

Chapter 121 - Smacking the Courtesan

Li Qingshan knocked her hand away rudely, but Ge Jian said, "If you want us to take care of you, that'll depend on what you have!"

"Don't worry, it's all the best. Lady Furong is currently waiting. Today, she's not receiving any customers other than the three of you. You have no idea how many people we've offended because of this."

At this moment, as if it was an attempt to prove what she said, a skinny man grabbed the procuress's hand as he sobbed. "Mother, I have to see Furong tonight. I'll give you anything you want." Afterwards, two sturdy guards who were second-rate masters at the very least rushed over, grabbing him and throwing him out.

All of the men there showed envy and eagerness when they heard the three of them would be received by Furong. Even Diao Fei, who remained cold and indifferent most of the time, became curious.

The procuress rambled as she flirted with Ge Jian, ogling at him. Diao Fei would listen in at times and look at the men and women in the hall at others; there was too much to take in. He had spent most of his time cultivating in his sect, so he obviously had not seen something like this before.

Li Qingshan instead raised his head and looked up. The Parlour of Clouds and Rain was designed with a hollow centre, so he could see the very top right from the ground floor. It was covered in paintings of dancing and floating women. The corridors of each floor stretched upwards as rings, and the sounds of songs and musical instruments filled the entire place. The customers were most numerous on the ground floor as they spent time with pretty women of the lowest class. The burning aura of lust seemed to gush through the roof.

Absent-mindedly, Li Qingshan seemed to see the women in the paintings move. Their eyes revolved, charming all people. But at a closer glance, they seemed to turn back into paintings. Was he mistaken?

The best room was on the top floor of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, specially prepared for esteemed customers. Three Qi Practitioners from the Hawkwolf Guard were obviously the most esteemed customers they could have.

Under the lead of the procuress, they climbed up the stairs, passing by many rooms. Through his extraordinary hearing, Li Qingshan clearly heard the sounds of love between many men and women, which was enough to make people heat up.

They sat down on extravagant cushions woven from golden threads as the music from several instruments rang out from the curtain behind them, forming an atmosphere capable of taking their breaths away. Suddenly, a group of orchid-like dancers came up and performed a dance. They only wore thin veils, which exposed their graceful figures as their feminine features moved about.

As he tasted the fine wine in his cup and enjoyed the song and dance before him, an extremely faint, exotic fragrance entered Li Qingshan's nose and mouth among the various other perfumes and fragrances. His mind seemed to become even more tipsy, making him want to submerge himself in it without the slightest care in the world.

Among the dancing women, the figure of a lady faded in and out, performing a fast and disorderly dance. She seemed like the moon in the night sky, surrounded by stars. As she was partially hidden, they would only be able to catch fleeting glimpses of her, only to see a face shrouded by a veil. Who was she? Was she Furong?

The pitch of the music from the instruments suddenly rose to the very top, and the dancers dispersed. The woman appeared before everyone, leaving her as the only one present dancing fervently. Li Qingshan and Diao Fei watched with so much concentration that they even failed to notice Ge Jian's departure.

In the corridor outside, Ge Jian said to the procuress, "This is something arranged by our boss Zhuo. You can't afford to neglect it, okay?"

The procuress smiled. "How could I? Our Parlour of Clouds and Rain does not plan on closing up in Jiaping city. Whether it's Incense of Enchantment, Dance of Charm, or Sound of Decadence, I've used it all. I can guarantee you that the two of them will be utterly bewitched." She glanced at Ge Jian's crotch. "Master Ge, have you come as well because you couldn't resist it any longer? Would you like our Furong to..."

Ge Jian said, "Shut up!" However, his face clearly was unnaturally flushed. He had lost control of his emotions slightly as well. Clearly, these three things had affected him as well. However, Zhuo Zhibo had purposefully ordered him to never touch that woman. Quite a few Qi Practitioners had been destroyed while they were on top of her, with even more regular people of the jianghu. The most terrifying part of all of this was that none of these people actually regretted it at all. They would still be willing to give her everything they possessed.

At this moment, the veil hit the floor in the room as if it was a slight accident during her fervent dancing. Furong stood there, at a loss as for what to do, and the music stopped conveniently.

The two men were stunned together. Li Qingshan felt incredibly amazed once again, but he was unable to accurately describe the woman's appearance. It was hazy, like there was a layer of mist that separated them. Within it, he vaguely saw Xuanyue and Gu Yanying, or even going to an even more distant past, to his first love of his past life. His mind was lost, and his heart was enchanted.

Diao Fei stared straight at Furong as he murmured, "A'ning!" The wine in his cup had already spilt all over the floor, but he was not aware of it at all. Many memories flooded through his head, along with the unforgettable feelings of pain and happiness. He wanted to protect her, to have her all to himself.

Furong sneered inside with the success she experienced. This was basically a piece of cake to her, as easy as it could get. And, her target this time was only the teenager, which made it even easier. She had already begun thinking about how she would use him and how she could get some more pills. She had heard the treatment that Hawkwolf guards received was rather impressive, so she should be able to squeeze quite a lot out of him. However, he was only a first layer Qi Practitioner, so she probably could not squeeze him for too long. However, the other might be able to make her break through once again with her cultivation, reaching the third layer.

Thump! Thump! Thump! A few, gentle sounds rang out from the jar on Li Qingshan's waist, which jolted Li Qingshan back to his senses. Xiao An was extremely clever. He would never make anything difficult for

Li Qingshan, so he had always been extremely quiet when he was in the jar. This was the first time he had made a disturbance while in the jar.

Li Qingshan immediately sensed that there was something wrong with his body. He began practising the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression, and the turtle shell-shaped daemon core in his body began to revolve and glow, suppressing everything. Whether it be his restless true qi or disorderly thoughts, all of it had been suppressed.

His mind suddenly cleared up. Spiritual qi gathered to his eyes as he looked at the lady called Furong again. The layer of mist on her face immediately dispersed, and her enchanting beauty suddenly faded away into mediocrity. She was not even as beautiful as one of her accompanying dancers or the female attendants sent to receive them. Even her facial expression seemed extremely fake, nowhere near as touching as before.

This felt like when a certain beauty on the internet from his former life took off her make-up. It was basically a travesty. However, this was much smarter than that. She could actually influence the senses of people, utilising the most beautiful components of the women he had seen before so that he would enchant himself.

None of these people had come to see this woman. They clearly only wanted to see the woman in their minds. This woman was shamelessly using the most wonderful memories of these people.

Was this an art of charm just like the legends? Li Qingshan frowned. He was not an idiot. He immediately understood the twisted, vile nature of this. Originally, he believed that while he could not wander through Jiaping city freely with his current strength, there were no opponents he could not handle, which was why he entered the Parlour of Clouds and Rain fearlessly. He was confident that as long as he kept himself under control, no one would be able to harm him. However, the various tricks and tactics of this human world had surpassed his imagination.

It was said that during the process of cultivation, various external demons would appear for cultivators, disturbing their minds and destroying their cultivation. Wasn't this it?

Then he looked at Diao Fei beside him. He was basically bewitched as he stared at Furong. However, Furong looked at Li Qingshan in surprise. She had never thought that anyone would be able to break free from her charming arts. Under his pressing gaze, she could not help but take a step back.

Slap! There was a loud and clear smack.

Ge Jian and the procuress looked at each other. When they rushed into the room, all they saw was Li Qingshan standing up. On the other hand, Diao Fei was on the ground, having been sent flying by a slap. The clear outline of a hand remained on his face. A sliver of blood oozed from his mouth, only demonstrating the force of the smack.

Diao Fei was just about to fight back out of anger, but a hand clamped down on his neck. A terrifying murderous aura made him freeze. He felt like as long as he moved slightly, his neck would be snapped.

"What are you trying to do?"

Li Qingshan lifted him before Furong. "Look carefully!"

Diao Fei had already begun to circulate his true qi subconsciously. Fury and fear broke him out of his prior state. Furong seemed to have forgotten to continue using her charming arts after being taken by surprise, so Diao Fei experienced the same thing as Li Qingshan earlier. He saw the surprising difference and immediately became stunned. That was not his A'ning. A'ning was no longer a part of this world.

The procuress cried out, "W- w- what are you doing?"

Ge Jian yelled out in a righteous manner, "Stop!"

Li Qingshan let go. "His manner from before was disgusting, so I couldn't help myself but to smack him."

Diao Fei collapsed on the ground and only said after quite a while, "Thank you!" Originating from a sect, he knew much more about charming arts than Li Qingshan. He knew just what would happen if he fell for it. Once people had fallen too deeply into it, even their own family would not be able to wake them up from the enchantment.

Li Qingshan pointed at Furong and said to the procuress, "Get this ugly woman out of here, or I won't be able to help myself against her either."

Furong screamed out, "Just by you?!" She even had a deep, husky voice. She was used to controlling men in her palms through her charming arts, so when had she ever been treated like that? In particular, being called 'an ugly woman' infuriated her. However, her face became even more twisted and uglier as a result.

The procuress said angrily, "Master Ge, isn't this newcomer of yours a little too unruly?" How could a measly first layer Qi Practitioner be so rude to her? If it were not for his identity as a Hawkwolf guard, she would have attacked him already.

Li Qingshan suddenly vanished from his location, appearing in front of Furong. He raised his right arm and lashed out viciously.

Within ten steps of him, he was even more terrifying than having a whole country as an opponent.

Li Qingshan used his powerful body and followed through with what he said. Although Furong was a second layer Qi Practitioner, she was not skilled in battle, as she focused on charming techniques. It was as if she had never imagined Li Qingshan would stoop as low as to hit a woman before so many people.

You bring me a fucking sham, a fake woman, to fool me, and you still have the nerve to call me unruly? You're not in a good mood, but I'm in an even worse mood. The fury from being fooled had almost turned into anger out of humiliation. It put him in a horrible mood.

He responded with his actions; he turned his hand into a blur, forcefully dragging it through the air as it cracked like a whip, slapping Furong in the face. She spun around a few times where she was like a spinning top. Half her face bulged up, two teeth flew out, and she fell back on the ground as the world spun around her, dazed!

The dancers and attendants were all stunned. After all, this was lady Furong, the head courtesan of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. She had always stood above everyone else, such that even when an attendant served her tea that was slightly cold, they would be whipped. As for verbally insulting her, even just questioning her beauty slightly, that would only lead to death!

Chapter 122 - Splattering the Parlour of Clouds and Rain with Blood (One)

As for men, they all worshipped Furong like dogs. She would never even dream of a man giving her a slap across the face!

The procuress struck out in anger. Her chubby hands were filled with true qi as they struck towards Li Qingshan. Not only was Furong the head courtesan of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, but she was also her disciple. But to her surprise, Ge Jian blocked her. The procuress forcefully pulled back her hands. "You!"

Ge Jian said coldly, "Are you trying to attack a Hawkwolf guard?" He was stuck between a wall and a hard place as well. As long as Li Qingshan was still a Hawkwolf guard, he could not afford to just stand by and watch. This was about the pride and dignity of the Hawkwolf Guard. Most importantly, he doubted the procuress could defeat Li Qingshan with her strength.

The Parlour of Clouds and Rain gifted a large number of pills to Zhuo Zhibo every year, as well as offering various types of women. He received a share of it as well as Zhuo Zhibo's errand boy, so he obviously did not wish to see the Parlour of Clouds and Rain suffer.

The procuress' breathing heaved a few times before she replied with, "Fine!" She pulled up the dazed Furong and made her way out.

Li Qingshan instead returned to his seat. He said, "Hurry up. I'm waiting for the next part. Your Parlour of Clouds and Rain must have more than someone like that, right? Brother Ge, I'm waiting!"

All he heard were shrill, hoarse screams from Furong. She had finally returned to her senses. "I want to kill him! I want to kill him!"

Ge Jian looked back, and the sunkenness on his face had vanished. He smiled helplessly. "Qingshan, if you don't like her, then you don't like her. Why must you hit her? There aren't a lot of women skilled in the arts of charm. It's not like you can't try them from time to time." He made it sound like Furong had been wronged that even Diao Fei wondered whether he had made this happen on purpose or not.

"She's just a whore, so if she has been hit, then she has been hit! There's nothing you can do about it!" Li Qingshan leaned onto a soft cushion without minding much at all. He raised his chin, and a female attendant to the side hurriedly picked up a grape, feeding it into his mouth carefully. He seemed just like a scoundrel.

This damned brothel was actually bold enough to work with Zhuo Zhibo against him, so he wanted to copy garrison major Lu, demanding five kilograms of lean meat, minced finely without a speck of fat in there, then demanding five kilograms of fat meat, also minced finely without a speck of lean meat in there, and finally, demanding five kilograms of cartilage, finely minced and without a speck of meat in there.

Note: This comes from a part in Water Margin where Lu Zhishen, or garrison major Lu Da in this part of the story, purposefully makes things difficult for a butcher who harasses people with over-the-top demands so that he could pick a fight with the butcher, who he ended up killing with three punches. This comes from chapter 6 of Water Margin.

Out of the women who came to serve him next, he would ask for well-endowed and plump ones if they were skinny, slapping the procuress across the face. If they were plump, he would ask for skinny and pretty ones, also slapping the procuress across the face. However, he did not seem like garrison major Lu. He seemed more like a part from a crosstalk?

