

Chapter 381 - The Third Layer of the Spirit Turtle

"Yes, matriarch." Ye Liusu closed her eyes, but she still refused to accept it.

"My good daughter. I'm doing all of this for your sake. You will understand in the future." Ye Mingzhu let go of her and rubbed Ye Liusu's face gently.

After completing the deal, Li Qingshan immediately set off. After being circled a few hundred times by Bloodshadow, most of his daemon qi had already been depleted. If he wasted too much time, he might not be able to maintain his mirror clone.

Blacklustre city completely vanished into the darkness behind him, and the sound of the waterfall grew closer and closer. The three of them travelled upstream. Li Qingshan suddenly halted an hour later.

"What's wrong, master?" Ye Liubo asked. Ye Liusu frowned, as if she had sensed something too.

"Hmph, he sure likes to haunt people. Let's go!" Li Qingshan picked up Ye Liubo and sped up.

Bloodshadow unfurled his cloak and whistled up the waterfall like a huge, black bat. His teeth protruded from his mouth, which made his handsome face seem very vicious. "Northmoon, are you bold enough to fight me? Show me what you're capable of. Show me how you killed the three elders."

He did not speak loudly, but it was like an invisible sword, piercing through the cavern and reaching Li Qingshan's ears, which made them buzz.

"How dare you tail me? Aren't you afraid of being punished by ma'am Spider Queen?" Li Qingshan said loudly. Wild gusts of wind and wind blades shot over with his voice.

"I won't kill you. I'll just suck you dry so that you understand the consequences of offending me." Bloodshadow swept his cloak and smashed apart the wind blades. He did not slow down at all.

"I don't have the time to play these games with you."

As this conversation unfolded, the distance between them had halved. Their movement speed was far too slow compared to Bloodshadow.

"You go first! I'll take him for a spin!"

Li Qingshan stopped and turned around. He passed his hundred treasures pouch and blade to Ye Liubo before tossing Ye Liubo to Ye Liusu.

"Master!" "I can assist you." Ye Liusu gripped her curved dagger.

"It's rare of you to be so devoted. However, his target is me. Keep Liubo and yourself safe. This is an order!"

Ye Liusu said nothing more. She immediately took off, while Li Qingshan turned around and flew into a cave to the side. Bloodshadow also turned and entered the cave with a flash. He basically moved with no hesitation at all, chasing after Li Qingshan. However, Li Qingshan's aura suddenly vanished at this moment.

“Puny tricks!” Bloodshadow sneered. A sound wave expanded like a dense filter, covering every inch of space there. Li Qingshan’s figure immediately appeared in his senses.

As Li Qingshan fled, Bloodshadow closed the distance between them rapidly.

The wind whistled as their figures drifted off swiftly. The gloomy caves made Li Qingshan feel like he was on a rollercoaster, rising and falling constantly. They also seemed like the writhing guts of a beast.

Suddenly, he stopped. The cave ended in front of him. It was actually a dead end.

Li Qingshan exhaled. This should do! He placed his hand on the wall.

Bloodshadow had already found out about the dead end from his echolocation, so the corner of his lips curled up into a smile. He turned into the cave and saw Li Qingshan a few hundred meters away. He could cover this distance in a single breath.

Rumble! Tremoring booms filled the caves as cracks immediately riddled the wall. Thousands of tonnes of rock and soil collapsed down.

Li Qingshan’s sneer was blocked by a huge stalactite. Dust filled the air, and the echolocation probing was immediately disrupted.

“Don’t even think about escaping!” Bloodshadow advanced instead of retreating. He revolved rapidly, turning into a drill of red and black that pierced the layers of rock and soil. The huge boulders disintegrated into dust-like loam.

However, by the time he arrived in the depths of the cave, Li Qingshan had already disappeared; it was like he had vanished into thin air.

Unleashing the shockwaves had already depleted his final bit of daemon qi. He was unable to maintain his mirror clone anymore, so it automatically dispersed.

“Very impressive. I’ve already remembered your name and your smell. Northmoon, I will taste your blood sooner or later!” Fury flashed through his eyes. Bloodshadow raised his head and took a gentle sniff, revealing his sharp teeth as he smiled viciously. With a sweep of his cloak, he turned around and left.

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“Is master going to be fine?” Ye Liubo asked in worry.

Ye Liusu remained silent. He had lured away the enemy while getting his servants to escape. She had never seen a daemon, no, person, like this.

Li Qingshan opened his eyes in the sea of Blue Butterfly flowers. The sneer lingered on his face. If he had been there in person, he definitely would have wanted to fight Bloodshadow.

Li Qingshan glanced at Xiao An, who was concentrating on forging artifacts, before closing his eyes again. All the pills in the hundred treasures pouches of the Lone Grave Elder and the Golden Pheasant Elder had already entered his belly. He had polished off everything the two sects had accumulated over the years.

After becoming a Daemon General, his ability to digest pills had grown. The pills turned into pulses of spiritual qi, pushing him towards the third layer of the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression.

Li Qingshan suddenly opened his eyes. He extended his hand into his clothes. The Scarlet Wolf tablet was flashing urgently.

This was an emergency summoning from the Hawkwolf Guard!

Li Qingshan touched it gently with his finger, and the tablet stopped flashing. If he did not answer it, he would be presumed dead, which was why Li Qingshan had always carried it on him. Of course, it was unable to track his location.

"Just what is going on? Has it got to do with the three elders? Whatever, I'll worry about it once I break through with the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression. I need to wait for them to return too."

He settled down once more. After who knew how long, all the pills were completely digested and converted. Pulses of spiritual qi rampaged through Li Qingshan's body. If his body had not been tough enough, just this power alone would have been enough to blast him to pieces.

The spirit turtle's daemon core revolved rapidly. It turned into a huge vortex above his sea of qi, sweeping up the spiritual qi and absorbing it strand by strand into the vortex.

The spiritual qi decreased while the spirit turtle's daemon core became brighter and brighter. When it absorbed the final strand of spiritual qi, the daemon core had already become so bright that it was like a blue sun, shining with unprecedented luminance.

The light was powerful but not dazzling. It was filled with an aura of peace, as if it could remain without moving for millennia on end.

Li Qingshan shuddered in the cave. His red hair danced like fire as blue light that was like water ripples filled the entire cavern. Tremendous daemon qi rose up.

Xiao An stowed away the prayer bead she had finished forging and turned around. The slumbering Milliped had woken up too.

According to human standards, the tiger demon and ox demon were cultivation methods for the body, while the spirit turtle was for qi. It was the true basis of Li Qingshan's cultivation as a daemon.

The daemon core bobbed up and down in the sea of qi. Suddenly, a series of fractures appeared on the surface as a cracking sound rang out. Then, it burst apart loudly, kicking up huge waves and making the sea of qi toss and turn.

Li Qingshan peered into his body, and he discovered the perfectly-round daemon core had actually turned into the shape of a turtle's shell. The top swelled towards the heavens, while the bottom was flat like the ground. The back of the spiritual turtle rose and fell like hills; it was layered in profound inscriptions of all kinds of colour, constantly at work.

There seemed to be something trying to break through the shell.

Suddenly, he understood. They were the spirit turtle's head, tail, and limbs. However, due to his insufficient cultivation, it was still a blur within the shell. It had yet to condense into its actual form.

However, even with that being the case, his daemon qi had reached an unprecedented peak.

His senses became several times stronger. The world was now vastly different in his eyes.

Tremendous amounts of disorderly, unorganised information rushed into his head. He did not know what it meant, but they seemed to give an indication for the variations in omens and the fluctuations of fate.

Xiao An had once described what she felt when she performed divination. He understood he was currently in that state.

Another world seemed to exist within the everchanging kaleidoscope, a profound world that regular cultivators struggled to come in contact with.

Spirit turtles foretold the good and bad and understood the omens with utmost confidence.

Emerging from this state, Li Qingshan suddenly became convinced that Wang Pushi was calling him back so urgently exactly because of the three elders.

His certainty was completely groundless, but it was unwavering.

Li Qingshan smiled. Finally, he had taken another step forward!

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“It’s master’s daemon qi.” Ye Liubo beamed.

Ye Liusu found it slightly strange. Why had he returned before them instead? However, she did not think too much about it with everything he was capable of. She eased up for some reason and sped up.

“Master!” Ye Liubo flew into Li Qingshan’s arms. Li Qingshan patted her back. “You’ve returned.”

Originally, Ye Liubo wanted to give him a deep kiss, but when she was met with his clear, unwavering eyes, she became afraid to do anything for some reason. She just remained in his arms obediently.

Ye Liusu was much more sensitive. She could feel that some of Li Qingshan’s violence and restlessness had vanished, now replaced by maturity and wisdom. She seemed to feel much less pressured by him too. However, he only seemed even more unreadable and powerful. Afraid to come off as rude, she also said,

“Master... Bloodshadow...”

“I’ve shaken him off. I don’t have any time to waste on him. Oh right, I need to go out and complete the mission the Spider Queen gave me. You’ll still be in charge of this territory, great king Ye Liusu. Don’t let anyone disturb Milliped’s cultivation, uhh, rest.”

“What? No! It’s too dangerous above ground!” Ye Liubo paled in fright. Above ground was a world filled with human cultivators. It was a place filled with murderousness in her eyes, extremely dangerous. She treated it just like how the cultivators above ground treated the underground world.

“I have my plans. Alright, here’s your hundred treasures pouch that I promised.” Li Qingshan took out a hundred treasures pouch, not too big or small, and passed it to Ye Liubo.

“Thank you, master, but...”

“No buts!”

“Yes,” Ye Liubo replied pitifully.

“You’re welcome to try out this pill. It might allow you to undergo the heavenly tribulation.” Li Qingshan took out a True Spirit pill from his hundred treasures pouch and placed it in Ye Liubo’s palm. Although he had no idea just how effective pills refined by humans would be on Night Roaming folk, they were still technically “people” after all, so it should have some effect.

Apart from increasing his cultivation, he could not go without a few capable subordinates either. The mirror clone was nice, but it could not cover every aspect he required. If Ye Liubo could undergo the heavenly tribulation, then she could take care of the trade underground. He would not have to worry about it himself.

Ye Liusu’s gaze was drawn away by the True Spirit pill’s lustre. She was amazed. There’s actually such a wondrous pill in the world!

Ye Liubo had already become touched to the bottom of her heart. She could understand the value of the pill even if no one told her.

“What’s wrong?” Li Qingshan saw the rims of Ye Liubo’s eyes redden. He was rather surprised.

“No one has ever treated me so nicely in my entire life. I won’t let you down, master!”

Li Qingshan became rather embarrassed. Most of the time, the main thing he considered were still his own interests and benefits. Though, there were no relationships in the world that completely neglected personal interest after all. Even if they did exist, they were fragile.

People would be bound to one another because of each other’s needs, and they would abandon this tie when there was no need to maintain it anymore. This had always been how the world worked.

He did not want to be a master who only considered for his servants, but a master trusted and required by his servants. As a result, he accepted her loyalty calmly.

Chapter 382 - Meeting Niu Juxia Again?

Taken away by her emotions, Ye Liubo tried to kiss him again, but Li Qingshan blocked her with his hand. He smiled. “It’ll be up to your performance then.”

Xiao An was currently staring at them in great interest. He could not lead children astray after all.

Returning to the surface, the sunlight was blinding.

“Xiao An, how did your forging go?”

“I only forged a single prayer bead.” Xiao An counted the five prayer beads in the centre of her hand.

“That’s fine. Take it slowly.”

Li Qingshan rubbed her long, seaweed-like hair. Xiao An raised her head, and her dark pupils reflected his ordinary appearance.

Li Qingshan rubbed his cheek. Ah, the life of a handsome man is no different from dreaming!

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“Where have you been during this time? What were you doing?”

On the highest floor in the Hawkwolf Guard of Clear River city, the floor-to-ceiling windows flooded the entire room with sunlight, but Wang Pushi, who sat in the high-back chair, remained as cold-faced and stern as ever. He studied Li Qingshan before him. He was unable to imagine what extraordinary aspect of him could earn him such a special appraisal from Gu Yanying.

Because he was a genius? She had seen even more geniuses like this than stray mutts on the streets. This might have been possible with Xiao An, but not him. Though, he did indeed grow by quite a lot in just two years. Just by standing there, he actually possessed an indescribable sense of level-headedness and calmness.

“Completing missions obviously,” Li Qingshan said it like it was as clear as day.

“And these are all the missions you completed?” Wang Pushi patted the thin stack of mission documents on his desk.

Li Qingshan originally planned on finishing off all the missions he had accepted after dealing with the matters underground, but he had been summoned back in such a hurry, so he had obviously completed very few missions.

“I was collecting material too.” Li Qingshan had a moment of inspiration.

“Collecting material?”

“I’m a novelist after all.” Li Qingshan stared straight ahead sternly.

“Fuck your novels! You’re a Hawkwolf guard!”

“Commander, even you can’t look down on the school of Novels! Heh!” Li Qingshan had remembered the shoddy excuse Liu Chuanfeng had used the first time he met him.

