

Honoured 501

Chapter 501: Another Sect Mission [5]

Zhao Tian watched as the group of bandits closed in on them, their faces twisted with a mixture of greed and arrogance.

A lightning charge began crackling around him, arcs of blue lightning dancing across his skin.

His gaze locked onto the remaining bandits... six of them, all wielding various elemental energies, and his grip tightened on the sword.

thosh Then, in a single, explosive burst of energy, Zhao Tian vanished.

The bandits barely had time to register his movement and in the next instant he was standing still, and the next, there was a flash of blue light as he shot forward, faster than any of them could react.

crack *woosh* The crackle of lightning echoed through the air as he reappeared right in the middle of their group, his sword drawn, crackling with lightning energy.

sleesh With a swift motion, Zhao Tian's sword slashed through the air, leaving a trail of electric blue in its trail.

The closest bandit, a wind elemental user who had just raised his sword to defend, was too slow.

woosh *crack* Lightning surged through his body the moment Zhao Tian's blade connected with his chest, the sharp edge slicing clean through his armor as if it were paper.

"AAARGHHHHHHHH!" The bandit's body convulsed violently, his eyes wide with terror as lightning coursed through him.

thud In an instant, his body collapsed to the ground, smoking and lifeless.

As the others began to react, drawing their weapons or gathering astral energy in a desperate attempt to fight back, he was already moving again.

thoom Lightning crackled in the air, enveloping Zhao Tian as he dashed toward the next opponent, a fire elemental user who had summoned a wall of flames in a last-ditch effort to stop him.

The heat from the fire would have scorched any other cultivator, but Zhao Tian's body was wreathed in lightning, the energy forming a protective barrier around him.

Clicking his tongue in annoyance, the fire user hurled a massive fireball toward Zhao Tian, the flames roaring as they shot through the air.

He leaped into the air, his entire body pulsing with lightning energy.

The fireball exploded beneath him, missing its target entirely.

As Zhao Tian came down from his leap, he raised his sword high, lightning gathering around the blade until it hummed with lightning energy.

sleesh The blade cut through the fire user's neck in one clean motion, lightning surging into his body.

"GUAARGHHH!" The man's eyes rolled back, and his body crumpled to the ground before the fire even had a chance to extinguish itself.

The other bandits, witnessing the carnage, finally realized the true extent of the danger they were in.

But it was too late. Zhao Tian was already upon them.

The next bandit, an earth elemental user, slammed his hands into the ground, causing a wave of stone spikes to erupt from the earth, aiming to impale Zhao Tian.

Zhao Tian smiled as he zigzagged between the spikes, moving with lightning speed.

The earth elemental user's eyes widened in panic as Zhao Tian closed the distance in the blink of an eye.

He tried to summon another wave of earth to shield himself, but Zhao Tian was already too close.

sleesh His sword flashed once more, and in the same instant, the man's arm was severed at the elbow, lightning crackling through the wound.

"AAARGHH!" The bandit let out a scream, falling to his knees as blood poured from the stump of his arm.

With a final, swift motion, Zhao Tian drove his sword through the bandit's chest, lightning surging into his heart and silencing his screams for good.

Zhao Tian pulled his sword free, the bandit's body collapsing at his feet.

Only two bandits remained now... a wind elemental user and a fire elemental user.

They glanced at each other, fear clear in their eyes.

They had already seen how futile it was to try and fight him head-on.

But still, they couldn't back down.

With a roar, the wind elemental user summoned a powerful gust of wind, sending a barrage of cutting wind blades toward Zhao Tian.

At the same time, the fire user gathered all his remaining energy, flames bursting from his hands as he prepared to unleash one final, desperate attack.

flick As Zhao Tian dashed forward, his sword coated with lightning energy slashed through the barrage of wind slashes and appeared in front of the bandit.

flick As the souls of the dead bodies came to him one by one, he slashed his sword, taking the bandit's head in one slice.

The bandit's head separated cleanly from his body, a look of shock still frozen on his face as his head tumbled through the air.

boom The ground trembled as the last surviving bandit, eyes wide with terror, made a desperate move to escape.

