for the Imperial Army, and upon entering the battlefield, they were generally crushed by the Imperial forces.

The Southern rebels were constantly being pushed back, losing key cities they once held, and now they were forced by the Imperial Army to keep shrinking their defensive line.

Even the use of the Piercing Cloud Bow had not given them much advantage on the battlefield, causing great concern for Lu Shuyun.

It was now clear to him why his royal father had not been worried at all about his rebellion, even forcing him to come to the South and lead these Aristocratic Families in revolt.

These Aristocratic Families were reluctant to give up their own interests, and even when united, they formed a loose alliance.

Fighting each for their own, with endless scheming and rivalry, they were fundamentally impossible to lead.

Lu Shuyun was beginning to regret coming to the South to rebel. Had he not, at worst he would have been stripped of his title as the Crown Prince.

Now he had put himself in a situation where retreat was impossible; once the bow was drawn, there was no turning back. He had no choice but to face the Imperial Army head-on.

The Wang Family.

The Council Hall.

Sitting in the Wang Family Head's seat, Lu Shuyun looked down at the Family Heads of the Southern Aristocratic Families and asked, "Has there still been no sign of the Dongfang Family?"

Upon hearing this question, not a single person in the Council Hall spoke up.

The disappearance of the Dongfang Family was so abrupt that they did not even know when the Dongfangs had vanished; perhaps others had already fled, and they were simply unaware.

At this moment, the Head of the Qin Clan spoke up, "Crown Prince, it's likely that the Dongfang Family has already defected to the Imperial Court. The Dongfangs have been a mercantile family for generations, with not much land in the South to begin with. For them, it makes no difference where they are; they had no need to take such a great risk."

Upon hearing this, the Wang Family Head snorted coldly, "Do they really think that by defecting to His Majesty they will be spared? His Majesty has long wanted to eradicate all ancient Aristocratic Families within the Great Xia territory.

Though the Dongfang Family doesn't have as much land as we do, with their commercial operations spread across Great Xia, manipulating prices would be effortless for them. I don't believe His Majesty would let them off in the end!"

It was then that Chu Liang said, "The Dongfang Family likely left by sea. Their merchant ships are so large that they could have transported all the Dongfangs away in a short time without any issue."

The mention of merchant ships gave Lu Shuyun a bad feeling. If the Dongfangs could transport their own people away so quickly, they could just as easily sneak Imperial soldiers behind their lines without anyone noticing.

If the Dongfang Family had indeed betrayed them and defected to the court, they would certainly look to demonstrate loyalty to his royal father by aiding the Imperial Army in attacking them.

Thinking this, Lu Shuyun's face turned dark in an instant, looking quite displeased.

Just then, a soldier rushed in, flustered, "Crown Prince, something terrible has happened. Imperial troops have been spotted to the southeast."

Lu Shuyun's heart skipped a beat upon hearing this. His premonition had come true; he knew that if the Dongfang Family had betrayed them, they would definitely help the Imperial Court transport soldiers to their rear.

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Several days later.

Ningbei City.

The vanguard Cavalry of the Tianqi King's forces had finally arrived at Ningbei City. However, they were only there to scout the way, and upon reaching the outskirts of Ningbei City, they did not launch an attack but simply surveyed the surrounding area.

Ningbei City was relatively isolated because it was surrounded by prairies and lacked any geographical advantages, not even a moat.

Such an isolated city, if besieged, would likely leave its soldiers trapped and doomed.

After scouting out the situation at Ningbei City, the Barbarian Tribe's vanguard immediately relayed the information to the Tianqi King. Hearing that the North Country's 200,000-strong army was mostly stationed in Ningbei City, the Tianqi King was overjoyed.

It was perfect that the North Country's forces were all in one place. Their Barbarian Army could defeat the North Country in one decisive battle, and after the collapse of the 200,000-strong North Country army, they could enter and plunder the North Country without hindrance, which was an excellent opportunity for them.

To prevent the North Country's 200,000-strong army from dividing their forces at this time, the Tianqi King quickly ordered his soldiers to hasten their march, fearing that if the North Country split up their forces, they would have to siege city after city.

Lu Chen stood on the city walls, gazing into the distance at the camp of the Barbarian Tribe's vanguard Cavalry, a slight smirk on his lips. In a few days, the North Country army's premiere show of firepower would begin.

Chapter 403: It's time for her to let it go_2

At that moment, Xiao Pengthian approached Lu Chen and said, "Prince, should I take some men and wipe out the Barbarian Tribe's vanguard?"

Xiao Pengthian was extremely eager for military achievements. After all, he was from the Barbarian Tribe, and to earn Lu Chen's trust, he had to be even more proactive and work harder. Xiao Pengthian's Barbarian cavalymen shared the same thought.

Lu Chen indifferently replied, "There's no need to be so hasty. If we destroy the Barbarian Tribe's vanguard so quickly and scare off the Tianqi King's army, what then?"

The firearms they were using were too powerful. If they didn't annihilate all the cavalry, the escaping barbarian soldiers would certainly report what happened here to the Tianqi King.

If the Tianqi King were scared off by the firearms and simply didn't come, how would they fight this battle? How would they test the combat capability of their army?

Seeing that Lu Chen wanted to wait longer, Xiao Pengthian could only respond, "You're right, Prince. I was too impatient."

Lu Chen said with a smile, "General Xiao, there's no need to rush. Your time to achieve great merit will come. You command the light cavalry. If the Barbarian Tribe is routed, I will need you and your cavalry to pursue them."

Upon hearing Lu Chen's words, Xiao Pengthian felt invigorated once again.

Last time they defended against the North Fre King's army, their light cavalry didn't play a significant role, mainly because they lured the barbarian soldiers into Tianguang City, and a cannonade had the barbarians surrendering in terror.

But this time was different. There were an entire four hundred thousand soldiers in the Barbarian Army, and it wouldn't be so easy to use the same tactic of "inviting the enemy into the pot."

With the vast grasslands, the light cavalry of North Country would certainly be needed to pursue the enemy if the Barbarian Army were defeated in open field, giving Xiao Pengthian and his light cavalry a chance to shine.