“What’re you laughing about? Right now, I don’t care which school you’re from. Go complete this mission for me.” Wang Pushi took out the documents for a mission from his drawer and tossed it onto the table before Li Qingshan.

“The Green Vine mountain under attack”, “Two sect masters slain” and “Revenge from an underground daemon” leapt out at him immediately, catching Li Qingshan’s attention.

Just as he had expected!

He flipped through it page by page; the document contained an extremely detailed introduction to everything that had to do with the incident. When he reached the last page, it was the painting that Chu Danqing had drawn, and it sucked away all his attention immediately.

“That’s right. The one behind this case is this daemon. It’s a Daemon General, and it should have undergone the heavenly tribulation recently. According to the analysis, it might not have transformed

from a regular beast. It's very likely to be a hybrid offspring of powerful daemons." Wang Pushi noticed Li Qingshan's unnatural expression, but he misunderstood Li Qingshan's thoughts.

Heh, I sure am fucking handsome!

The corner of Li Qingshan's lips twitched as he held back his smile. He said sternly, "I can't handle such a powerful daemon with my cultivation. Why do you say it's a hybrid offspring?"

"Just from some investigations. Little Hua had once seen his true form, and he put it in the records. His true form possesses the horns of an ox and the tail of a tiger, and it's basically humanoid as well. It's very likely to be the offspring of an ox and tiger daemon."

What an exceptional analysis! Li Qingshan clapped inside. Afterwards, he shoved the documents into his hundred treasures pouch. He was investigating his own murderer case. It felt like a detective show. Would the police be revealed as the actual murderer in the end?

"Yes, sir. I'll go immediately."

"Hold on!" Wang Pushi leaned back in his chair, but he suddenly remembered what Gu Yanying had asked him for, so he stopped Li Qingshan. "Don't forget to write a report."

"A report? Why do I have to write a report?" Li Qingshan looked back in surprise.

"It's an investigation mission, not a holiday, so of course you have to write a report."

"Alright, understood." Li Qingshan had no other choice but to accept that. He could just write something half-assed and pass it off as completed when the time came.

"Include your own thoughts. Make sure it's no less than ten thousand characters!" Wang Pushi added. Since Gu Yanying had asked for this, it had to be completed with one hundred percent effort even if he had no idea what she was getting at.

It was not like he had to complete the mission anyway.

Bang! Li Qingshan turned around with a flash and slammed the desk. "Commander Wang, you're not joking with me, are you? What kind of report needs to be so long?!"

"You're a novelist, aren't you?"

"Uhh... so what if I am?"

"If you are, then piss off and get writing! I won't spare you even if you're off by a single character!" Wang Pushi surged with coldness.

Bang! Li Qingshan slammed into the wall in the corridor, and the door closed in front of him.

Li Qingshan exhaled. Novelists are still people. Are you trying to kill me by getting me to write ten thousand characters?

At this moment, two familiar figures appeared in front of Li Qingshan, staring at him in surprise.

"You're... Diao Fei, and great hero Yu!" Li Qingshan blinked his eyes and saw them clearly. They were actually two acquaintances he had not seen in quite some time.

“Q- Qingshan, I was ordered to go on the investigation with you.” As the first senior brother of Green Vine mountain, Diao Fei would obviously be involved in this case.

“Really? You’ve already become a Scarlet Wolf guard. Congratulations, congratulations.” Li Qingshan noticed Diao Fei’s uniform.

“I’m the one who should be congratulating you. You’re at the eighth layer. How the hell did you cultivate?” Diao Fei was filled with disbelief. Back then on the ship, Li Qingshan was just at the first layer, an insignificant little Qi Practitioner, yet he had undergone such great changes in just a few years.

“I just cultivated every now and then. Oh right, I’ll leave the report up to you then.” Li Qingshan smiled resplendently and wrapped his hand around Diao Fei’s neck, behaving like they knew each other very well.

“Apologies. I really do want to help you, but commander Wang specially said that only you can write this report. No one else is allowed to lend a hand,” Diao Fei said unnaturally. Although he felt that Li Qingshan was much more mellow compared to the past, his impression of the past was just too deep. He could not afford to be associated with a vicious tiger!

“Fine then!” The corner of Li Qingshan’s lips twitched, and he released Diao Fei. “Great hero Yu, what brought you here too? Oh right, you weren’t injured on Green Vine mountain, right?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine. It has been two years, and you’ve already become an adult. I’ve come to seek shelter under... Zijian. You still remember that girl, right?” Yu Shukuang glanced at Diao Fei from the corner of his eyes.

“Of course I do. She’s a genius of our academy. It’s just a pity that you’re too old, so you can’t join the academy. But that’s fine. You can still cultivate in Clear River city. If you need my help, just let me know.”

“Thank you, but I need to return to Green Vine mountain now.” Yu Shukuang beamed. He really had not forgotten about his past acquaintances. However, Yu Shukuang then became helpless.

“It’ll be dangerous!”

“The sect master has already sent out an order, summoning all of us disciples back. If we don’t go back, we’ll be labeled as deserters!”

“You mean the Green Vine Elder has returned to Green Vine mountain?” Li Qingshan’s eyes flickered slightly as he asked slowly.

“Yeah,” Yu Shukuang lowered his head and let out a sigh.

Diao Fei suddenly shuddered. In that instant, he felt like he was beneath the claws of a tiger, making him shiver.

However, the feeling only lasted for an instant. He returned to his senses and heard Li Qingshan laugh. “Looks like I have plenty to write for my report.”

Was it a false impression?

“Let’s go!” Li Qingshan yawned and stretched. This old man really isn’t taking me seriously!

But that works too!

In the hall below, Xiao An sat on the resting bench provided and waited for Li Qingshan while leaning against her hands and swinging her feet around. Suddenly, her ear twitched, and she heard a voice. She found it to be slightly familiar before immediately recalling the person’s name and appearance.

“Zijian, it’s best if you stay here. Green Vine mountain is just too dangerous. The daemon might end up returning. You haven’t seen them before, so you don’t know the terrors of daemons.” Yu Lian did his best to convince her.

“How wouldn’t I know about the terrors of daemons? It’s actually because it’s dangerous that I have to go with you and take a look. I’ve already made up my mind. You can’t change it.” Yu Zijian frowned slightly as she stood firm.

It had been two years. She also wanted to go back and take a look.

Unable to stop her, all Yu Lian could do was let out a sigh. His gaze drifted through the hall aimlessly, brushing past a tiny figure quickly.

Hmm?

Yu Lian pulled his gaze back, landing on Xiao An’s face in the end. He did not possess the same, powerful memory as Xiao An, but Xiao An had given him an impression deep enough for him to remember her. He could not help but walk over. “You’re... that...”

“First senior sister, you’re here too! Senior brother, you know each other?” Although she never had any contact with Xiao An, she was not entirely unfamiliar with her. As the greatest genius of the academy, Xiao An’s name had rung constantly through Yu Zijian’s ears. She was the primary disciple of the school of Buddhism, so she obviously deserved to be referred to as first senior sister.

“First senior sister? The tenth layer!?” Yu Lian was stunned at first before becoming stunned again. The aura she gave off had clearly reached the peak of Qi Practitioners, the tenth layer. If it were not for how special she was, he probably would have suspected he had mistaken her for someone else.

Yu Lian crouched down. “Do you still remember me? I’m Yu Lian! Where’s Niu Juxia? He’s not with you?”

“I do know him. You delivered food.”

“You can speak now! That’s fantastic! Ouch, what are you doing, Zijian?”

Yu Lian was overcome with excitement, but he felt his wrist tighten. Turning around, he saw that Yu Zijian’s expression had changed. She became extremely serious.

“Senior brother, you said Niu Juxia?”

“She’s that child who accompanied Niu Juxia that I told you about. She was very pretty, but unable to speak. She can speak now though. Oh right, why are you here? Have you really reached the tenth layer?”

Yu Zijian let go of Yu Lian's hand. Her head immediately sunk into a mess as various thoughts flashed past. There seemed to be something extremely important drifting around, but it was just outside of her grasp.

"Xiao An, time to go!"

At this moment, the three of them climbed down the stairs. Li Qingshan called for Xiao An from afar, and she leapt off the bench, running over and grabbing Li Qingshan's hand.

Li Qingshan glanced at Yu Zijian before waving his hand and summoning a cloud. After becoming a Daemon General and reaching the third layer of the spirit turtle, he could use techniques of the water element as easily as blinking. The cloud he had summoned was both large and perfect, such that he even needed to hold himself back a little.

Yu Shukuang spotted Yu Zijian standing still right there. He thought Yu Lian had already managed to convince her otherwise, so he signaled to Yu Lian. Yu Lian was at quite a loss, but he did not have the time to think too deeply about it.

They boarded the cloud and were just about to take off.

A flash filled her head, connecting all the dots. Yu Zijian suddenly turned around and yelled loudly at Li Qingshan's back,

"Niu Juxia!"

Chapter 383 - Climbing up the Green Vine Mountain Again

Yu Shukuang was alarmed and stared at Li Qingshan. Yu Lian happened to be wondering why Xiao An was with Li Qingshan, and he seemed to come to a realisation at this moment. Only Diao Fei was left at a loss.

"What're you calling out for? You want to come along?" Li Qingshan turned around slowly. He spoke calmly, and his expression was natural. Having undergone the baptism of dual identities, he had become quite the actor. He would not give himself away just because a girl had called him out like this.

"You..." Yu Zijian stared at Li Qingshan as she walked over. She became uncertain once again.

"If you're not coming, then we're leaving." Li Qingshan let out a sigh of relief inside. As it seemed, she was not particularly certain.

"I'll come." Yu Zijian leapt onto the cloud. She refused to let this matter go. She sat down beside Li Qingshan and continued staring at him closely, like a swordsman constantly searching for openings in their opponent.

Yu Shukuang shot Yu Lian a furious glance, and Yu Lian lowered his head.

The cloud shot off, and both hair and clothes ruffled in the wind. The Clear River city became a tiny speck in the blink of an eye, disappearing into the horizon.

"Great hero Yu, has your daughter taken a liking to me?" Li Qingshan became unnatural from how Yu Zijian stared at him.

“Zijian, don’t be rude!” Yu Shukuang scolded.

“Father, tell me...” Yu Zijian pointed at Li Qingshan.

“Tell you what?” Yu Shukuang furrowed his brows in a very serious manner.

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The main hall towered on the top of the Green Vine mountain. It had actually been repaired completely through some unknown method, now exactly the same as before.

“Fellow Fu, the Sword Collection palace truly lives up to its name with its infinite power and miraculous abilities.” The Green Vine Elder’s eyes shone brightly through the tangled beard on his face. He seemed very much like a hermit of great influence and renown, but his eyes were filled with reverence as he stared at the young man in front of him. As a matter of fact, he even seemed a little like he was trying to flatter him.

“All structures, no matter how magnificent, cannot avoid the fate of being reduced to ruins.” Fu Qingjin paced around the hall, as if he had not heard the Green Vine Elder at all. He was filled with melancholy as he said that to himself.

His condescending behaviour and pessimistic view made the Green Vine Elder frown. He ended up asking politely, “Will that daemon really come again?”

“He will. All daemons are creatures of arrogance, while he is the arrogant among the arrogant.”

A light flashed through Fu Qingjin’s eyes. The momentary sharpness gave the Green Vine Elder chills, but he also eased up slightly at the same time.

“You have a guest.” Becoming melancholic and exhausted again, Fu Qingjin’s figure gradually vanished, stepping into the sky.

“Sect master, senior brother Diao and senior brother Yu have returned. A Hawkwolf guard has come with them too. He says he has come to investigate the deaths of the two elders.” At this moment, a disciple rushed in and reported in a hurry.

The Green Vine Elder beamed at first before frowning again. The Hawkwolf Guard?

When Li Qingshan stepped onto the terrace and gazed at the majestic hall he had destroyed with his two hands, he became slightly astounded. He found this to be interesting before continuing forwards.

“I am a Scarlet Wolf guard of the Clear River prefecture, Li Qingshan. I’ve come to investigate under commander Wang Pushi’s orders. I hope sect master Green Vine can cooperate with me.” Li Qingshan bowed politely after entering the hall before studying this old enemy of his again.

“Where’s your commander Hua?”

The Green Vine Elder saw that Li Qingshan was just an eighth layer Qi Practitioner, so he became rather unwilling to put up with him. He felt like the Hawkwolf Guard’s negligence of this matter was as clear as day simply by looking at who they had sent. He could only rely on the Daemon Suppression alliance now if he wanted revenge. After all, even Gu Yanying was half a daemon.

“Our commander Hua is currently in secluded cultivation.”

“Then you can go. You can go back and tell your commander Wang that our Daemon Suppression alliance will never spare this daemon.” The Green Vine Elder waved his hand around like he was shooing away a fly. He would be stooping to a lower level all for nothing if he spoke with someone as insignificant as him.

“I’ve only come to investigate. Something like that is beyond my responsibilities. Please cooperate with me, sect master. The Hawkwolf Guard will do its best to get to the bottom of this,” Li Qingshan said proudly, completely ignoring the glances from Diao Fei and Yu Shukuang from beside him.