He channeled the last of his astral energy, roaring in fear and anger, as a massive fireball erupted from his hands.

The flames exploded behind him as he dashed away, sending waves of heat rippling through the forest.

The bandit's figure blurred as he sprinted down the mountain slope, his flames scorching the trees in his path.

He had no intention of staying to fight; his only hope was to survive.

With a sharp breath, Li Xueyan drew water from the moisture in the air, forming two long, whips that crackled with astral energy.

She swung them in a wide arc, the whips slicing through the air with deadly precision.

The bandit barely had time to raise his weapon before the water whip coiled around his throat, tightening like a noose.

"GAARGH!" His eyes bulged as he clawed at the whip, gasping for breath, but Li Xueyan showed no mercy.

With a swift tug, she yanked him off his feet, sending him crashing into the ground with bone-crunching force.

The bandit lay there, lifeless, his neck twisted at an unnatural angle.

The water whip receded from his body as Li Xueyan flicked her wrist once more, and the liquid dissolved into the air, returning to its original state.

Her gaze flickered, scanning the battlefield with satisfaction... until she spotted one final bandit still alive, attempting to run away.

Li Xueyan's hand moved, ready to summon another water whip to finish him off, but before she could act, Zhao Tian gently caught her wrist.

"Xueyan wait..."

Li Xueyan was startled and asked "Tian.. why did you let him go?"

He softly pulled her closer and muttered "He will surely run to his hideout to tell about this to his leader, so we can just follow him."

Oh... Li Xueyan was quite amused and then glanced at Zhao Tian, up to down "Nothing happened to you, right Tian?"

With a chuckle, he hugged her waist as she instinctively placed her hands on his shoulders "No, I'm perfectly fine," he said softly, his breath brushing against her ear. "How about you?"

Li Xueyan relaxed in his arms, her tension easing as she rested her head on his shoulder. "I'm okay..." she murmured, her voice trailing off as her body leaned into his warmth.

A dark glint passed through Zhao Tian's eyes as the dark energy swirled around the remaining bodies, pulling the soul out of them for Zhao Tian to feast upon.

Zhao Tian's hand trembled slightly, a small surge of dark energy crackling at his fingertips.

Just then, Li Xueyan shifted in his arms, her gaze moving toward the bodies of the fallen bandits.

Her eyes narrowed slightly, sensing something unusual in the air.

As Li Xueyan turned her head to look at the bodies, Zhao Tian gently clasped her chin and placed her head again on her shoulder, placing a kiss on her head to distract her.

gasp Li Xueyan was startled by his kiss on her head and closed her eyes in the warmth of his arms.

Meanwhile, Zhao Tian smiled wryly 'If I hadn't done that, she would have seen the soul getting absorbed.'

Chapter 502: Another Sect Mission [6]

"Haa... Haa..."

The bandit who had narrowly escaped death tore through the dense forest, his breaths ragged as he sprinted with everything he had left.

Sweat mixed with the grime on his face as the trees blurred past him, branches scraping his arms, but he didn't stop.

The forest gradually thinned, and in the distance, a jagged rock formation loomed, almost hidden by the thick underbrush.

With a final desperate push, the bandit dashed toward it, slipping through a narrow gap in the rocks that led into a hidden cave.

Panting heavily, he descended deeper into the cave, his footsteps echoing off the damp stone walls.

At last, he reached the underground chamber, a sprawling hideout carved out beneath the mountain.

The cave opened into a rough-hewn series of rooms, where the dim light of flickering torches barely illuminated the rugged surroundings.

He quickly navigated the winding paths, past other bandits lounging in shadows, their weapons lying lazily by their sides.

Finally, he reached the door of the largest room... a ragged, makeshift space where their leader slept.

The bandit, burst into the room and his eyes immediately landed on his boss, a massive, burly figure stretched out on a bed.

"Boss... Boss!" the bandit gasped, staggering forward.

The leader of the bandits, a scarred man with a grim expression... groggily opened his eyes as the frantic bandit stumbled into the room.