At that moment, Mu Changtian arrived at Lu Chen's tower, "Prince, everything is ready. We are now just waiting for the Tianqi King's army to arrive."

Lu Chen, looking at the distant barbarian tents, said with a smile, "I hope our friends from afar will appreciate the gift we have for them."

Hearing this, Chen Wanrong watched Lu Chen with puzzlement from a distance.

For some reason, she always felt that in recent days Lu Chen seemed to be especially looking forward to the Barbarian Army attacking North Country.

War meant the loss of life, and this time North Country had brought only two hundred thousand troops to march north, while the Tianqi King had an army of four hundred thousand. In terms of numbers, North Country was at a disadvantage.

The formidable force of North Country was its Black Cavalry, but no one could be certain whether the Tianqi King's army also contained Heavy Cavalry with strength comparable to the Black Cavalry.

The Tianqi King was a mainline successor of the Barbarian King's lineage, and their power far surpassed that of the Sky Wolf King tribe and the North Fre King tribe.

North Country may have defeated the Sky Wolf King and the North Fre King tribes, but it wasn't certain they could overcome the Tianqi King. Yet Lu Chen could still smile so cheerfully at this moment.

It was also uncertain whether the person behind Lu Chen would appear this time.

Chen Wanrong had almost confirmed that Lu Chen was not an ordinary person; undoubtedly, there was a Grandmaster behind him. If North Country lost this battle, it was unlikely that the person behind Lu Chen would just stand by and watch.

Chen Wanrong was very curious to see who exactly was behind Lu Chen, who could allow Lu Chen to advance to the Grandmaster Realm in such a short time and bring about earth-shattering changes to North Country.

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Time flew by rapidly.

Finally, ten days later, the horns of the Barbarian Army sounded outside Ningbei City.

Hearing the barbarian horns, Lu Chen immediately went up the city tower, gazing into the distance at the dark mass of troops.

The soldiers of North Country were boiling with excitement; they had prepared for so long just for this moment.

Advanced firearms filled them with confidence, and they were no longer able to suppress the impulse in their hearts to unleash cannon fire upon the barbarians.

When the Tianqi King reached the outskirts of Ningbei City, he glanced at the flag of the North Prince Mansion atop the city wall, then said with a laugh, "These people of Great Sum do indeed have some backbone. I remember when I was a child, accompanying my father on raids down south, those Sum soldiers would abandon the common people and flee without even defending their cities."

"I did not expect these North Country people not only to lead an army of two hundred thousand north but also to wait for me here in Ningbei City."

"Good. I want to see just what abilities North Prince of Great Sum has to be able to eradicate the Sky Wolf King's tribe."

"Form up! Prepare to attack!"

As the Tianqi King's words fell, the horns of the Barbarian Tribe sounded once more.

Seeing that the barbarians were ready to attack, Lu Chen also directly ordered his soldiers, "Beat the drums! Load the cannons!"

The next moment, thunderous drumbeats reverberated through the sky above Ningbei City, and all the cannons on the city walls were ready to fire.

Witnessing this, Chen Wanrong couldn't help but speculate that those iron balls were probably similar to the ones used for defending cities, but it seemed doubtful that they could stop the barbarian advance with just those.

The first assault by the Barbarian Tribe would mean who knows how many North Country soldiers would die.

Chen Wanrong had experienced the brutality and bloodshed of the battlefield as a child and knew that once the war started, there would be corpses everywhere.

At that time, Chen Wanrong realized that the soldiers of North Country were all extremely excited, seemingly not afraid of death at all.

This was very strange.

She remembered when as a child she had seen people from Chen Nation defending the imperial city; the expression on their soldiers' faces was only one of exhaustion, despair, and fear, completely different from the current state of the soldiers from North Country.

Chapter 404: It's time for her to let it go_3

Why are the soldiers of the North Country so excited?

Chen Wanrong was curious, what exactly had Lu Chen done to train this army that the soldiers harbored no fear of death?

Just as Chen Wanrong was lost in thought, a grandmaster military general from the Tianqi King's camp led the Barbarian Army in a charge.

As Chen Wanrong watched the Barbarian Army get closer and closer to the walls of Ningbei City, the soldiers of North Country still did not release their arrows.

It was only when the Barbarian Army was almost at the city gates that the drums sounded again, and with the first beat, thunderous blasts consecutively followed.

Chen Wanrong immediately sealed her ears with Gang Qi, puzzled by why these "metal trebuchets" could make such loud noises. It was then that the iron balls erupted mid-flight among the barbarian soldiers.

With each explosion, bodies were torn asunder, limbs flew everywhere, and witnessing this scene left Chen Wanrong completely stunned.

Though the Mysterious Moon Palace had even more powerful Divine Artifacts, after all, a Divine Artifact was a Divine Artifact. Their numbers were limited; not just anyone could create a Divine Artifact.

But these metal trebuchets of the North Country—one could tell they were made by the North Country themselves. And with so many exploding iron balls, it was clear they were mass-produced by the North Country.

The North Country actually possessed so many of these terrifying weapons!!!

No wonder the faces of the North Country's soldiers showed no fear but excitement instead. With such terrifying weapons at their disposal, what enemies would North Country need to fear?

Chen Wanrong glanced at the soldiers operating the cannons and noticed that most of them were Ninth Grade martial artists, and some were not even martial artists but commoners.

And when those iron balls burst, they could directly blast a high-quality warrior of the Barbarian Army into pieces. Ordinary soldiers easily killed high-quality warriors; it seemed that the future of the Martial Arts World would be upended.

Seeing the scene before him, Mu Changtian and other military generals sighed continuously, just as they had at Tianguang City.

Although Lu Chen had told them that Martial Arts were still important when he equipped the army with firearms, it was hard for them to believe that the Martial Arts World would continue to flourish seeing the way those high-level experts were blown apart in the sky.

The Grandmaster leading the Barbarian Army's siege was completely dumbfounded after watching the limbs and torsos rain down.

Of course, it wasn't just him; every barbarian soldier was dumbfounded.

My god!!! What kind of weapon is this???

How can its power be so terrifying!!!

Can such weapons truly exist in this world???

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Finally, a barbarian soldier in the crowd was so frightened that he turned and fled.