“Please see him off!” The Green Vine Elder swung his hand. A Qi Practitioner who had no idea how to respect his seniors like him was even more annoying than a fly. Did he really think he could stand on equal footing to Foundation Establishment cultivators just because he was a Hawkwolf guard?

Yu Shukuang stood up and accompanied Li Qingshan to the foot of the mountain. He grumbled, “Qingshan, you should have been more polite with the sect master. He might have been willing to tell you something.”

“I’ve come as a representative of the Hawkwolf Guard. Your sect master finds my cultivation to be low, so he belittles me, but I’m not going to belittle myself. None of this is too important anyway. Tell me, what’s going on with Zijian?”

Yu Zijian was currently strolling around the mountain in boredom. She was neither a disciple of the Green Vine mountain, nor was she a Hawkwolf guard, so she had no right to seek an audience with the Green Vine Elder. All she could think about was what was going on with Niu Juxia. She held a flower in her hand, plucking off the petals one by one.

“He is. He isn’t. He is. He isn’t...”

Clang!

The thrum of a sword interrupted her thoughts.

Yu Zijian suddenly looked back. She followed the path and entered the forest.

In a series of ruins, Fu Qingjin fished with his sword. He looked back and smiled. “You’re here.”

“It’s you. Why have you come again?”

“I feel like I’m not very welcome.” Sunlight filled the pavilion as Fu Qingjin smiled slightly, radiating with grace and ease.

“I’m going.” Yu Zijian glanced at the Green Ruins sword.

“Hmm?”

“It’s not very appropriate for a man and woman to be alone.” Yu Zijian turned around and swung her hands, leaving quickly. She knew he would try to convince her to go to the Sword Collection palace or something along those lines if she remained.

“Master has been very good to me. He said he would accept me as a formal disciple once I go through the heavenly tribulation. I’m never going to the Sword Collection palace.” All of her ties were here, her father, her master, her senior brother, her fellow disciples of the school of Daoism, and Niu Juxia. Before she had gotten to the bottom of all this, how could she leave?

Fu Qingjin was taken aback for quite a while. He was almost tempted to trap her there so he could speak to her a little more. He let out a long sigh. “Is the time still not right?”

Emerging from the Green Ruins illusion, Yu Zijian lifted up her flower again and was just about to continue plucking petals. “Oh no, what was I up to just then?”

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“If that’s the case, I don’t have to worry.”

Yu Shukuang patted his chest, guaranteeing that he would take care of everything and that Li Qingshan had nothing to worry about.

“Oh right, you’re acting like you don’t want Zijian to know. Are you looking down on me?” Li Qingshan raised an eyebrow.

“How can you say that...” Yu Shukuang immediately behaved like he had been wrongly accused of a tremendous crime, but he wiped his brow inside. Li Qingshan seemed like a very reasonable person, but he definitely was not a good or honest person. He was someone who could be truly cruel.

“Alright, alright. I’m just kidding with you. You don’t have to be so nervous. I’m going to go. Oh right, if things aren’t going well on the Green Vine mountain, feel free to come to Clear River city to seek shelter under me.” Li Qingshan patted Yu Shukuang’s shoulder with a smile and signalled at Xiao An, who was waiting at the bottom of the mountain. He took off on a cloud.

“Is it a trap?” Xiao An asked.

“Most likely. The old bastard is far too composed.”

“Are you still going to go?”

“Of course. I need to see what kind of trap it is at the very least.” Li Qingshan smiled. If the trap was too simple, it might end up being ripped to shreds by the wild beast.

The cloud turned towards a lake. Deep within the mountains and forests, there was no one around at all. Li Qingshan flattened all the ripples from the lake such that its surface became like a mirror, a perfect reflection of the sky.

Li Qingshan stood in the centre of the lake as his red hair danced.

“Watermirror’s Image!”

Ripples appeared, and the water became agitated, remaining like that for quite a while.

A hand extended out from the centre of the ripples, pushing off the surface of the water and leaping up. Scarlet eyes shone like fire, and the red hair danced around. He was even stronger and more nimble than the past.

After reaching the third layer of the Spirit Turtle's Method of Sea Suppression, his daemon core had turned into a turtle shell, and Li Qingshan's daemon qi had become even more powerful. Following this, the power of his Watermirror's Image had become greater. It was almost twice as strong as the mirror clone from before.

Otherwise, with his original mirror clone, it probably would not even have been enough to deal with the Green Vine Elder, so there would be no point in investigating at all.

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A crescent moon hung in the sky, surrounded by many stars.

The security on the Green Vine mountain was lax. Only a single protective formation operated constantly, such that even Hua Chengzan had managed to infiltrate this place in the past, let alone a Daemon General. All of this basically pointed to something being amiss.

Two patrolling disciples discussed quietly,

"Senior brother, has third senior brother and the others returned?"

"They haven't. They're probably going to be labelled as deserters. The daemon is far too scary."

"If you're so afraid, why'd you return? Are you afraid of being hunted down by the sect? Don't tell me you're taking the master-disciple relationship seriously!"

"What would you know? I'm not afraid of being hunted down by the sect at all. It's just far too difficult being an independent cultivator. Even master is brave enough to return, so why wouldn't I be too?"

At this moment, a figure emerged from behind a tree and appeared on the mountain path.

"Who is it?" "Senior brother, I- I think that's daemon qi!" "Oh no, it's a daemon!"

They finally made out the person using the moonlight. They did not see a pair of sharp horns on his head, nor did they see an ice blade in his hand. They did not take note of any special features. They only saw a pair of scarlet eyes flickering in the darkness, giving them an impression even deeper than the moon and stars.

Li Qingshan did not disguise himself at all, whether it was his daemon qi or figure. He just walked up the mountain like that.

The two disciples stood on the path and stared at him as he walked over towards them. Even their courage to flee or to seek help had collapsed. They felt like they were watching a mountain collapse on them.

"Excuse me," Li Qingshan said softly after arriving in front of them.

Only then did the two of them return to their senses. They scampered out of the way, just watching helplessly as Li Qingshan continued his way up. They glanced at each other before rushing down the mountain together.

The Green Vine mountain was just too dangerous. They would never return, even if their lives depended on it!

In the main hall, the Green Vine Elder snapped open his eyes, which shined in the darkness and flickered with unease. He only settled down after looking around.

Li Qingshan had only just reached the mountainside when all the disciples had already become alarmed.

Diao Fei was covered in cold sweat as he forcefully composed himself, barely able to rile together all the disciples. Since the sect master had not fled, he could not flee. However, all he was bold enough to do was watch from afar as Li Qingshan made his way to the mountain top.

“Green Vine you old bastard, today is the day you die!”

Li Qingshan’s lips curled into a smile, revealing his long teeth as he called out. It boomed through the clouds as daemon qi surged into the air, making the entire mountain shake.

“How dare you, wretched daemon! You’ve killed my fellow cultivators, and you’ve insulted my sect. Today, I will make you witness my power!” The Green Vine Elder responded in a similarly loud manner. “All disciples of the Green Vine mountain, disperse into the distance. There is no need for you to interfere. Watch as I slay a daemon!”

In the hall, two voices conversed.

“Is it his real body?”

“From the daemon qi, I think so?”

With a swing of the ice blade, Li Qingshan pointed it at the ground and climbed up several hundred stairs with a single step, causing three long, red and blue streaks to trail behind him. He arrived on the peak in a flash and shattered the ground. His blade rose up, pointing towards the sky.

A blade of light whistled through the air, illuminating the gloomy hall and the Green Vine Elder’s sunken face.

Chapter 384 - Seeing Fu Qingjin Again

“Wretched daemon, today is actually the day you die!”

The Green Vine staff pointed down, shattering the attack.

“Greenwood as a Dragon, the Dragon Battles in the Wilderness!”

The Green Vine Elder slammed his hand and stood up. He erupted with green light that extended and swelled around him, turning him into a green dragon complete with horns and scales. The dragon’s roars boomed as it soared out of the main hall.

A bolt of lightning shot across the sky, and a great, black curtain had already pulled over the starry night sky at a certain moment. Rain crashed down as the wild gales swept through the surroundings.

A dragon moved through the world, accompanied with rain and wind.

The green dragon stared down from above, shining with green light. It brandished its claws and fangs, scattering Li Qingshan’s daemon qi. It was imposing, just like a real god.

“An arcane artifact!”

Li Qingshan's eyes narrowed. Only arcane artifacts possessed such power. The essence of greenwood lay in the east. Upon being condensed to the limit, it could transform into a dragon. This was not just the power of an arcane artifact, but the materialisation of the Green Vine Elder's entire life of cultivation.

Li Qingshan's vision darkened. Under the roaring surge of the dragon, it seemed like rolling, green waves, sweeping up the clouds and rain in an unstoppable manner.

"Die, wretched daemon!"

Boom!

Millions of rain droplets shot off in all directions, piercing countless trees and branches.

Li Qingshan gave up on his blade and directly used his fist, smashing it against the top of the green dragon's head! Power surged through his entire body through his feet, but even with that, he still struggled against the dragon slightly. He was pushed down the mountain, leaving behind two deep trails with his feet.

Li Qingshan stopped looking down on him. He really was the leader of the three elders, a Foundation Establishment cultivator who had cultivated for centuries. When he used his ultimate technique, its power really was something else. Li Qingshan grinned through his teeth,

"If you hadn't played dead that day, it actually wouldn't have been so easy for me to kill them if the three of you worked together!"

"Shut up, wretched daemon! The Green Dragon Slays the Daemon!" The Green Vine Elder was driven mad from anger. He had completely lost his composure. He unfurled his arms and green light flowed out of them like a flood.

The green dragon shone brightly. It coiled over, entangling with Li Qingshan while digging its four dragon claws deeply into the ground. Thousands of vines sprouted from its body, anchoring deeply into the mountain. Even with Li Qingshan's startling physical strength, he struggled to unleash it. The dragon wanted to rip Li Qingshan apart then and there.

Boom! There was another clap of thunder in the air, but it was unable to drown out Li Qingshan bellow, "Tremor!"

The shockwaves expanded, kicking up visible ripples on the green dragon and making it growl.

The disciples who watched on from afar all felt themselves shake. Looking over, the Green Vine mountain was actually shaking slightly, as if it was trembling before the great power of the daemon.

Li Qingshan shook off the dragon before rushing into the air.

But just a few seconds later, another dragon's roar rang out, rising up from below his feet. The green dragon coiled up and pursued him once more, completely unscathed. It opened its mouth and unleashed a great blast.

Li Qingshan frowned and used the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell. The green light suddenly turned into thousands of vines after arriving near him, entangling him and pulling him down; it was like a frog preying on an insect, extending its tongue.

With a flash of his blade, Li Qingshan cut through the tongue, but even more vines immediately extended over, like an endless, green tidal wave.

He swung the ice blade madly like a sharp wheel that spun at high speeds, tearing through wave after wave, but it was endless.

He wants to waste away my strength! I need to get the person behind all of this! Li Qingshan guessed the Green Vine Elder's plan. Taking in a deep breath, he shot towards the green dragon and let out a great roar.

The Tiger Demon's Killing Roar!

Wild winds surged as the thunder became negligible.

A black pillar of wind spun rapidly, rushing into the green dragon's mouth and immediately expanding to twice its size. Thousands of wind blades cut through the green dragon, tearing its body to pieces.

At the same time, a pair of half-transparent wings of wind unfurled on Li Qingshan's back. With a flap, he vanished from the sky.

In the next moment, he appeared in the main hall, wielding his blade with both hands above the Green Vine Elder's head and swinging down!

The second innate ability of the tiger demon—Like Giving Wings to a Tiger!

Using the wild wind as wings, he reined in the fierce gales and soared through the sky.

Li Qingshan's scarlet hair danced like fire as his pupils had constricted to the size of needles. Murderousness surged out, which he channeled into his blade. I don't care what your trap is. As long as I cut you down, all of it is futile!

"Die!"

"Talisman Formation of Protection!"

The Green Vine Elder was surprised, but not flustered. With a great swing of his hand, seven talismans lined up in a single row, shining brightly and turning into seven layers of light.

One layer, two layers, three layers! The ice blade cut through three layers of light easily before slowing down drastically. The swing rang out of power.

"You wretched daemon!" The Green Vine Elder stared at Li Qingshan in hatred and fear. His hands formed several seals consecutively, and the green dragon that had been ripped apart outside the hall actually reassembled, flying towards the hall.

"You just keep pulling tricks from your sleeves, don't you?" Li Qingshan made up his mind. Ignoring the threatening green dragon from behind, he released the power of the Spirit Turtle's Profound Shell and the wings of wind. He roared out as he channelled all of his daemon qi, power, and killing intent into the blade.

Four layers, five layers, six layers! The layers of light were cut through one by one, such that only one thin layer remained.

The Green Vine Elder immediately recalled the cold feeling of being cut through by the blade last time. He did not want to experience it a second time. He summoned the green dragon desperately, which rammed into Li Qingshan's back heavily.

Bang! There was a grunt, followed by the faint cracking of bones.