“Let me go check on them!” Only after Ge Jian had stepped outside did he show his anger. He never thought these ultimate moves of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain would actually fail to conquer a country bumpkin of a kid from the mountains. However, it was still not time for him to fall out with Li Qingshan. As long as Zhuo Zhibo had yet to get to the bottom of Li Qingshan’s relationship with Gu Yanying, Zhuo Zhibo would never be bold enough to fall out with him, and as long as Zhuo Zhibo was afraid of turning against him, he would be afraid of turning against him.

Most importantly, he was worried that even if he did turn against Li Qingshan, he would not be the kid’s opponent. Ge Jian had leapt in fright from the slap earlier. Within a range of ten steps, Li Qingshan could move as swiftly as a tiger or a panther if he suddenly wanted to attack. Even he was uncertain as to whether he would suffer from something like that. Were Body Practitioners really that powerful?

In less than fifteen minutes, Ge Jian had returned. Behind him was the procuress, who smiled from ear to ear as if nothing had happened at all. Who knew what Ge Jian had said to her. She even brought seven or eight young women with him, every single one of them with a great figure regardless of their differences. The eldest was only sixteen or seventeen, while the youngest was only fourteen or fifteen.

“Little brother, it seems like you don’t like mature women. Here are some women we’ve recently groomed. They’re guaranteed to be clean, so why don’t you pick a few to take back with you as maidservants? Their price is very negotiable.” The procuress pinched the cheek of a young lady beside her as she introduced them to Li Qingshan.

The women all looked at Li Qingshan, and many of their gazes were eager. Being sold and taken away before they had received any guests was the good fortune they were all hoping for, not to mention that this was an upright and sturdy young man, not some pot-bellied merchant or some bony old man.

Ge Jian said, “I think you should have a person or two to serve you on the mountain. With how big your bed is, it’s a waste if it’s just for one person.” Seeing how he could not complete Zhuo Zhibo’s mission, he came up with another plan. He saw how this kid seemed like a person who placed great emphasis on his ties with people. As long as an additional burden appeared beside him, they could use it to threaten him.

Looking at the young women who were lined up and waiting to be chosen, just like livestock, Li Qingshan suddenly felt sadness. He looked at the fat procuress again and felt even more disgusted by her. He was really tempted to just cut her down right here. However, he also knew that in a day and age like this, brothels were proper businesses. Many people who had daughters and were reluctant to raise them due to favouring males, or were unable to raise them, would send them here. It was basically a path for them to survive.

Li Qingshan asked, “Did you get into all of this willingly?”

The young women looked at one another before finally lowering their heads and saying yes.

Li Qingshan lost his interest in them. He stood up. "That's it for today. I want to go home and sleep!" He made his way out, but when he walked past one of the young women, she shoved a piece of paper into his hand.

Qing Xiu looked at that tall, wide figure with eagerness. Ever since she had been abducted and brought here, many years had passed already. She had sunken into despair a long time ago, but the slap from Li Qingshan earlier made her recover a ray of hope, enough for her to take such a great risk. He was different from other men. If it were him, perhaps he would report it to the authorities and save her, as well as her siblings. It was said that the district magistrate was a good official, the best of the best. He would definitely help them.

However, she saw Li Qingshan suddenly stop, just unfurling the piece of paper there. Afterwards, he asked her, "Did you give this to me?"

Everyone's gazes immediately gathered on that one woman. In particular, the procuress managed to catch a glimpse of the words written on the paper. There was some killing intent in her eyes.

Qing Xiu lowered her head deeply as if someone was staring daggers at her. She thought about the fates of the sisters who had tried to escape or betray the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. Despair flooded her face. She was filled with deep regret. Inside, she wholeheartedly resented Li Qingshan. Are you an idiot? Don't you know how powerful they are in the Parlour of Clouds and Rain? I'm done for because of you!

Li Qingshan stowed the piece of paper away as he patted the young lady's shoulder with a smile. "I'm asking you. Why aren't you answering me? You could have just mentioned it earlier." I've bid my time for ten years! I've been filled with an urge to enforce and uphold justice a long time ago, just waiting for injustice!

He felt like he had spoken very amiably, but Qing Xiu only grew paler.

The procuress could already tell that Li Qingshan was a troublemaker. She immediately pulled Qing Xiu behind her. "She has lost her mind. Don't take it seriously." Qing Xiu had always been a clever and obedient girl. She never opposed anything that she was told to do, so the procuress thought she was just about done with her grooming, which was why she took her out to see Li Qingshan. However, she never thought that in such an important moment, she would actually do something like that. The procuress would definitely beat her to death later on and make an example out of her.

Li Qingshan said, "Didn't you want me to choose someone? I'll choose her!"

The procuress said, "Why don't you take her away?" Then she turned to Li Qingshan and smiled. "There are plenty of girls in our parlour. It really would be wrong of us to let you choose one who has lost her mind!" She bickered in a babbling manner.

Immediately, two powerful guards took Qing Xiu away.

"Stop!" Li Qingshan raised his foot, about to chase them, but the procuress blocked him with her plump body in an agile manner. He wanted to make his way around her, but Ge Jian grabbed his hand.

"Qingshan, where are you going? She's just a whore, that's all!"

This was what Li Qingshan had just said to Ge Jian, but Li Qingshan immediately turned around and answered. "You're a whore! Let go of me!" He shook his arm. Ge Jian was no opponent of Li Qingshan's

great strength, so he was immediately forced to let go. His face changed. "What did you say?" He was a mighty Hawkwolf guard, yet he had just been labelled as a whore, so he could not help but lose his temper. He could not be bothered about holding back anymore.

The guards both possessed martial arts. They seemed like they were just walking, but they moved extremely quickly. In the blink of an eye, they had left the room, merging with the crowd.

Li Qingshan paid no attention to Ge Jian, taking a step forward, but what he ran into was a pile of fat. The procuress felt like she had just been struck by a rampaging elephant, smashing through the window and corridor railing behind her as she flew towards the hollow centre of the building. She directly fell down from the seventh floor.

She screamed out along the way down, "Stop him!" With a palm strike, true qi surged out, and her plump body moved horizontally, landing in the corridor of the third floor.

Li Qingshan had already rushed out using the path that had been cleared by the procuress. All he saw was a crowd of heads. He could not see Qing Xiu at all, but he sniffed with his nose and caught a smell.

Out of his senses, the one that exceeded ordinary people the most was his sense of smell. The vision and hearing of ordinary Qi Practitioners would become extremely sharp as long as they practised true qi and opened their meridians. They could see mosquitos and hear ants walking from hundreds of meters away. However, their sense of smell would not grow by much, not even becoming on par with a stray hound on the street. This was due to their innate restrictions.

However, Li Qingshan's sense of smell had become much stronger than a dog's a long time ago. He pursued as he followed the trail that the smell left behind.

"Where are you going, little brother?" A few beautifully dressed women of the brothel rushed over from somewhere, filling up the corridor and entangling with him, grabbing his arms and legs.

Li Qingshan said, "Piss off!" He did not have any intention to go soft on women at all. With a spurt of true qi, he sent the women flying.

As he quickly descended down to the sixth floor, a valiant guard in yellow seemed like he had heard the procuress' cries, so he rushed out from his room. He immediately spotted Li Qingshan and blocked his way rigidly. From his aura, he seemed like a first-rate master.

The guard had just thrown a first-rate master out today, so he was quite full of himself. When he saw Li Qingshan stride over, he could tell that he was a Qi Practitioner, but only at the first layer. As such, he was confident that he could take him on or even defeat him. He had always looked down on these people who directly practised qi due to their better innate talent. With the same voice he used when he scolded customers, he yelled, "Stop!"

"If it's just frail women, so be it. They've just been used by people. However, for a good man like you to help the bad, you deserve death!" Li Qingshan said. He continued without stopping, and he had already drawn out the Wind-entwining blade. The shiny blade flashed.

The guard in yellow was just about to attack him, but his neck felt a chill before flying up into the air. The world spun around him such that he almost saw his own body. A few more guards wanted to rush over, but when they saw their leader's head knocked into the air by the spurt of blood from his neck,

their legs immediately seemed to become rooted to the ground as they became afraid to even take a step forward.

Chapter 123 - Splattering the Parlour of Clouds and Rain with Blood (Two)

Li Qingshan raised his foot, kicking the headless corpse off the floor.

While the men and women on the floor below were still confused by the procuress' scream, a bloody corpse landed loudly before them. After a while of silence, someone cried out, "Murder!"

The lower floor immediately exploded. Their fleeting joy had shattered from shock. Li Qingshan laughed aloud at the sight. He looked around, and from the corner of his eye, he saw the emerald green of Qing Xiu's clothes. She had already been taken to the fourth floor on the other side.

Li Qingshan leapt out; he was like a tiger lunging at its prey, like a hawk swooping down for a rabbit. He leapt across the opening in the centre of the building.

Just when Qing Xiu was about to sink into despair, there was a rush of wind, and Li Qingshan arrived in front of her. He stowed his blade back in his sheathe, while the two guards who had seized her sprayed with blood, falling backwards.

"You-" Qing Xiu stuttered that single word for quite a while, unable to say anything else. He was actually bold enough to kill people in the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. She had never seen such a reckless person before. This was completely different from what she had been expecting originally.

Li Qingshan said, "If you've received any ill treatment at all, feel free to tell me!"

The building was in chaos. Guards surged out from everywhere, coming out from every corner of the building.

Qing Xiu complained in a hurry, "I- I've been abducted by them. I didn't get into this willingly. If I don't oblige, I'll be beaten and even starved! I even have to practise martial arts! If I don't, I'll also get beaten and starved."

"You bitch, shut your mouth!" With a boom, the procuress directly smashed through the floorboards and arrived on the fourth floor, but she only received Li Qingshan's murderous gaze.

"Perfect timing!" Li Qingshan yelled out. The Wind-entwining blade produced a wind blade in the air, directly flying towards the procuress's face.

The procuress had never seen someone so vicious before, directly trying to kill her without saying anything else. She spent most of her time welcoming guests and seeing them off. She could not even remember the last time she had to personally fight. She could not even utilise half of her true qi properly anymore, so with a scream, she fell back down to the third floor.

Looking up, all she saw was Li Qingshan appearing in the hole above, wielding his blade with both hands and directly swinging down. She did not even have time to pull out a talisman from her hundred treasures pouch, perhaps due to being stupefied. She dove onto the ground instinctively and rolled away like a ball.

One of them was adept with battle, while the other was not. One of them used their tough body to openly kill a second layer Qi Practitioner, while the other focused on dual cultivation and sexual practises. While she was a third layer Qi Practitioner, she only had the battle prowess of the second layer.

There was a flash of red, and the Wind-entwining blade sliced off a great piece of her bottom. The procuress squealed like a pig, losing all will to fight.

Before Li Qingshan had even landed on the ground, he kicked off the wall and flew over, catching up to the procuress. He stomped down on her back as he smiled viciously. "You old hag, let's see where you run off to now!"

Whenever the procuress tried to struggle, she would feel the foot on her back crush down like a metal log, breaking all of her bones. A shiny blade was poised by the side of her face such that she became frozen.

A sharp sword stabbed over from behind. Before it had even arrived, green light surged three feet from the sword. Furong grasped the spiritual sword viciously as she directly stabbed at Li Qingshan.

"Good!" Li Qingshan was not surprised, but overjoyed. Shifting his body slightly, he let the sword pass by. Even the third layer Qi Practitioner procuress was not his opponent, let alone the second layer Furong. He turned his left hand into a claw and reached out, grabbing Furong by the throat and dragging her in front of him.

With one below his foot and one in his hand, he had killed two birds with one stone.

Li Qingshan directed his Wind-entwining blade at the procuress. "As a Qi Practitioner, you stand above most, leading an extravagant life, yet you still do such heartless things. Even if you're dead, there's nothing to regret."

The procuress squealed loudly, "Spare me, good sir!"

"You cannot be spared!" Li Qingshan was just about to swing down with his blade.

"Stop!" Two voices rang out at the same time. One came from Ge Jian; the other was not Diao Fei, but a middle-aged man in sapphire-blue robes. He drifted down to the third floor like a falling leaf. He was actually a fifth layer Qi Practitioner with delicate facial features. He said in a sunken tone, "Sir, you seem to be very unhappy with our services."

He was the true master of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, Zhao Liangqing. Usually, only the procuress received guests, while he remained behind the scenes, using these women as human cauldrons for his cultivation.

If Zhuo Zhibo wanted to deal with a newcomer, he obviously would not ask for his permission, which was why he managed to set up the whole scheme. However, Zhao Liangqing did not mind it too much either. Catching the eyes of a vulture like Zhuo Zhibo would never lead to anything good. And, he thought it would be a piece of cake for Furong to deal with this person as well, but he never expected something like this to happen.

Li Qingshan thought about how if he did not use his daemon qi, he could easily defeat second layer Qi Practitioners, and he would have great confidence against third layer Qi Practitioners as well. However, it would be difficult to say against the fourth layer, while victory would be impossible against the fifth layer.

He called out loudly, "Ge Jian, go get our big brother Zhuo! I've found a nest of bandits who force women into prostitution! How can our mighty Hawkwolf Guard be afraid of some brat like you!" His voice was imbued with true qi. It shattered a few cups nearby and made the ears of many people ring.

Big brother Zhuo!? Ge Jian reeled back, almost falling over. He had personally witnessed how arrogant Li Qingshan had been to Zhuo Zhibo, so why did he call him big brother Zhuo now? He was clearly pulling in Zhuo Zhibo and the Hawkwolf Guard to protect himself.

Zhao Liangqing frowned heavily. Although Li Qingshan had demonstrated strength beyond what regular Qi Practitioners possessed, he was confident that he could kill him. However, he was afraid of doing so.

