

## Es. Benefits 591

### Chapter 591: This is Your Illusion\_1

Seeing Murong Xue'er about to leave, Lu Chen directly grabbed her wrist and then pulled her delicate body into his arms.

Murong Xue'er didn't struggle, and Lu Chen said at that time, "Practice, why not practice? It has been a long time since I last practiced calligraphy, my handwriting is getting uglier, it's time to seriously practice."

Having said this, Lu Chen walked towards the resting room with Murong Xue'er in his arms, laughing as he walked, "Miss Murong's body is getting softer and softer."

Hearing these words, a blush appeared on Murong Xue'er's indifferent face. She tried hard to control her emotions, attempting not to be carried away by Lu Chen's words.

Soon, they arrived at the resting room, where Lu Chen gently placed Murong Xue'er on the bed and then lightly pressed down upon her but did not hurry to start undressing her.

He gazed at Murong Xue'er's face, which was coldly beautiful with a hint of blush, and said with a smile, "Miss Murong, I feel our trade isn't fair."

Hearing this, Murong Xue'er was somewhat puzzled and asked, "What do you mean?"

Lu Chen said, "Think about it, in our trade, I provide you with the most secretive information from the North Country, and you just have to practice calligraphy with me."

"Although it seems like a fair trade, each time we practice calligraphy, I not only expend physical energy but also mental effort, and end up making you comfortable. Tell me, is this trade equal?"

Upon hearing this, Murong Xue'er was taken aback. The shameless wretch of the North Prince actually had the nerve to say he was at a loss after taking advantage of her.

Although her emotions were stirred, Murong Xue'er did not argue directly with Lu Chen, but said coldly, "What else do you want then?"

Lu Chen said with a laugh, "Since it's a trade, naturally, you should serve me, not the other way around."

Upon hearing this, Murong Xue'er felt her heart skip a beat, seemingly understanding what he meant, and her cheeks became unbearably hot.

Murong Xue'er then said, "You practice your writing, how should I serve you?"

After all, Lu Chen was truly practicing his writing, and not constantly doing other things.

Lu Chen then whispered into Murong Xue'er's ear, "You should understand, I'm not talking about writing. Although I need to practice, we can always stop while we're practicing, right?"

"You..." Murong Xue'er wanted to speak but hesitated.

Indeed, as Lu Chen had said, although he would write on her, he did not write continuously; most of the time, they engaged in certain activities, so it was not impossible for her to serve him.

But she had grown up in the Imperial Palace of the Great Jue and had only ever served the Yue Emperor, a woman; she had never served a man before. Suddenly being asked to serve a man, she was completely at a loss as to what to do.

Seeing Murong Xue'er silent, Lu Chen asked with a smile, "What's the matter, you don't want to?"

"If you're not willing, then you should go back today."

Hearing this, Murong Xue'er snapped back to reality and quickly said, "Fine."

Although she didn't know how to proceed, having visited the Prince's Mansion many times and having done many bad things in this room with Lu Chen, she had some experience.

She worried that if she did not agree to Lu Chen's demands, he might no longer trade with her in the future, and it would not be so easy to obtain information about the North Country from him; therefore, she had to meet all of Lu Chen's conditions.

With this in mind, Murong Xue'er said, "You... you get up first."

Seeing that Murong Xue'er had agreed, Lu Chen smiled faintly, very pleased with himself, and then got up, took off his shoes, and lay down on the side of the bed.

Seeing Lu Chen lying straight on the bed, eyes fixed on her, Murong Xue'er felt somewhat at a loss.

In her previous visits to the Prince's Mansion, it had always been Lu Chen who had taken the lead in everything, and she had practically done nothing from start to finish. Now that she was supposed to serve Lu Chen, she had no idea how to serve this thick-skinned fellow.

Seeing that Murong Xue'er was only looking at him, Lu Chen asked, "What's wrong?"

Murong Xue'er paused for a moment, then immediately got up, took off her embroidered shoes, and raised her delicate hands to start undressing Lu Chen.

Seeing this, Lu Chen asked with a smile, "Are you in such a hurry?"

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Murong Xue'er's hands stopped, and she asked, "How do you think I should proceed, Prince?"

Murong Xue'er had no idea what to do, other than to undress him. And yet this man had the audacity to say she was being hasty.

Now that they were in bed, if not to undress, what else could be done? This troublemaker was clearly teasing her.

Lu Chen said, "Besides undressing, there are actually many other things we can do."

Saying this, Lu Chen raised his hand, grabbed Murong Xue'er's wrist, and pulled her body down, making her sprawl on top of him. Then, while guiding her hands in what to do, he kissed Murong Xue'er's red lips.

Seeing Lu Chen initiate the kiss, Murong Xue'er couldn't help but think, overkill.

If this scoundrel had his own ideas, why bother making her serve him? They could just go along with his plan.

Although a bit annoyed, under Lu Chen's kiss, Murong Xue'er soon forgot all the displeasure of a moment ago.

After an indeterminate amount of time, Lu Chen lifted his arms, supporting Murong Xue'er's fragrant shoulders to raise her body, and their lips finally parted.

Chapter 592: This is Your Illusion\_2

Murong Xue'er's eyes were shrouded in mist, and she appeared somewhat bewildered. Clearly, she had entered into a certain state of mind, and she hadn't anticipated that Lu Chen would push her away at this moment.

Lu Chen gazed into her eyes and said with a smile, "The master leads the student through the door, but cultivation depends on the individual. From now on, it's up to you. Do whatever you think you should do."

Murong Xue'er was slightly stunned, but then she began to disrobe Lu Chen once more, and this time, she did so with much more urgency.

This time, Lu Chen didn't stop her, and under Murong Xue'er's tentative efforts, she finally managed to complete the basic task of serving him.

Lu Chen had originally planned to practice calligraphy, but Murong Xue'er didn't give him the opportunity, as if she was possessed.

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Meanwhile.

Youping County.

Mu Changtian was arranging the defenses in Lingyun City. They had already heard about the defeat of Great Wu's main forces, and North Prince had also conveyed in his latest military order that they should try to intercept the retreating troops of Great Wu.

At this moment, Mu Changtian felt immense pressure. According to the intelligence reports, there seemed to be two Grandmasters among Great Wu's main forces. Here, they had no Grandmasters at all, only Wenren Lie was somewhat stronger. Though they had firearms, killing a Grandmaster wasn't just a matter of using guns.

Standing on the city wall, Mu Changtian gazed at the distant forest, his heart filled with worry.

Just then, Wenren Lie also arrived at the city wall. Mu Changtian asked, "General Wenren, are you confident in facing a Grandmaster?"