"Thank you!" Li Qingshan spurted with blood. Completely ignoring his wounds, he used the force to swing down harder.

The last layer of light shattered!

"Save me, sir!" The Green Vine Elder cried out. If he lost his head, even he could not recover.

The main hall that stood still even within the storm twisted, changed, and vanished. It was actually just an illusion.

A green sword appeared out of nowhere. Green light flowed through its edge, slowly drawing an arc before returning to its sheathe, like it was all just a dream.

The shattered blade spiraled into the air and planted into the ground.

A thin, red mark appeared on Li Qingshan's throat. He remained calm, glancing at the broken blade in his hand before glancing at Fu Qingjin beside him. Only then did he radiate with chilling anger.

So this was the true form of the trap—Fu Qingjin!

"You wretched daemon! You'll suffer a horrible death now!" The Green Vine Elder was overjoyed, like a great burden had just been lifted from his shoulders, but he still felt slightly uneasy for some reason. He had a feeling that Li Qingshan was not as powerful or terrifying as last time. Looking at Li Qingshan's calm expression, his unease intensified.

No, impossible!

"I hope you can keep protecting him. There will be a day when I personally cut him down, when I personally cut you down. Oh right, my name's Northmoon." Li Qingshan straightened himself out, and he gradually faded away.

"He's just a clone?" Luminescence flowed through Fu Qingjin's eyes. If just a clone possessed so much strength, it truly would be startling. He could vaguely sense that failing to kill him last time might have been a very great mistake.

On the distant lake, Li Qingshan opened his eyes as he sat on the surface of the water. He rubbed his neck subconsciously.

"How'd it go?" Xiao An asked.

"I almost killed that old bastard, but someone interfered in the end, and the clone died. He's also an old friend, by the name of Fu Qingjin." Li Qingshan's eyes shone with cold light. He was the one who had lured out Milliped and forced Milliped into blowing up his daemon core. His grievances with him ran even deeper than his grievances with the three elders.

If he worked with Xiao An and climbed up the Green Vine mountain again, could they kill him?

“Do you want to do it?” Xiao An’s eyes flashed with firelight.

“No. The sword is just too sharp. Probably even the Spirit Turtle’s Profound Shell can’t block a few strokes from it. He probably didn’t fight seriously last time.”

Li Qingshan was interested, but after a moment of thought, he shook his head in the end. From their clash this time, he had gained a deeper understanding of Fu Qingjin’s strength instead. He was powerful as a person, and his sword was even more powerful. If they merged as one, he could unleash extraordinarily terrifying power.

The sword might have already surpassed the level of arcane artifacts and reached the level of arcane treasures. He had to properly investigate the Ten Renowned Swords of the Sword Collection palace once he got back.

When he was struck by the sword, Li Qingshan felt like not even a tenth of the sword’s power had been unleashed.

Originally, it should have been completely impossible for a Foundation Establishment cultivator to wield an arcane treasure. However, this impossibility became a possibility with the Sword Collection palace’s cultivation methods and legacies.

During those two years, Li Qingshan was not the only one improving. Fu Qingjin, a great genius who wielded a renowned sword, was improving too, at a similarly startling rate. The more he coalesced with the Green Ruins sword, the more powerful he would become.

“Fair enough. We can take him on once I refine a string of Skull Prayer Beads.”

Xiao An expressed her agreement. Li Qingshan was still a slight bit away from reaching the third layer of the tiger demon. By then, both of them would take a step forward with their strength.

“It’s best if you refine your bone sword too. Regular weapons won’t be enough when you clash with him. I also need to get my hands on a suitable weapon.”

The ice blade forged from the Whale’s Ingestion of Water was just barely satisfactory. Neither its toughness nor sharpness was even close to what Li Qingshan required. It was fine against weaker opponents, but against an opponent like Fu Qingjin, who was already extremely strong even without a weapon, he would suffer far too great of an disadvantage.

However, Li Qingshan was still in a good mood. Through this process, he had verified that he was not a lamb to the slaughter like before at the very least. Even if there was nothing he could do about Fu Qingjin right now, there was nothing Fu Qingjin could do about him either.

“Fuck it. It’s not like I have anything better to do. I’ll send my clone every day to try to assassinate him. I’d like to see just how many times you’ll be able to protect that old bastard!”

Xiao An smiled.

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“Fellow Fu, how is this going to work out? If that wretched daemon sends his clone over daily to assassinate me, what am I supposed to do?” The Green Vine Elder was filled with worry. He truly lived up to his title as the wisest among the three elders. He immediately thought of this.

“I’ll help you set up a Duality Formation of Disintegration on your Green Vine mountain. If a Daemon General becomes trapped in it, all that’ll await it is death. You don’t have to worry.”

“Sigh, looks like that’s all we can do then. Though, if I, a mighty sect master, become so frightened by a Daemon General that I’m afraid to even go out, will I still have any dignity left? Will the Daemon Suppression alliance have any dignity left?”

“The master of the palace has already begun negotiating with the Dragon King of Ink Sea. This matter won’t just end like this. If the Daemon race refuses to explain themselves, then war is all there’ll be.”

The Green Vine Elder thought to himself, Now that’s what you really want. If that really happens, it’ll probably become even more impossible for me to stroll around freely outside the sect.

“Sect master.” Diao Fei presented himself before the Green Vine Elder with the disciples. He did his best to suppress his fear and ignore the mess on top of the Green Vine mountain.

Yu Shukuang was at the very back. He made up his mind. No, I need to find an excuse to leave the Green Vine mountain and seek shelter under Li Qingshan.

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“... I feel like that, yep, is very wrong. We should follow the Treaty of Kings. Humans and daemons should cohabit in peace...” Wang Pushi clutched the report in his hand as his brows crumpled into a mess. In the end, he erupted with rage and flung the report of just a few measly pages in front of Li Qingshan.

“What the hell did you write? Why don’t you open your sh*tty eyes and count for me? Is that ten thousand characters?”

Chapter 385 - Identity and Suspicion

Every single character on the report was the size of a cup, and the handwriting was horrid. It all seemed distorted, like homework that a young child had completed mindlessly. The content only seemed to reinforce this.

“It’s very wrong for daemons to kill humans... it’s not like the Green Vine mountain is completely right either. Why do they have to hold that Herb Gathering ceremony or whatever it’s called... Of course, it’s still wrong for daemons to kill humans. They need to be punished...” It was the same few sentences written in different ways, making no clear sense and swaying both ways.

“Commander, it’s not that I don’t want to write it. Sect master Green Vine just won’t cooperate, so I don’t know what to write either. Surely I can’t just make things up!” Li Qingshan laid out his hands and said helplessly.

“I don’t care. You’ll write it even if you have to make it up! Are you the commander or am I the commander?” Wang Pushi brought out his authority as the commander and forced Li Qingshan to yield.

“That’s far too unreasonable of you!”

“Hmph, where’s your arrogance now, kid? Now you understand what more authority means, don’t you?” Wang Pushi sneered.

Li Qingshan was angered too. He slammed the desk. “There was no point in the mission in the first place! What the hell do their deaths have to do with me? It’s not like I know them. The Green Vine Elder doesn’t take me, a puny Qi Practitioner, seriously at all. Where am I supposed to find so many of my own thoughts?!”

Right as the two of them glared at each other angrily, a gentle breeze ruffled their hair. They looked back at the same time. Before they knew it, Gu Yanying was already sitting on the long bench in the corner of the room with one leg on top of the other.

“Commander Gu.” Both of them started explaining at the same time. Wang Pushi hurried over from behind the desk and bowed towards Gu Yanying.

“More authority!” Li Qingshan sighed gently and received a vicious glance from Wang Pushi.

“Little bro Qingshan, do you have any problems with the mission from me?” Gu Yanying arrived in front of the desk in a flash and picked up the thin report.

“Your m- I don’t. I just feel that ten thousand characters is too much.” Li Qingshan was unable to grasp her movements at all. Compared to her, Bloodshadow seemed like he was crawling along the ground. Even if Li Qingshan transformed, he would not be her opponent. And, faced with her mysterious speed, he probably could not even escape.

“Ten thousand characters?” Gu Yanying smiled widely. “Old Wang, you’re abusing your position to resolve personal grievances, aren’t you?”

“I would never. Your mission should have been completed with one hundred percent effort. He has let you and the kindness you’ve shown him down with this half-assed report.” Wang Pushi completely ignored Li Qingshan’s furious glare.

“You returned right after you met the Green Vine Elder?” Gu Yanying asked suddenly. Her gaze became as sharp as a hawk’s, as if she could see through the very minds of people.

“Yes.” Li Qingshan lowered his head, afraid to make eye contact with her just in case he gave himself away.

“Then you missed out on quite the show. The daemon visited the Green Vine mountain again. He almost killed the Green Vine Elder again, but Fu Qingjin interfered.” Gu Yanying leaned against the side of the table and crossed her arms.

“Commander, was the daemon slain?” Wang Pushi asked.

“He wasn’t. All he sent was a clone.”

“Just a clone possesses so much strength!”

"If his original body launched an attack, he might even end up eating Fu Qingjin too!" Gu Yanying glanced at Li Qingshan with a smile.

Li Qingshan listened quietly, but he had a feeling that Gu Yanying's gaze had been fixed on him. Once upon a time, this had been the attention he could only hope for, but now, he felt very pressured.

Gu Yanying changed the topic. "Little bro Qingshan, tell me, just what is the daemon thinking?"

Li Qingshan said, "He wants to die."

"Really?"

"He's basically digging his own grave like this, defying the Treaty of Kings and disturbing the peace right now. Even daemons won't spare him." Li Qingshan raised his head and stared into Gu Yanying's eyes. He could feel that Gu Yanying already knew something, as she had specially demanded for a report—a clear attempt to stir him up.

As a result, he composed himself a little. If it were a blessing, then he would not have to worry about it being a curse. But if it were a curse, it would be inevitable anyway.

Wang Pushi butted in and said, "How can it be that simple, kid? If the Dragon King of Ink Sea would hand over his clansmen so easily, he wouldn't be one of the Ten Daemon Kings! If this is handled badly, it'll probably lead to war."

"The exact reason why I'm here is to handle this. No matter what the daemon is thinking, I hope he can settle down a little," Gu Yanying said as she made her way out. Li Qingshan's heart tensed up before he let out a sigh of relief.

However, she ended up stopping and looking back. "Oh right, be sure to rewrite it. Ten thousand characters, without a single character missing."

Wang Pushi smiled and patted the stunned Li Qingshan's shoulder.

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What does Gu Yanying know? How much does she know? Should I run off and avoid this altogether? Though, it looks like she has no intentions of getting to the bottom of this, so if I just leave like this, that'll be far too cowardly. It'll make her laugh at me.

Speaking of which, she's half a daemon too! Although she's a little different from a half-daemon like me, she still might find me to be more relatable, right? Not only won't she harm me, but she'll even treat me very kindly and generously instead. If it weren't for the fact that I already have a woman right now, this might have been a good opportunity to get close to her.

Stop dreaming. That woman isn't some kind of goddess from your dreams. She has absolutely no issue with including the deaths of several tens of thousand of people in her plans. Who do you think you are to her anyway?

On Cloudwisp island, Li Qingshan stared at the verdant bamboo outside the window as his thoughts ran wild. Afterwards, he lowered his head and stared at the white paper on the table. He racked his brains and sighed painfully. "Ten thousand characters!"

Li Qingshan did not end up choosing to leave the academy. No matter what Gu Yanying was thinking, she did not seem to hold any bad intentions. He had a feeling that if she really did decide on dealing with him, he would be doomed even if he fled to the world of daemons.

His human identity brought him far too many benefits. If he abandoned it, his cultivation speed would drop drastically. That would be unforgivable. Even if it came with some risk, he would still maintain his identity without hesitation.

“My dear disciple, are you writing a novel?” Liu Chuanfeng shuffled over and poured him some tea, showing great enthusiasm.

“I’m not.”

“Then what are you doing?”

“This is a report for the Hawkwolf Guard.” Li Qingshan told him the whole story.

“How difficult can that be? I’ll help you out. I’m best at something like this.” Liu Chuanfeng patted his chest.

“Alright then.” Li Qingshan was taken aback.

Liu Chuanfeng immediately sat down. With a splash of ink, the brush took off in his hand. Within two hours, a report of ten thousand characters emerged fresh off the press.

“Here. You just have to copy it out, and you’ll be good.”

“Thank you.” Li Qingshan accepted it and had a read. The content covered a great extent, and the personal arguments went into great detail. With flowery language, it ventured deeply into the meaning behind the Treaty of King’s existence and the conflicting relationship between humans and daemons. Li Qingshan found it to be very inspirational, and he began to admire Liu Chuanfeng a little more too.

“Then, my dear disciple, I want to discuss something with you,” Liu Chuanfeng rubbed his hands and said with embarrassment.

“What’s the matter?”

“Can you lend me some spiritual stones?” Liu Chuanfeng filled up Li Qingshan’s cup again.

“What do you need spiritual stones for? Don’t tell me you’re going to the Parlour of Clouds and Rain again?”