This was not only due to the two hostages in Li Qingshan's possession, but also because of his identity as a Hawkwolf Guard. The Hawkwolf Guard was not invincible. It was the exact opposite actually. Due to various dangerous missions, their death and injury rate was quite high. If they died during their missions or were assassinated, and the culprit could not be found, nothing much would happen, and it would just be treated as a cold case.

However, if he killed a Hawkwolf guard in the eye of the public, he would be challenging the authority of the Hawkwolf Guard. Consequently, he would be hunted down. Even Zhuo Zhibo would not be bold enough to spare him. He would instead be the first one to try and kill him so that he could clear his own name and any doubts that came with it. If Zhao Liangqing was an independent cultivator, perhaps he would have the courage to kill upon being angered, but with such a large business behind him, he became more and more terrified of the consequences.

Li Qingshan sniggered. As expected, this wolf's hide was quite useful. Only an idiot would serve as the hawk and wolves of the government and not make use of that identity. Since Zhuo Zhibo wanted to be his elder brother, then he would welcome him to.

Zhao Liangqing said, "Please release the people of my Parlour of Clouds and Rain!"

"They've committed crimes of forcing women into prostitution and harming young girls. They cannot be released. Oh right, you can't leave either. As a Hawkwolf guard, I will be investigating you. You have the right to remain silent, but anything you say may be used against you in a court of law." Li Qingshan had no idea what to say, so he just spouted some nonsense he had heard from his past life. He completely ignored Zhao Liangqing's great strength as a fifth layer Qi Practitioner.

Zhao Liangqing's face darkened. "Force women into prostitution? Do you have any evidence?"

Li Qingshan said, "I have a witness!"

Zhao Liangqing said in a sunken manner, "Where's your witness?"

Li Qingshan's eyes suddenly narrowed. Two guards had grabbed the dejected Qing Xiu.

Zhao Liangqing grabbed Qing Xiu by the chin. "You do have quite some beauty. No wonder he'll lose his temper over you. You can release the people now!"

Qing Xiu's eyes teared up as she stared right at Li Qingshan. We really are done for now!

Li Qingshan said, "That's a lady of your parlour! What's she got to do with me?"

Zhao Liangqing said, "Oh, fair enough. We can't keep a troublemaker like her around!" He put his hand on Qing Xiu's shoulder. Before he could even use any force, Qing Xiu let out a miserable scream.

However, it was immediately drowned out by an even more miserable squeal, frightening Qing Xiu to the point where she closed her mouth. The blade in Li Qingshan's hand fell, cutting off one of the procuress' arms. He said with glowing, red eyes, "Why don't you try to touch her again?"

Those heroes who surrendered after being threatened with a hostage were all idiots. Li Qingshan would never do something like that. You might be vicious, but I'll be even more vicious!

Ge Jian finally gave up on resolving this matter by himself. This brat had a kind of fierceness and unruliness that came from the mountains and forests, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Everything today was a counterattack against the scheme Zhuo Zhibo had set down, but the entire situation had already developed out of his control. He crushed a talisman, which was used to call for reinforcements among the Hawkwolf Guard; he used this to alert Zhuo Zhibo of the critical situation.

Zhao Liangqing glared at Li Qingshan. He had not done anything, nor was he bold enough to do anything anymore. He could clearly tell from Li Qingshan's gaze that if he were bold enough to kill Qing Xiu, Li Qingshan would be bold enough to behead the two women. This would be an almost irrecoverable loss to him. On one side was a mere lady who had just been groomed, while on the other side were two important helpers of his. It was obviously as clear as day to him who was more important.

The light in his eyes flickered as he circulated his cultivation method. Before everyone's eyes, the rather feminine master of the parlour suddenly changed. He became extremely terrifying, like the horrifying demons or ghosts from those legends. An aura of brutality and cruelty crushed down on their hearts. The legs of the guards almost gave way.

He basically roared out, "I said, release them!" Within the Sect of Clouds and Rain, they could use their arts of charm to become as beautiful as ever, enchanting anything and everything, but they could also use it in the exact opposite fashion, turning into demons or ghosts and frightening all people. It was a technique that could directly shake the souls of people. With that, the noisy Parlour of Clouds and Rain immediately fell into silence. Everyone felt like a great horror had descended; they even became afraid of drawing too much attention just from breathing, let alone screaming and fleeing. Even Ge Jian was afraid of looking at Zhao Liangqing's face. How was Li Qingshan, who had been in the face of it all, supposed to cope with this pressure?

However, Li Qingshan only smiled gently. "I said, release her!" He was a daemon in the first place, and his cultivation had surpassed Zhao Liangqing's. The reason why the arts of charm were effective against him was because his body was powerful, and his desires were stronger than regular people, requiring the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression to suppress them. However, when it came to frightening people, Zhao Liangqing was basically trying to teach a fish how to swim. He did not even need to use the

Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression against it. You're trying to scare me? Would you like me to revert to my original form and frighten you to death!?

Zhao Liangqing saw how it was useless, so he could only give up on it. He stared straight at Li Qingshan. If his glare were a sword, it would have pierced Li Qingshan all the way through already.

"What are you looking at? If you keep looking at me like that, I'll dig your, no, their eyes out." Li Qingshan rubbed his blade against the procuress beneath his feet.

"What do you want?"

Li Qingshan pointed at Qing Xiu. "I want my witness!"

"Don't even think about it!" Before Zhao Liangqing had even finished talking, Li Qingshan had cut off the procuress' other arm. "I have two anyway. If I kill one, I still have another!"

Chapter 124 - Splattering the Parlour of Clouds and Rain with Blood (Three)

The procuress squealed, "Save me, sir!" She really was a Qi Practitioner after all. She actually managed to remain conscious despite the pain.

Furong saw the bloody scene and heard how she was next. She screamed, "Save-" But before she could even finish her words, the grip around her neck tightened.

"Stop! Release lady Furong!" The Parlour of Clouds and Rain was thrown into an uproar again.

It was not just the people below. Even the railings from the higher floors were filled with people. Seeing such a rare disturbance, they all began discussing among themselves.

"Isn't the Hawkwolf Guard backers of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain? Why have they turned against each other today?" News would always make it out one way or another. With how the Parlour of Clouds and Rain ran amuck in Jiaping city, they would have been closed down a long time ago if it were not for the Hawkwolf Guard's protection. There were plenty of discerning people in the world.

"The kid hit Furong!"

"What! He could actually bring himself to do something like that?!" Many people ground their teeth furiously. They all treated Furong as a goddess from their dreams. Even if she could not be theirs, they would never let someone else just abuse her.

"Look, that's Furong! She is being held by the neck by that kid!" It led to public anger. In their eyes, Furong was furrowing her brows from pain. Her beautiful face was filled with misery, enough to shatter their hearts. It caused pain to many of them.

"A'ning!" Even though Diao Fei had been smacked awake by Li Qingshan earlier, he was still captivated when he looked at Furong's appearance. He had to bite his tongue viciously to return to his senses.

Furong's cry for help spurred many practitioners of martial arts to save her. Those who did not know martial arts cursed furiously as well. Throughout the entire parlour, similar aggressive threats crashed down on Li Qingshan like a tidal wave. "Release lady Furong, or I'll make you wish you were dead!"

“Hmph, you bunch of idiots!” Li Qingshan sneered. He did not speak loudly, but it easily drowned out the threats, booming through everyone’s ears.

He only looked at Zhao Liangqing. “Are you releasing her or not?” He had already placed his blade across the procuress’ neck.

Zhao Liangqing released Qing Xiu with trembled arms. Qing Xiu rubbed her shoulders and jogged over to Li Qingshan’s side, carefully avoiding the puddle of blood on the ground. As she looked at the procuress’ state, she could not help but feel sorry for her even though she knew about her various evil deeds and how all of her sisters had died to her hands.

However, Li Qingshan felt no emotions like that. His lips curled into a cruel smile. Since he wanted to be a hero, he obviously had to possess willpower greater than ordinary people. He would take the greatest delight in eliminating evil from this world.

“Li Qingshan, what are you doing!?” Zhuo Zhibo rushed over furiously with Qian Rongzhi and five or six other Black Wolf guards. When they saw what the Parlour of Clouds and Rain had descended into, they were all shocked.

Zhuo Zhibo personally believed that the perfect part about his scheme was that even if Li Qingshan did not take the bait, he would not be at fault at all. I’ve sent someone to take you to a brothel entirely out of kind intentions, so how can you say that I’m in the wrong? Even if he really did have a connection to Gu Yanying, it was not like he could say to her, “They took me to a brothel and screwed me over.” If Li Qingshan fell for it, he was dead, but if he did not, he could only put up with all of it silently. It was truly flawless. It was perfect.

In reality, if it were not for the tiny, unforeseen message from Qing Xiu, the only choice Li Qingshan would have had was to let this go after slapping Furong across the face, biding his time for revenge in the future. However, now that the opportunity had presented itself, he wanted to make a big mess to show Zhuo Zhibo. If he’s bold enough to set a trap, I’m bold enough to make a mess out of it!

Zhao Liangqing said, “Commander Zhuo, is this how your Hawkwolf guards handles matters? I can forgive him for not paying after visiting, but he’s even making trouble!”

“Is that what happened? He has gone too far!” “The Parlour of Clouds and Rain has done everything they can already, so what are you trying to do now?” “Release lady Furong! If you even touch a hair on lady Furong, I’ll cut you to pieces!”

Not paying after visiting? What a great crime! If that became a part of his reputation, there was no way Li Qingshan could remain in Jiaping city any longer! Zhuo Zhibo also said sternly, “Qingshan, is that the truth?” It was as if he was not behind Li Qingshan’s visit at all.

“It’s not. It’s them who...” Qing Xiu argued loudly from behind Li Qingshan, but she was drowned out by the sounds.

Li Qingshan spoke with his actions. With a spurt, his blade stabbed into the heart of the procuress. After that, he pulled the blade back out. There was not a trace of blood on it.

If you curse me, I’ll beat up the procuress. If you beat me up, I’ll keep beating up the procuress. If you slander me, I’ll kill the procuress.

“You-” Zhao Liangqing flew into a fury, but Li Qingshan placed his blade across Furong’s neck casually. He muttered to himself, “One is dead, but there’s still another!” He kicked the procuress’ heavy body off the floor as well. One killed was one dead.

Everyone in the Parlour of Clouds and Rain knew the procuress. They all knew about the fat woman’s slickness and viciousness. She had managed the Parlour of Clouds and Rain in Jiaping city for many years. She was responsible for receiving and seeing off all guests, so she could basically be described as famous. Now, she had been killed with a single stab, reduced to a corpse.

Silence descended. Everyone wanted to ask, Just who is this teenager? How is he so fierce?

As if he never thought Li Qingshan would actually be bold enough to commit murder right before him, anger rose through Zhuo Zhibo’s mind. If only he did not have to worry about her. Qian Rongzhi suddenly experienced a hint of fear. The teenager who could kill so easily that he could do it while holding a friendly conversation was not like the men she had seen before. He was definitely not an easy person to deal with.

When Li Qingshan lifted up Furong, Zhao Liangqing finally lost his temper. “How dare you?!” That was his money tree. The foundation of the entire Parlour of Clouds and Rain was basically with her. If the procuress died, he could find another, but if Furong died, the entire Parlour of Clouds and Rain would collapse.

Li Qingshan said to Zhuo Zhibo, “Commander Zhuo, the Parlour of Clouds and Rain has committed a multitude of sins. They’ve forced women into prostitution. The young woman beside me is a witness. Please judge them with impartiality!”

Zhao Liangqing looked over as well as if he was trying to say, I give you so many pills every year.

Zhuo Zhibo felt like he was at his wit’s end. Out of everyone present, he was the one afraid of consequences the most. He still wanted to use the authority he possessed to live out the rest of life wealthily. He would never be able to bring himself to take the risk of killing Li Qingshan. However, if he agreed with Li Qingshan, he would basically be slapping himself across his face, severing his source of wealth.

Li Qingshan targeted this mentality of his and viciously checkmated him. It had to be mentioned that the reason why he was bold enough to take such a great gamble under the threats of two powerful Qi Practitioners was directly connected to his personal strength.

Even if the worst-case scenario happened, he could use his hiding abilities to escape. Just by releasing some daemon qi, he could easily escape from here. However, he had clearly been overthinking now.

Zhuo Zhibo said earnestly, “Qingshan, you’ve been far too rash. Judging people is the district magistrate’s job. It’s not up to me!”

Zhao Liangqing looked at Zhuo Zhibo in disbelief. Exactly because of you, so many of my people have died, yet all you say is he has been too rash?

However, Zhuo Zhibo immediately glared back at him, which made Zhao Liangqing remember the difference in their strength, as well as who actually had a say in Jiaping city. He could only hold in his grievances. Impressive, Zhuo Zhibo!

“This magistrate is right here. What’s the case? Please do tell me!”

At this moment, Zhou Wenbin stepped into the Parlour of Clouds and Rain with his vermilion official robes with embroidered snakes.

“Sir Zhou!” “Sir Zhou is here!”

There was a great rustle that came with the movement of clothing.

Within the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, whether it be the common people downstairs or the valued customers upstairs, they all knelt for this man. There was not just fear for authority in their eyes, but also great admiration and respect. They all knelt willingly, from the bottom of their hearts.

Only now did Li Qingshan understand just what kind of prestige Zhou Wenbin possessed in Jiaping city. Only now did he realise that maybe Qing Xiu had given him the piece of paper to pass onto Zhou Wenbin to seek help from him.