Wenren Lie said indifferently, "Yes."

Hearing the calm tone of Wenren Lie, Mu Changtian could only smile bitterly in his heart. All the soldiers who came from the north were much like Wenren Lie, supremely confident at all times, and he wondered where their confidence stemmed from.

It seemed Wenren Lie sensed what Mu Changtian was worried about, so he directly asked, "Is General Mu worried that we are no match for those two Grandmaster Military Generals?"

Mu Changtian answered straightforwardly, "Yes, even with cannons, it's very difficult to breach a Grandmaster's Protective Gang Qi."

"Both of us are only at the Master Realm; to kill a Grandmaster will probably be very difficult."

Wenren Lie said without worry, "General Mu, you don't need to worry. The Prince has tasked us with holding this position and preventing Great Wu's defeated troops from retreating, he will surely send a powerful warrior."

Hearing what Wenren Lie said, Mu Changtian was momentarily stunned.

That's right, North Prince had taken part in the battle with Tianqi King; he couldn't possibly be unaware that Grandmasters can withstand cannon fire, he surely knew very well that a Master is no match for a Grandmaster, so he must have arranged for someone to come.

But, who exactly had he sent?

Mu Changtian thought about it; there were not many Grandmasters in North Country, other than Zhuge Zhongguang, the only Grandmasters he knew of were North Prince himself. But, given that North Prince was a Seignior, he certainly would not lightly enter the battlefield anymore unless it was absolutely necessary.

Could it be that North Prince sent Zhuge Zhongguang this time?

If it was just one Grandmaster, it was uncertain whether he would be a match for Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen.

As Mu Changtian contemplated this, he suddenly felt a breeze brush by. The next moment, he faintly sensed that someone had appeared beside them.

Mu Changtian swiftly turned, alert, and said, "Who goes there!"

Before he could finish, he saw Wenren Lie greeting the suddenly appearing elder, "Master, you have arrived."

At this, Mu Changtian was taken aback. He looked at the elder before him; he had seen this man at North Prince Mansion, but since he was mostly in the military camp, he didn't know much about this man, only that he belonged to North Prince Mansion.

Mu Changtian felt puzzled; he couldn't detect any aura of a Martial Artist from the elder, as if he were just an ordinary person. However, the fact that Wenren Lie addressed the elder as "Master" suggested that the old man's strength was likely above Wenren Lie's.



Mu Changtian was perplexed, thinking that even if a Grandmaster concealed his aura, he should still be able to sense a faint Martial Artist aura. Moreover, the man had appeared abruptly on the city wall, and he hadn't even seen how the man ascended.

To suddenly appear before them, what kind of strength did this person possess?

Then Wenren Lie looked at Mu Changtian and said, "General Mu, you might not yet be acquainted with Master Xuanyuan. Allow me to introduce you. Master Xuanyuan was originally the City Lord of Great Yu City. Later, the Prince assigned Master Xuanyuan to Yan County, to oversee North Country's road construction."

Hearing this, Mu Changtian was taken aback. So, this person was the City Lord of Great Yu City; no wonder Wenren Lie called him Master.

Wenren Lie had come from Great Yu City, and indeed it was right to address his former superior as Master.

Mu Changtian then looked at Xuanyuan Chaoge and asked, "Master Xuanyuan, I hope you forgive my boldness in asking, are you a Grandmaster?"

Xuanyuan Chaoge didn't answer directly but said calmly, "General Mu, rest assured, if the King has sent me here, there is good reason for it."

Although Xuanyuan Chaoge did not respond directly, Mu Changtian discerned from Xuanyuan Chaoge's tone that he didn't consider those two Grandmaster Military Generals as threats at all, leading Mu Changtian to think that this man must be even more powerful than he had imagined.

Chapter 593: This is Your Illusion\_3

Could it be... a Celestial?

Thinking of this possibility, Mu Changtian's heart was filled with indescribable excitement. If this old man was indeed a Celestial, then Great Wu's two Grandmaster Military Generals would be no threat at all.

The strength of a Celestial was to that of a Grandmaster as heaven is to earth; even ten Grandmasters together might not match up to a Celestial.

However, if North Country had a Celestial, why wouldn't the North Prince let people know? Initially, didn't the North Prince have Zhuge Zhongguang pose as a Celestial simply to intimidate the various dynasties?

If North Country had a Celestial, why would there be a need for Zhuge Zhongguang to impersonate one?

Could it be...

This old man achieved the breakthrough to become a Celestial later on?

Mu Changtian also thought back to when Lu Chen had recently taken the initiative to clarify that Zhuge Zhongguang was not a Celestial.

The North Prince's initiative to clarify that Zhuge Zhongguang was not a Celestial directly led to Great Wu's decision to deploy troops to attack North Country. If North Country had a Celestial, Great Wu would definitely not dare to initiate an attack against them.

Mu Changtian suddenly understood. The North Prince Mansion clarifying that Zhuge Zhongguang was not a Celestial was, on one hand, to lure other dynasties to deploy troops against North Country, and on the other hand, because North Country already had a real Celestial. Therefore, there was no longer a need for Zhuge Zhongguang to continue impersonating one.

Mu Changtian couldn't help but think that this was the case. He originally thought that the North Prince Mansion clarifying Zhuge Zhongguang's status was because the North Prince felt their North Country had grown and thus no longer feared the other dynasties. He hadn't expected that the real confidence of the North Prince lay with this old man.

Mu Changtian couldn't help but admire Lu Chen once again.

Back when he was in the Capital city, he really misjudged the situation, thinking that the North Prince was just a prodigal son. He hadn't expected the North Prince to be so formidable, to the point where even a Celestial would willingly serve him.

At the same time, Mu Changtian felt somewhat fortunate. Heaven truly wanted to rejuvenate their Mu Family.

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At this moment.

Murong Xue'er continued to serve Lu Chen in her own way, and although it was said to be serving, Lu Chen realized that Murong Xue'er was merely satisfying her own desires.

With a chuckle in his heart, Lu Chen then lifted his hands and firmly grasped Murong Xue'er's buttocks, preventing her from moving around.

After Murong Xue'er's body was restrained by Lu Chen, she froze for a moment. She tried to twist her body to break free from Lu Chen's grip, but considering Lu Chen was a Pseudo Celestial, how could Murong Xue'er possibly be his match?

Upon finding herself immobilized, Murong Xue'er felt extremely uncomfortable. Just then, she slightly raised her upper body, looking down at Lu Chen from above.

Her eyes were misty with a veiled layer, her face filled with a seductive charm, "What... what are you doing..."

Lu Chen replied with a smile, "I asked you here to practice calligraphy, and how can I write with you behaving like this?"