In an instant, the sounds of the cannons and the barbarian soldiers' screams merged into one.

At this moment, even the Tianqi King himself was stunned.

He watched his defeated Barbarian Army in disbelief, unable to grasp what had just happened before his eyes.

This was the first time in his life that he had seen such a terrifying weapon!

The explosion from those iron balls was almost on par with an attack by a Grandmaster.

The multitude of exploding iron balls was like a multitude of Grandmasters attacking them.

The Tianqi King murmured to himself, "How could this be..."

He had believed that defeating the two hundred thousand North Country soldiers would only take a few days, but their first siege had met with such a blow.

How could Great Sum have such terrifying weapons!

These must be Divine Artifacts already, right?

Could a dynasty possess so many Divine Artifacts?

The collapse of the Barbarian Army was swift, but the Tianqi King soon regained his senses. Since they were Divine Artifacts, their use couldn't be unlimited. Or perhaps using a Divine Artifact incurred a great cost—he didn't believe Great Sum could continue using those Divine Artifacts indefinitely.

With this thought, the Tianqi King immediately led the Barbarian Army in retreat, but it wasn't a true withdrawal. He intended to stabilize the morale of the barbarian soldiers first, let them rest for a while, and then continue the siege.

The scene earlier had terrified the barbarian soldiers. If they were made to attack now, they would surely lack the courage, thus a temporary retreat was the only option.

Seeing the barbarian soldiers had retreated, Xiao Pengthian asked from the sidelines, "Prince, should we pursue?"

Lu Chen looked at the Barbarian Army's slow retreat in the distance and smiled, "No need for now, the Tianqi King likely hasn't given up yet—they will attack again."

The North Country's cannons were not so easy to transport, especially across the plains.

The main force of the barbarians was still intact; if they pursued now, they could only send the cavalry. If the cavalry caught up and clashed with the barbarians, it would be too much of a loss.

Thus, the Tianqi King's first siege ended in less than half an hour.

At that time, Lu Chen approached Chen Wanrong and asked, "Master Chen, what do you think of our North Country's weapons?"

Chen Wanrong inquired, "Were these weapons manufactured by North Country?"

Lu Chen replied, "Yes."

Chen Wanrong then stated coldly, "Your ambition is too great and will bring disaster to this world."

Lu Chen chuckled and said, "Master Chen, where did you see that I have great ambition?"

Chen Wanrong responded indifferently, "To possess a sharp weapon is to give rise to the intent to kill. I hope one day you will not make an enemy of the Mysterious Moon Palace."

As her words fell, Chen Wanrong turned and left.

At this moment, Chen Wanrong realized the complete futility of her dreams of restoring her nation. Firstly, she could no longer separate herself from Lu Chen emotionally. Even if she were to leave Lu Chen, it was unlikely he would allow her to restore her nation.

With such terrifying weapons in North Country's possession, capable of mass production, Lu Chen must surely harbor strong ambitions.

Perhaps uniting the entire world was this man's ambition. If that was indeed the case, then under this man's ambitions, he would never allow her to restore her nation.

If the entire world was united, how could there be a Chen Nation?

Chen Wanrong felt a heavy blow to her heart at this realization.

All her efforts, her preparations over more than a decade, had yielded nothing but a man, and her hopes of a restored nation were now dashed.

Perhaps her master was right, all the pursuits of this mortal world are nothing but illusions, the more one seeks, the less one attains.

It was time for her to let go.

Chapter 405: Night Raid on Barbarian Tribe Camp_1

After the Tianqi King's massive army retreated to a safe distance, they no longer continued the retreat. Although the Barbarian Tribe soldiers were terrified by the scene they had just witnessed, with the Tianqi King present, they did not dare to flee directly.

The Tianqi King immediately ordered his soldiers to set up camp, as he still had no intention of giving up on attacking North Country.

Inside the Main Commander's tent.

The Tianqi King and his accompanying Military Generals were seated on the ground, and for a long time, no one spoke.

After a while, a Master General under the Tianqi King finally broke the silence, "Your Majesty, the North Country soldiers did not pursue us, which proves that the weapon they used, although powerful, is difficult to move or perhaps the explosive iron spheres they have are extremely limited in number."

"If we capture Ningbei City, the weapons used by North Country will fall into our hands. With such weapons, no dynasty's citadels could withstand our Cavalry."

Upon hearing these words, the Tianqi King said, "You make a good point. I'm thinking the same way. North Country's weapon is something I'm determined to obtain."

"Let the soldiers rest for two days; in two days' time, we will continue our attack on Ningbei City."

The Tianqi King was certainly not willing to just retreat like this. They had just suffered a setback in the Da Yue Dynasty, and if they were to hit a snag again in the Great Xia Dynasty and return without any achievements, wouldn't other Barbarian Tribes laugh at them?

Taking hundreds of thousands of men out only to wander around, losing so many lives, and in the end, gaining nothing—how could he stand firm among the Barbarians thereafter?

Meanwhile.

Inside the Main Commander's quarters in Ningbei City.

Mu Changtian and others were discussing how to fight this battle.

The plains were too vast, it was difficult to surround and annihilate the Tianqi King's army of four hundred thousand. Moreover, from the first attack by the Barbarians, they could basically tell that the Tianqi King was a cautious person.

For the first siege, the Tianqi King only sent out a Grandmaster Military General with about a hundred thousand Barbarian Tribe soldiers and did not rush in all at once.

Their methods of attacking with divided forces also made it impossible for Lu Chen and his men to eliminate the four hundred thousand Barbarian Army in a short period of time.

Just then, the scouts sent out by Lu Chen returned, "Prince, as expected, the Tianqi King has not retreated; they have already set up camp."

Upon hearing the scout's words, Lu Chen smiled and said, "It seems the Tianqi King is quite reluctant to give up."

At that moment, Xiao Pengthian said, "Prince, if the Tianqi King has settled in camp, then this is an excellent opportunity for us. We can take advantage of the night to move out the cannons, bombard their camp, and then launch a Cavalry attack on the fleeing Barbarian soldiers."