Just by himself, Zhou Wenbin received far more respect than Zhuo Zhibo and his Hawkwolf guards combined. He said in a gentle and cultivated fashion, “Please stand, my people.”

Zhou Wenbin glanced at Zhuo Zhibo before glancing at Li Qingshan. When something major happened in the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, he found out immediately. Not only did he find out about it, but he even understood the exact cause for it all. He even saw through Zhuo Zhibo’s scheme. He glanced at Li Qingshan and thought, This kid is a genius at making trouble. He had taken a small gamble only to win something huge. He actually managed to force Zhuo Zhibo into an awkward situation.

Zhuo Zhibo said coldly, “Sir Zhou, you’ve sure come in a timely fashion!”

Zhou Wenbin smiled. “It’s no problem, no problem at all!” With a wave of his sleeves, he floated up and arrived before Li Qingshan. He asked despite already knowing the answer, “Qingshan, what are you doing?”

“She has grievances. I originally wanted to take her to see you, sir, but I never thought there would be some vile people trying to stop me. I thought about how our mighty Hawkwolf Guard was righteous, purging evil in an awe-inspiring manner and speaking for the people, so how could I be afraid of these vile people? As a result, my hand slipped, and I killed a few of them. Please investigate the entire matter, sir.” Li Qingshan pulled out Qing Xiu from behind him and handed the piece of paper to Zhou Wenbin.

His idiomatic saying made Zhuo Zhibo’s eyebrows leap up as he cursed furiously inside. He was tempted to just cut down Li Qingshan then and there.

“My name is Qing Xiu. I come from the Fishes’ Gully. Seven years ago, I was playing around near the river and I was abducted, brought here...” Qing Xiu knelt and lowered her head in a graceful manner. Her speech became much more orderly. Clearly, she had thought through this countless times in her head already.

Zhao Liangqing said, “Sir, we’re being wrongly accused! We originally bought this girl for twenty taels of silver. I have a deed for proof. She just wants to run away, which was why she spun these lies to fool you, sir.”

Qing Xiu tried to justify herself, “No, I’m not! You’re the liar...”

Zhou Wenbin raised his hand and stopped their argument. “I will definitely get to the bottom of this case. There won’t be a single innocent person convicted, nor will there be a single guilty person spared.”

With an order, over twenty guards from the government entered. They were not Qi Practitioners, but they all possessed powerful martial arts. Under Qing Xiu’s guide, they went to save the other girls. However, they returned a while later with nothing. Clearly, they had been moved away already.

“Please check, sir!” Instead, Zhao Liangqing sent a male servant to retrieve a deed. The matter of Qing Xiu being purchased by the Parlour of Clouds and Rain for twenty taels of silver was clearly written on there.

Qing Xiu immediately teared up anxiously. “Sir, I haven’t been lying!”

Zhou Wenbin said gently, “Don’t worry, I will send people to Fishes’ Gully to investigate.” He knew that it was impossible for a place of wickedness to have anything clean. It was as clear as day who was telling the truth.

Chapter 125 - Suing the Parlour of Clouds and Rain

Over these years, Zhou Wenbin had invested millions of taels of silver into Jiaping city, easing the burden that came with taxes and costs to help the city achieve its current prosperity. As the magistrate of the district, not only was he not greedy, refusing to take bribes, but he even spent much of his own money into this place, governing Jiaping to a point where there was not a single beggar on the streets.

It was exactly because of that that he had been received with such reverence as soon as he came to the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. Of course, he did not do this because of the doctrines of great scholarly sages, or because he wholeheartedly wanted to be a good official where the people came first. Instead, he had deeper concerns to consider as a Qi Practitioner.

However, it was exactly under these circumstances that very few people were willing to sell their daughters into this pit of suffering. To a brothel, if they did not have a fresh and abundant ‘supply’, they would obviously go to great lengths and do everything that they could.

The Parlour and Clouds and Rain had never been too worried about this district magistrate; they relied on their relationship with Zhuo Zhibo and their backing from the Sect of Clouds and Rain. They would just slight him from year to year. Zhou Wenbin had his worries as well, so he was reluctant to stir up trouble, ignoring the Parlour of Clouds and Rain that had been so popular with the people. However, now that someone had served as the vanguard for him, he obviously would use this opportunity to benefit himself in one way or another, placing some pressure on the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. Of course, he would just be applying some force to them. It was impossible for him to destroy them in a single stroke.

Li Qingshan frowned. He had been expecting this. If the Parlour of Clouds and Rain could be uprooted so easily, they would not be around still. Probably even the investigations at Fishes’ Gully would be pointless.

Anyways, a person saved was a person saved, while a criminal killed was a criminal dead. He did not plan on destroying the Parlour of Clouds and Rain in a single stroke either, but even if he could not destroy an

evil organisation like this immediately, he wanted to deal a blow to them. However, it was still not enough right now.

Zhao Liangqing smiled with a sinister, complacent smile. "Sir Zhou, if there is nothing else, please punish Li Qingshan for murdering the innocent. And, please get him to release our head courtesan, Furong."

What he said at the end actually led to a chorus of agreement from the entire crowd.

Li Qingshan said, "That's a matter of our Hawkwolf Guard. An outsider like you has no right to butt in on this. Those guards blocked the Hawkwolf Guard from carrying out their business, so they only deserved death. As for the procuress, she directly attacked me. Many people can serve as witnesses. Big brother Zhuo has personally taught me before just how I should handle situations like this. I've only been complying with that."

Zhuo Zhibo managed to force something out from his gritted teeth. "Master Zhao, these are all small matters, so it's best if you don't bicker over them anymore." He had to bide his time until he got to the bottom of Li Qingshan's backing. It was obvious just how he would erupt when he found out that Li Qingshan had no proper connection to Gu Yanying at all.

How could Li Qingshan waste such a perfect period of time? Obviously, he would screw him over whenever he had the chance. He would take advantage of him as much as possible first.

Zhou Wenbin said to Li Qingshan, "You should release that woman first!"

Li Qingshan called out, "Sir, we can't release her! Here's the evidence! I have grievances to settle! I want to sue the Parlour of Clouds and Rain!"

Veins popped out from Zhao Liangqing's forehead, while Zhou Wenbin almost broke into laughter. You utterly crushed the Parlour of Clouds and Rain in a slaughter; you even killed off the procuress, yet now you actually have grievances, wanting to sue the Parlour of Clouds and Rain!

After coughing gently twice, he held back his smile. "For what do you want to sue the Parlour of Clouds and Rain?"

Li Qingshan lifted up Furong. "I want to sue the Parlour of Clouds and Rain for offering fake commodities. They've falsely labelled what they were offering, cheating the common people out of what they paid for. They've deeply hurt my feelings!"

Zhao Liangqing held back his intense urge to curse aloud. True qi surged from the centre of Li Qingshan's palm, and Furong immediately fainted. Having fallen unconscious, she could no longer use her arts of charm. Even ordinary people could see her true appearance. Li Qingshan lifted her high up.

"Please look, everyone! This is the true appearance of the head courtesan, Furong. Why don't you ask yourselves whether I was right earlier or not?"

Basically everyone rubbed their eyes at the same time before becoming stunned. Their dreams shattered. Was this really Furong? Was this really the woman they dreamed of? Why had they gone as far as to spend every penny they had just to see her? They questioned themselves and realised that they really were idiots.

Regurgitation. Many people directly began vomiting. This tremendous disparity between reality and their fantasies made them feel even sicker than eating a hundred flies. Filth poured and flowed through the magnificent Parlour of Clouds and Rain as if this was its original form.

There were also people who refused to believe it, perhaps due to falling too deeply into the arts of charm. They knelt on the ground as they wept bitterly while crying out, "That's impossible! That's not Furong! It's all fake! It's all a lie!"

Zhou Liangqing flew into a fury. He took a step forward, and true qi crushed down. A large part of the floor collapsed. However, two auras that were even stronger than his immediately locked onto him. One came from Zhuo Zhibo, while the other came from Zhou Wenbin. They were two sixth layer Qi Practitioners who had split open seas of qi.

Regardless of their reasons or intentions, they could not just stand down as Zhao Liangqing attacked Li Qingshan. The two of them were the symbols of law in Jiaping city, the presentation of the authority of the government. They could not allow the law and authority to be defied or broken. Li Qingshan seemed arrogant, but he stuck close to the word 'reason'.

Li Qingshan did not even glance at Zhao Liangqing. All he said loudly was, "You spent astronomical sums of silver just to see this. Tell me, hasn't it been unjust?" Afterwards, he casually tossed Furong to Zhao Liangqing, "You don't need to ask for her. If it's something like her, I don't want her even if you're giving her to me!"

Furong gradually woke up and saw how everyone's gazes towards her were different now. She instinctively used her arts of charm, but it was very difficult for them to be enchanted again after the mental shock from earlier unless they possessed particularly weak willpower.

She screamed hysterically, "What's wrong with you all? Don't you like me? I'm Furong!" However, she was stopped by Zhao Liangqing, who ordered, "Send her to her room."

Of course, as time went on, the memories of many people would blur, and perhaps her arts of charm would regain the upper hand. However, who knows how long that would take. These techniques that could affect the minds of people did not just depend on the user, but also the environment. Since sounds and smells played a part, the verbal agreement of people could also affect it. When everyone said you were a great beauty, you would be a great beauty, but if the exact opposite happened, it would only make things more difficult.

Li Qingshan had basically destroyed the many years of painstaking effort from the head courtesan Furong and the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. It was no wonder why Zhao Liangqing would react so violently.

Zhou Wenbin smiled as he stroked his beard. "Well, you've basically agreed and accepted her out of your own free will with prior knowledge. It would be inappropriate for me to judge this." If he agreed to Li Qingshan, probably half the men in all of Jiaping city would want to sue.

Afterwards, he said to Qing Xiu, "Lady, please return to my office with me. That'll be the end of today!" He had already sent a guard of the government to travel through the night to Fishes' Gully for investigations. Although it would probably lead to nothing, it was still worth a try.

In the end, he said to Li Qingshan, "You were involved in this case too, so you must pay a visit to my government office tomorrow." Clearly, he had something he wanted to tell him, but it was inconvenient before the eyes of the public. As such, he reminded him again.

Li Qingshan said, "I understand, sir."

Qing Xiu tidied up her clothes and thanked him, but Li Qingshan said, "You don't need to thank me. I should be the one thanking you." It made Qing Xiu's eyes widen in confusion. However, at least she managed to escape from this abyss of misery, which was fantastic. Sir Zhou really is as rumored. He is a good official. I will definitely expose the Parlour of Clouds and Rain and save my suffering sisters.

Zhou Wenbin left with his guards and Qing Xiu, while Zhuo Zhibo departed with his Hawkwolf guards as well. Li Qingshan followed behind them obediently and even added, "Thank you for taking charge for me, commander Zhuo!"

The customers all dispersed as well. Many of them were utterly depressed or filled with indignation. They swore they would never come again.

But that was how matters were. They would be equal. Whenever there was someone unhappy, there would be someone happy. To the pleasant surprise of many dissatisfied housewives of Jiaping city, they discovered that their men had actually returned, no longer wallowing in the joyhouse constantly now. They were thankful that Li Qingshan had made a mess out of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. The men also discovered that compared to Furong, their own wives were all the greatest of beauties. As a result, they reconciled with their wives, and what happened next would go without saying.

Li Qingshan was in a good mood as well, so as a result, in the exact opposite fashion, Zhao Liangqing stared at the empty parlour and roared inside, I will make you wish you were dead.

It was quite a coincidence, as Li Qingshan was thinking of the same thing as well. He witnessed injustice, and if this source of all of it was not eliminated, it would never be over. You resent me, but I haven't forgotten about you either!

However, it was inconvenient for him to assume his original form and kill Zhao Liangqing. They had just fallen out with each other, so if Zhao Liangqing was dead the next day, people would probably suspect him. He still wanted to save this valuable opportunity for Zhuo Zhibo.

Trump cards would only demonstrate their greatest strength when hidden away, unleashed in the final moment. Unless he ran out of choices, he would never resort to it. Right now, increasing his apparent strength on the surface was his priority. Right now, he could try his luck even when he came across fourth layer Qi Practitioners, so he believed that as long as he made it to the second layer of Qi Practitioner, he could match them evenly.

Along the way, Zhuo Zhibo and the Black Wolf guards all remained silent. Their gazes towards Li Qingshan became more hostile.

Li Qingshan was delighted by the peace he received. He directly returned to his residence and said to Xiao An, "It was all thanks to your warning today, or I would have fallen for their trick. How did you know I had fallen for the charming technique?"

Xiao An used his finger to write on Li Qingshan's palm.

As it turned out, he could see through the thin walls of the jar with his fiery eyes, seeing Furong. The so-called white bone and great beauty was about seeing through all illusions such that the mind was just as clear and pure as *śarīra*, unaffected by any illusions of appearance. Let alone these mere arts of charm, even impressive illusions would fail to fool his eyes.

The Path of White Bone and Great Beauty completely surpassed the cultivation methods of the Sect of Clouds and Rain. It even far surpassed most of the cultivation methods of this world. The remaining portion of cultivation methods were not equal to it either. They could only be said to be a little closer to the Path of White Bone and Great Beauty.

Li Qingshan spent an entire afternoon submerged in the library. He did not only look at the martial arts manuals, but he also gained a rough understanding of the cultivation methods of this world. There was no need for him to go to the second floor. There were plenty of informative books on the ground floor.