Hearing these words, Murong Xue'er twisted her body, once again trying to struggle out of Lu Chen's grip.

Murong Xue'er spoke, "Practice writing... let's do that later..."

What was this time for practicing writing, Murong Xue'er thought to herself with great urgency.

Lu Chen smiled lightly, then said, "Call me 'darling,' and I'll let you go."

No sooner had Lu Chen finished speaking, Murong Xue'er called out shyly and ashamed, "Darling..."

Lu Chen also kept his promise and let go of Murong Xue'er, allowing her to do as she pleased.

As evening approached.

Murong Xue'er lay on the bed with an expressionless face.

Lu Chen, lying beside Murong Xue'er, turned to his side, then lifted his hand and gently stroked her cheek, smiling as he asked, "What's wrong?"

"I didn't make a move on you today, so why do you seem a bit unhappy?"

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Murong Xue'er wished she could find a crack in the ground to crawl into. Of course, Lu Chen hadn't made a move because she had been the one in control all day long.

She had never imagined she would become like that.

At this moment, Murong Xue'er bit her silver teeth and cursed herself in her heart.

She really was a shameless woman!

If it had been before, her disgraceful behavior upon coming to the Prince's Mansion could have been attributed to being forced by this man. Being the oppressed party, she had no way to resist.

But today was different; everything was her own initiative.

She couldn't understand how she could have become like that. Was she inherently a woman without any sense of shame?

After a long while, Murong Xue'er finally spoke in a cold voice, "I apologize for taking up your time today, Prince. If you wish to practice your calligraphy next time, you may send someone to fetch me. I will be leaving for today."

Having said this, Murong Xue'er prepared to get up, dress, and leave the North Prince Mansion, feeling as though she had lost all face.

She feared that in the North Prince's heart, she was no different from those women of the brothel.

However, just as Murong Xue'er was about to get up, Lu Chen rolled over and pinned her beneath him. He lifted his chest and propped his hands on either side of her head, looking down at her panicked eyes from above.

"Xue'er, I discovered a problem today, have you noticed? You seem to be even more proactive than I am?"

At these words, Murong Xue'er's cheeks turned even redder, becoming hotter as if they were about to start emitting smoke.

Then, trying to justify herself, Murong Xue'er said, "That's your illusion."

Lu Chen's mouth curved into a slight smile, and he reached out to lift Murong Xue'er's chin, staring straight into her beautiful eyes. Being gazed at so intently by Lu Chen's profound eyes, Murong Xue'er's heart became even more flustered.

She had realized why this man had wanted her to serve him today. The reason was simple: he wanted to humiliate her, to make her see clearly what kind of woman she really was.

Without a doubt, Lu Chen had succeeded, and she felt like someone driven by desire, no different from an animal, completely unable to control her inner lust.

Lu Chen said with a smile, "An illusion, huh?"

After saying so, Lu Chen did not continue but just kept looking into Murong Xue'er's eyes.

With Lu Chen gazing at her like that, Murong Xue'er's eyes kept darting away. After a short while.

Lu Chen continued to tease, "I never would have thought that Great Jue's most famous talented lady, the Inner Palace Prime Minister, would turn into such a person on my bed."

Chapter 594: Is Yue Emperor a Celestial?\_1

Shamed to the core by Lu Chen's words, Murong Xue'er was overwhelmed with humiliation.

Despite being insulted by this detestable man, she couldn't say anything in return because, after all, Lu Chen hadn't done anything today—he had merely been lying there the whole time.

After a long while, unable to bear the humiliation any longer, Murong Xue'er chose to completely fall from grace. With a cold laugh, she said, "What's the matter, have I disappointed the Prince?"

"I am such a woman. If the Prince dislikes someone as shameless as me, he just needs to stop seeking me out to practice calligraphy."

Because of her humiliation, Murong Xue'er became angry at this point.

Lu Chen smiled faintly, "Are you flying into a rage out of humiliation? Have you not considered that if I don't seek you out for calligraphy practice anymore, how will you extract information from North Prince Mansion in the future?"

With that said, Murong Xue'er's heart skipped a beat.

Indeed, if Lu Chen grew tired of her and stopped seeking her out, it was very likely that she would be cast aside by the Yue Emperor, and then she would have nowhere to call home.

Hateful man!

Murong Xue'er felt she was completely under this man's control.

Soon after, Murong Xue'er asked coldly, "What exactly do you want?"



Looking into Murong Xue'er's eyes, Lu Chen said, "Great talent, it's not about what I want, but what you want. Ask your own heart, can you ever live without me in the future?"

Having said that, Lu Chen leaned forward and captured Murong Xue'er's red lips with his own, taking the initiative this time.

At that moment, Murong Xue'er's mind was in utter chaos. She was still lost, unsure of which path to take for the future.

She also realized that she couldn't live without Lu Chen, but she didn't trust him. In her eyes, the reason Lu Chen slept with her was partly because of her beauty, and partly because of her identity—he wanted to use her to achieve some purpose. She was just a pawn to Lu Chen.

As a pawn, one is bound to be discarded one day, just as it was with her and the Yue Emperor.

If the Yue Emperor learned that she had failed to control Lu Chen, she would certainly be discarded by him as well.

Caught between the Yue Emperor and the North Prince, Murong Xue'er could see no future for herself.

The most terrifying thing was that she had actually fallen for the North Prince, this bad man.

Everything she had done before had made it clear that she was deeply infatuated with the North Prince.

After an indeterminate amount of time passed, the evening glow in the sky had gradually faded, and the whole world sank into the blackness of the original night.

Lu Chen slowly stood up, gazing at the seductive cheeks of Murong Xue'er. He was about to speak when Murong Xue'er interrupted him.

"I'm just your pawn, right?"

Hearing this, Lu Chen laughed, "To be honest, you indeed serve a very important purpose for me, but I have never regarded you as just a pawn."

"Rather than treating you like a pawn, I'd much prefer to make you mine, turn you into my collectible."

Murong Xue'er said weakly, "The rumors in the outside world are indeed true; you are a lustful rogue."

Lu Chen said with a smile, "Didn't you know that already?"

Murong Xue'er fell silent. Lu Chen continued, "What do you say, would you like to marry into North Prince Mansion and become my true woman?"

"After all, you cannot go back anymore."

Murong Xue'er replied, "I can never marry you, even if the Yue Emperor has already discarded me."

Lu Chen asked, "Why is that?"

Murong Xue'er said flatly, "You have too many women; you will grow tired of me one day."

Lu Chen said with a smile, "All the women in my Prince's Mansion had this fear before entering, but after a while, they stopped worrying about it."