Hearing Xiao Pengthian's suggestion, Li Feng also said on the side, "Prince, I think General Xiao's plan is good. The Barbarian Army has marched such a long way to reach Ningbei City, and the Barbarian soldiers are tired. Most of them will be sleeping deeply, so tonight is the most suitable time to attack the Barbarian camp."

Xuanyuan Chen advised, "After being attacked by the cannon in broad daylight today, they are probably still cautious about Ningbei City. If we attack the enemy camp by leaving the city under the cover of night, I feel it's not quite appropriate."

After contemplating for a moment, Lu Chen then said, "General Xuanyuan is right. Tonight will certainly be when the Barbarians are most vigilant. If we attack tonight, our soldiers might be discovered by the Barbarian scouts just as they leave Ningbei City."

"Since the Tianqi King has not retreated, they are certainly going to continue the attack on Ningbei City. So, we don't need to be too anxious; we can think of a way to deceive them, to make them gradually lower their guard."

War is not a matter to be rushed. Although Lu Chen may not have much military talent, he understood that haste does not bring success.

Lu Chen continued, "For the next few days, if the Barbarians continue to attack, we'll use fewer cannonballs each day and also deploy catapults and archers, to make them think our cannonballs are running low and to make them relax their vigilance as much as possible."

Hearing this, everyone spoke in unison, "Yes, Prince."

Two days later.

Seeing that his soldiers had recovered, the Tianqi King once again led the vast army to the outskirts of Ningbei City, intending to launch another attack.

Of course, it was still a probing attack. He wanted to know if North Country's mysterious weapons had run out.

If they had not, why, after setting up camp not far from Ningbei City for two days, had the North Country forces not pursued them? Surely, it meant that the weapon was running out or there weren't many left, which is why the North Country soldiers did not dare to counterattack rashly.

Lu Chen stood on the city wall, looking out at the dark mass of the Barbarian Army in the distance, the corners of his mouth curving upwards slightly. It seemed their guess was right; the Tianqi King truly hadn't been scared off by their cannons. They were still intent on attacking Ningbei City.

Just then, the horns of the Barbarian Army sounded, and a General under the Tianqi King led a hundred thousand Barbarian troops to launch the attack again.

As the Barbarian Army approached the city gates, the cannons of Ningbei City roared to life once more. Cannonballs exploded among the Barbarian soldiers, mercilessly reaping their lives.

However, amidst the cannonballs, there were also stones and arrows—not like the last time the Barbarians besieged the city, which was completely with cannon fire.

Seeing this, the Tianqi King rejoiced. He laughed and said, "I knew it; North Country couldn't possibly have too many of such terrifying weapons. It looks like I guessed correctly. They've used stones and arrows this time, most likely because those iron balls are running low."

Chapter 406: Night Raid on Barbarian Tribe Camp_2

At this point, the Tianqi King turned to a General beside him and said, "You lead a hundred thousand troops and attack from the East City. I want to see how long they can hold out!"

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

The Grandmaster Martial Artist by the Tianqi King's side then swiftly led a hundred thousand soldiers from the Barbarian Army towards the East City to launch an assault on Ningbei City's eastern gates.

Of course, the attack by the Barbarian Tribe was merely a probing siege, so they didn't achieve significant success; tens of thousands of barbarian soldiers were killed in explosions, and the camp suddenly saw an influx of injured soldiers missing arms and legs.

A day soon came to an end, and inside the Main Commander's tent, the generals of the Barbarian Tribe were exceedingly excited, celebrating with swigs of liquor and large bites of meat.

"Your Majesty, your prediction was indeed correct. The North Country hardly has any of those iron balls left. This afternoon, when we attacked again, they mainly used rocks and arrows, resorting to those iron spheres only when our soldiers approached the gates!"

Another General of the Barbarian Tribe added, "If we keep this pace, it shouldn't take us long to exhaust their supply of those mysterious iron balls."

Upon hearing what the generals had said, the Tianqi King laughed and responded, "They think such iron balls can stop my march? Pure fantasy!"

Then, a curious General from the Barbarian Tribe said, "But come to think of it, we don't even know what those glowing iron balls are made of. If we could make them ourselves, your unification of the Barbarian Tribes would be imminent!"

After taking a drink, the Tianqi King replied, "According to my guess, crafting those iron balls might require the use of a living Fifth Grade Martial Artist."

Hearing this, a shudder went through the hearts of the Generals in the tent.

The Tianqi King continued, "As far as I know, Central Plains Warriors often use a special Cultivation Technique that allows them to concentrate all their skill into the Dantian, causing their bodies to explode. When they do explode, those nearby will also be affected, killed or injured in the blast."

"The way those iron balls explode resembles a Martial Artist's self-destruction. I suspect they've found a way to seal the Martial Artist's skill inside the iron balls and then use them as weapons."

A General from the Barbarian Tribe responded, "Then to make so many iron balls, wouldn't that mean killing a lot of Martial Artists?"

The Tianqi King laughed and said, "That just goes to show the people of Great Sum know they can't beat us and have resorted to this suicidal method to stop our advance."

"I would like to see just how many Martial Artists they are willing to sacrifice to halt my advance. If this continues, the Martial Artist soldiers in the North Country army will sooner or later rebel. We just need to keep wearing them down!"

In the Tianqi King's view, since living people were being used as weapons, it was possible that the Martial Artists in North Country's army would fear they too might one day be turned into weapons. Should the pressure from the Barbarian Tribe be sufficient, the Martial Artist soldiers within Ningbei City would eventually revolt.

When that time came, with cooperation from the rebelling soldiers inside and the Barbarian Army outside, it would be easy to rout North Country's two hundred thousand strong army.

Over the subsequent half-month, the Tianqi King intermittently led his Barbarian soldiers in assaults on the city. Still, they remained exploratory in nature and were not fully committed.

The Barbarian soldiers soon noticed that Ningbei City's terrifying iron ball weapons were being used less frequently, and later on, the city's defenders relied almost exclusively on arrows and rocks.

On several occasions, Barbarian soldiers even reached the city gates, making the Tianqi King and all his Generals more confident in their assumption that Ningbei City's stockpile of iron ball weapons was likely depleted. It would not be long before they conquered Ningbei City.