His hair was matted with sweat, and the dim torchlight cast deep shadows across his face, highlighting the jagged scar that ran from his cheek to his neck.

"Boss... it's... it's bad," the bandit panted, collapsing onto one knee as he tried to catch his breath. "They're coming."

The leader sat up slowly, and his dark eyes narrowed as he looked at the trembling body form of his subordinate. "Who's coming?" he growled, his voice thick with sleep and annoyance.

"Two... no, a man and a woman... they slaughtered the whole patrol group!" the bandit stammered, his words spilling out in a rush.

The leader's brow furrowed. "You're telling me," he said slowly, his voice dangerous, "that an entire patrol..my men...were taken down by just two people? And you ran?"

The bandit shrank back, the weight of his leader's glare making him tremble. "I... I had to, Boss. They're monsters. The man uses lightning... and the woman, she controls water.

They are exceptional cultivators"

The leader's expression darkened and he clutched the bandit's neck "Not that you fucker.. why did you run here? They would follow you and will find our hidden place."

"And I am sure... they let you go, so they can find our hidden place, you idiot."

H-Huh? The bandit was startled and only then did he realize the mistake he has done "F-Forgive me, Boss..."

The man clutched his forehead in annoyance and stood up as he reached for the massive war hammer resting by the wall.

"You should've died with your men rather than crawl back here with your tail between your legs," the leader spat, grabbing the hammer and slinging it over his shoulder.

Without another word, the leader pushed past the trembling bandit and stormed out of the room.

"Everyone gather!"

He barked orders to the other bandits lounging in the corridors, calling them to arms.

The underground chamber buzzed with sudden activity as weapons were gathered, torches lit, and traps set.

The leader's eyes gleamed with determination as he made his way toward the cave's entrance. "They think they can just waltz in here and slaughter my men?" he muttered, more to himself than anyone else.

"Get ready!"

BOOOOMMMM

The quiet tension in the cave was shattered by a sudden, deafening blast.

The thick stone walls quaked, dust falling from the ceiling as the entrance to the cave exploded inward.

Before any of the bandits could react, Zhao Tian and Li Xueyan stormed in.

woosh Zhao Tian moved like a bolt of lightning and his body crackled with electric energy as he leaped into the mass of stunned bandits, his sword glowing with a sharp, deadly charge.

sleesh *sleesh* With each swing, arcs of lightning danced through the air, slicing through armor and flesh alike.

Zzzt! Slash!

"Ah-" The first bandit barely had time to scream before Zhao Tian's lightning-infused blade tore through him, his body convulsing as electricity surged through his veins.

Zhao Tian spun gracefully, his movements so fluid that the bandits could barely keep track of him.

His sword flashed in the dim light of the cave, leaving a trail of destruction.

"Get him! Don't just stand there!" one of the lieutenants yelled, trying to rally the terrified men.

A group of bandits with fire and wind elemental powers rushed forward, desperate to overpower Zhao Tian.

But it was futile.

Zhao Tian smiled as he sidestepped a blast of fire, then sliced through a gust of wind that tried to knock him off balance.

His lightning flared, countering their powers with ease.

woosh He dashed forward, slashing through another group of bandits in a single swift motion, their charred bodies falling to the ground, smoking.

A dark glint passed through his eyes as dark energy swirled around the dead bodies, grabbing their souls.

On the other side of the cave, Li Xueyan was just as cadaverous.

woosh Her graceful body danced through the air, her water elemental powers flowing like a whip.

She summoned streams of water from the moisture in the air, shaping them into razor-sharp whips that slashed through the bandits with terrifying precision.

crack The water whip lashed out, wrapping around one of the bandits' necks, tightening with a brutal snap.

With a flick of her wrist, Li Xueyan sent the man flying across the cave, his body slamming into the stone wall with a sickening thud.

Another group of bandits, wielding earth powers, tried to corner her by raising massive stone barriers around her.

But Li Xueyan's eyes glinted coldly as she raised her hands, and a massive surge of water erupted from beneath the ground, shattering the stone prison.