To the Qi Practitioners of orthodox clans and sects, the information was probably general knowledge, but to him, it was like opening the door to a brand new world. Every single bit of understanding was news to him.

Chapter 126 - Encompassing Vows and Obsessions

First of all, cultivation methods were not split into detailed grades like spiritual artifacts or talismans, but their grades were instead more clear-cut than spiritual artifacts and talismans. The limit on cultivation determined the grade of the cultivation method.

For example, the Innate Method of Practising Qi that Li Qingshan practised would only amount to a third layer Qi Practitioner if he reached the ninth layer, which only illustrated that the cultivation method was not very great. It was basically the lowest, more rudimentary cultivation method in the cultivation method. He would have to find a new cultivation method to practise in the future.

There were many great cultivation methods that could directly allow Qi Practitioners to cultivate to the ninth layer, or even undergo the first heavenly tribulation, reaching the legendary Foundation Establishment realm. The books he read were ambiguous over whether there were even greater cultivation methods than that. All they said was that they definitely did exist, but they went into no reason as to exactly why. Clearly, the writer's knowledge was limited in this area.

However, they did indeed exist. The Path of White Bone and Great Beauty was one of them. As for the very limit of the cultivation, the black ox had told Li Qingshan since the very beginning. It was bodhisattva.

By bodhisattva, he meant attaining bodhicitta and swearing four encompassing vows—the boundless creatures, I vow to save; the endless afflictions, I vow to break; the limitless dharma, I vow to learn; the unsurpassable buddha way, I vow to accomplish. Finally, they would attain the fruit of bodhisattva.

That was how the buddhist scriptures put it. Xiao An had read about it on the ship, and he had written them in Li Qingshan's palm, word by word. The Path of White Bone and Great Beauty also had four encompassing vows:

The boundless creatures, I vow to slaughter; the endless afflictions, I vow to fell; the limitless dharma, I vow to destroy; the unsurpassable buddha way, I vow to end.

When Xiao An wrote these two sets of polar-opposite vows in Li Qingshan's palm, he was expressionless, which was as clear as day, but Li Qingshan could feel that he was particularly solemn.

It had to be mentioned that Li Qingshan was unable to properly understand these two sets of vows. Of course, he refused to admit that he was illiterate. He only felt that this eminent buddhist monk must have experienced a tremendous stimulus for them to undergo such a drastic mental change.

After considering it, Li Qingshan found a more direct way of putting it—it was badass. As for just how badass it was, he had no idea! Perhaps no one in this world knew how badass it was!

Even in this world, a world with various great cultivators capable of moving mountains and filling seas, bodhisattvas could remain seated on their lotus platform, looking over all living creatures with a gaze of benevolence or indifference.

Cultivators were only bold enough to call themselves cultivators, but not immortals or buddhas. Those were not figures that existed in this world. Perhaps he would only see them once he ventured to that place beyond the Nine Heavens that the black ox spoke of. In Li Qingshan's belief, they were even more powerful cultivators, so powerful that he could not even look up to them anymore.

The conclusion he reached was very simple. Just what level was an ability where the practitioner cultivated to become a bodhisattva? It was self-explanatory. If this made it out, it would not be as simple as purging demons. Instead, it would bring a storm to the nine provinces of the world.

Against cultivators of the same cultivation who practised weaker cultivation methods, Xiao An basically had a crushing advantage as he practised an ability as great as the Path of White Bone and Great Beauty. Moreover, Xiao An had only practised it for a few months and had basically just gained a rudimentary grasp. He had not even reached the first layer. As his cultivation progressed, this advantage would gradually widen and become even more evident.

These were Li Qingshan's thoughts. Usually, Xiao An would just look at him from the side silently and be very satisfied. He did not think as much. All he wanted to do was remain by his side. He only desired a body of flesh so that he could remain by Li Qingshan's side in a more open manner. He only wanted to become stronger to offer greater assistance to him and not serve as a deadweight.

With his extraordinary intelligence, he could comprehend the great horrors within the Path of White Bone and Great Beauty far more deeply than Li Qingshan. He could feel just what kind of great despair this eminent monk went through to create an ability like this, willingly casting himself into the hell of Avīci, using white bone to assemble a lotus platform, feeding off blood and flesh, deriving joy from despair, so much so that they felt like they had made it to paradise.

But for the sake of this objective, he would be more than willing to do anything, even if it meant slaughtering the boundless creatures, felling the endless afflictions, destroying the limitless dharma, and ending the unsurpassable buddha way.

Li Qingshan pulled out a hundred treasures pouch that was bright in colour from his bosom. He smiled. "Look at what this is?"

Where had he gotten the hundred treasures pouch from? He had obviously found it on the procuress. If he killed, how could he forget to rob? Having a strong sense of justice and assisting the weak went hand

in hand with robbing the rich to give to the needy. He robbed the procuress to make up for his own neediness. Unfortunately, Furong did not have a hundred treasures pouch, or there would be another hundred treasures pouch in his hands. However, he could not be too greedy as a person after all.

“How is it? I said I’d do it, and I did it!”

The blood-red flames in Xiao An’s eye sockets flickered happily.

Li Qingshan said, “Let’s have a look at our harvest this time.” He channeled spiritual qi into the hundred treasures pouch, and a new space opened up ‘before’ him. It was around the same size as his current one.

There were quite a few items in there. He swept past the miscellaneous items like cosmetics, clothes, and handkerchiefs. The only items that he paid attention to were pills, talismans, spiritual artifacts, and cultivation methods, items that were directly related to cultivation.

However, there were no talismans or spiritual artifacts in the hundred treasures pouch. Clearly, she had been a procuress for all these years, so she had stopped fighting a long time ago, which was why she was unprepared.

There were a few bottles of pills, but two of them seemed to be aphrodisiacs called the Pills of Passion. Li Qingshan had a whiff of the bottle, and he felt his crotch warm up. He had no idea what kind of materials it was made from to be so effective against Qi Practitioners.

There were two other bottles that happened to be the exact opposite; they were called Pills of Calming. He whiffed it, and his mind cleared up, but the flame in his crotch remained. His desires roared like fire, while his mind was as tranquil as water.

There was a cultivation method in there called the Minor Method of Clouds and Rain, which Li Qingshan looked through. Upon completion, it could be cultivated to the sixth layer of Qi Practitioner, allowing the cultivator to split open a sea of qi. It was much better than the Innate Method of Practising Qi. Unfortunately, it was a dual cultivation method. It had to be cultivated while man and woman went at it, treating the partner as a human cauldron. The Pills of Passion and Pills of Calming were for this; the cauldron would consume the Pills of Passion and freely releasing yin and yang qi, while the practitioner would consume the Pills of Calming, allowing them to harmonise their yin and yang, thus practising the Minor Method of Clouds and Rain.

It was no wonder that the Sect of Clouds and Rain would open so many brothels on such a large scale. It was so that they could find human cauldrons under a legitimate reason. Money was secondary. Practising qi was their primary focus. Otherwise, they would have been destroyed by the Hawkwolf Guard a long time ago with their behaviour of sexual debauchery.

It would obviously be impossible for Li Qingshan to practise such a troublesome cultivation method. Although the Innate Method of Practising Qi was quite an inferior cultivation method, it was easy to practise and a fantastic cultivation method for building a foundation. Unless they were prodigies of startling talent, basically everyone would start off with this cultivation method.

He tossed all of that aside, and in the end, he found two bottles of Qi Gathering pills. As it seemed, regardless of the sect that a Qi Practitioner came from, they would still have the basic pills. Although

there were just around a dozen or so pills, it was enough to console him. As a result, the number of Qi Gathering pills on him exceeded seventy. He was rather wealthy now.

The other item that drew Li Qingshan's attention slightly was a stack of unassuming accounts. It utterly confused him when he went through it, so he decided to hand it over to Zhou Wenbin tomorrow for him to take a look.

After all of that was money, a lot of money. Li Qingshan had never seen so much money in his entire life; the sum totalled to several hundreds of thousand taels of silver. Although they were all in the form of thousand tael silver notes, it still formed a thick stack. Although money was the Parlour of Clouds and Rain's secondary purpose, they were as vicious as directly stealing money from their customers when it came to making money. Moreover, there was no place safer to store it for the procuress than her own hundred treasures pouch, so it was easy pickings for Li Qingshan.

If the Li Qingshan from before had obtained so much silver, he basically would have gone crazy from happiness. Just how much meat and ginseng could he buy? But now, he led an extravagant life, and his pills completely exceeded the effects of ginseng, so he actually had no aspect that required spending money anymore.

However, if he really did want to practise the Minor Method of Clouds and Rain, he should have been able to buy quite a few women with several hundred thousand taels of silver, right? He had a perverted daydream before stowing away all of the silver and Qi Gathering pills in his own hundred treasures pouch.

He handed the new hundred treasures pouch to Xiao An. "I said I'll do it. This is for you."

Xiao An placed his wooden tablet into his new hundred treasures pouch, returning the old one to Li Qingshan. He played around with the items inside in great joy. Only then did he seem particularly like a child.

Li Qingshan looked at him and smiled. He felt his tense nerves gradually ease up. He felt the peace that came with family. No matter what, he was not alone.

A Qi Gathering pill was tossed high up in the air, landing in Li Qingshan's mouth. He began to meditate and cultivate again.

Currently, Zhuo Zhibo did his best to suppress his fury. "Fucking Li Qingshan! He actually played me like that..." Ge Jian and Qian Rongzhi were utterly silent out of fear, afraid of answering him.

"Commander, why don't we just go all the way with him?" A Black Wolf guard made a gesture to kill, while the Black Wolf guards by his side were all aggressive. They were Zhuo Zhibo's trusted subordinates, so they obviously had to share their master's burden. In their eyes, no matter how powerful Li Qingshan was with his body practising arts, only death would await him if he was encircled by five third or fourth layer Qi Practitioners.

"If I could kill him, I would have personally killed him already!" Zhuo Zhibo held back his fury. "I've already sent people to investigate in Clear River city. We will get an answer before long. Let's just wait till then. Right now, none of you touch him. Ge Jian, don't go find him anymore. I will send other people

to do that. Rongzhi, you're all newcomers, so you'll spend more time together. You must keep investigating whether he's telling lies."

Ge Jian was relieved, but Qian Rongzhi's expression changed slightly. Despite her viciousness, Li Qingshan's viciousness tonight had frightened her.

Ge Jian added in worry, "If we really do end up moving against him, Zhou Wenbin seems to favour this kid very much. And, regarding the vice commander..."

Zhuo Zhibo said, "If we really do move against him, no one will be able to save him in Jiaping city."

Li Qingshan had no idea about these schemes in the shadows. Even if he did know, he would not have cared anyway. He was popping Qi Gathering pills like candy, increasing his own strength. As long as he became tough enough, he would finish off the damned Zhao Liangzhi first before dealing with the damned Zhuo Zhibo.

In just two hours, three Qi Gathering pills had already slid down his gullet, turning into true qi and daemon qi sliver by sliver. Although he could rely on the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression to not become mentally exhausted, his ability of absorbing Qi Gathering pills did not surpass other Qi Practitioners by too much either.

Chapter 127 - Demonic Thoughts Rise Once More

With the Qi Gathering pills inside, half was directly transformed into daemon qi by the daemon core. The remaining half then went through the purification and concentration of the sumeru ring. At the end, the amount for him was only a tenth of what he started with. Ten pills for him was only equivalent to one pill for someone else, which was why he could ingest them in such large quantities.

If regular Qi Practitioners were willing, they could also eat a pill every three days, or even a pill every single day. However, it would be extremely wasteful, as they would not be able to convert it all into true qi. The medicinal effects would linger in their bodies and cause detriments instead.

Li Qingshan was neither afraid of being wasteful nor was he afraid of any detriments. All he suddenly thought to himself was whether the daemon core was far too stingy.

Originally, it was simply too difficult to practise qi, which was why he suppressed the daemon core so that he could practise qi faster. But now that he had so many Qi Gathering pills, he tried changing it up.

His roots were based on the path of daemons, from the three superhuman abilities that the black ox had left him. After learning that the Strength of Nine Oxen and Two Tigers would not actually result in the Strength of Nine Oxen and Two Tigers, he automatically separated the Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength and the Tiger Demon's Fist of Bone Forging.

This was the path that led beyond the Nine Heavens that the black ox had paved for him. If he completely focused on practising qi, he would basically be neglecting his essentials, his very roots. His original intention behind returning to humanity was for resources that the wilderness could not provide.

Now, the resources were in his hands. They were these Qi Gathering pills. It was time for him to return to his original path.

After thinking through this, his mind shuddered. He stopped cultivating on the same night and leapt through the trees with Xiao An. Just a while later, he had travelled far away from the Hawkwolf Guard, arriving on the other side of the mountain. He could not see Jiaping city here. Below his feet were cliffs several hundred meters tall and the raging waters of the Clear river.

When he first came to Jiaping city, it was this cliff that had blocked the flow of water. The water here flowed particularly rapidly, so over time, it dug out a deep cave at the foot of the cliff. It was suitable for cultivation.

Li Qingshan leapt off the cliff and entered the river, kicking up a splash several meters in height. The dark water surged over from everywhere, swallowing his body. There was a small splash beside him. Xiao An had leapt in too.

He swam for a while in the water, and as expected, he found an extremely deep underwater cavern that was pitch-black, just like the gaping mouth of a colossal beast. He felt no fear at all; instead, this sight left him overjoyed. He dove deeper, diving until he reached the very bottom of the cavern.