This belief rapidly spread among the Barbarian soldiers, who gradually lost their fear of Ningbei City's terrifying iron balls. They became less tense than they had been after the first battle.

In recent days, Lu Chen noticed the increased eagerness of the Barbarian soldiers in their sieges, feeling that the time was ripe.

At dusk, Lu Chen immediately convened a military council with his generals, preparing for a decisive battle with the Tianqi King that very night.

Looking at the Military Generals in the room, Lu Chen began, "The time is right. Tonight, we strike at the Barbarian camp!"

Upon hearing this, the officers were immensely excited, having been waiting for this moment. Over the past half-month, Lu Chen had limited their use of cannons, leaving them with a pent-up eagerness since they could not finish off the Barbarian soldiers even as they stormed the ramparts.

Now that an attack was finally in order, they were free to fully utilize their firearms.

Lu Chen continued, "The assault will commence at midnight. Even if the Barbarians' scouts discover us, and they awaken the soldiers immediately, they won't be able to react in time."

At that point, Mu Changtian reminded, "Prince, be careful. The Tianqi King is a Grandmaster. He may come after you personally during the battle."

Once the full-scale war broke out that night, if the Grandmaster Tianqi King became enraged, there was a good chance he would seek out Lu Chen himself.

Lu Chen smiled and said, "With Master Chen here, I will be fine."

Then, turning to Chen Wanrong at the doorway, Lu Chen said, "Master Chen, I entrust my safety to you tonight."

Without a word, Chen Wanrong remained still, thinking to herself that it was finally going to end.

Chapter 407: Night Raid on Barbarian Tribe Camp_3

In the past half-month, she had watched the soldiers of the North Country use cannons, always feeling very uneasy. It wasn't that she sympathized with the Barbarian Tribe being bombarded; she was just worried that one day Lu Chen would turn the cannons towards Mysterious Moon Palace.

Although the power of the cannons was not as great as the Divine Artifacts of Mysterious Moon Palace, the fact that cannons could be manufactured and had a vast quantity of ammunition was undeniable.

The Divine Artifacts of Mysterious Moon Palace could not be utilized a second time without knowing how long they would need to be set aside after use, and their usage conditions were very stringent; they simply could not withstand so many attacks from cannons.

Lu Chen continued speaking to Mu Changtian and the others, "After the battle begins tonight, the cannons will first target the Barbarian Tribe's camp and bombard them for half an hour; then the cavalry will chase down those Barbarian Tribe soldiers who have not fled too far."

"Alright, everyone go and get ready."

"Yes, Prince!"

Subsequently, the Military Generals left the room to prepare for tonight's operations.

At the same time.

After attacking the city for a day, the Barbarian Tribe soldiers were very tired and had begun to rest.

They were still dreaming that once the terrifying iron spheres of Ningbei City were depleted, they would storm into Ningbei City to massacre and plunder.

At this moment, the Barbarian Tribe soldiers were unaware that the soldiers of North Country in Ningbei City had started transporting ammunition and were preparing to set off fireworks for them at night.

The wait through the night was long, and for the first time, the soldiers of North Country felt time pass so slowly, feeling that the few hours were longer than the half-month they had spent in Ningbei City.

The soldiers could no longer contain the excitement in their hearts and were eager to give gifts to the guests from afar.

Nearly at midnight, the large army of Ningbei City mobilized, and the soldiers quickly rolled out the cannons; Prince Lu Chen even helped push a heavy cannon out.

Although the cannons were heavy, for a Martial Artist, their weight was not too great; Lu Chen, as a Grandmaster, could lift a heavy cannon crafted by North Country with ease. However, since the

Artillery camp was mainly comprised of regular soldiers, the transportation of cannons was still a challenge.

But to facilitate tonight's operations, Lu Chen specifically ordered the Black Cavalry's Fifth Grade Martial Artists to transport the cannons first, and once the cannons were put in their designated spots, they were to don their heavy armor.

With the cooperation of the Black Cavalry, the cannons and ammunition were quickly transported to the designated positions.

To prevent the cannon positions from being overrun by the Barbarian Tribe soldiers who might recover from the surprise, the Artillery camp divided the cannon positions into three locations, so that if one was compromised, the others would not be affected.

There was no moonlight tonight, and everything was shrouded in darkness as if the heavens were aiding Lu Chen and his men.

The Barbarian Tribe soldiers on night patrol had not discovered North Country's movements initially, and since it was now midnight, they did not believe that North Country's soldiers would leave Ningbei City at this time, leading them to lower their guard.

Once everything was ready, a massive drumbeat suddenly shattered the silent night, followed by the deafening sound of cannon fire.

In an instant, the Barbarian Tribe's camp was a scene of blazing fire, with sleeping soldiers blasted into the air.

Soon, the thunderous sound of cannons awoke the Barbarian Tribe soldiers, and before long, the sound of cannons was mingled with the Barbarian Tribe's horn calls resounding through the darkness of the night.

The Tianqi King awoke from his sleep upon hearing the sound of cannons, and immediately left his tent. Seeing the scattered bodies of Barbarian Tribe soldiers, the Tianqi King was stunned.

At that moment, a Barbarian Tribe Master General rushed to the Tianqi King's side, "Your Majesty, it's terrible! The North Country army is attacking!!!"

The Barbarian Tribe General had barely finished speaking when a cannonball landed beside him, startling him and turning his face pale. The Tianqi King leaped and stood in front of the Barbarian Tribe General.

The next moment, the cannonball exploded, but it didn't harm the Tianqi King or the Barbarian Tribe General. Around their bodies, a golden shield appeared, blocking all the cannonball fragments outside of the golden shield.

Enraged, the Tianqi King blurted out, "Despicable Great Sum people! I will kill you all!"

He then loudly commanded, "Gather the soldiers, follow me in a counterattack!"

"Since they dare to come out, then they shall not think about going back alive!"

Amid the bombardment, some Barbarian Tribe soldiers quickly assembled and followed the Tianqi King out of the bombarded area.

After bursting out of the Barbarian Tribe's camp, the Tianqi King soon saw the cannon positions of North Country's soldiers and immediately ordered, "Follow me and attack!"