Murong Xue'er continued, "Your ambition is too great. One day, you will become the overlord of the world, and then your women can only live in the Imperial Palace for the rest of their lives."

Murong Xue'er wasn't foolish. Having stayed in North Country for so long, she had felt its rapid development and power.

The North Prince, as a ruler, indeed had significant flaws, namely his lecherous nature, but this did not prevent Lu Chen from becoming a sovereign who could dominate the world.

The battle between Great Wu and North Country already showcased North Country's power and exposed the North Prince's ambition.

Murong Xue'er had a premonition that the North Prince would eventually unify the great dynasties. Though the future held many uncertainties, she firmly believed in her judgment.

Lu Chen said, "I don't recall ever restricting my women from leaving the Prince's Mansion?"

Murong Xue'er said, "What is now, is now, and what is later, is later."

At this point, Murong Xue'er looked into his eyes and said, "It doesn't matter to me what you think, I want to make one last trade with you."

Lu Chen asked, "What trade?"

Murong Xue'er said, "I can betray the Yue Emperor and help you collect information about the Great Yue, but if one day you annihilate the Da Yue Dynasty, you must grant me freedom and let me leave."

Murong Xue'er understood that she could no longer stay away from this man, yet she did not believe that Lu Chen would truly like her, so she simply treated it all as a trade.

Hearing Murong Xue'er say this, Lu Chen smiled. Murong Xue'er's favorability towards him had long reached a full one hundred.

Unfortunately, favorability is just that, and Murong Xue'er did not trust him, nor did she believe he could develop feelings for her. He had not given Murong Xue'er a sense of security.

But then again, the absence of a sense of security now didn't mean there wouldn't be one in the future. Lu Chen believed that as long as Murong Xue'er stayed by his side for long enough, she would eventually come to trust him.

Thinking this, Lu Chen smiled and said to Murong Xue'er, "Alright, I agree."

Seeing Lu Chen agree, Murong Xue'er's mental knot finally unraveled. She had been struggling with what to do recently, but now that she had spoken her mind, she felt incredibly at ease.

As for betraying the Yue Emperor, she had no choice. Even though the Yue Emperor had protected her for so many years, she was, after all, just a chess piece to him and would be discarded by the Yue Emperor eventually. She desired her own life, not one as a mere chess piece.

Whether Lu Chen would honor their deal in the end was something she would have to wait and see. She didn't hold out much hope for him.

Murong Xue'er then said, "The Yue Emperor is a Celestial. If you want to swallow the Great Yue in the future, your North Country will also need to have a Celestial power."

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen was momentarily stunned. This news was indeed explosive for him; if he remembered correctly, the Yue Emperor was only in her thirties. How could she be a Celestial?

Regaining his composure, Lu Chen asked, "You're not deceiving me, are you? She's only in her thirties. Can someone that age really be a Celestial?"

Murong Xue'er said, "You're not even twenty years old and you're already at the Grandmaster Zenith Realm. Compared to the Yue Emperor, Prince, your martial arts talent is even more fearsome."

"You and the Yue Emperor both have grand ambitions. Although your realm is currently lower than the Yue Emperor's, with enough time, your strength will definitely surpass hers. Given your current pace of improvement, it's not impossible for you to break through to the Celestial Realm before you're thirty."

Lu Chen smiled and said, "So you think highly of me."

With an expressionless face, Murong Xue'er continued, "I don't know if the North Country has a Celestial power. If not, and my virgin mark is indeed a curse pattern used to control you, then you better pretend to be under my control and temporarily act as the Yue Emperor's chess piece."

Lu Chen instantly understood Murong Xue'er's meaning. If the North Country lacked a Celestial power and she couldn't control him, the Yue Emperor might personally make a move to eliminate him as a major threat.

Thus, if there were no Celestials in the North Country and he had not yet broken through to the Celestial level, pretending to be controlled by Murong Xue'er was indeed a way to avoid the Yue Emperor making a move against him.

Only...

Lu Chen smiled faintly, then said, "I'm not accustomed to being someone else's chess piece."

Hearing Lu Chen's words and seeing the indifferent smile on his face, Murong Xue'er immediately guessed something, "It seems your North Country already has a Celestial."

She had just revealed to Lu Chen that the Yue Emperor was a Celestial, yet Lu Chen was not frightened at all, implying that the North Country must have a Celestial. That's why Lu Chen dared not to take the Yue Emperor seriously.

At this moment, Lu Chen said, "Aren't you trying to deceive and outwit me by telling me fake intelligence?"

"Is the Yue Emperor really a Celestial?"

Lu Chen did not distrust Murong Xue'er's words. He could tell that Murong Xue'er had completely sided with him. However, he still had some doubts.

If the Yue Emperor was indeed a Celestial, she could easily control him by coming to the North Country in person. Why would she need to send Murong Xue'er to use her beauty and curse him?

Murong Xue'er said indifferently, "I have told you about the Yue Emperor's strength. Whether you believe it or not is up to you."

Deep down, Murong Xue'er felt somewhat upset. She had already made up her mind to stand by Lu Chen's side, yet this man doubted her words.

If he didn't believe her, so be it.

Lu Chen also felt Murong Xue'er's emotional tone and smiled, then said, "It's my mistake; I shouldn't question you."

Lu Chen thought to himself that perhaps Murong Xue'er considered the Yue Emperor a Celestial but, in reality, the Yue Emperor wasn't a true Celestial, or maybe she was like him, a Pseudo Celestial.

No matter how you put it, it was indeed quite exaggerated for someone in their thirties to be a Celestial in this world.

If true, Lu Chen would even wonder if the Yue Emperor was from his homeland.

Of course, if the Yue Emperor was indeed a Celestial, then her decision not to eliminate the threat of the North Country but instead to have Murong Xue'er control him made some sense.

It just went to show that the Yue Emperor was ambitious, and not just slightly so. This also matched what Murong Xue'er had said earlier about both Lu Chen and the Yue Emperor having grand ambitions.

Chapter 595: The Movements of Great Wu's Remnant Forces\_1

Regardless of whether the Yue Emperor is a Celestial, his strength is incredibly formidable. Lu Chen decided that from now on, he would treat the Yue Emperor as a Celestial and would not launch an attack on the Da Yue Dynasty without absolute certainty.

The information that Murong Xue'er had told him was quite important. Lu Chen caressed her cheek and then gently toyed with the locks of hair on her face as he said, "Thank you for telling me this intelligence."



Murong Xue'er turned her gaze away and said coldly, "All of this is just a transaction."

With a silent chuckle in his heart at the sight of Murong Xue'er's icy demeanor, Lu Chen thought to himself how quickly women change their faces. This woman had just been coquettishly alluring, but now she had turned into a cold, unemotional statue.