He sucked in deeply and unleashed his daemon qi, returning to his original form.

His pupils that were as scarlet-red as fire, his skin that was pitch-black like iron, and his teeth that were as sharp as knives all appeared underwater.

From a certain perspective, this was the actual Li Qingshan.

His colossal figure that towered at twenty-two feet forcefully parted the river water, but he did not kick up any currents at all. The water flowed around him, almost like it was viscous. The deep water could cut off his daemon qi very well. He only controlled the water as much as he could so that it would flow slightly better.

Xiao An watched over from one side silently. As such, it became even safer for Li Qingshan to cultivate here.

Although the daemon qi possessed an absolute advantage, the extremely pure true qi was like a clear flow in the raging river water. It was very thin and weak, but it was unending. It would not assimilate with the daemon qi either.

Li Qingshan waved his hand, and the water parted to two sides. He took out all of his Qi Gathering pills, and after a moment of consideration, he put ten away again for his usual cultivation.

Afterwards, he tossed all of the remaining Qi Gathering pills, over sixty of them, into his huge mouth filled with teeth, swallowing them in one gulp.

He was not practising the Innate Method of Practising Qi, but the Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength.

In the pitch-black depths, his scarlet hair danced around as he stamped his hooves, butted his horns, and forged his hide. All of his movements were extremely smooth and fluid. This was the ability that had begun his path of cultivation, so he was as familiar as he could get with every single part of it.

Once the Qi Gathering pills entered his body, they were like several dozen water mines exploding in the water simultaneously. His raging daemon qi immediately circulated at ten times the speed, roaring and bellowing as if it wanted to rip his body to shreds.

Although Qi Gathering pills were the most practical and mildest of pills, the fate awaiting regular Qi Practitioners would be devastating if they ate so many in a single gulp. However, he was not a Qi Practitioner right now, but a daemon, a daemon who had condensed a daemon core.

“Suppress!” Li Qingshan bellowed out like a clap of thunder in the water.

The daemon core crushed down in suppression. The figure of a spirit turtle vaguely appeared around the daemon core, roaring out silently with its head raised. Its four huge, pillar-like legs landed in the raging flow of daemon qi.

The daemon qi that had basically run out of control immediately settled down, and the flow of daemon qi became much more tame. It flowed under Li Qingshan’s control, fusing with every part of his body.

The medicinal effects were converted into daemon qi by the Spirit Turtle’s Method of Sea Suppression and great strength by the Ox Demon’s Fist of Great Strength. He was utterly delighted. Yes, now this was where his roots lay.

He did not stop moving. His body produced a strange sound like the screeching of steel being stretched. Strength filled his muscles that seemed to be forged from metal; they swelled and twisted, producing quiet, bulging sounds.

He was gradually growing larger!

Twenty-three feet! Twenty-four feet! Twenty-five feet!

In just a while, he grew by three feet. Great strength surged through him. Just a casual punch of his managed to place the water under pressure, just like a cannonball. He created a large pit several meters across in the mud underneath.

Although he had yet to reach the second layer of the Ox Demon’s Fist of Great Strength and attain the strength of two oxen, his strength still grew evidently. Clearly, the Ox Demon’s Fist of Great Strength was just like its name. The strength of two oxen was not referring to two ordinary oxen, but two ox demons.

As his body transformed, his mind silently changed as well. He lost part of his prudence and caution as a human and gained some of the frenzy and confidence of a daemon.

With such strength, who couldn’t I kill?! Even if I’m up against Zhuo Zhibo, I could defeat him, so why should I fear a measly Zhao Liangqing? Why not use the night and go to the Parlour of Clouds and Rain to crush him to death and get some more pills for cultivation?

Li Qingshan used the Spirit Turtle’s Method of Sea Suppression and returned to human form. His violent nature settled down, but this thought lingered in his head. He seriously considered the benefits and costs that came with this.

His greatest worry was being exposed as a daemon. However, a tremendous difference existed between the fifth and sixth layers of Qi Practitioners as well, a fact that he was aware of. If he daemonified, he would have the strength of a sixth or even seventh layer Qi Practitioner. As long as he grasped the opportunity, he might even be able to kill him in a single strike, without raising anybody’s attention.

As long as he did it cleanly, it was possible for others to believe that Zhao Liangqing had fled or gone missing. Although he would raise suspicion after that, he was only a first layer Qi Practitioner on the surface. Who would think that he could kill a fifth layer Qi Practitioner?

The more he thought about it, the more convinced he became that it was worth a gamble. If he kept his trump card hidden away the entire time, it would be a waste. As long as everyone who saw his trump card ended up dead, his trump card was still a trump card!

Li Qingshan told Xiao An about what he was thinking, and Xiao An obviously did not object. Afterwards, the two of them began discussing deep under water about how they would assassinate a fifth layer Qi Practitioner, Zhao Liangqing.

It was both for the sake of eliminating an enemy as well as to obtain even more resources so that he could achieve the second layer of the Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength sooner.

Li Qingshan swam out from the cavern and followed the river downstream. He arrived in Jiaping city, climbing ashore in a quiet, remote area. He was completely dry. He quickly dove into a pitch-black alleyway.

He moved through the maze-like streets. The seven-storeyed building in the distance served as the most obvious guide for him.

The moon was bright that night, but he could only move in the shadows and darkness. He concealed all of his aura, whether it be his daemon qi or true qi. He was like a tiger prowling in the forest, his footsteps gentle and silent.

When a passerby brushed past him, he failed to even notice his existence. All he felt was a night breeze brush past him. In the hot, stuffy summer night, it was slightly cold, chilling him to the bone. The man shivered, unable to tell that it was an aura of murderousness.

Li Qingshan stood in the alleyway behind the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. Past the twenty foot wall was the back courtyard of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain. Guards patrolled around the walls, both inside and out. It did not seem like a brothel, but more like a fortress.

Obviously, this could not stop Li Qingshan. He no longer treated people like masters of martial arts with too much importance. Scaling the wall, he first hid himself in a small, dense garden. He raised his head and breathed in deeply and slowly, taking in a lot of air. He gathered the various smells in the air.

He did not have a particularly deep impression of Zhao Liangqing's scent, but he did with the head courtesan Furong's smell. She had a unique perfume that could intoxicate people.

In order to strengthen his senses of smell, he released a tiny sliver of daemon qi. A black luster rapidly coated his entire body as his hair turned scarlet. At the same time, two bulges appeared on his forehead. His body swelled up by a foot as well as he turned into a muscly man who seemed like a black tower.

However, before he could change any further, he found what he was searching for. He was in no hurry to completely revert to human form either. He made his way towards the parlour. The quiet night that the Parlour of Clouds and Rain was experiencing had saved him a lot of trouble.

However, he discovered very soon that Furong's smell did not come from above, but below. He infiltrated the cellar and discovered several hundred jars of fine alcohol, but he failed to find Furong. The smell was still below him. An underground palace was hidden deep below the Parlour of Clouds and Rain, which was no wonder why the guards had failed to find the abducted girls during their search.

Following the trace of the smell, he arrived before a wall. The smell ended there. Li Qingshan pressed his ear against the wall, and as expected, he heard the soft sounds of people talking. The underground palace was right there, but he was unable to find the way to open the path leading down. He was afraid of alarming them if he forced his way in. Moreover, he might leave behind too many traces.

In the end, it was Xiao An who was more thorough with his searching, managing to find a jar of alcohol stuck firmly to the ground; this was the mechanism to open it. However, Li Qingshan had already understood that this probably was not just an issue of thoroughness. He also needed a certain understanding of the structure of the building to perfectly grasp the mechanism.

Moving the jar, a path opened in the wall. As soon as the two of them entered, the wall closed behind them again. Before them was a dark staircase that wined downwards. Li Qingshan made his way down without any hesitation at all.

The sounds of moans rose and fell as two naked bodies slammed against one another with great intensity. Zhao Liangqing said viciously, "I have to kill him." Furong answered with a messy reply.

Neither of them had used Pills of Calming for dual cultivation. Instead, they used the most primitive method to vent their repressed feelings.

After finishing up, Zhao Liangqing's face was filled with exhaustion. He did not want to catch another glance of Furong. If it were not for the sake of cultivation, he would have never been willing to sleep with this woman. He ordered, "Bring those women over!"

Chapter 128 - Crushing Zhao Liangqing to a Pulp

Furong was surprised. "Are you planning to?"

Zhao Liangqing said, "I'm going to use them. From today onwards, none of these people are allowed to appear again."

Use! That was an extremely cold word, as if he treated them as objects, but the reality was even colder. Not only did he treat them as objects, but he even wanted to use them as consumables.

"Doesn't the sect forbid this?" Furong shuddered. She knew that he wanted to use a vicious cultivation method from the Sect of Clouds and Rain to drain away the vital yin qi of the girls. This was basically casting aside long term benefits for the sake of short term benefits. It was truly an art of the demonic path, which was why it had been stringently banned by the Sect of Clouds and Rain. If anyone was discovered using it, they would become an enemy of the world and be hunted down until they were dead.

Sects of dual cultivation had always been orthodox sects within daoism. The Minor Method of Clouds and Rain was not an evil cultivation method, but taking this path of cultivation required greater willpower than other cultivation methods. Otherwise, their minds would be gradually corrupted by lust, sinking into the demonic path and becoming a demonic art practitioner.

Zhao Liangqing said, "How am I supposed to break through quickly if I don't use that? If you don't say anything and I don't say anything, who will know? Don't you hate that kid as well? Once I open my Girdle meridian and break through to the sixth layer, I'll be able to control weapons. I can assassinate him using a flying sword. It'll basically be avenging you!"

As soon as Li Qingshan was mentioned, Furong immediately made up her mind. Without even putting on clothes, she made her way out, while Zhao Liangqing just laid on the bed with his eyes closed, resting.

As soon as Furong emerged from the room, a large hand with sharp claws grabbed her neck. With a crack, she collapsed on the ground. The Blood Flames of Corpse Incineration quietly spread over. In just an instant, it swallowed her completely, reducing her to a white skeleton.

Furong's aura had vanished!"

Zhao Liangqing suddenly snapped open his eyes as he bellowed out, "Who is it?" His voice reverberated through the underground palace.

Zhao Liangqing raised his guard to the limit, but all he saw was Li Qingshan pushing open the door and making his way in. There was a relaxed smile on his young face. "It's me!" He had completely reverted to human form now, so his aura was only a first layer Qi Practitioner's. He was exactly the same as when he made a mess out of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain earlier tonight.

When enemies met, their eyes would redden from rage. Zhao Liangqing stared at Li Qingshan with red eyes as he roared out, "You killed her?"

"Yep, I killed her. Sorry for interrupting you. I'll be leaving first." With that, Li Qingshan actually just backed out of the room again.

"Do you still think you can escape!?" Zhao Liangqing leapt up from the bed and dove outside. He did not even bother to grab his hundred treasures pouch on the side. He utterly hated Li Qingshan, so all he wanted to do was end his life as soon as possible. How was it possible for a mere first layer Qi Practitioner to be the opponent of him, a fifth layer Qi Practitioner? Even if he was empty-handed, he could easily kill him.

He really is looking for his own doom.

As soon as Zhao Liangqing barged through the door, he suddenly turned around and saw a skull condensed from blood-red flames bite down on him from the left. There was no heat, but he could feel the horrors of the fire from the bottom of his heart.

The true qi that surged out kicked up a wild gust of wind in the long, gloomy corridor. Zhao Liangqing raised his right hand and condensed a palm print out of true qi, smashing the fire skull to pieces. Just when he wanted to advance, he suddenly froze up as if he had been rooted to the spot.

A murderous aura and daemon qi that was ten times more terrifying than the fire skull surged out from behind him like the flowing and ebbing tide. He felt like as soon as he moved, the monster hidden in the tide would rip him to shreds. Cold sweat ran down his back.

Only now did he find the origins of the blood-red flames. A small skeleton stood right in front of him as blood-red flames flickered in its eye sockets. It did not show any intentions of attacking. Instead, it just stared behind him.

What was behind him?

Unprecedented fear seized him, but inside, he roared out that he refused to accept this. He was a Qi Practitioner with a great future. As long as he broke through to the sixth layer, a very good position would be waiting for him in the Sect of Clouds and Rain. He felt a lot of regret, regretting over why he had not slowed down a little and taken his hundred treasures pouch with him. He regretted facing something so terrifying while naked.

He slowly turned around and saw the true appearance of the horror.

The small, narrow corridor struggled to contain the colossal body that seemed to be forged from black iron. It could only crouch there, crouching in the darkness, even darker than the darkness. Long, scarlet hair draped down, seeming like both roaring flames and waterfalls of blood. The huge, scarlet pupils stunned him, immobilising him completely.

I'm dead!

This was the first time he had experienced a thought like that in his entire life, and it clearly appeared in Zhao Liangqing's head. However, his instincts for survival urged him to fight back. He turned around as quickly as he had ever done so in his entire life, utilising every shred of true qi in his body to receive this terrifying monster.

He had no actual plans on taking this monster on in a deathmatch. He only wanted to slam it with his true qi and borrow the rebounding force to flee to the other side of the tunnel. The tiny skeleton was strange, but he was confident that he could deal with it. The monster's size was so large that it would struggle to move through the corridor. He could escape with his life intact through another secret door.

There was still a chance! There was still hope!

Zhao Liangqing suddenly halted as blood and shattered organs sprayed out from his mouth. He lowered his head in disbelief. A huge claw had grabbed him with terrifying speed that he was unable to react to before gradually bringing him closer.