The horn calls immediately rose, "Ooo-ooooo—"

Seeing the Barbarian Tribe's cavalry had actually broken through, Mu Jingwu, who was at the cannon positions, immediately instructed the Artillery camp's cavalry to adjust the cannons' aim towards the Barbarian Tribe's cavalry.

Following that, the cannon positions under Mu Jingwu bombarded the Tianqi King's cavalry with relentless fury. In no time, men and horses were shattered to pieces, with countless Barbarian Tribe Cavalry blasted to death or sent flying.

Yet, even as cannonballs fell around the Tianqi King, he remained unscathed. Witnessing this scene from a distance, Mu Changtian could no longer restrain himself.

The Tianqi King was a Grandmaster, and if he reached the cannon positions, would any of the soldiers there survive?

But just then, Mu Jingwu addressed the soldiers of the Artillery camp, "Aim the cannons at the Tianqi King, fire!"

As his words fell, Mu Jingwu personally manned a heavy cannon and took aim at the Tianqi King's position.

The next moment, a dozen cannonballs exploded around the Tianqi King but as the smoke and flames subsided, the Tianqi King was still standing.

By then, the Tianqi King's horse had been killed, but there was still a golden shield around his body, leaving him entirely unharmed, without even a scratch.

Seeing this, Lu Chen from a distance paused for a moment.

Is this the power of a Grandmaster?

It seemed that cannonballs were indeed of little use against a Grandmaster. It appeared that he and Chen Wanrong would have to take on the Tianqi King themselves, otherwise, the Tianqi King would not only be invincible but also bring a great number of casualties to their side.

While Lu Chen was contemplating this, Mu Jingwu continued to command the soldiers at the cannon positions, aiming a dozen cannons continuously at the Tianqi King.

Chapter 408: Absorbed Too Much Skill_1

Facing the artillery of the North Country, the Tianqi King was completely infuriated; he grasped his axe, wanting to charge into the artillery camp and destroy all those cannons.

"You wretched mice of Great Xia, this king will exterminate all of you!!!"

While speaking, the Tianqi King headed straight for the artillery camp where Mu Jingwu was, but at that moment, countless cannonballs rained down upon him.

The Tianqi King immediately summoned his Protective Gang Qi to block the fragments of the cannonballs, yet the shockwaves generated by the explosions kept pushing him backwards.

Although the cannonballs had not caused any harm to his body for the time being, they prevented him from getting anywhere near the Great Xia artillery camp.

The expression on the Tianqi King's face became extremely twisted, his eyes filled with bloodshot rage as he desperately wanted to rush forward and chop down the people of Great Xia; however, the power of the cannonball explosions forced him to constantly deploy his Protective Gang Qi to defend, and he realized that the True Qi within him was depleting very quickly.

The explosive power of these cannons was already comparable to a Grandmaster's strike. Continuously using Gang Qi to fend off the "Grandmaster's" attack, the True Qi in his body was naturally draining rapidly. If this continued, it was very likely that he would die of exhaustion here.

At this moment, the Tianqi King gnashed his teeth and glared at the artillery camp not far away. His heart was unwilling to accept this; he had led hundreds of thousands of troops, not only facing defeat at the hands of the Da Yue Dynasty but now encountering such terrifying weaponry while attacking Great Xia.

How infuriating!

If he retreated like this, how could he ever stand his ground among the Barbarian Tribe in the future!

That woman would surely say it was because he disobeyed her order and acted on his own that led to their crushing defeat.

No! He absolutely couldn't just return like this!

With that thought, the Tianqi King gathered all his strength to move forward. He had already been targeted by a dozen or so cannons in the distance, however, and the bombardment rendered it impossible for him to advance a single step. The cannonballs from the North Country were not falling at a single point but were aimed within a range, with explosions continuously pushing him back.

The shockwaves from the explosions kept pushing him back, and he had to wastefully expend his skill on Protective Gang Qi, rendering his speed utterly incapable of picking up or breaking out of the bombardment zone.

At that time, Lu Chen, mounted on his horse, was also stunned by this spectacle.

He had just seen the Tianqi King easily withstand the bombardment of the cannonballs and thought that artillery was now useless against a Grandmaster, that artillery in the future could only deal with martial artists below the level of Grandmaster. He didn't anticipate that once Mu Jingwu and his team aimed their cannons at the Tianqi King, he would be completely unable to charge through.

So it turned out that cannons could still be used against Grandmasters; it's just that Grandmasters weren't so easily killed by them.

Seeing the Tianqi King resisting the exploding cannonballs in the bombardment area, Mu Changtian and the rest of the military generals once again sighed in admiration. The Grandmasters they once thought could stabilize a nation were now being bombarded by artillery, leaving them without the power even to strike back, forced to defend desperately just to survive.

When had a Grandmaster ever been so helpless!

Indeed, a Grandmaster was not so easily killed, but the True Qi within a Grandmaster's body was continuously being drained. If they couldn't be killed now, what about with even more cannonballs? They could wear a Grandmaster down to death with attrition!

Grandmasters are human too; they are not invincible. A single cannonball was almost equivalent to a Grandmaster's attack. With so many cannonballs, how long could a Grandmaster hold out?

Seeing the Tianqi King amidst the gunfire, nearly all the generals were silent at this moment, except for the soldiers from Mu Jingwu's Artillery camp who, like madmen, kept stuffing cannonballs into their artillery pieces, furiously bombarding the location of the Tianqi King.

The majority of the Artillery camp were ordinary soldiers. On any normal day, let alone a Grandmaster, even a fifth-ranked martial artist could easily crush them. But today, they were operating the artillery, pinning down a Grandmaster, and this made them uncontrollably excited.

After who knows how long, Chen Wanrong finally spoke to Lu Chen, "It's enough, tell your soldiers to cease fire. It's not that easy to kill a Grandmaster with your weapons."

The power of artillery was great, but killing a Grandmaster, one with Protective Gang Qi, through attrition wasn't going to happen in a moment's time.

To kill a Grandmaster, it's best for another Grandmaster to take action personally.

Hearing Chen Wanrong's words, Lu Chen asked, "Do you plan to take action to kill him?"

Chen Wanrong replied coolly, "If you don't want me to take action, I won't."