“I’m not. I want to buy a True Spirit pill so that I can establish a foundation.” Liu Chuanfeng had constantly tried to establish a foundation in the past few months, but it never ended in success. The main issue was he was very poor and unable to afford a True Spirit pill. Although he had already restored some of his dignity as the leader of the school of Novels, novels could not turn into spiritual stones unfortunately, which was why he was still very poor and unable to afford True Spirit pills.

The power of belief he had gathered could be used for cultivation, but it was useless for breakthroughs. Just when he was distressed, he saw Li Qingshan return and immediately remembered that this disciple of his seemed to be quite wealthy.

Li Qingshan was taken aback. To think that a mighty school leader would be reduced to such a state one day. He sure was pitiful.

“If you can’t, then just forget about it.” Liu Chuanfeng reddened. Since when did school leaders borrow spiritual stones from their disciples? He had no idea when he would be able to return it either.

“I can’t lend you spiritual stones, but I can lend you two True Spirit pills!” Li Qingshan said after some thought.

“R- really?” Liu Chuanfeng sank into dejection when he heard the first half, but after hearing the whole thing, he actually struggled to believe his ears. Since when did Qi Practitioners who were willing to lend out True Spirit pills exist?

“Of course.” As he said that, Li Qingshan had already taken out two embroidered boxes and placed them on the table.

“A- are you really giving them to me?” Liu Chuanfeng gulped. He opened a box, and sure enough, a True Spirit pill he had been dreaming of for a very long time laid inside, glistening with light in an extremely tempting manner.

“I’m not giving them away. You’ll have to return them in the future.” Li Qingshan reiterated.

“Alright, alright. I’ll definitely return it. I’ll return it before you need them!” Liu Chuanfeng was deeply touched. Although Li Qingshan had never mentioned it, he could imagine just how much effort it had taken for Li Qingshan to obtain these two True Spirit pills to prepare for his breakthrough in the future. Now, he was lending them to him for free without the slightest hesitation, without even writing up a deed. What level of trust was that?

He felt a lump in his throat. He placed his hand on Li Qingshan’s shoulder. “Qingshan, to be able to have a disciple like you under me, I truly am the most fortunate master in the world!”

“You don’t have to be like this. If you successfully establish a foundation, the entire school of Novels will benefit. I’ll benefit from your glory too.”

Li Qingshan still had around forty True Spirit pills on him, so lending out two was perfectly fine.

As for Liu Chuanfeng potentially renegeing on the debt, he had not even considered it. However, it was not because of his trust in Liu Chuanfeng’s moral character, but because of his trust in his own strength. If he refused to pay it back, he could pay it back with his life instead—You bastard, I helped you out of kindness, yet you actually screwed me over instead! Die!

“Oh right, don’t let anyone else know that they’re from me, or you’ll have to return four pills.” It would be better if fewer people knew he possessed True Spirit pills.

“Alright, I won’t tell anyone!” Liu Chuanfeng’s eye rims had already reddened from emotion as he said with a trembling voice. His dear disciple was clearly trying to keep this a secret so that he, a school leader, would not have to embarrass himself! What care! What consideration!

“Qingshan, I’m going to go!” Liu Chuanfeng said nothing else. He stood up and made his way out. A translucent tear even slid down from the corner of his eyes.

“Do you really have to be so extra?” Li Qingshan muttered to himself as he scratched his head.

“What’s so extra?” A familiar voice rang out from outside the window.

“Qiongzhi!” Li Qingshan looked over, and a familiar face grinned at him from the window. Who else could it be apart from Han Qiongzhi?

“Oi, kid, you haven’t done anything unspeakable behind my back recently, have you? You better come clean. I’ve heard about it all already!” Han Qiongzhi held back her excitement and said with fake seriousness.

Chapter 386 - Paying Respects to the Father-in-law (One)

Li Qingshan directly arrived before the window and wrapped his hand around her waist, lifting her into the room.

“What are you- Hmmph!”

Before Han Qiongzhi had even finished speaking, her mouth was sealed up by his lips. She no longer held herself back either, embracing his wide back and returning the gesture passionately. They collapsed on the ground together and rolled around a few times.

“I missed you so much. Why did it take you so long to emerge? It’s just the tenth layer. You’re so slow!” Li Qingshan leaned on her body and smiled from ear to ear. He kissed her again after that.

“How dare you say that to me? If it weren’t for you, why would I have taken so long in the first place? What’re you stripping for?” Han Qiongzhi rolled over on top of him and pinched his waist viciously.

“It’s all my fault. I’m offering a humble apology by punishing myself right now!” As he said that, Li Qingshan had already taken off his upper garment, revealing his sturdy body. Then he began to undo her waist band.

“Then what’re you stripping me for?” Han Qiongzhi grabbed his hand and shot a glance at him.

“You’ve made me guard an empty nest for so long, so shouldn’t you offer a humble apology too?” Li Qingshan rolled over, now on top of her. He grabbed her hands and pressed them down beside her.

“Don’t you even think you can get away with this! Tell me exactly, what were you doing during this period? And what’s going on between you and Ru Xin? If you don’t tell me, don’t even think about touching a hair on me!” Han Qiongzhi put up a struggle, but she was actually unable to break free. What strength! He was still as rude and unreasonable as ever!

“Do you believe me or not?” Li Qingshan bent over and stared into her eyes. He had gone through many tests and resisted many urges, but as long as he could embrace her with a clear conscience, it was all worth it.

Han Qiongzhi also gazed into his bright, passionate eyes. She already believed him, but she still shook her head gently with a smile. “I don’t.”

“Alright you, Han Qiongzhi. How dare you doubt your husband? I need to punish you properly!” Li Qingshan feigned anger, tickling her while peeking at her sensitive regions. His eyes and hands worked together.

“Alright, alright. I believe you.” Han Qiongzhi put up a struggle, but she was no match for his strength. She giggled as she breathed heavily.

“As long as you believe me. I’ve maintained my purity for your sake. If you don’t believe me, you’re welcome to see for yourself.” Li Qingshan raised his hand, and all the windows shut themselves. Then he waved his hand, and a barrier of faint, blue light enveloped the room.

“How would you like me to see for myself? Hey, stop!” Han Qiongzhi struggled powerlessly. Clothes flew off her body as she blushed more and more, but all she felt was joy, as well as a hint of eagerness.

Before long, the ground was covered in clothes. A beautiful person lay on the ground. Two scorching hot bodies entangled together, rousing each others’ passion. They touched and embraced each other tenderly, as if they wanted to become one.

After a while of intimate contact, the two of them laid together in a close embrace and told each other their feelings.

Han Qiongzhi laid on Li Qingshan’s chest and blinked. “What did you call yourself earlier?”

“What?” All Li Qingshan focused on was caressing her slender, beautiful legs that were no different from a piece of art, so he immediately received a punch to the gut. He shifted his gaze back to her. “What’re you doing?”

“Doesn’t it hurt?” Han Qiongzhi was surprised. In order to get him out of the state of just thinking with his crotch, she had used true qi, but it was completely ineffective.

“Of course it hurts! Ahh, it hurts so much!” Li Qingshan said without the slightest sincerity before lowering his head and kissing her elegant neck.

“Don’t brush me off!” Han Qiongzhi pretended to be furious. She straightened herself out and threw another punch. This time, she was a little more vicious and used half her strength.

However, all she saw was Li Qingshan’s eyes landing on her breasts that jiggled with her action. She was vexed. “If you keep this up, I’m going to put my clothes back on.” She looked at her fist, basically doubting whether she had actually reached the tenth layer or not.

“Alright, alright. I’ll listen! And, it’s not like you can blame me.” He had a naked beauty in his arms, yet he could not do anything to her. There was not a single man who could remain focused in such a predicament!

“You mentioned “husband” earlier. Have I married you?” Han Qiongzhi said furiously, but she was very shy too.

Li Qingshan’s eyes lit up. He gently moved Han Qiongzhi to the side before putting on his clothes.

“Where are you going?” Han Qiongzhi was surprised.

“To see your father. Just wait here. I’ll be back in fifteen minutes. You don’t have to put your clothes back on!” Li Qingshan smiled confidently.

He had once sworn he would propose marriage once she emerged. Then, he would be able to do whatever he wanted.

“Stop right there! Are you marrying me just for that?” Han Qiongzhi found this both infuriating and funny.

“I’m just kidding. Though, I am quite eager, not just for that.” Li Qingshan grabbed her hands and smiled. She was not the most beautiful woman he had seen, nor was she the gentlest or strongest, but she was the woman who treated him the best.

If he simply wanted to fulfill his desires, it would be far too easy. Both the Parlour of Clouds and Rain on the surface or the night roamers below could allow him to do whatever he wanted.

However, there was not a single woman who could replace her position in his heart, not even Gu Yanying. He was not someone insatiable. He was willing to spend his entire life with a single person. Right now, he wanted her as his wife, so he did not hesitate at all.

Han Qiongzhi was enchanted by him. She embraced him gently. “Tonight, my father will be in the estate, celebrating for me.”

“Just who’s the one in a hurry now?” Li Qingshan smiled and received another punch from her. This time, Li Qingshan refused to back down, so he landed a slap on her plump, snow-white buttock with a smack, immediately leaving behind a red mark. He wanted to show her what’s what.

Han Qiongzhi yelled in pain and wanted revenge, but Li Qingshan pulled her in, and they became entangled together again.

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Thirty-five kilometers away from Clear River city was a mountain called Tiger Hill.

Tiger Hill mountain was not particularly tall, only standing at an altitude of a few hundred meters, but it covered a great expanse, several thousand square kilometers at that. The gentle slope was like a tiger’s back, holding up countless buildings. This was where the Han estate stood.

Walls that stood thirty meters tall split the place into the inner estate and outer estate. Turrets stood plentifully with strict security, which made it seem more like a fortress. Even within the dark of night, it was lit with lanterns.

A towering arch stood on top of the several hundred steps. A plaque hung high above, detailing two words—General’s Estate. There were no stone lions at the entrance; instead, they had a pair of tigers sculpted from white jade. They laid on the stone platform vividly like living creatures, glaring at the strangers nearby.

The tiger was a representation of the school of the Military. Many tablets for controlling armies were created in the form of a tiger, so they were called tiger tablets. And, the white tiger represented the metal element, which made it even more so a god of war, a god of slaughter.

TL: A reference to the four symbols of Chinese mythology, the Azure Dragon, the Vermillion Bird, the White Tiger, and the Black Tortoise. The Azure Dragon represents wood, the Vermillion Bird represents fire, the White Tiger represents metal, and the Black Tortoise represents water.

“This is your home?” Li Qingshan raised his head and sighed over the size and prosperity of the Han family.

“What about it? You’ve made quite the gain by following me.”

“Just gaining you is enough. I don’t care about the others.”

“Hmph, what a boast. Those who are ignorant would even think you’ve established a foundation already.” Han Qiongzi glanced at him, but she liked his confidence and arrogance the most. Compared to those suitors who wanted to climb on board with the Han family, she much preferred a valiant man like him.

“I suddenly feel a little nervous.” Li Qingshan took out his gift from his hundred treasures pouch and breathed out.

Han Qiongzi had prepared the gift. It suited old father-in-law Han’s tastes. It was neither too little or too much, just perfect. It led to some more teasing from Li Qingshan about how eager she was, but he was truly grateful for this.

“You’re a person who gets nervous?” Han Qiongzi became rather curious.

“It’s all your fault. Qiongzi, what if your father refuses?” This was not a random thought of his. Instead, Li Qingshan had a premonition. The complicated information in the turtle shell had indicated some kind of omen that this would not go as smoothly as he imagined.

“He won’t refuse you.” Han Qiongzi was filled with confidence. There was no reason for Han Anjun to be dissatisfied with him. Over all these years, she had never seen her father be so satisfied with anyone. Even if he was considering for the Han family, he would still agree to it!

“What if he actually refuses?” Li Qingshan teased.

“If he actually refuses, we’ll elope.” Han Qiongzi looked at Li Qingshan with a burning gaze. This passion scorched like fire. It was unstoppable.

“You better be careful about being used and then abandoned.” Li Qingshan’s heart had melted. Just who could abandon a girl like her?

“Then make sure you perish with me!” Han Qiongzi shot a glare at him.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clank! Clank! Clank! Clank! Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

At this moment, the alarm bell went off and gongs filled the air. The entire Han family was alarmed and mobilised.

Li Qingshan was surprised. “What’s going on?”

“There’s an invading enemy!” Han Qiongzi was not surprised at all, just vexed and powerless.

In the Han family, these drills happened often. The members of the Han family would be on the defence, while the army of the Han family under Han Anjun would attack. She was familiar with this, except she never expected it to happen tonight.

“Don’t tell me I’m the enemy!” Li Qingshan pointed at himself. He already knew that his future father-in-law, Han Anjun, was a standard battle freak. Was he testing his future son-in-law with this?

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Within the inner estate of the Han family, Han Anjun was clad in armour as he held his sword, seated in the main hall; it was like he was about to confront an enemy.