It was like a cat that had just learned how to hunt, studying the first rat it had caught.

Pain basically drowned out all of Zhao Liangqing's thoughts. How did he encounter something like this? He was chasing a mere first layer Qi Practitioner. Did it come from that? How did he come across a monster like this?

He realised something. He said with difficulty, "Y- you're... Li Qingshan?"

"That's me!" His voice was like resonating metal, yet it was also like the gurgling of magma in a volcano that was about to erupt. He stated a truth with a solemn voice, a truth that brought Zhao Liangqing disbelief.

Li Qingshan truly felt surprised, as he was too weak! Zhao Liangqing was just too weak! The tremendous pressure he felt from Zhao Liangqing when he was in human form had vanished completely. Right now,

all he needed to do was use a little bit of force, and he would be able to crush this fifth layer Qi Practitioner like a bug.

So it has always been me? I've never held enough confidence in myself? Li Qingshan was amazed.

"S- Spare me!" Zhao Liangqing said with difficulty as he constantly coughed up blood.

"Don't even think about it!" Li Qingshan used some force, and with a squelch, there was an explosion of blood between his fingers. Zhao Liangqing was crushed to a pulp.

The Blood Flames of Corpse Incineration surged over, converting every droplet of blood into a part of itself. It cleaned up the mess that Li Qingshan had created perfectly.

Li Qingshan reverted to human form. He stretched his arms and legs as he stood there while muttering to himself, "So much for taking you so seriously back then. Turns out, this is all you are."

Xiao An extended his fingers like a sword. The bones scattered across the ground suddenly trembled, flying into his hundred treasures pouch. He had completely removed all traces of anything happening at all.

Just like he was in his own home, Li Qingshan walked into the extravagant bedroom in the underground palace, or should you say cultivation room. He picked up two hundred treasures pouches from the side of the bed before raising his head and studying the erotic art drawn on the walls. He evaluated, "How ugly!"

Xiao An gathered Zhao Liangqing and Furong's scattered clothes as well. After hesitating, he did not tidy up the bed. He carefully removed the many tiny traces. As such, it seemed more like the two of them had fled in fear of punishment instead of being killed.

Li Qingshan was unable to do something like this. After confirming there was nothing else worth his attention, he asked, "You done?"

Xiao An nodded, and the two of them returned the same way they had come, silently leaving the Parlour of Clouds and Rain.

By the time they returned to the mountain, it was already very early in the morning. Li Qingshan did not light a lamp either. He used the moonlight that flooded through the gauze window to inspect his harvest.

Furong's collection and the earnings from the years that Zhao Liangqing was in charge of the Parlour of Clouds and Rain amounted to one million two hundred thousand taels of silver and a pile of gold and silverware.

There were a few talismans, and not a single one of them were inferior. They were low grade at the very least. There were even two mid grade talismans.

The Qi Gathering pills, over fifty of them, immediately made up for the pills that Li Qingshan had just consumed.

There were a few stones the size of pebbles that contained pure spiritual qi. They must have been the legendary spiritual stones.

However, these were not his greatest harvest from this trip. The greatest harvest was a small, translucent sword that he had found in Zhao Liangqing's hundred treasures pouch. The sword was only a foot long, and it did not have a hilt. It was completely translucent as light basically flowed through it. It was clearly made from metal, yet it had the qualities of jade.

Li Qingshan held the small sword in his palms as he carefully inspected it. He could sense a gentle but extremely powerful spiritual qi flowing through it, surpassing the Wind-entwining blade on his waist. It was a mid grade spiritual artifact.

However, the sword did not even have a hilt, so how was it supposed to be used? Li Qingshan suddenly thought of the Soaring Dragon Elder, as well as Wang Pushi's pitch-black baton. Was this sword supposed to be controlled like that too? He was uncertain, so he could only stow it away for now.

Li Qingshan was utterly delighted. As it turned out, things really were easier with the evil path. Human society sure was a good place. If he remained in the mountains and forests, he would never have so many pills to eat. His cultivation speed would definitely be much slower.

Although the cultivation of daemons would be calculating with centuries, he was confident that if this continued, he could drastically reduce his time.

The battle tonight had given him quite a lot of confidence. No matter how powerful a sixth layer Qi Practitioner who had split open a sea of qi like Zhuo Zhibo was, he was confident he could take them on in battle.

"Zhuo Zhibo, oh Zhuo Zhibo. What nice things do you have in your hundred treasures pouch? Li Qingshan licked his lips as he wondered malevolently.

They truly targeted one another.

.....

A long, long time ago, a young man walked through the deep mountains. A hawk flew in the sky while a wolf ran in front of him. They were his pets and playmates since young. They hunted for him and ensured that he was not lonely. They had gone through many difficult times with him.

As the will of the heavens went in the way of the boy, he picked up his treasured sword, and the hawk and wolf became daemons. They waged wars across the world, defeating countless powerful opponents with him and enduring many disasters at his side.

Until one day, the young man swept through the world and established the nine provinces, gaining the title of the dragon son of heaven. He had many gifted officials, many like the droplets of rain in the world. He also had many valiant generals, many like the clouds in the world, serve beneath him. His harem reached tremendous proportions, and he became the wealthiest in the world.

However, there was nobody, no other human, that he trusted more than his two most loyal friends. He crowned them as kings, giving them the authority to stand above all. When he returned to the heavens, he ordered them to protect this empire.

These were the origins of the Hawkwolf Guard.

Oh right, as for the name of the empire, it was called Great Xia.

Author's Postscript

I like the name 'Great Xia'. It's the beginning of five thousand years of culture, while its creator is the legendary figure, Yu the Great. The people that came after him could only remain earnestly as humans, unable to be like their ancestors who mended the heavens, created humanity, served by many. What a pity!

The name 'Great Xia' by itself seems like a boundary between legends and history, also serving as a beginning and an end. Even more wondrously, its existence has been questioned. This kind of existence where it seems to exist yet is also debatable, this point of both beginnings and end, it where this novel and I lie.

Since I've said so much already, then I might as well ask for some tickets. Whether it's monthly tickets, recommendation tickets, or review tickets, any ticket is fine!

Chapter 129 - The Daughter of the Hawk God

With the arrival of the morning, a thick layer of mist shrouded the mountain. Opening his window and looking down, he saw Jiaping city swallowed by a sea of mist. Only the few, larger structures like the Parlour of Clouds and Rain were like islands in the sea, floating in the sea of mist.

No one had noticed what had happened last night aside from Li Qingshan. He lowered his head and looked at his right hand; it was a coarse hand covered in calluses. The markings of all those years of labour had not simply faded away with cultivation. It was also that very hand that had crushed an enemy to death the night before. The feeling of causing someone to burst remained clearly embedded in his palm and memory.

Ordinary people would probably sigh that their hands were covered in blood and become melancholic. However, he felt very wonderful and delighted. It was not due to the influence of his demonic nature that had made him cold-hearted. He could shed tears for Xiao An, and he could sob for Xuanyue, but scum like Zhao Liangqing was not even worth a sigh of his.

You could refuse to accept the darkness within you and keep acting like you were still a normal human, or you could accept it calmly and find some more scum like that, enjoying the pleasure that came with crushing them to a pulp.

Li Qingshan chose the latter without any hesitation at all. Just like how he had said since the beginning, why should he repress his interests? Aren't there a lot of people worth killing in the world?

On their first day of joining the Hawkwolf Guard, newcomers were usually given the day to rest and grow accustomed to the new environment. The true training of the Hawkwolf Guard would begin today under the guidance of a senior.

Originally, that person should have been Ge Jian, but instead it was the 'bulbous nose' that had gambled on Li Qingshan. He slapped Li Qingshan's shoulder with a smile. "Kid, you were really impressive last night. If it were me, I would have never been bold enough to do that."

Just from that, Li Qingshan understood that this person was probably not a trusted subordinate of Zhuo Zhibo. Speaking of which, even if Zhuo Zhibo wanted to take a trusted subordinate, he would have never taken someone so inappropriate.

Diao Fei and Qian Rongzhi sat beside Li Qingshan. They both had their own thoughts as they remained silent.

'Bulbous nose' cleared his throat and began the first lesson of the Hawkwolf Guard, the history of the Hawkwolf Guard.

Li Qingshan listened with complete focus. This was the first time he had understood where he was in so much detail. He was shocked by the grand tale from the lengthy history. He murmured, "The Great Xia empire?"

Just how would an empire founded by a cultivator be? To his even greater surprise, the commander of one of the government systems with the highest authority was actually a daemon. This was simply unbelievable!

However, he could understand what the founding emperor was thinking. His wives could fight among each other for his favour, while his children could kill one another for the throne. Even loyal officials and valiant generals could fall out with one another over their beliefs. The minds of humans were far too complicated. Only the loyalty of daemons would remain unwavering.

Although Li Qingshan refused to admit that Xiao An was his pet, he was unable to find a better description for their current situation. The reason why he could trust him so much was exactly because of his simple-mindedness, as well as his complete dependence on him.

'Bulbous nose' was akin to the most impressive storyteller as spittle flew out of his mouth like a river. He narrated this part of history in a magnificent manner, but when he reached there, he suddenly stopped. He looked at Li Qingshan while smiling. "Speaking of the highest commander of our Hawkwolf Guard, sir Guardian Hawk God, I must mention his daughter..."

Submerged in his thoughts, Li Qingshan suddenly raised his head. All he heard was bulbous nose slowly mention a name. "Gu Yanying!"

Li Qingshan closed his eyes slowly and sank into his thoughts again. The graceful figure in white appeared in his head again. When Yan Song mentioned Gu Yanying, he had said she possessed an extraordinary background, but Li Qingshan had never thought it would reach such a level.

'Bulbous nose' continued, "Of course, you can't tell others about this. While this is a public secret within the Hawkwolf Guard, it's also taboo. The White Wolf commander has specially put this in writing that he would watch anyone who blabbers chew their own tongues out. You better not think this is just an empty threat. It's basically the greatest rule among us Hawkwolf guards of the Ruyi commandery. Just treat it like you never heard about it. It's not like you'll manage to establish any connections with such a great figure in your lives anyway." As he said that, he glanced at Li Qingshan again.

Li Qingshan did not reply. After his slight shock, he recovered his composure. The target that the black ox had given him was far too distant. As such, his vision had never stopped in just this world from the beginning.

When your final objective was to fly in the sky, other people could tell you about just how tall Mount Everest was and how difficult it was to scale. You could agree, but you would not feel too much pressure. As a matter of fact, you might even feel that it was a much easier target.

Whether he could establish a connection with her would depend on fate, but if he could, he definitely would. He was not afraid of being labelled as lecherous by others, as he admitted he was lecherous. He also liked drinking, liked eating, liked crushing enemies to a pulp, and liked good pills and spiritual artifacts.

.....

Passing through the busy streets, Li Qingshan arrived before the government office. At the entrance were a pair of huge, stone lions. Li Qingshan could tell that they were not just to scare away regular citizens and demonstrate the might of the government. Instead, the spiritual qi they emitted told him that the pair of stone lions would immediately come alive as soon as someone had intruded upon the place, tearing the intruder to shreds.

Compared to them, the two guards seemed more symbolic than anything else. When they saw Li Qingshan's Black Wolf uniform, neither of them tried to stop him. After hearing him state his name, the guard immediately took him in.

The government office was busy. Various people hurried around under the orders of guards. It was as if they all had their own matters to attend to, not just to prove their innocence or to sue.

Zhou Wenbin received Li Qingshan in the garden behind the offices. Under the brilliant sun, the green-clothed Zhou Wenbin sat on a cushion under a large willow tree by a pond as he admired the scenery. He did not seem like a district magistrate, but more like a hermit. He was at great leisure, forming quite the contrast with the busyness in the government office.

Li Qingshan clasped his hands. "How elegant of you, sir!"

Zhou Wenbin waved his hand, and another cushion fell down before him, along with an exquisite tea set.

Li Qingshan sat down gracefully. Zhou Wenbin waved his hand, and steam rose up from the pond as if it were gathering in his palm, turning into water and landing in the teapot. Afterwards, it produced hot steam, and the fragrance of tea permeated the surroundings. He filled two tea cups.

Only then did Zhou Wenbin say leisurely, "We cultivator's shouldn't be held up by too many everyday affairs!"

Li Qingshan said in surprise, "Then why do you still hold the position of district magistrate, sir? Why not settle down in a beautiful land and properly focus on cultivation?"

"Now that's something you don't know about. This is one of the cultivation methods of the school of Confucianism, gathering the power of belief, which can also be used for cultivation. That's why I'm the district magistrate of Jiaping city."

Zhou Wenbin said patiently. Only then did Li Qingshan find out about a cultivation method like this, and it was an extremely effective cultivation method as well that did not require too much effort. The proteges and aides under Zhou Wenbin would handle the various government affairs for him, while he normally only needed to remain in the back courtyard, drinking tea and admiring the flowers. The paths of cultivation truly did vary.

Li Qingshan cut to the chase. "May I ask why you've summoned me here?"

Zhou Wenbin said, "Are you aware that you're living on borrowed time?"

Li Qingshan said, "I'm really not aware of that."

Zhou Wenbin said, "You've deeply offended Zhuo Zhibo. He's extremely cowardly, which is why he chose to put up with all of it. But don't we both know that you don't have any kind of backing like that at all? Old Wang in Clear River city should dislike you very much. Zhuo Zhibo will realise that sooner or later."