The water spiraled around her, forming a deadly vortex that crashed down on the bandits like a tidal wave.

"Is that all you've got?" she taunted, her voice laced with confidence as she spun in place, directing the water with the flick of her fingers.

Bandits tried to retreat, but they were helpless against the onslaught.

Chapter 503: Another Sect Mission [7]

The bandit leader, clenched his war hammer tightly, his eyes narrowing as Zhao Tian advanced.

His men were already dead or dying, the cave echoing with the faint crackle of lightning and the dripping of water.

Desperation and rage filled his veins as he glared at Zhao Tian, who stood there calm and composed, his lightning-imbued sword gleaming in the dim light of the cave.

"AAAGHHHH!!!" With a guttural roar, the leader raised his hammer high, the veins in his muscular arms bulging as he infused the weapon with his earth elemental energy.

THOOOOM The ground beneath them rumbled as jagged spikes of rock shot up from the floor, aimed straight at Zhao Tian.

Boom!

The spikes hurtled toward Zhao Tian, and In an instant, his body became a blur of motion, disappearing and reappearing in a flash of lightning as he effortlessly dodged the attack.

The spikes crashed into the cave walls, sending shards of rock flying in every direction, but Zhao Tian was already on the move.

"GRR!" The bandit leader growled, swinging his hammer with all his might.

The ground beneath him shook again as he summoned more of his earth energy, causing the entire cave to tremble.

WOOOSSHHH Massive boulders detached from the walls and ceiling, swirling around him like a shield.

"Die!" the leader roared, hurling one of the massive boulders straight at Zhao Tian.

But Zhao Tian, darted forward, closing the distance between them in a split second.

His sword, crackling with lightning energy, hummed in his hand as he slashed through the air, splitting the boulder in half with a single strike.

thoom *thoom* The two halves crashed to the ground, sending tremors through the cave, but Zhao Tian didn't stop.

His eyes locked onto the bandit leader, who was already preparing another attack, his war hammer glowing with a deep, brown energy.

With a savage grin, the leader slammed the hammer down, sending a shockwave of raw power rippling through the cave floor.

thoom* *thoom Huge chunks of rock shot upward, creating a wave of destruction aimed directly at Zhao Tian.

Zhao Tian's lightning energy flared, and he thrust his sword into the ground.

The entire cave seemed to light up as the blade acted as a conduit, sending a surge of lightning through the earth.

The wave of rock disintegrated, reduced to rubble before it could reach him.

woosh Before the bandit leader could react, Zhao Tian was upon him.

In a flash of lightning, Zhao Tian leapt into the air, his sword raised high.

Time seemed to slow as he darted toward the leader, his body wreathed in lightning energy.

The bandit leader swung his hammer upward in a desperate attempt to block the attack, but it was too late.

Zhao Tian's blade, charged with the full force of his lightning elemental power, slammed into the hammer with a deafening **CLANG!**

crack The hammer shattered under the force of the blow, sending fragments of metal flying in all directions.

The bandit leader's eyes widened in shock as Zhao Tian's sword cut through the remnants of his weapon, slicing downward with unstoppable momentum.

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Slash!

The blade tore through the bandit leader's chest, sending a surge of lightning through his body.

"ARGHHHH!" The leader's muscles spasmed uncontrollably as the electricity coursed through him, paralyzing him where he stood.

His eyes rolled back in his head as he tried to summon his earth energy, but it was too late... Zhao Tian's attack had already severed the flow of his power.

With one final twist of his blade, Zhao Tian sent the bandit leader crashing to the ground, his body smoking and twitching from the lingering effects of the lightning.

Soon, Zhao Tian absorbed his soul and his eyelashes trembled with dark energy '3rd level of Stellar Essence Stage.'

'I need to reach the 5th level to be the Inner court disciple, isn't it?'

tap At this time, Li Xueyan quickly reached there and saw the bloody mess around the cave
"Woah.. Tian, I am surprised you managed to kill him."