Murong Xue'er continued, "I hope you will keep your promise and let me leave in the future."

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen said, "I will keep my promise..."

As if! Lu Chen silently finished the sentence in his mind.

At that moment, Murong Xue'er pushed against Lu Chen's chest and added, "I should go back now, that's enough for today."

Lu Chen immediately turned and made room for her. He had no intention of keeping Murong Xue'er overnight, especially since he had an appointment in Wang Qingci's room later that night.

After getting up, Murong Xue'er began to dress, while Lu Chen still lay in bed, taking in her graceful figure.

After Murong Xue'er had dressed, she turned to look at Lu Chen still lying in bed and said, "I'm leaving now."

Lu Chen then raised his hand, using Spiritual Power to gently pull towards himself. In the next moment, Murong Xue'er's body uncontrollably fell into his arms.

Without struggling, Murong Xue'er let Lu Chen embrace her tender body, and then he kissed her red lips.

After kissing for a while, Lu Chen slowly released Murong Xue'er. Although a flush of red reappeared on her face, her expression remained as cold as ever.

Lu Chen said with a smile, "I'll have someone escort you."

Murong Xue'er said indifferently, "No need. The carriage from the mansion is waiting for me outside the Prince's Mansion."

Without further words, Murong Xue'er turned and walked towards the door of the resting room. Just as she reached the doorway, Lu Chen suddenly thought of something and said, "Next time you come to the Prince's Mansion, just spend the night here. I'll have a courtyard prepared for you within the mansion."

Stopping in her tracks, Murong Xue'er turned to face Lu Chen on the bed and said, "My relationship with you is merely a transaction, Prince. There is no need for you to do this."

Lu Chen said indifferently, "If you frequently spend the night at the Prince's Mansion, it will make the Yue Emperor believe that I've fallen for your beauty scheme, which benefits us as well."

Murong Xue'er responded, "I understand," and turned to step out of the room.

After Murong Xue'er left, Lu Chen got out of bed, dressed, and headed straight to Wind Cloud Court for dinner.

During dinner, Lu Chen said to Mu Zixuan, "My love, I plan to have Murong Xue'er stay at the Prince's Mansion. Have the servants prepare a courtyard."

Upon hearing this, Mu Zixuan smiled slightly. They had long been aware of what was going on between Lu Chen and Murong Xue'er. "I have already had a courtyard prepared," she said.

Hearing that, Lu Chen said with a smile, "You truly are my beloved, you understand me so well."

Chu Yuqin then asked, "Chen'er, Murong Xue'er is an envoy from the Great Yue, isn't it improper to have her stay at North Prince Mansion?"

Lu Chen said lightly, "There's nothing improper about it. Her main purpose for coming to North Country is due to the Yue Emperor's mission. Having her stay at North Prince Mansion can confuse the Yue Emperor, and this is to our advantage."

Chu Yuqin seemed to understand and said, "Alright, but you should still be cautious of her, she is ultimately one of the Yue Emperor's people."

Although Chu Yuqin also knew that Lu Chen was adept at dealing with women and almost every woman he came into contact with couldn't help but fall for this bad guy, there are always exceptions. She still had her reservations about Murong Xue'er.

Just as Chu's words fell, Wang Qingci, sitting opposite her, said, "Don't worry, Sister Chu. You're not unaware of the Prince's skills. I believe Murong Xue'er has long fallen in love with the Prince, and she's probably already unable to part with him by now."

Hearing this, Chu Yuqin snorted and said, "Not everyone is like you."

Lu Chen laughed softly and said, "Chu, rest assured, Murong Xue'er has already pledged her loyalty to me, and she is now one of my people."

Suddenly, Lu Chen remembered something else and said, "These are critical times, and everyone should try not to go out. I have a premonition that there will soon be assassins coming to North Country from the Capital city."

At these words, the women were taken aback. Chu Yuqin, pondering, said, "The Capital city? Chen'er, do you suspect your father the Emperor...?"

Chu Yuqin didn't finish her sentence, as it was unpleasant for a father and son to be involved in such matters.

Lu Chen nodded, "That possibility cannot be ruled out. The strength of North Country is growing rapidly, and so is the threat I pose. In my father's eyes, I was never his son, and there is no familial affection between us. It's quite normal for him to want me gone."

"Of course, this is just speculation," he added.

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Chu Yuqin's face showed a trace of worry. She also thought that Lu Chen's conjecture wasn't impossible. The Sum Emperor had always been a heartless and unprincipled man, he had even harmed his own woman to death. What would killing another child count for his own purposes?

However, now both Lu Chen and she were Grandmasters. Even if the Sum Emperor were to send assassins to North Country, at most he could send a Grandmaster. With the two of them as Grandmasters, plus Zhuge Zhongguang, North Prince Mansion should be safe from danger.

...

After dinner, Lu Chen first took a bath in Wind Cloud Court before heading to Wang Qingci's room.

At that time, Wang Qingci was still coaxing the child. After Lu Chen entered the room, she handed the child in her arms over to the wet nurse.

Wang Qingci twisted her enchanting body over to Lu Chen, "Prince, it is my first time doing 'that' with a Celestial. Please be gentle with me."

Seeing Wang Qingci flirting and trying to seduce him, Lu Chen laughed. It seemed he hadn't been here for too long, and this bitch had forgotten the pain once her wound had healed.

Lu Chen then said, "I am not a Celestial yet."

A Pseudo Celestial is far from a true Celestial. At most, a Pseudo Celestial could be considered at the Zenith Realm within the Grandmaster's Zenith Realm. A Celestial is known as an 'Immortal,' not something a Pseudo Celestial could imitate.

Wang Qingci spoke with a smiling voice, "In my eyes, a Pseudo Celestial is also a Celestial."

As she spoke, Wang Qingci raised her delicate jade hand and started to caress Lu Chen's chest. Lu Chen caught her wrist in one move and then said with a laugh, "Although I'm not a Celestial, my strength is more than enough to deal with you, bitch."

As soon as his words fell, Lu Chen scooped Wang Qingci up in a princess carry, threw her onto the bed, and pressed down on her.

It wasn't until dawn that Lu Chen finally let Wang Qingci go.

Several days later.

Youping County.

Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen were leading the soldiers of the North Country to retreat back to Great Wu through Youping County.

Zhan Hong had already faintly sensed that something was amiss. He said to Xu Xingwen at his side, "Our supply of food and fodder has been cut off for so many days. I'm afraid that something has happened to Youping County."