Li Qingshan was unfazed. "Then what do you suggest, sir? Am I supposed to transfer to under sir?"

Zhou Wenbin replied, "I sure would like a subordinate like you. I've heard about what you've done in the Qingyang district, but you've directly increased the number of vice magistrates under me. It'll even cost me a bit to pay and feed him."

Only now did Li Qingshan think of the brother-in-law of the prefect, Ye Dachuan. Calculating the time, he should have arrived today.

"However, since you've joined the Hawkwolf Guard, you can't just get away from this entire matter so easily anymore."

Li Qingshan said, "My only option is to flee?"

Zhou Wenbin shook his head. "The crime of deserting or betraying the Hawkwolf Guard would be even greater than that. It's enough to put you on the criminal list. Despite how vast the world is, just where can you go? Are you really supposed to flee into the mountains and forests and dwell with those daemons?"

Li Qingshan considered it; this was not necessarily a difficult matter to deal with.

Zhou Wenbin said, "If you want to avoid Zhuo Zhibo, there's only one place you can go now."

Li Qingshan asked, "Where?"

"The Academy of the Hundred Schools!"

"Where's the Academy of the Hundred Schools?"

"Obviously in Clear River city."

"What kind of place is the Academy of the Hundred Schools?"

"It's a place where ordinary people cultivate, as well as the foundation of the Great Xia empire. As the district magistrate, not only do I watch over this region, but I also have the responsibility of choosing talents for the empire. I can recommend talented Qi Practitioners to study in the Academy of the Hundred Schools. Even your duties as a Hawkwolf guard will be temporarily set aside. Obviously, you wouldn't need to worry about Zhuo Zhibo anymore. I'll be honest with you, I came from the Academy of the Hundred Thoughts. That place is much more beneficial to your cultivation than being a Hawkwolf guard."

Li Qingshan said, "May I ask why you are favouring me so much, sir?"

Zhou Wenbin said, "Your talent is so-so, but I like your disposition very much. I don't wish to see you get destroyed in the hands of a crafty ruffian. There will be a day when you return to the Hawkwolf Guard, so I wouldn't mind you coming to Jiaping city, and we can keep working together."

Some people might detest your disposition, but there would obviously be others who liked your disposition. With ill will came goodwill. Such a matter was very fair.

Li Qingshan considered it for a while before answering, "Thank you for your kind offer, sir. There will be a day when I go there and check it out, but it's not right now. I still have things I want to do in Jiaping city."

He speculated that the Academy of the Hundred Schools was a place like a school. It was a school for Qi Practitioners to raise talents for the Great Xia empire so that they could overwhelm the talents of other sects. However, since it was a school, it would definitely come with school fees, and moving about would become inconvenient. At the very least, he could not go on a killing spree under the name of justice.

He needed flesh and blood to assist Xiao An's reconstruction of his body, and he also needed to obtain even more Qi Gathering pills from these missions. These two matters supplemented one another, and Jiaping city was highly suitable for him to complete both. Most importantly, he was not afraid of Zhuo Zhibo, not even a bit.

Zhou Wenbin frowned. "It seems like you don't understand the strength of sixth layer Qi Practitioners."

Chapter 130 - The Art of Controlling Artifacts

Li Qingshan obviously understood the strength of sixth layer Qi Practitioners. Splitting open a sea of qi and condensing a daemon core went hand in hand. He knew exactly how much his strength had grown after condensing a daemon core. It was basically a change in quality.

However, he would never complain if it meant he could get more information on his opponent. He also wanted to know just what humans used against daemons in battle. A fifth layer Qi Practitioner like Zhao Liangqing was nowhere near enough, so he asked with an open mind, "Please enlighten me, sir!"

Zhou Wenbin said, "The strength of humans does not lie with themselves. Whether it's true qi or their physical strength, there's no way they can contend with regular daemons. You should be aware of that."

Li Qingshan nodded. "The strength of humans lies in their use of tools." He could recall the classes of his previous life very well, how his teacher had said that the greatest difference between humans and animals was the invention and usage of tools. Even in this world of cultivation, this aspect remained the same.

Zhou Wenbin's eyes lit up. "Well said. But have you realised the importance of tools right now? For example, the Wind-entwining blade on your waist. What kind of strength increase do you think it provides to you?"

Li Qingshan rubbed his Wind-entwining blade instinctively before shaking his head. The Wind-entwining blade was not a bad weapon, but it was not essential to the current him. It did not increase his strength in any qualitative fashion.

Zhou Wenbin said, "That's because you've yet to learn how to properly use the tool. The blade right now is just like the teeth and claws to a beast. You can only use it based on your instincts. The blade and sword-wielding people of the jianghu are actually just slightly stronger wild beasts."

Li Qingshan leaned forward and picked up the teapot, filling up Zhou Wenbin's cup. "Then may I ask what is the proper way to use a tool?"

"Like this!" Zhou Wenbin's eyes shone, and there was a powerful flash from within his wide sleeves. It swam past him with lightning speed, sometimes down low and sometimes high in the sky, producing an unending streak of light.

Under the afternoon sun, the blade of the sword reflected the sunlight, flickering across the two of them.

The streak of light rushed into the sky, piercing through the green willow branches. Willow leaves fell down like rain. However, before the 'rain' had even hit the ground, the sword flashed again and skewered over a hundred leaves before slamming against the tree bark.

Zhou Wenbin extended his hand, and the streak of light moved again, sweeping across the calm surface of the water and cutting it open like an extremely sharp pair of scissors. Suddenly, the sword vanished. It pierced through the reeds on the side of the pond before returning to Zhou Wenbin's sleeve.

Li Qingshan was dazzled by all of this. If he did not daemonify, there was no way he could deal with a sword like that. He had witnessed the terror of being hunted down by a flying sword in the ancestral hall of the Dragon's Gate sect in the past, but no one was controlling that flying sword, so all it did was charge straight ahead rashly. As a result, his understanding of the terrors of flying swords were not deep enough.

Only now did he understand that he basically had no chance to forcefully take on a real flying sword, as without the restrictions of the human body, the agility of the flying sword had exceeded the great techniques of any supreme swordsmen.

It was possible to imagine that if you failed to knock away the lightning-fast flying sword in a single strike when you fought against it, the flying sword would be able to move around like a snake, worming into your heart. You might not even be able to reach your opponent. You would not even be able to throw your life at the enemy.

This was the case unless you could deal with the sharpness of the flying sword and surpass its speed, but just how many people could achieve such a feat? This was the proper way to use a tool, the thing that humans relied on to overwhelm daemons.

He had basically seen this method of using tools in the hands of the Soaring Dragon Elder of the Sword Collection palace before. There was obviously a huge difference between Zhou Wenbin and the Soaring Dragon Elder's swords, but due to the drastic disparity in strength back then, all of it seemed to flash past him like rain in a storm, as flickers of light possessing devastating power.

Back then, this indomitable, terrifying power had overwhelmed his mind, and he actually failed to comprehend its wonders and horrors. He had not been as shocked as right now. Another reason for his shock was that he realised that he himself would be able to use a tool like that as well.

Zhou Wenbin said, "Calling them tools is a relatively more common name, but more accurately, this should be called 'controlling artifacts'. Sword artifacts are relatively common spiritual artifacts. There are a myriad of other spiritual artifacts in the world, which can be used to kill, defend, or bewitch. Anyway, there are a myriad of ways to use them as well. As long as your true qi is sufficiently strong enough, there's no need for you to be restricted to your arms and legs. You can use many spiritual artifacts at the same time, and killing people will become as easy as winking."

"However, all of this requires you to open your four yin and yang meridians, reaching a balance in yin and yang. Subsequently, you need to open your Girdle meridian and split open a sea of yin and yang qi. Only then can you achieve this. As a matter of fact, there's even a saying that only Qi Practitioners who have split open a sea of qi can be regarded as real Qi Practitioners, embarking on the path of cultivation. In short, it's extremely easy for a sixth layer Qi Practitioner to kill a fifth layer Qi Practitioner."

What he was trying to say was, It goes even more without saying what would happen if a mere first layer Qi Practitioner like you were matched up against a sixth layer Qi Practitioner. Even if you have some achievements as a Body Practitioner, it's impossible for you to be Zhuo Zhibo's opponent.

Li Qingshan was convinced from the bottom of his heart. "I see. Thank you for your guidance, sir. However, I haven't chosen to remain here because I'm unaware of the dangers I'm in."

The two of them stared at each other silently. One was determined, while the other one was in doubt.

Zhou Wenbin said, "Since you insist on staying, I won't say anything more. If you need any help, you are welcome to come to the government office to come find me. However, at the end of the day, you are still under Zhuo Zhibo's command. It's impossible for me to fall out with Zhuo Zhibo over you, so do take care."

Li Qingshan smiled. "That only makes sense."

Li Qingshan's relaxed, casual attitude even made Zhou Wenbin doubt himself. Does this kid really have a powerful background?

"There is a matter that I'd like to ask you about, sir. Where can I learn the art of controlling artifacts?" Li Qingshan was highly intrigued after witnessing Zhou Wenbin's display. He immediately thought of the small, hiltless sword he found in Zhao Liangqing's hundred treasures pouch the night before. As it seemed, Zhao Liangqing had prepared it for when he broke through to the sixth layer, but now that it had fallen into his hands, he wanted to make full use of it.

Zhou Wenbin gazed at him deeply. "Do you really think the sixth layer of Qi Practitioner is that easy to break through to?"

Li Qingshan said, "I'll try my best and see." His gaze was filled with great confidence. At least from the aspect of a daemon, he had already reached that level.

Zhou Wenbin did not comment on that. All he said was, "There are many people in the cultivation world who know regular arts for controlling artifacts. It's nothing for me to teach you beforehand."

Li Qingshan asked curiously, “They are non-regular arts for controlling artifacts?”

Zhou Wenbin said, “The Sword Collection sect has special arts for controlling swords. It’s not artifacts, but swords. The Umbral Yin sect has ghost control arts, using ghosts as their artifacts. Some demonic path cultivators refine and pilot corpses, thus using corpses as artifacts. There is not a single sect’s artifact control art that is completely original, but it’s impossible for me to know them all either.”

The Umbral Yin sect! Ghost control arts! Li Qingshan’s heart skipped a beat. He thought about the page he had obtained from the witch. Wasn’t that the Umbral Yin Ghost Control technique? There must have been a connection between the two. If he understood the origins of the witch, he might be able to find out about Xiao An’s origins. He asked in a hurry, “Where’s the Umbral Yin sect?”

To the cultivators of the Green province, this was essential knowledge. Zhou Wenbin casually explained it. He failed to notice the change in Li Qingshan’s expression.

Li Qingshan memorised eight words, ‘Down south, the Myriad Ghosts abyss’. This was the first time he had heard anything about this colossal sect of the Green province, but since Zhou Wenbin did not go into detail, he did not ask any further either.

His strength was still insufficient. He could not go to somewhere so far away. Xiao An had yet to remember much, and he had not recovered his body yet... Under these countless reasons hid a selfish excuse. He did not want Xiao An to leave his side! He did not want to be lonely!

It was rather funny now that it was mentioned, but a tough guy like him, a daemon who could stand over twenty feet tall and crush people like ants, was no different from an ordinary person inside. He was afraid of loneliness.

As a result, for the first time, he was no longer as determined as before when an opportunity to investigate Xiao An’s origins presented itself.

The sunlight was cut to pieces by the blade-like willow leaves, scattering all over the teenager. He was not particularly handsome, but there was a rare sliver of uncertainty on his bronze, sculpted face. However, it turned into determination immediately, determination to uphold his promise and let nature take its course.

Zhou Wenbin patiently explained the method of controlling artifacts. As expected, the principle behind it was not complicated, but it had a strict requirement on cultivation. While Qi Practitioners could not easily connect with the spiritual qi of the world after splitting open a sea of qi, they were moving in that direction, allowing them to sense various objects with a spiritual nature.

Of course, all living things were spiritual nature, including every blade of grass or flower. However, with greater spiritual qi came stronger senses. While they could not control plants to harm their opponents, Qi Practitioners could pick a spiritual artifact and soak it in their own true qi constantly. Eventually, they would establish a slight sensory connection with the spiritual qi, allowing them to control it from afar. It was like controlling a piece of metal while using their own bodies as a magnet.

Li Qingshan expressed his gratitude. It was exactly these pieces of common knowledge that would instead bring him even greater help, as public knowledge to Qi Practitioners was an essential

foundation. He had come from the country, without a master or a sect, so he had no chance to learn about such matters at all.

Zhou Wenbin smiled as he stroked his beard. "So you only plan on expressing your gratitude verbally?"

Li Qingshan was surprised. Did he plan on accepting backhanders?

Zhou Wenbin hinted, "You must have had quite the harvest last night, such as silver?" Li Qingshan had taken the procuress' hundred treasures bag, which obviously did not escape his eyes.

Li Qingshan was taken aback. "You're the mighty district magistrate, a sixth layer Qi Practitioner who rules over several hundred thousand people, yet you're asking money from a broke kid like me?"

Zhou Wenbin said, "Must you speak so loudly? It's not like I'm asking it for free. It's exactly because I rule over too many people that there are far too many areas that require money. You have no use for silver anyway, so you might as well give it to me. I'll exchange it for Qi Gathering pills."

Li Qingshan was surprised. "Why's that?" He would be more than willing to exchange silver for Qi Gathering pills. Unless he actually planned on buying women, he really had no use for the silver.

Zhou Wenbin was a sixth layer Qi Practitioner, but he actually required silver?