"The rumors I heard were true huh... that you actually bullied all of the new outer disciplines that day."

She smiled softly, the cold edge in her expression fading as she walked over to him, wiping a small bead of water from her cheek.

Zhao Tian slashed his sword wiping the blood away from it and glanced back at her, returning her smile.

"Shall we return?"

"Yeah... let's slice off the head and leave."

With a nod, Zhao Tian stepped forward and sliced the head of the bandit leader and put it in a large pouch, storing it in his storage ring.

...

It was already afternoon, as both Zhao Tian and Li Xueyan returned to the Sect hall and submitted the head of the bandit leader.

"Good work..."

The receptionist accepted their disciple tokens with a smile on her face and inserted them into the device.

"The credits for this mission is 7000 credits and it would be split in half between you. 3500 credits for each."

After completing the procedure, the receptionist returned the tokens to them.

Looking at his disciple token, Zhao Tian frowned slightly 'I gained a lot in this mission as I gained some souls... and some credits.'

'i should visit the Auction house tomorrow and pill shop in the capital city.'

As he was thinking, Li Xueyan gently tapped his shoulder and asked "Shall we go to the cafeteria to eat something?"

"Tian..."

However, at this time, another voice was heard and Zhao Tian turned to look at Li Jia who was walking toward him.

Li Jia glanced at Li Xueyan and hurriedly grabbed Zhao Tian's hand pulling him from there "Jia?"

Li Jia's fingers tightly clutched his hand and she muttered in a low tone "Please.. Tian, come with me."

Zhao Tian let out a sigh in his heart and let himself be pulled by her.

Li Xueyan looked at them and a sigh escaped her lips as she made her way toward the cafeteria
"She doesn't want me to get close to Tian?"

'ARGHH!'

Li Jia who was pulling Zhao Tian through the open area, felt her heart twisting in pain as if something was eating away her heart.

'U-Urghh.. I need to endure it... a bit.'

Chapter 504: A spar!

cough Pulling Zhao Tian through the open area, Li Jia clutched her chest as her eyes trembled in severe pain.

She could feel the iron taste of the blood seeping into her mouth, but she clenched her lips tightly and gulped down the blood from flowing down her lips.

'T-This much backlash? It hurts more than the first time...' she thought, her vision briefly blurring as her body screamed in protest.

Zhao Tian felt her fingers which were clutching his wrist trembling and he called her "Jia?"

However, Li Jia didn't turn her head or speak as she gulped even more blood that was seeping into her mouth because of the backlash.

She again felt the nausea feeling of coughing blood but she held onto it and gulped it again.

Soon, she pulled him into a building and hand signaled him to wait 5 minutes.

With that, she moved to the registration in that building to fetch some water, which was placed beside the reception area.

In the meantime, Zhao Tian turned to look at the enormous hall and the large number of rooms in the building.

'Isn't this the training chambers for outer court disciples? Why did she bring me here?'

Here, disciples can use credits to rent a room for a specific time and that room can be used to cultivate or train with fellow disciples.

Meanwhile, Li Jia approached the water station by the reception area, her breath still uneven.

She hastily poured herself a cup of water, gulping it down as if it could wash away the pain gnawing at her from within.

The cold liquid did little to ease the burning sensation in her chest, but it helped her regain some sense of control.

She wiped her mouth with the back of her hand, pausing for a moment to collect herself.

Then she straightened her back, taking a deep breath.

She forced the pain into the far corners of her mind, pushing down the backlash that was still ravaging her insides.

A short while later, she returned to Zhao Tian, her expression more composed, though her body still felt like it was on the verge of collapse.

"Come on, Tian..." she said, her voice steady but softer than usual. "Let's go."

Looking at her, Zhao Tian asked in confusion "Go where?"

Li Jia glanced at him briefly before nodding toward the corridor of rooms. "I've booked a room for the next four hours. We can train there."

Eh? Zhao Tian was quite confused as she suddenly brought him here and now she wants to train with him?

Does she want to train with me? Or... maybe she doesn't like that I've been spending time with her sister and wants to keep me away from her?