Lu Chen said with a smile, "No, I'm not saying I don't want you to act. I can't wait for you to do it personally. Although I am also a Grandmaster, I've never fought before; I don't have any battle experience."

With that, Lu Chen immediately said to the soldiers behind him, "Beat the drums, tell Mu Jingwu to stop bombarding the Tianqi King."

As the drum sounds echoed, Mu Jingwu was taken aback; he didn't expect to be ordered to cease fire so soon.

At that moment, the flames and smoke around the Tianqi King once again dispersed, and his figure emerged into view.

The Tianqi King held a colossal axe, and his body seemed to be radiating a crimson glow, indicating that he was extremely angry.

Seeing that the artillery had stopped, the Tianqi King thought that the North Country's cannonballs had been depleted. He stamped hard on the ground with both feet, and his body shot like a cannonball towards Mu Jingwu's artillery camp. But at that moment, a cold glint struck, and the Tianqi King quickly leaned back to dodge the sword light.

Chapter 409: Absorbed Too Much Skill_2

The next moment, the Tianqi King found a stunningly beautiful woman in white appear before him. Although the woman was incredibly beautiful, the King no longer had any mind to appreciate her appearance.

The Tianqi King coldly said, "So the rat of Great Sum finally dares to face me directly? After killing so many of my soldiers, I will have you smashed into pieces as a burial sacrifice for my warriors!"

As he spoke, the Tianqi King gripped his axe and swung it towards Chen Wanrong. With a light dodge, Chen Wanrong evaded the Tianqi King's strike, and the next moment, her figure appeared at his right side, sweeping her sword horizontally.

The Tianqi King blocked Chen Wanrong's attack with a backhanded swing of his axe. The clash of axe energy and Sword Qi resulted in a loud explosion, creating a huge pit in the ground, and both of their bodies were blasted backward.

Seeing this, Lu Chen was somewhat surprised. Is this what fighting between Grandmasters looks like?

That enormous pit must be at least a dozen meters deep, right? How much gunpowder would it take to create that?

It seemed he had still underestimated the strength of a Grandmaster.

After both Chen Wanrong and the Tianqi King were sent flying, the Tianqi King immediately knelt on one knee, vomiting a mouthful of blood.

He had been bombarded by cannon fire for quite a while, and the True Qi in his body had already been nearly exhausted. Although Chen Wanrong had only recently become a Grandmaster, her Cultivation Technique was quite special, and she had easily mastered the power of a Grandmaster.

Before Chen Wanrong, the Tianqi King was no match at all.

The Tianqi King realized this as well, and slowly stood up from the ground before saying coldly, "Despicable people of Great Sum, if you want to take this king's life, let's see if you're worthy!"

In the midst of talking, the Tianqi King's eyes seemed to emit two red beams, making him look extremely terrifying. Lu Chen frowned slightly; he wondered if the Tianqi King had entered some kind of berserk state to temporarily increase his skill.

While he pondered this, the Tianqi King kicked off the ground and his body shot forward. Just as he was about to reach Chen Wanrong, he swung his axe – sending a massive wave of axe energy straight for her. Chen Wanrong, sensing that the Tianqi King's strength had increased significantly, did not try to block his attack and hurriedly dodged.

The next moment, the ground was cleaved open, creating a long gash about a dozen meters deep and two meters wide.

Seeing this chasm created by the Tianqi King, Lu Chen's perception of a Grandmaster's power was once again shattered.

At that point, like a madman, the Tianqi King launched another axe attack at Chen Wanrong, who again chose to evade.

Afterward, the Tianqi King chased after Chen Wanrong, swiftly creating countless ravines on the ground. Lu Chen could tell that Chen Wanrong planned to exhaust the Tianqi King's strength first, waiting until his True Qi was nearly depleted before striking back at him.

This strategy seemed sound, but the Tianqi King probably realized he couldn't continue attacking mindlessly forever.

Just then, the Tianqi King lunged forward once more, but instead of continuing the pursuit, he charged towards Lu Chen and the others.

The Tianqi King's plan was simple: if you're not going to fight me, then I don't need to waste my time on you. I'll just go after those distant onlookers, killing one by one. Once enough are dead, that Great Sum woman will have to come out and fight.

Chen Wanrong had seen through the Tianqi King's intention as well and flashed in front of him, blocking his path. The Tianqi King's mouth curled slightly, "Keep dodging! Why are you not dodging now?"

As he spoke, the Tianqi King brought his axe down again, but this time, the strike was clearly different from the previous ones.

"One Axe Opens Mountain!!!"

A flicker of concern crossed Lu Chen's mind – this was the use of a Cultivation Technique, so this axe swing would likely be much more powerful than the previous ones.

This time, however, Chen Wanrong did not dodge; she struck with her sword.

"Snow Flower Sword!!!"

The next moment, the surroundings seemed to be enveloped in ice, and snow appeared to fall from the sky, mixed with countless white flower petals.

Witnessing this, Lu Chen was immensely astonished. Surely, this can no longer be considered mere Martial Arts?

Could Chen Wanrong also be practicing cultivation?

As Lu Chen contemplated this, the Tianqi King's axe energy and the white Sword Qi collided, instantly exploding. The earth shook and a white cloud of smoke spread rapidly, as if a Cloud Explosion Bomb had been detonated.

Chen Wanrong and the Tianqi King were once again sent flying by the blast wave. Once the smoke cleared, it appeared as if real snowflakes were falling from the sky. Lu Chen reached out his hand to catch them.

He looked up again at the distant Tianqi King, who was half-kneeling on the ground, supported by his axe, spitting blood incessantly.

Chen Wanrong's condition wasn't much better – she wasn't bleeding, but her complexion was deathly pale, clearly a result of excessive depletion of her Spiritual Energy.

At that moment, seeing that Chen Wanrong seemed injured too, the Tianqi King immediately got up and with a kick, dashed straight for her again.

"Even if this king must die, I will take these despicable Great Sum people with me!"

Hearing this, everyone's faces turned pale; the Tianqi King was planning to self-detonate his Dantian and perish together with them!!!

Mu Changtian immediately warned, "Run! He's going to take us all down with him!"