Today was different from the standard drill. Valiant guards stood sternly to the two sides. All of their faces were hidden within their helmets as they stared straight ahead. They were not regular members of the Han family. Instead, they were known as the real army of the Han family. They had once suppressed daemons and otherfolk and subdued heretic cultivation sects under Han Anjun’s lead. Every single one of them was battle-worn. Just by standing there, a feeling of bleakness rushed into the air.

This time, Han Anjun had actually mobilised both the members of the Han family and the army of the Han family for Li Qingshan.

Han Tiewi wielded a spear as he stood in shining, silver armour, which accentuated his handsomeness and soldierly bearing.

“Under my orders, even if you have to die, stop him.” Han Anjun said sternly, as if the thing about to rush in was not his son-in-law, but an actual army.

“Yes, sir!” Han Tiewi accepted the orders and led the soldiers away.

The clacking of boots against the ground and the jingling of armour rang out together. In a uniform formation, they turned into a river of steel and surged out.

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“No, it’s us.” Han Qiongzhi held his hand.

Li Qingshan realised it too and held her hand firmly. From today onwards, there would be someone else who would be fighting beside him.

The doors swung open loudly. Li Qingshan and Han Qiongzhi exchanged glances before advancing forward together.

In the turrets, groups of archers drew their bows to the maximum.

Inside the doors, a group of soldiers wielded spears and dagger-axes, standing in formation.

A total of four specks of light lit up in the eyes of the two white, jade tigers. They moved their bodies and stood up from stone platforms. Standing at six meters tall, they were extremely imposing. They let out a roar at the sky and lunged over.

“Can I throw the gift away?” Li Qingshan gazed at the lunging tigers and turned his head slightly, asking Han Qiongzhi softly. A damned father-in-law like him was not worthy of a gift from him.

“No.”

“Fine then!”

Chapter 387 - Paying Respects to the Father-in-law (Two)

Li Qingshan passed by the two white tigers with a clash.

The white tigers did not slow down, now targeting Han Qiongzhi. There were not living creatures, so they had no concept of enemies. Once they were activated, they would rip apart everything in front of them.

Han Qiongzhi prepared a technique. She did not even look at the incoming tigers. Just as the fierce gale had ruffled her hair and the claws had arrived before her, they came to a screeching halt.

Li Qingshan extended both hands, grabbing the two tigers by the tail. The white tigers growled and swung their claws around, but they were unable to advance another inch forward. They turned around and lunged at Li Qingshan instead.

With an explosive bellow, Li Qingshan began to spin like a spinning top, pulling the tails until they were taut. He actually tossed the two white jade tigers that weighed as much as a thousand tonnes into the air, over a hundred meters away. With a rumble, they formed two deep craters.

“What strength!” “No wonder he’s bold enough to propose marriage to the Han family!”

This move of his startled all the members of the Han family above the archway. They all took action in a hurry, unleashing a flurry of arrows.

Thrum! Thrum! Thrum! Thrum! Thrum! The sound of released bows were enough to pierce rock.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! The arrows formed a dark cloud.

“Bird of Flames!” Han Qiongzhi called out.

Li Qingshan’s vision dimmed before lighting up again. A bird of fire took off into the air, unfurling its thirty-meter-long wings of flames and smashing through the dark cloud. It rushed up the archway and erupted with fire with a great boom, forcing back the archers and throwing the army into disarray.

“That’s your home, for heaven’s sake.” Li Qingshan glanced back.

“Hmph, I’d rather go without a home like this!”

Under the gloomy archway, almost a hundred armoured soldiers stood in formation with dagger-axes, radiating with murderousness.

“They’re here! On guard!”

An eighth layer Qi Practitioner, an old man with a downwards slanting mustache, bellowed out thunderously. The dagger-axes drooped down, pointing straight ahead.

Two figures, Li Qingshan and Han Qiongzhi, walked in slowly, just like lovers on a stroll. They even muttered among themselves.

“Is he really just the gatekeeper?” Li Qingshan gazed at the battle formation in slight amazement. By gatekeeper, it referred to the person who watched the entrance of the estate. He had never seen such a mighty gatekeeper before with such a high cultivation.

“We normally call it the gatekeeping army. There are a total of eight divisions, guarding the eight gates. The commander is the hundred-man commander of the gate.” Han Qiongzhi explained with a smile.

“Young miss, this has nothing to do with you, so please back away, just in case you become injured. Kid, if you have the balls, come at us alone. What kind of man are you supposed to be, relying on a woman? I’ll teach you what delusional dreaming means!”

The hundred-man commander called out and waved his dagger-axe around, cutting through the air swiftly. His mustache danced around on top of his lip as he radiated with vigour. He did not seem senile at all.

“Hundred-man commander, this has always been a matter that involves both of us. What would be the point if I got in alone?” Normally, Han Qiongzhi would have to refer to him as grandfather, but now that they confronted each other today like enemies, there was no room for personal feelings. She only referred to him by his military rank.

“What’s wrong?” Han Qiongzhi suddenly discovered that Li Qingshan was staring at her with shining eyes, even touching her face.

“Nothing. I just find you extremely pretty today!”

“You’re still talking nonsense at a time like this.” Han Qiongzhi reddened slightly. She was just about to go up to receive the enemy, but Li Qingshan grabbed her shoulder.

“Leave here to me. Recover some strength instead. I’d like to show this hundred-man commander what a visiting son-in-law is unstoppable means!”

Han Qiongzhi burst out laughing. This guy still joked around at a time like this. “Go easy on him.”

“Alright!” “No!” Li Qingshan and the hundred-man commander answered at the same time. They exchanged glances, one smiling and one furious.

“Kill!” The hundred-man commander pointed with his dagger-axe, and the army of one hundred behind him erupted with a bellow at the same time. “Kill!” Their feet jingled against the ground as their weapons stood as densely as a forest, shining threateningly. All one hundred of them charged forward with the bearing of an army of thousands towards Li Qingshan.

The hundred-man commander thought, You’re just at the eighth layer, and you come from the school of Novels or whatever that is. How are you worthy of the young miss. You must have sweet-talked your way to her side and fooled the young miss. Now, you’re even boasting that you’ll go easy on me? You have no idea at all, do you? Are you really treating these experienced soldiers as regular Qi Practitioners? No matter how you look at it, you’re outnumbered one hundred to one, and there’s also another eighth layer Qi Practitioner, me. There’s no way you can win!

Boom!

The sound interrupted the hundred-man commander's thoughts. In the archway up ahead, soldiers were launched into the air as they cried out, all slamming into the walls of the archway. These flying soldiers drew closer and closer, as if a monster was charging through them towards him.

The Wave Treading Form!

Waves surged under Li Qingshan's feet, and he charged forward like a loose arrow, slamming through the army.

The Vortex Form!

The water ripples in Li Qingshan's right hand spun rapidly. He seemed to become a huge drill, driving his way forward.

Whenever he came in contact with soldiers, they would be directly sent flying. The dagger-axes sucked into the vortex would be torn to pieces. Wherever he passed by, everyone would suffer a crushing defeat. He passed through the enemy in an instant and arrived before the hundred-man commander.

"Eat this, uncle!"

The hundred-man commander was stunned. Never did he imagine that his gatekeeping army would be so fragile before him. However, how could he back down? With a bellow, his dagger-axe erupted with light, and the tiles beneath his feet shattered. With his full strength and both hands on the dagger-axe, he stabbed it towards Li Qingshan.

The dagger-axe and the drill head clashed violently. It sounded like an electric saw cutting through metal, but it only lasted for an instant. The dagger-axe was sent flying.

The hundred-man commander retreated in surprise. The flap between his thumb and index finger on both his hands had shattered, and the vortex drill drove into his body with the "unstoppable" might of a visiting son-in-law. His protective true qi crumbled like paper, while his shiny armour was torn to pieces.

I'm done for!

The hundred-man commander sighed deeply inside. He never thought he would actually die here after an entire life spent on the battlefield. He had completely comprehended the terrifying might of this battle skill the moment they clashed. He could not endure it with his body alone.

However, he felt no pain. He lowered his head and discovered that he was already completely naked, but completely unscathed. He raised his head, and all he saw was Li Qingshan standing before him with a grin across his face. He could not help but become stunned.

The entire process seemed quite slow, but it had taken him less than three seconds to go from unleashing the Vortex Form to defeating the hundred-man commander.

Han Qiongzhi was rather surprised too. She had been expecting Li Qingshan's abilities to be impressive. After all, even Chu Tian, who had a higher cultivation than him as a Qi Practitioner, was not his opponent. He could not be stopped by this gatekeeping army, which was why she had told him to go easy, just in case he injured this old man who had basically watched her grow up.

However, she never expected him to win in such a straightforward fashion, and sure enough, he did not lay a single finger on the hundred-man commander. She was filled with pride. This was the man she had chosen, someone who could always cause surprises. If anyone underestimated him, then they really would be blind.

“I’ve lost. I’ll admit that you’re a little capable, but what comes next won’t be so easy. I’d advise you to back out sooner rather than later. You might end up losing your life accidentally!”

The hundred-man commander said sternly. He did not take Li Qingshan lightly at all anymore. It was not too impressive that Li Qingshan had charged through this Flying Swan formation. After all, he could manage that too if he tried hard enough. However, ripping off his clothes without harming him proved that he was still holding back a lot. His battle skill had reached a state of great meticulous control. If it came to an actual battle to the death, he could probably kill this division of a hundred with a single hand relaxedly. Just where had the young miss found a monster like him? She sure had quite the insight.

“Sir, you better cover yourself!” Han Qiongzhi arrived beside Li Qingshan and pointed below at the hundred-man commander.

“I deserve to die for defiling the young miss’s eyes!” The hundred-man commander reddened and covered himself below in a hurry.

My eyes have already been defiled plenty of times recently anyway. There’s nothing surprising anymore. Han Qiongzhi thought. She linked arms with Li Qingshan and said, “Let’s go!”

“How’s your recovery gone?” Li Qingshan asked.

“You were so quick, so how was I supposed to recover?”

“Yeah, how can I be so quick as a man? Don’t worry, ma’am. I’ll try to slow myself down in the future.” Li Qingshan sniggered, earning him a kick from Han Qiongzhi. “I understand what you’re saying! This is my home!”

“I’ve yet to see a home with barbicans!”

With that, the two of them passed under the archway, and Li Qingshan stopped. He saw a large, empty space before him with tall walls standing in the surroundings, with watch towers and battlements rising and falling. It was actually a barbican.

The only path leading out of the barbican was the huge gate cast from black iron.

The sound of a zither lingered about. A learned man with a long beard and a tall hat stroked his zither on a watch tower.

“The zither just sounds so great when uncle Cao plays it.” Han Qiongzhi said as she introduced him to Li Qingshan softly, “This ‘uncle Cao’ is my father’s military advisor. His full name is Cao Gan. Not only is his cultivation at the tenth layer, but he’s also known for his resourcefulness. He’s not one to be trifled with. Looks like my dad really wants to stop you in the barbican.”

Li Qingshan grinned. Men married and women were married off. Was that not how the world worked? Why was this old man Han acting like he was fending off bandits? Surely he was not a deviant of a father who had a daughter complex?

“Qiongzhi, it ends here. Looks like your father doesn’t like the kid beside you, so even if you meet him, it’s pointless. It’s still not too late for you to back off right now,” Cao Gan said as he played the zither.

“I don’t care whether he likes him or not. All that matters is I like him? Is he the one getting married, or am I the one getting married?” Han Qiongzhi became agitated, so she spoke rudely.

“Nicely said!” Li Qingshan rose up on a cloud, charging straight towards Cao Gan. The key to defeating the army was to defeat its leader. So what if he was a tenth layer Qi Practitioner?

The walls could stop regular people, but how were they supposed to stop cultivators? The so-called barbican was just a joke.

Clang! The strings of the zither vibrated.

“Now!” A cold light flashed through the man’s eyes. Many archers appeared on the battlements, all wielding powerful bows and crossbows. The bows were released, and the triggers were pressed.

With a thrum, arrows filled the sky, blotting out the sun.

At the same time, the sounds of mechanisms rang out from the twelve watch towers. They did not possess a single archer at all. Instead, they were each loaded with a black ballista. The ballistae were designed to be like dragons with flashing gems as their eyes. They automatically adjusted their aim and locked onto Li Qingshan in the air with great precision. Their mouths opened up, and they spat out huge, spear-like bolts.

Huge bolts shot out of the magazines and were launched endlessly; it was like a dragon’s breath.

The Mechanical ballistae of the school of Mohism could kill enemies from a thousand meters away. Every single one of them were worth more than high grade spiritual artifacts. The specially-designed Cloud-piercing bolts could penetrate protective techniques and true qi. They were priceless.

Even if regular people could afford one, they could not afford to use one. With the ballistae and bolts combined, they could take down Qi Practitioners like taking lambs to the slaughter.

“Qingshan!” Han Qiongzhi drew her blade and went up to assist him. A volley of arrows rained down on her, and she swung her blade around, cutting through it all. The ground beside her had already become covered in arrows, but all she could do was watch helplessly as Li Qingshan was swallowed by the rain of arrows.

“This isn’t a test. This is murder!”