After witnessing the mysterious weapons of North Country, they also realized the strength of North Country. Zhan Hong did not believe Ying Feiyu could defeat the garrison of Yongan County with an army of 300,000, given the frightening power of those iron spheres.

At that time, Xu Xingwen said to someone beside him, "Deputy General Wang, take a thousand cavalry immediately to scout the situation in Youping County."

"Yes, General."

Thereupon, Deputy General Wang led a thousand cavalry scouts to investigate the entire situation of Youping County, while Zhan Hong and the others rested with their troops on site.

After an unknown amount of time, the thousand men Xu Xingwen had sent out started to return one after another. Soon Deputy General Wang also returned, and the faces of the returning soldiers were all filled with panic.

Xu Xingwen immediately asked, "Deputy General Wang, what is the situation in Youping County?"

Deputy General Wang replied, "General, Youping County has been occupied by the North Country."

Hearing this, everyone's hearts sank. Sure enough, the thing they least wanted to occur had still happened. It looked like Ying Feiyu had already been defeated.

At this time, everyone on site fell into silence, and both Generals Zhan and Xu did not speak for a long while.

After some time, the voice of a soldier from behind came, "General, the envoy of Great Jue has arrived!"

Hearing this, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen immediately looked towards the direction of the voice. At this moment, a person from Great Jue approached Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen, "I've seen both Generals. This is the intelligence our emperor has given to you."

Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong looked at each other, then Xu Xingwen took the intelligence from the envoy of Great Jue. After looking at it carefully, his eyebrows knitted together. He immediately understood why the Yue Emperor was still providing them with intelligence on North Country at this time.

The Yue Emperor intended to use the army of Great Wu to continue testing the strength of the North Country army. After all, they were cut off from their retreat, and if they wanted to return to Great Wu quickly, they would have to pass through Youping County.

Of course, they could also take a detour, but detouring would present many problems. If they detoured to the west to return to Great Wu, it would waste more time, and once North Country was aware of it, it might also send out troops to intercept them.

Seeing Xu Xingwen frowning, Zhan Hong asked, "What is written in the Yue Emperor's letter?"

Xu Xingwen handed the letter to Zhan Hong, "According to the intelligence gathered by the scouts of Great Jue, there are only two Master Level Military Generals stationed in Youping County.

The intention of the Yue Emperor is that if we can kill these two generals, it might throw the North Country army into chaos, and then Great Wu could take the opportunity to seize the weapons used by North Country."



Zhan Hong sneered after glancing at the intelligence Xu Xingwen had handed over, then said, "This woman really knows how to play her gambits. She just wants us to take the risk."

Xu Xingwen thought for a moment, then said, "If there really are only two Master Level Military Generals in Youping County, then indeed, if both of us take action, there is a chance we could kill them."

Hearing Xu Xingwen's words, Zhan Hong said, "To deal with two Masters, I alone am enough. But to get close to the two of them will not be easy."

Just then, Deputy General Wang who had gone to gather information earlier stepped forward and said, "General Zhan, based on the intelligence I've just gathered, Youping County is not under martial law. It seems that North Country intends to occupy the entire county, so their troops have not looted or killed the common people of Youping County.

More than that, they are even free to move around Youping County. Lingyun City still has an endless stream of caravans coming and going."

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Hearing this, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen were overjoyed. Zhan Hong said, "If that's the case, we can first locate where those two Grandmaster Military Generals from the North Country are, and then disguise ourselves as a merchant convoy to get close to them."

"As long as we can get close to those two Grandmaster Military Generals, killing them will be easy."

"Without those two Grandmaster Military Generals, the North Country's army stationed in Youping County will be like headless flies. We might even have the opportunity to counter-attack."

Just thinking about this, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen felt extremely excited.

Afterward, Zhan Hong said to Deputy General Wang, "Send someone immediately to disguise themselves as a merchant convoy and investigate in each city. Once you find out where those two North Country Grandmaster Military Generals are, come back and report as soon as possible."

As soon as Zhan Hong's words ended, some of Great Wu's soldiers started to prepare. They took off their armor and disguised themselves as merchants, heading to various cities in Youping County to gather information. The twenty thousand-strong army of Great Wu then moved to a forest in Youping County to await the opportunity.

Zhan Hong and his comrades' subtle movements were quickly detected by Mu Changtian and his group.

When the North Country's army entered Youping County, the Brocade Guard had already spread throughout the whole county.

It might seem that Mu Changtian and his group did not declare martial law in Youping County, but that was because they planned to use the opportunity to weed out those in the county who didn't submit to the North Country's rule, paying only lip service to loyalty while secretly being disloyal.

A few days later.

Lingyun City, the Prefectural Government.

Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie were discussing the interception of Great Wu's remnants when a Brocade Guard wearing black and red clothes entered the hall.

Both Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie were part of the military system, and the Brocade Guard reported directly to Lu Chen, which meant neither of them had the authority to use the Brocade Guard for their tasks.

However, Lu Chen had already issued orders for the Brocade Guard to cooperate with the North Country's garrison in Youping County to figure out the movements of Great Wu's remnants.

As the Brocade Guard entered the hall, he immediately bowed to Wenren Lie and Mu Changtian, saying, "Commander Liu Huaiming of the Brocade Guard, at your service, Generals."

Seeing that it was a Commander of the Brocade Guard, Mu Changtian swiftly asked, "Commander Liu, have you located movements of Great Wu's remnants?"

Liu Huaiming replied, "Yes, there have been some people disguised as merchant convoys in Youping County recently."

Who are the Brocade Guard? They are specialists in espionage, their greatest skill being the ability to read people.

The Great Wu's soldiers, disguised as merchants, were immediately distinguishable by the Brocade Guard as not genuine merchants.

Liu Huaiming continued, "These fake merchants seem to be inquiring about the whereabouts of you two Generals. It's my guess that they are intending to find out where you are now to carry out an assassination."

Upon hearing this, Mu Changtian's brow furrowed.

But he quickly remembered that there was a Celestial in the Prefectural Government; they had nothing to fear from those two Grandmaster Military Generals.

Just as Mu Changtian was about to speak, Wenren Lie addressed Liu Huaiming, "Commander Liu, please have the Brocade Guard spread word that General Mu and I are in Lingyun City."

"Since they are looking for our location, let's inform them proactively. If we can draw Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen here, that would be best."

Hearing this, Liu Huaiming turned his head towards Mu Changtian.

Mu Changtian stated, "My thoughts align with General Wenren's."

Liu Huaiming then bowed and said, "Then please be prepared, Generals. I will spread the news of your whereabouts in Lingyun City immediately."

"If there is nothing else, I will take my leave now."

As his words fell, Liu Huaiming turned and left the Prefectural Government.