With a soft sigh, he nodded. "Alright... let's go."

...

Soon, both of them entered the training room, the heavy door sliding shut behind them with a soft thud.

The room was dimly lit, with enough space to spar freely.

Along the walls, racks of various weapons gleamed under the low light... swords, spears, and other tools for combat practice.

Li Jia walked to the racks of weapons and picked a sword "You know how to use a sword, right?" she asked throwing the sword to him.

Catching the sword, Zhao Tian gave a nod "I do..."

In the dimly lit training room, Zhao Tian and Li Jia stood a few feet apart, both gripping their swords in silence.

Li Jia's face, though calm, still showed traces of the pain from earlier.

Her grip on the sword was steady, but her body trembled faintly as she suppressed the lingering backlash.

woosh Without a word, she dashed forward, her blade cutting through the air with speed and precision.

Clang!

Their swords met with a sharp ring, the force of their strikes vibrating through the room.

Zhao Tian parried her first attack effortlessly, his blue eyes gleaming as he countered with a swift strike of his own.

Li Jia twisted her body, dodging and stepping to the side, her movements agile despite the pain gnawing at her.

Her eyes narrowed slightly, and suddenly, her sword glowed faintly, exuding a sharp, invisible pressure.

The air around her blade began to hum with energy, and Zhao Tian immediately realized what it was...

Oh? Sword Intent?

Zhao Tian was quite surprised as he felt the subtle, refined pressure of her sword intent pushing against his blade.

She moved with fluidity, but every strike she made now felt sharper.

Her attacks were not wild or aggressive, but they carried a cold, calculated precision.

He blocked one of her swings, but the sheer force behind her sword intent made his arm tingle.

"Sword intent..." Zhao Tian muttered under his breath, impressed.

Li Jia's lips curled into a faint smile as she continued her assault.

Though her body was still in pain, she did not let it show in her movements.

She pressed forward, each of her strikes calculated to test Zhao Tian's defenses.

As Zhao Tian parried another strike, a glint flashed in his eyes.

He hadn't expected Li Jia to show sword intent so early in their spar, but if she could use it, so could he.

Taking a soft breath, Zhao Tian focused, and soon his own blade began to hum with power.

A different kind of energy, but no less potent.

His sword intent wasn't as refined as Li Jia's, but it carried a fierce, crackling intensity.

Li Jia's eyes trembled in shock looking at the white energy humming around Zhao Tian's sword.

Huh? He has also stepped into the Realm of Swords?

As Zhao Tian's sword intent clashed with hers, the room seemed to vibrate with the force of their wills.

clang *clang* Every strike they exchanged carried more weight than before.

The air crackled with tension as their sword intents collided, sparks of energy flashing between them.

Li Jia's eyes flickered with admiration as she felt the raw power of Zhao Tian's intent matching her own.

His sword intent was not as refined, but there was a crude energy behind it, a force that was difficult to counter.

Chapter 505: Jealous much?

"Haa..."

After three long hours of intense sparring, Li Jia exhaled a soft breath, her chest heaving slightly as she made her way toward the weapon rack.

With a subtle wince, she placed the sword back with the other training weapons.

Zhao Tian walked after her and placed the sword beside hers "Jia... you alright?"

With a nod, Li Jia replied "I am alright... just a little bit tired."

Now the backlash she has been feeling for a while has reduced, and the pain in her body has subsided.

Looking at her, Zhao Tian asked "By the way.. the reason, you pulled me that time was just to train with me or some other reason?"

Li Jia raised an eyebrow and spoke "Of course to train with you; what else do you think...?"

--

Zhao Tian stared at her blankly, clearly not buying it.

The prolonged silence stretched between them as he raised an eyebrow, waiting for her to confess.

Feeling his steady gaze, Li Jia's composure cracked, and she let out a soft sigh, admitting defeat. "Okay, I admit..."

"I didn't want you spending time with my sister, so I pulled you here," she finally confessed, her voice a mixture of annoyance and embarrassment.