Li Qingshan muttered to himself and dodged to one side. He caught a Cloud-piercing bolt that brushed past him conveniently and swung it around, sweeping a few arrows out of the air with a clatter. He left no opening at all with that, rushing straight into the sky.

Chapter 388 - Paying Respects to the Father-in-law (Three)

Li Qingshan saw the barbican below his feet rapidly shrink and grow further away. Within the blink of an eye, it was shrouded by the dark cloud of arrows, which soon collapsed and dispersed. Li Qingshan was secretly startled. If he had been a step slower, it would have been quite painful even if he emerged in one piece.

Cao Gan's smile lingered, as if he had been expecting this.

"Be careful!" Han Qiongzhi felt no joy. Instead, she became worried.

In that instant, scorching, white light filled the night sky, dazzling Li Qingshan's eyes. Only then did he hear a great rumble. Li Qingshan had been struck by a bolt of lightning, falling out of the sky.

Flying in the general's estate was forbidden for members of the Han family, so the entire estate was enveloped by formations. Once they were formally activated, even Foundation Establishment cultivators could not come and go as they pleased. Neither Li Qingshan nor Han Qiongzhi had expected something like this.

Cao Gan raised his hand, and the rain of arrows stopped. "You'll be bed bound for ten to fifteen days at the very least once you're struck by that lightning. The general's mobilised so many troops. He's taking this kid too seriously."

"Qingshan! Qingshan!"

Li Qingshan landed in Han Qiongzhi's arms. Seeing her concern and irritation, he said, "I'm fine. Looks like I really do need to get a little more serious."

He leapt back onto his feet. Compared to the tribulation of lightning, this lightning strike felt more like a tickle.

"Do you still refuse to come to your senses? It's impossible for you to pass through the barbican. You don't even have a one percent chance. If you keep going, you'll only injure yourself more for nothing." Cao Gan frowned. He never expected the kid's body to be so tough, such that he could even endure the lightning summoned by the formation.

"We'll go right now. I don't need my father deciding matters between us!"

"I'm a man. I don't need a woman to teach me what to do!" Li Qingshan said proudly, casting a wide, dependable figure to Han Qiongzhi. He glanced back and smiled. "This isn't for you, but for us!"

He smiled as resplendently as the sunlight, which left Han Qiongzhi speechless for a moment. She stood up and gritted her teeth. "What're you boasting for? I'll accompany you to wherever you want to go."

Li Qingshan smiled and pointed at the battlements. "Cao, I was careless just then, so I'll let you feel proud of yourself for now. I'll give you a painful thrashing now!"

"Kid, those are some pretty big boasts! Release the arrows!"

"Leave here to me! You smelly man, I'll show you the power of women!"

Just when Li Qingshan wanted to advance, Han Qiongzhi brushed past him, so he stopped with a smile.

Twelve Mechanical ballistae locked onto Han Qiongzhi, but five of them soon lost track of her. As it turned out, she did not go straight for Cao Gan. Instead, she flew towards the walls along the blind spots of the ballistae.

Swish! Swish! Swish! The giant bolts shot over, but Han Qiongzhi did not even look at them. She turned and leapt around on the walls like it was flat ground. The huge bolts brushed past her and deeply

embedded themselves into the walls. As the first young miss of the Han family, she was extremely familiar with the target designation and method of attack of these ballistae.

She leapt up the wall and charged into a watch tower. Right in front of her lay a ballista with its gem eyes twinkling. Like a willow leaf in the wind, she leaned backwards with the flow, and the huge bolt brushed past the tip of her nose. She turned around and arrived behind the ballista. With a casual slam, the eyes immediately dimmed, and it was disabled.

From the two sides of the watchtower, soldiers charged up with all of their might. They flung the door open, and waves of heat rolled over. All of Han Qiongzhi's true qi had turned into flames, dyeing the entire place red. She called out, "Move!"

Like a leaping ball of fire, she whistled towards another watch tower with a long tail of flames, leaving behind a trace of fire on the battlements.

In the blink of an eye, she invaded like fire and circled around the entire barbican, disabling all the ballista and landing before Cao Gan. She heaved slightly, and the fire on her weakened. Although Bing Fire true qi possessed great destructive power, it was exhausted very rapidly.

"Young miss, you've grown up." Cao Gan let out a sigh as his fingers plucked the strings rapidly, producing confusing noises with the zither. The waves of sound turned into sharp blades.

Within the noise, Han Qiongzhi took a step back and swung her blade around, parrying the sound waves. However, a tiny cut still appeared on her face. She understood that Cao Gan's cultivation was above hers, and she was exhausted. Meanwhile, he had been prepared the whole time, waiting for them here. If they dragged the battle out, there was no way for them to emerge victorious. As a result, she made up her mind and fire erupted from her body. Just when she was about to advance with her blade, a figure blocked her.

Cao Gan was slightly surprised. He saw how Li Qingshan was enveloped by a thin veil of water, and he felt scornful. How can a mere Water Curtain technique block my zither? He plucked the zither even more rapidly, which sounded like pearls falling into jade bowls.

However, Li Qingshan's curtain of water was surprisingly tough. The sound waves kicked up countless ripples, but it failed to pierce it. After reaching the third layer of the spirit turtle, Li Qingshan's water element technique had become extremely powerful. He strode over through the sound waves.

"Dance of the Heavenly Sound!" Cao Gan pressed down and tugged, pulling seven strings all the way to their limit. With a great clang, it erupted with an extremely fierce wave of sound and pierced the curtain.

"You--"

Before Cao Gan could even celebrate, a black shadow enveloped him. Li Qingshan looked down from above as his eyes shone as two red specks of light.

Bang!

Without any hesitation at all, Li Qingshan grabbed the zither, lifting it up and smacked Cao Gan with it.

"Have you played enough?"

Cao Gan was sent spinning into a group of soldiers who had come to assist him, knocking them all over. Disbelief filled his eyes. How could a mere eighth layer Qi Practitioner block his Dance of the Heavenly Sound from such a close range?

Li Qingshan's clothes had been reduced to rags, so he ripped it off, revealing his unscathed, bronze skin. The zither in Cao Gan's hand trembled, as if it was trying to return to its master's side, but how could it rival Li Qingshan's strength? He frowned and tried crushing it with both hands. Although this was a rare high grade spiritual artifact zither, it was much more fragile compared to other weapons, so it was no opponent for Li Qingshan's strength. It immediately produced a painful moan.

"My zither!" Cao Gan cried out.

"Qingshan." Han Qiongzhi pressed down on Li Qingshan's hand and studied his expression. "Are you mad? Didn't I tell you to go easy?"

"I can't just watch him harm you though!"

Han Qiongzhi touched her face. She had grown accustomed to scratches like that growing up in this household, such that even she did not take it seriously, but this made her smile. Being cared for really was quite nice.

"Uncle Cao, we've won this time, right?"

"You've won, you've won. Give me back my zither!" Cao Gan said in a hurry.

"Alright, here."

Han Qiongzhi elbowed Li Qingshan gently. Li Qingshan leaned back and raised his arm, making the perfect throwing posture. The zither turned into a black speck immediately, flying off the mountain.

"Kid, you!" Cao Gan rushed off in pursuit.

"You're far too evil. That's uncle Cao's lifeblood," Han Qiongzhi smiled.

"You're my lifeblood," Li Qingshan stroked her face, and the scratch vanished.

"How disgusting." Han Qiongzhi reddened, and her heart sweetened slightly.

"I really don't mean it like that this time!" Li Qingshan said like he had just been wrongly accused.

The two of them passed through the barbican, and after that, it was actually smooth sailing. They did not run into any more obstructions. Just a lot of people from the Han family whispered among themselves in the houses.

"Look, that's Li Qingshan!" "I heard he's very strong. It's said that the gatekeeping army and the advisor have both been defeated by him." "What? He's just at the eighth layer though. The young miss must have helped him. You really can't keep a grown girl around!"

With the same method of managing an army, Han Anjun managed the entire general's estate into something like a military base. There was even a drilling field in front of the gates separating the inner and outer estates. Normally, it was used for drilling the people of the Han family. But right now, there

were a total of three hundred soldiers there, either sitting or standing. Some of them even discussed among themselves quietly. There was no sense of discipline at all.

Only Han Tiewei stood dead straight with a spear in his hand, like a statue. Only when he saw Li Qingshan and Han Qiongzhi appear did he suddenly say,

“Prepare for battle.”

The soldiers only stood up and looked over. They still seemed like a messy group, without any sense for formation per se. However, something indescribable was connecting them, actually merging three hundred completely different people into one.

“This is my father’s personal army, the elites among the elites. You can’t be careless here!” Han Qiongzhi felt troubled inside.

“In other words, I can see your father once I defeat them!” Even without Han Qiongzhi’s warning, Li Qingshan would not be careless. These soldiers gave off a concealed sense of terrifying murderousness such that even he felt a hint of danger.

“We can’t win. We have to find a way to pass through here and reach the inner estate!”

Li Qingshan strode over and laughed aloud. “Brother-in-law, shouldn’t you greet the future husband of your elder sister when you meet him?”

“I don’t think the two of you will turn around no matter what I say, so let’s do it! Receive the enemy!” Han Tiewei sent out an order, and the three hundred soldiers silently surged forth like a flood.

At this moment, Li Qingshan and Han Qiongzhi worked together to launch the first strike.

Han Qiongzhi erupted with flames the moment she attacked, radiating with waves of heat, while Li Qingshan treaded on waves, spinning and agitating the streams of water.

Water and fire raced against one another charging forward together and merging as one. They sent all the soldiers in their way flying, but the other soldiers in the surroundings were unaffected. They brushed past them.

In just a few seconds, the two of them had penetrated the formation.

With a boom, Han Tiewei struck out with his spear like a dragon, colliding with a blade and a fist. The light from agitated true qi illuminated the dark night.

A tremendous force erupted from the fist. Han Tiewei actually found it rather difficult to bear with. He was secretly surprised. Just how long had it been, but Li Qingshan’s strength and speed had increased yet again. The bearing he vaguely gave off was chilling. If they were fighting against each other alone, he probably was not his opponent anymore. With his rate of improvement, it truly was strange that his father insisted on stopping them.

However, this thought only flashed through his head. Li Qingshan and Han Qiongzhi roared out together, pouring all their true qi and strength into the attack.

Han Tieyi was forced into staggering back. He reached the gates of the wall, with no room left for retreat. Suddenly, he abandoned his spear and punched both of them in the chest. At the same time, he called out, "Trap them!"

Li Qingshan blocked the punch with his arm, so he only shuddered slightly, but Han Qiongzhi was sent flying. Looking back, the three hundred soldiers had already fallen into the Military Formation of the Coiled snake before he knew it. A huge snake sat with its body coiled, pulling Han Qiongzhi into the formation. She called out, "Don't worry about me! Just go! Go find my father and explain it to him!"

However, Li Qingshan killed his way back into the formation without the slightest hesitation at all, arriving beside Han Qiongzhi.

The two of them stood with their backs against one another with enemies everywhere.

Han Qiongzhi said, "You idiot, why'd you return?"

"What would be the point if I got in alone?"

Chapter 389 - Partners of Cultivation, Partners of Love

The bitter battle and the battle formations constantly changed about—the Coiled Snake formation, the Tiger Trapping formation, the Dragon Ensnaring formation, and so on. There was not the slightest opening as they moved from formation to formation. They used the same formations, but the military disciples of the Hundred School of Thought were no match for them at all.

Three hundred people swung their weapons quietly. Even when Li Qingshan charged around violently, he was unable to break out of the encirclement, especially since Han Tieyi commanded the formation and even took part in the battle constantly. If he were alone, he might have had a chance, but with the two of them, they could not take a single step forward.

In the blink of an eye, Han Qiongzhi ran out of true qi. She was dripping with sweat. Holding off the formation alone had never been something a regular Qi Practitioner could achieve. As she faced the incoming row of dagger-axes, she was actually powerless to stop them. Her waist tightened, and she was pulled back by Li Qingshan.

"Hang tight!"

Li Qingshan carried her on his back. The situation became even more dangerous.

Han Qiongzhi laid on his back. Suddenly, she felt a gust of wind from behind, and as he rapidly turned around, three dagger-axes stabbed towards him swiftly.

"Qingshan!"

Li Qingshan snapped the dagger-axes or pulled them out of the hands of the opponent, but their tips had become dyed with red. They had been infused with the power of the entire formation, such that even the Ox Demon Forges its Hide was unable to block it. He was already fortunate it did not penetrate him all the way through.

Seeing this, the soldiers actually all launched their attacks at Han Qiongzhi, which made Li Qingshan curse inside.

“Let me down!” Han Qiongzhi’s heart ached. This was her father’s personal army. With just a single order, they would not even show a shred of mercy no matter who the opponent was.

“Stop moving around!”

Han Qiongzhi struggled around on his back, but Li Qingshan reached back and pulled her in. These people really were out to kill. They did not treat Han Qiongzhi as their young miss at all.

Han Qiongzhi immediately stopped moving, as whenever she moved, a few more wounds would appear on Li Qingshan. She lay on his back firmly, and the rims of her eyes reddened helplessly. She murmured, “Qingshan.”