## Chapter 598: The First Phase of the War Concludes\_1

The Brocade Guard quickly spread the news that Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie were in Lingyun City. To avoid arousing suspicion from Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong, there was a noticeably larger number of soldiers stationed near Lingyun City than usual.

At this time, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen were still unaware that Lingyun City was a trap. Upon learning that Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie were there, they were very pleased, as they were just about to pass through Lingyun City.

Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen immediately began to prepare. They selected some elite soldiers and then disguised themselves as merchants, heading towards Lingyun City.

To make themselves look more like merchants, they directly robbed a merchant caravan and even killed all of the caravan's people.

Perhaps it was because their caravan did have goods, when they passed through the gates of Lingyun City, the soldiers only briefly checked and then let them through.

Seeing how easily they had entered Lingyun City, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen felt somewhat strange. It was a time of war; shouldn't there be strict inspections? Instead, why were they allowed to pass through so easily? As they were puzzled, they overheard the conversation of the North Country soldiers at the gate.

"Recently, more and more merchant caravans have been coming to Lingyun City."

"Yeah, the shortage of supplies in Lingyun City will soon be resolved."

"It's really enviable for these merchants, wherever there's war, that's where they go to make big money."

"Don't say that. Now that Youping County is under our North Country's control, the Prince won't let them raise prices at will."

...

Hearing the discussion of the North Country soldiers, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen realized why the soldiers had so easily let them in; it turned out that Lingyun City was facing a recent shortage of supplies.

This made sense. After all, following the outbreak of the war, the merchants and aristocratic families would have fled with their belongings. Previously, the merchants and aristocratic families played a role in the distribution of goods, and their departure would inevitably lead to a shortage of supplies in the city.

After the North Country occupied Youping County, in order to rule over it, they couldn't afford to ignite the anger of the common people, so they sought ways to restore prices to their previous levels. To bring prices back down, naturally there was a need for merchants to transport supplies, such as food, from other places.

The reason the North Country soldiers inspected so loosely was likely to speed up the entry of merchant caravans into the city and suppress the prices within the city.

With this in mind, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen did not suspect anything further and then blended into Lingyun City, staying at an inn.

Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen were confident in their strength, but to be cautious, they planned to take action at night. In the event of any mishaps, with the strength of the two Grandmasters, they would be able to easily escape from Lingyun City.

Their caution was mainly due to their worry that the North Country might possess weapons even more formidable than cannons.

In the evening.

Inside the Prefectural Government, Wenren Lie and Mu Changtian sat in the pavilion in the courtyard, with Xuanyuan Chaoqe sitting beside them, engaged in discussion.

At this time, Liu Huaiming of the Brocade Guard entered the courtyard and approached the three of them, "Master Xuanyuan, Generals, the fish have entered the net."

Upon hearing this, the three men showed a hint of subtle smiles. Eliminating Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong, the two Grandmaster Military Generals, would be an absolute disastrous blow to Great Wu.

The remaining troops led by Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen would also quickly disperse due to the lack of leadership.

Xuanyuan Chaoqe then said, "I need to hurry back to Yan County, so let's not waste any more time and take action now."

Upon hearing this, Wenren Lie said, "Master Xuanyuan, if we take action now, I'm afraid it will reveal your Celestial powers."

Xuanyuan Chaoqe casually replied, "There are not many people in this world who have seen a Celestial. Besides, those people disguised themselves as merchants to enter Lingyun City, and no one knows that there are Grandmasters among them."

Xuanyuan Chaoqe thought, as long as they could deal with those two swiftly, no one would know that the slain Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen were Grandmasters. If people do not know they were Grandmasters, how could they deduce that the one who acted was a Celestial?

Mu Changtian said, "Senior Xuanyuan makes sense. We are in your hands then."

As soon as the words fell, Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie immediately led their troops to the inn where Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong were staying, giving the reason that spies had infiltrated and they were there to capture them.

The common people of Lingyun City, seeing the soldiers coming and going, did not take it to heart, as they had observed the conduct of the North Country soldiers in recent times.

Besides targeting some of the aristocratic families, the North Country soldiers hardly made life difficult for small merchants and peddlers, and the ordinary common people had not suffered at the hands of those soldiers. This convinced the people of Lingyun City that the initial claims of North Prince's benevolence, made by Wenren Lie, were true.

At this moment, Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong were still on the second floor of the inn, discussing how they would proceed that night when they suddenly heard the clamor of armor outside.



Then, a soldier by the window immediately said, "It's not good, the soldiers of Lingyun City have surrounded the inn!"

Hearing this, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen were taken aback. They had only just entered Lingyun City, and they did not expect that their lodging would be surrounded so quickly.

Chapter 599: The First Phase of the War Concludes\_2

Could it be that they've already been discovered?

Xu Xingwen said, "Let's not make any rash moves yet, let's see what the situation is first. It's possible they're not here for us."

No sooner had Xu Xingwen spoken than the shouts of North Country soldiers came from outside, "Spies inside, you are surrounded. Come out and surrender immediately, or face death without mercy!"

With those words, all the guests who were still in the inn ran out. At that moment, the Shopkeeper rushed to Wenren Lie's side and asked, "My lord, what's happened?"

Mu Changtian said indifferently, "Some spies have infiltrated and we've discovered them. Quickly get everyone out. Once we start fighting, I'm afraid they'll be implicated."

"As for the inn, any damages will be fully compensated by the North Prince Mansion."

This...

The innkeeper was somewhat stunned. He had not expected spies to run to his inn, and although he was not sure whether the North Prince Mansion would indeed compensate him, under these circumstances, he could only cooperate and have everyone in the inn come out.

At this moment, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen still hadn't moved; they still fancied that the soldiers outside might not be looking for them.

Just then, Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong suddenly felt a strange force sweep through their bodies, causing great discomfort, though the force vanished very fast.

Xuanyuan Chaoge then said, "They are on the second floor. Move in!"

As he spoke, the soldiers in the street, holding grenades and fire guns, greeted the second floor of the inn.

Following the explosion of several iron balls in their room, Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong realized that they had indeed been discovered.

Since they had been discovered, there was no point in hiding.

They both jumped straight out of the second floor. The North Country soldiers below immediately attacked them with fire guns, but the bullets only hit their Protective Gang Qi, to no effect.

At that moment, Zhan Hong's gaze instantly locked onto Wenren Lie and Mu Changtian. He could sense that these two were at the Master Realm, and their armor, so different from regular soldiers', along with the capes they wore, clearly indicated the attire of a General. Thus, he deduced that these two men must be Generals of the North Country army, and the very targets of their mission.