Chapter 410: Absorbed Too Much Skill_3

A Grandmaster's self-destruction is no joke; it's far more powerful than any bomb. If a Grandmaster self-destructs his Dantian, he could blow an entire mountain top away.

If someone is at the center of the explosion, death is almost certain, even another Grandmaster might be killed by the blast.

Seeing that the Tianqi King actually wanted to drag them down with him, Lu Chen dismounted at this moment.

Chen Wanrong immediately turned to Lu Chen and said, "I'll hold him off, get away quickly!"

As she spoke, Chen Wanrong once again gripped her sword tightly, ready to launch another attack at the Tianqi King. However, just as the Tianqi King was almost upon them, Lu Chen's figure suddenly appeared behind him, and almost no one saw how Lu Chen got there.

The Tianqi King also sensed someone behind him and hastily turned around to swing his axe. Yet, Lu Chen easily caught the axe with his hand and then placed his other hand directly on the king's chest.

After feeling the powerless slap from Lu Chen, the Tianqi King sneered and said, "Is the rat of Great Sum trying to tickle me?"

Hearing this, Lu Chen smiled and said, "I'm just helping you cool off, don't get so heated."

As the words fell, Lu Chen immediately employed the Absorption Technique.

The Tianqi King instantly felt all his skill flowing toward the young man before him and was momentarily stunned.

He hastily attempted to self-destruct his Dantian, wanting to perish together with the young man in front of him, but found that he couldn't gather his skill in his Dantian to self-destruct at all.

The Tianqi King's face changed dramatically, "Who... who exactly are you..."

Smiling, Lu Chen said, "Pleased to meet you, I am the North Prince of Great Sum!"

The Tianqi King said in disbelief, "No... Impossible!!!"

Before coming to the North Land, the Tianqi King had already learned a bit about the North Prince through the Barbarian Tribe's scouts. The North Prince was just a seventeen or eighteen-year-old youth; how could he possess such terrifying strength and use such bizarre tactics!

The Tianqi King immediately began to struggle, trying to free himself from Lu Chen's palm. But he suddenly found his body as if rooted to the spot, completely immobile, forced to watch helplessly as his internal power crazily surged toward the youth before him.

At this moment, Chen Wanrong, not too far away, also witnessed this scene. It was the first time she had seen Lu Chen absorb someone's skill, and she stood frozen in place.

She had never imagined that a technique to directly absorb another's skill could exist in this world; she had only ever heard of transferring skill to others.

What cultivation technique had Lu Chen cultivated? How could it look so sinister, as if only those in a Cult would use it?

After a while, the Tianqi King's skill had been completely absorbed by Lu Chen.

The Tianqi King was a Grandmaster, and the lifetime of skill from a Grandmaster entering Lu Chen's body all at once made him very uncomfortable, as if his body was about to burst into flames, his face turning red.

Lu Chen immediately threw the Tianqi King's body aside and drew out a Barrett, aiming it at the king's head. The Tianqi King was now at death's door, staring at the dark muzzle when he mustered all his strength to say, "The Goddess... will one day... avenge me..."

No sooner had the Tianqi King finished speaking than Lu Chen shot him in the head.

Even as a Grandmaster, without the support of internal skill, he was no different from an ordinary person. With that single shot, the Grandmaster Tianqi King fell.

Seeing the Tianqi King perish, Mu Changtian and the others hastily rode their horses to Lu Chen's side.

By this time, Mu Changtian noticed Lu Chen's flushed face and chaotic breathing, sensing that his martial artist's presence was somewhat out of control. He asked anxiously, "Prince, what's wrong with you?"

Lu Chen also felt he had absorbed too much skill and that his body was struggling to digest it. Without speaking, he hurried to steady his body, trying to calm the rampant power inside him.

It was then that his martial artist's presence further spiraled out of control. As a Grandmaster, the release of his presence could be so oppressive that it might suffocate an ordinary person.

Suddenly, everyone around felt breathing difficulties, and it became evident that something was wrong with Lu Chen's body.

"Distance yourselves from me immediately. I've absorbed too much skill and it's causing me to lose control," he said.

He murmured to himself, "It seems I will have to break military discipline today."

Realizing Lu Chen's intent, Mu Changtian promptly said, "The Prince has been gravely injured on the battlefield and now needs medical attention, which naturally isn't a breach of military discipline."

Hearing this, Lu Chen chuckled, then said, "General Mu, you're good at giving me an out."

"Alright, you all continue the pursuit of the Barbarian Tribe soldiers. I must return now. If there is anything important, send someone to report to me immediately," he instructed.

The soldiers chorused in unison, "Yes, Prince!"

Then, Lu Chen said to Chen Wanrong, "Master Chen, would you be so kind as to give me a ride back on your horse?"

Chen Wanrong, realizing something was wrong with Lu Chen as well, quickly mounted her own horse and said, "Get on."

Without a word, Lu Chen jumped onto Chen Wanrong's horse and then laid his head on her back.

Right after, Chen Wanrong spurred her horse towards Ningbei City.

Watching their retreating figures, Li Feng asked with confusion, "What's wrong with the Prince?"

Mu Changtian said indifferently, "General Li, it's better to know less about things that one shouldn't know. You just need to remember that the Prince has been severely injured and has left the battlefield early. As of now, the frontline conflict has nothing to do with the Prince."

Upon hearing Mu Changtian's words, Li Feng and the others grew even more curious. How could the battle have nothing to do with the Prince, who was the Main Commander? But they refrained from asking more.

Following this, Mu Changtian ordered the Tianqi King's body to be collected, then he led his troops directly to the Barbarian Tribe camp, and soon the quiet of the night was again disrupted by the sound of gunfire.

The Black Cavalry led by Xuanyuan Chen and Wenren Lie, and the light cavalry headed by Xiao Pengthian, also joined the battlefield.

At this very moment.

Chen Wanrong rode her horse, carrying Lu Chen back as fast as she could, with him leaning on her back, his arms encircling her waist.

Chen Wanrong was incredibly puzzled. What was going on with Lu Chen? She had clearly seen that he hadn't been injured just now.

And she found that Lu Chen now seemed very restless, as he was bold enough to grope her while on horseback.