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Li Qingshan held a broken dagger-axe to prop himself up. His true qi was almost completely depleted, and his body was riddled with wounds. However, Han Qiongzhi remained completely unscathed on his back.

Out of the personal army, a hundred was heavily injured, while the remaining two hundred maintained the formation rigorously, without easing up at all. They were taken aback with surprise and shock. Never had they seen such a tenacious opponent before, and he was using this momentary stalemate to recover his strength despite the huge disadvantage he was facing.

At this moment, a figure rose up, immediately rousing the killing intent of the formation. Dagger-axes and spears shot over from everywhere. Only then did they make out the person to be Han Qiongzhi. As it turned out, after she had recovered sufficient true qi on Li Qingshan’s back, she had immediately flown off to receive the incoming wave of weapons.

“Qiongzhi!” Li Qingshan flew up with her, but it was already too late. Just when Han Qiongzhi was about to be pierced by the weapons, Han Tieyi shot over. His spear darted out like a dragon below Han Qiongzhi. With a jerk and a flick, he grabbed her by the shoulder and took her out of the formation.

“Qingshan!” Han Qiongzhi extended her hand, but all she saw was a smile of relief on Li Qingshan’s face.

“Withdraw.”

With Han Tieyi’s order, the army immediately withdrew. In the blink of an eye, only Li Qingshan stood there, alone. He saw the gates leading to the inner estate open loudly behind Han Tieyi, so he asked loudly, “So have I passed the test?”

“You’ve passed my test.” Han Tieyi released Han Qiongzhi and made his way to the side of the gate.

Li Qingshan strode over. The soldiers stood in two rows, allowing him to pass by. Someone called out, “Nice strength, lad!” A companion who supported an injured soldier added, “Yeah, he’s got some skill!”

Li Qingshan held Han Qiongzhi’s hand. The two of them made their way into the inner estate together.

“Where’s the gift?”

“Can I keep it for myself?”

“You can’t!”

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“General, Qiongzhi and I love each other from the bottom of our hearts. I’d like to take her as my wife.”

Han Anjun sat extremely straight in front of the main room of the estate. Li Qingshan made his way over and bowed before he proudly spoke.

Han Qiongzhi’s face became flushed with joy and embarrassment.

“No!” Han Anjun said firmly, filled with unwaverable determination.

“Why?” Li Qingshan was surprised. They had already done all this, but it was still no?

“Why? Old man, you better explain yourself!” Even Han Qiongzhi could not help herself anymore, going up and pointing at Han Anjun.

“No reason. No is no. It’s quite late now, so if there’s nothing else, you can go!” Han Anjun stood up, turned around, and made his way into the room.

“Stop right there! We haven’t travelled all the way here to hear your opinion!”

Han Qiongzhi snatched the gift from Li Qingshan’s hand and smashed it viciously before Han Anjun. Aggrieved, tears covered her face. Never had she seen such an unreasonable father. She grabbed Li Qingshan hand and rushed out the door, brushing past Han Tieyi.

Han Tieyi was slightly surprised. Making his way in, all he saw was Han Anjun bending down, picking up the scattered pastries. He asked without even looking up, “Why are you here?”

“I ordered the troops to withdraw, defying your orders. I’ve specially come for punishment!”

“Even you’re disobeying me.” Han Anjun straightened himself out and placed a pastry in his mouth, chewing it slightly before swallowing it. “It’s quite nice. To think that this girl would just throw it away on a whim.”

“Father, why did you refuse them?” Han Tieyi lowered his head deeply. He was completely perplexed.

“So you find me completely unreasonable too? I’m not always right about everything.”

Han Tieyi raised his head in surprise. He struggled to believe that those words had come from his father’s mouth, but all he saw was the corner of Han Anjun’s lips curling into a rare smile.

“I wholeheartedly want to raise the two of you into capable people. I don’t want to become what holds you back instead. Even with that girl, she seems like she does whatever she wants, but when she’s found herself a man, she still comes earnestly for my approval. Why must she need my approval? Teiyi, you have to understand that before general and soldier, before father and son, we are cultivators.”

Han Tieyi left in thought, while Han Anjun returned to the main room. Cao Gan currently held his zither very gently in there, carefully tuning the strings.

“General, your son-in-law is far too heavy-handed. He almost broke my zither. Though, his strength really is quite impressive, so why didn’t you recruit him into the Han family? He’ll definitely be of great assistance in the future. Surely your adamant refusal wasn’t just to punish the young miss, right?”

"I can't hide anything from you. The kid is anything but mediocre, but he will never yield himself to another. On the path of cultivation, there are only partners of cultivation, not partners of love. Unless they possess the same goal, the same mindset, how can they stand the test of time? Today, they marry because of love. One day, they'll separate because of love. Their status as husband and wife will only become shackles to one another."

"Heh, fair enough. When you put two balls of fire together, they seem to blaze fiercely, but it won't last. In my opinion, it'll be surprising if they can last another three or five years. The young miss will definitely understand this perspective of yours in the future."

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The two of them left the general's estate, but they did not return to the Academy of the Hundred Schools. Instead, they arrived in Han Qiongzhi's courtyard in Clear River city.

Han Qiongzhi remained silent the entire time. Li Qingshan had no idea on how he should comfort her either. "I think it's still because my cultivation is insufficient. Let me cultivate a little longer. Once I destroy your father's personal army, he won't have anything more to say."

"Are your wounds fine?" Han Qiongzhi finally spoke.

"They're nothing!" Li Qingshan's body had always been tough. Combined with a few Water Healing techniques, he made a complete recovery.

"Then let's get married right now!"

Chapter 390 - Entanglement

The lotuses bloomed in the pool outside the window. Under the night breeze, the smell of flowers permeated the place.

Li Qingshan was rather surprised. With how determined she was, Han Qiongzhi seemed a little like Han Anjun. She opened her lips and repeated, "Qingshan, let's get married!"

"You've made up your mind?" Li Qingshan pulled her into his arms.

"Yep!" Han Qiongzhi nodded and leaned against his chest, listening to his powerful heartbeat. This was the sound she wanted to listen to for the rest of her life.

"Why don't we just wait a little more? As long as we persevere and your younger brother puts in a few good words, your father will definitely agree to it." Li Qingshan was tempted to take off with her right now, but eloping like this would probably make her fall out with her family completely. This was not what he wished to see.

"No, you don't understand my father. Once he has decided on something, nothing can change his mind. Nothing. With what I said to him earlier, he must be furious. He has probably disowned me already, let alone approving of our marriage."

"It's all my fault." Li Qingshan rubbed her head as he sighed slightly. He never thought something as reasonable as a marriage between a man and a woman would lead to so much trouble.

“From today onwards, all I can depend on is you. You mustn’t let me down.” Han Qiongzhi hugged Li Qingshan firmly. She seemed very delicate. Having left the Han family and defied her father, she had lost everything she once possessed in a single night. A loss like this was unimaginable to a regular person, but she did not regret it. From today onwards, the man in her arms would be her everything.

“What, young miss Han? Without the support of the Han family, you’ve become a soft little kitty? I really need to give you a proper teasing then.” Li Qingshan buried his face in her neck and took in a deep breath of her fragrance.

“Don’t you even think about it. Your cultivation is lower than mine right now.”

“Cultivation is nothing. You gotta look at strength. If you just look at cultivation, I don’t even have the right to pursue you right now. How would I have been able to coax young miss Han into eloping with me?”

“Hmph, just you wait until I reach Foundation Establishment. How the hell do you cultivate?”

Their whisperings became drowned out by heavy rain. Dark clouds shrouded the moon and stars, throwing the courtyard into darkness.

Their voices vanished, and a few red candles lit up, dyeing her bashful face red. “I’m going to go wash up.” She broke free from his embrace and turned around lithely. Her hips swayed from side to side as she made her way behind the curtain.

“I’ll come with you.” Li Qingshan could not help himself but follow her, but Han Qiongzhi raised her hand and stopped him. “No, not today. I beg you.”

All Li Qingshan could do was wait outside. Looking at the shimmering candles and listening to the rain falling into the pool, his heart became like the pool water, rippling with waves and unable to settle down.

After a wait that felt especially long, a hand lifted up the bead curtain, revealing a bright face. Her skin seemed so moisturised, like it had been filled with water. She had changed into a large, red dress. Her long, black hair had not been combed, draping down her shoulders moistly.

“You made me wait.” Li Qingshan lifted her up.

“Wait.”

“What?”

“There seems to be a lot of steps to marriage.”

“I only remember one.”

“Which one?”

“To the bridal chamber!” Li Qingshan sang loudly, directly taking her to her room.

TL: If you’ve read other Chinese novels with traditional marriages, there are usually three other steps that come before this—bowing to the heavens and earth, bowing to the parents, exchanging bows between bride and groom, and then finally to the bridal chamber.

“You sex fiend!” Han Qiongzhi grumbled in a flirtish manner.

The sound of rain gradually grew heavier. Through the heavy curtains, soft gasps rang out. Her beautiful body lay on the bed, allowing him to touch her as he wished. She offered up her lips enthusiastically.

“Qiongzhi.” Li Qingshan suddenly stopped and said gently. His eyes shone.

Han Qiongzhi propped herself up and wrapped her arms around his neck, burying her face into his shoulder. She said gently, “Make love to me!”

Li Qingshan grabbed her hips and lowered himself. All he heard was a soft moan, like a long sigh, filled with joy and pain.

There was silence. Only the sound of rain could be heard in the room, growing louder and louder. A few claps of thunder could be vaguely heard in the distance.

The lotus flowers swayed in the wind and rain. Translucent droplets of water filled their centres. Enchanting moans vaguely passed through the rain.

After a stormy night, the droplets of rain rolled around on the lotus pads. They were almost crystalline under the rising sun in the east, shining with seven colours as they fell into the pool.

Li Qingshan opened the window, stretched, and yawned. Looking back, he saw Han Qiongzhi sleeping heavily. She seemed to sense the sunlight, so she turned onto her side, revealing her beautiful back. There were a few traces of bruises on her snowy buttocks. When Li Qingshan thought of the wildness last night, he smiled. “What great weather!”

Li Qingshan closed the window and returned to bed.

Han Qiongzhi opened her eyes slightly, and the first thing she saw was Li Qingshan’s face. Her heart was filled with indescribable tenderness and sweetness. She placed her face on his chest lazily. “What time is it?”

“It’s already been a while since the sun has risen.” Li Qingshan kissed her forehead gently.

“Oh no, I still have business to handle in the Hawkwolf Guard today.” Han Qiongzhi propped herself up, but she felt powerless all over.

“Just leave it to someone else. You’re in no shape to go out right now.”

“It’s all your fault.” Han Qiongzhi felt like her face had been set ablaze. She punched his chest. She was too embarrassed to think of last night. Never did she think there would be a moment when she would be so wild.

“Alright, alright. It’s all my fault. Please wait, my wife. I’ll go prepare some food. You should rest up some more!”

This rest lasted for three days. The two of them stuck to each other like glue, refusing to spend even a moment apart. All they could see was each other. They completely forgot about everything else.

In the Academy of the Hundred Thoughts, the professor had yet to arrive, so there was quite a hubbub in the classroom. A group of young disciples of both genders gathered together, discussing among themselves.

“Really? I think that’s very impressive of him. What about now?”

“As for now, who knows? It’s already been a few days since anyone has seen the two of them. I heard they eloped.”

“Woah!” There were gasps. In particular, the female disciples’ eyes lit up.

“Look, Zijian. It’s that Li Qingshan again. Hmm? You don’t look so good.” Hua Chenglu elbowed Yu Zijian.

Over two years had passed now. Hua Chenglu’s body had developed, going from a blooming girl to an adolescent maiden in the prime of her beauty. Her eyebrows were curved like the crescent moon, her lips were naturally red, and her skin was snow-white. Her youthful beauty was unmatched.

Her face that was quite similar to Hua Chengzan’s seemed to demonstrate just how beautiful it would be if Hua Chengzan’s face belonged to a woman. In the academy, she had already gained the title of the greatest beauty. She had countless pursuers. Just by sitting together with Yu Zijian, she attracted everyone’s attention.

Hua Chenglu was not unfamiliar with Li Qingshan’s name, but after two years of no contact, any special impression of him, even if she had one, had already faded with her colourful life. All she could vaguely remember was that he still owed her something, but perhaps he had already forgotten about it!

“Oh, nothing. The professor is here.” Yu Zijian snapped back to her senses and pointed at the podium.

The classroom immediately quietened down. Hua Chenglu turned around too, paying attention to class.

Yu Zijian frowned slightly. He shouldn’t be Niu Juxia, right?

After returning from the Green Vine mountain, Yu Shukuang had stated repeatedly that Li Qingshan had absolutely nothing to do with Niu Juxia, but only now was she willing to believe that. She let out a sigh of relief.

If Li Qingshan was not Niu Juxia, then this had nothing to do with her. She even felt rather sorry for him. They were clearly in love with one another, yet he could not gain the approval of her family. He sure was pitiful.