Zhan Hong immediately said to Xu Xingwen, "Old Xu, we're in luck, our targets have delivered themselves to us!"

Xu Xingwen also noticed the realm of Wenren Lie and Mu Changtian, and immediately said, "Let's finish them off fast!"

As soon as Xu Xingwen finished speaking, the two charged toward Wenren Lie and Mu Changtian. They completely failed to notice an old man beside Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie.

Celestials could easily conceal their presence, and to everyone else, Xuanyuan Chaoge seemed no different from an ordinary person. Thus, they had no idea that the decrepit old man beside their targets was a Celestial.

In the blink of an eye, Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong appeared right next to Wenren Lie and Mu Changtian.

Their lips curved up slightly, thinking their mission was accomplished. With these two dead, Lingyun City would surely descend into chaos.

However, just as they were about to make their move, a mighty oppressive force suddenly descended. Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen felt as if a mountain weighed upon them, and although they struggled, they found they were completely immobilized.

At that moment, their Protective Gang Qi shattered like glass with a "crack," and before they even understood what was happening, Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie struck.

Mu Changtian drew his sword, beheading Xu Xingwen in one stroke, while Wenren Lie raised his hammer, smashing it onto Zhan Hong's head, causing brains to splatter instantly.

Two Grandmasters were thus easily dispatched by two Master Level Military Generals.

Of course, it was not solely their effort. The ease with which Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie disposed of Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen was entirely due to Xuanyuan Chaoge, the Celestial who had suppressed the power of Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen, shattering their Protective Gang Qi and temporarily leaving their bodies defenseless.

Without the help of Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie, they would not have stood a chance against the Grandmasters.

Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen had not anticipated a Celestial in Lingyun City. Had they known, they would have been much more cautious and not died so easily.

Although Celestials are powerful, they are not invincible. Suppressing two Grandmasters for just a few breaths had also exhausted a significant amount of spiritual power from Xuanyuan Chaoge. If not for the sudden turn of events, Xu Xingwen and Zhan Hong might have reacted in time to break free from Xuanyuan Chaoge's restraint.

However, in the world of masters, victory and defeat are often decided in an instant; it was in these few breaths that Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen lost their lives.

With these two Grandmasters gone, the rest of the Great Wu soldiers in the other inns were quickly dealt with by the North Country soldiers. The soldiers from Great Wu within the inn had at most Half-step Master strength and could not resist the power of firearms.

Seeing the corpses of Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen, two Grandmasters, Mu Changtian felt somewhat emotional.

These were Grandmasters...

Once considered as "strategic weapons" by various nations and pillars of the state, the Grandmasters had been killed by two Masters in the face of a Celestial.

The power of a Celestial is truly fearsome!

Chapter 600: The First Phase of the War Concludes\_3

"This world is truly about to change."

"In the future, any dynasty that lacks a Celestial will surely face destruction. Grandmasters will no longer be the pillars of a nation; instead, Celestials will take their place and become the new foundation of a country or dynasty."

"Thankfully, North Country possesses a Celestial!"

Mu Changtian felt an immense relief that they had gone to North Country. It seemed that with the Celestial of North Country, it wouldn't be long before they could unify the world, and the North Prince would become the lord of all.

Perhaps it was his overly joyous mood, but suddenly, Mu Changtian felt the skill within him growing rapidly. However, before he could say anything to Wenren Lie beside him, a surge of power burst forth from Wenren Lie's body, sweeping past everyone.

The next moment, Mu Changtian realized that the martial presence emanating from Wenren Lie was significantly stronger than his own.

But Wenren Lie's expression showed no change whatsoever, as if the whole event was not worth getting excited about. Tentatively, Mu Changtian asked, "General Wenren, did you just break through to the Grandmaster Realm?"

Wenren Lie responded indifferently, "Hmm, somehow, I've broken through."

This...

Seeing Wenren Lie's expression remain so calm, Mu Changtian couldn't help but admire him. He thought if it were him breaking through to the Grandmaster Realm, he wouldn't know how to contain his happiness.

After all, the only realm now capable of withstanding firearms was the Grandmaster Realm. In the upcoming Age of Firearms, only Grandmasters would become the true divide between ordinary people and martial artists.

Anyone below Grandmaster level was deemed ordinary, but upon reaching Grandmaster, one could face firearms without being killed by a commoner wielding them.

At this moment, Xuanyuan Chaoge looked at Wenren Lie with a smile and said, "General Wenren, you've finally made the breakthrough. I'll report your success to the king as soon as I return. He will certainly be most pleased to hear it."

Mu Changtian asked from the side, "Is Elder Xuanyuan planning to return?"

Xuanyuan Chaoge answered, "Yes, now that Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen are dead, my mission is complete. Besides, with General Wenren becoming a Grandmaster, having a Grandmaster stationed in Youping County means there should not be any issue wiping out the remnants of Great Wu."

"In these turbulent times, it is most important for me to return quickly and protect Yan County and the North Prince Mansion."

Mu Changtian replied, "What you say is true, Elder."

Xuanyuan Chaoge then said, "Alright, let's not linger any longer. Everything henceforth will be left in your two capable hands. I will take my leave now."

As his voice fell, Xuanyuan Chaoge disappeared from the spot in an instant.

Mu Changtian and Wenren Lie then came back to their senses and began directing the soldiers present to clean up the site.

In the following days, Wenren Lie and Mu Changtian led their troops to clear out the Great Wu soldiers within Youping County. The 200,000 soldiers soon learned the news of their generals' failed assassination attempt.

When the Great Wu soldiers first heard of their generals' defeat, they couldn't believe it. After all, Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen were Grandmaster level Military Generals. Grandmasters did not die easily, especially when their targets were merely at the Master level.

But as time passed, and the North Country's army continued to track the movements of their 200,000-strong force, plus the fact that their generals did not return, they pretty much confirmed the failure of Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen.

However, before the return of Zhan Hong and Xu Xingwen, they dared not make any moves. Eventually, the 200,000-strong Great Wu army stayed hidden in the forest for nearly half a month.

Later, due to a shortage of provisions, some soldiers could no longer bear it and deserted. Once the deserters were captured by North Country soldiers, the whereabouts of the 200,000 troops were quickly ascertained.

When North Country soldiers besieged the 200,000 Great Wu troops, the Great Wu soldiers had already lost all will to fight. Even though they were elite troops, the bombardment by cannons, lack of logistical supplies, and the disappearance of their generals had worn down their fighting spirit entirely.

Ultimately, a Master Level vice general stepped forward, leading the 200,000 Great Wu soldiers to surrender.

With this, the initial phase of Great Wu and North Country's battlefield engagement came to an end, and it was now North Country's turn to play their hand.