Hearing this, Zhao Tian smiled dryly "Just because you don't like your sister.. doesn't mean I should not spend time with her."

"Being with her was fun and the mission also went smoothly."

Li Jia's eyes darkened upon hearing him praising her sister and she reached out grabbing the collar of his robe.

Eh? Zhao Tian blinked his eyes in confusion as she pulled him, bringing her face close to him...

"Listen here, you jerk... you should not spend time with her."

Hoh? Zhao Tian was quite amused and smiled faintly "That's quite rude, don't you think..."

She twirled her fingers on his fabric, clutching his collar tightly "I said what I said.. you shouldn't spend time with her."

Zhao Tian chuckled softly, his hand slowly reaching up to cover her hand.

He gently overpowered her grip, twisting her hand away from his collar as he leaned in slightly. "That's not really for you to decide, is it?"

Li Jia's hand trembled as she felt his strength overpower hers, but she refused to let him win this easily.

She pouted in frustration and pushed against his chest, her lips curling into a mock scowl. "Why don't you just listen to me, you jerk?"

"Jealous much?"

Hearing this, Li Jia's lips twitched in exasperation "I am not jealous of that bitch.. it's just- *cough* She suddenly coughed.

'Shit!'

She hastily closed her mouth with her palm feeling the warmth of blood rising up her throat and turned around, showing her back to him.

Zhao Tian's brow furrowed in concern "Jia... are you okay?" he asked, placing a hand on her shoulder.

Li Jia raised her left hand and gave a thumbs-up, gesturing that she was alright. She asked him to grab some water, pointing at the small water station at the edge of the room.

As Zhao Tian went to get some water, she quickly gulped down the blood 'Fuck... this backlash... but Tian, I can't lose him...'

Pulling back her palm, she saw the blood stains on her palm and hurriedly rubbed them on her robes.

Zhao Tian came with a glass of water and she took it from his hand and turned around, quickly drinking it.

She rinsed the water inside her mouth before drinking the water.

Zhao Tian noticed that she was acting strange and his gaze squinted 'What is happening?'

Li Jia took a deep breath and turned back to Zhao Tian "What are your plans for tomorrow?"

Zhao Tian frowned slightly and seeing this, Li Jia spoke "So I can spend time with you.. instead of that cu- I mean... my sister."

Looking at her, Zhao Tian spoke, "Tomorrow, I am going to the capital city of the Zhennan Empire to take a look at the Auction House and Pill Shop."

Li Jia gave a nod "I can accompany you."

Hearing this, Zhao Tian asked in suspicion "Are you really doing this because you are jealous of your sister?"

Li Jia bit her lip and looked away, a slight flush rising to her cheeks. "Tian," she began, her voice barely above a whisper, "I just... I don't want to see you with her, okay? It's not that I'm jealous. I just don't trust her."

Zhao Tian's gaze condensed "Are you afraid... that she will kill me just like she killed your father?"

Hearing this, Li Jia's gaze trembled and she gave a faint nod "Y-Yeah..."

Zhao Tian rolled his eyes upon hearing this 'But Xueyan said that she didn't actually kill her father... Hmm, seems like I should talk with her and help them to make up.'

cough *cough* Li Jia let out a series of faint coughs as the traumatic scene she saw in the past resurfaced in her mind "I-I still remember her killing my father that day... she is the one who killed him. Not only father, she killed his friend too."

"Don't get close to her, she will kill you too."

cough *cough* Li Jia coughed and Zhao Tian hurriedly took another cup of water and helped her to drink it.

"Are you really okay, you idiot?"

Li Jia gave a faint nod "Yeah... I am just feeling a soar throat..." she muttered, bearing the pain ripping through her heart.

Meanwhile, Zhao Tian was contemplating her words just now 'She saw Xueyan killing her father? So she actually did kill her?'

'I really need to talk with her.'

Li Jia glanced at him 'I will make you fall in love with me, so you won't fall for her...'

With a deep breath, she reached out grasping his arm "I am quite tired... Tian, let's go to the cafeteria and eat something."

"Hm..."

...

It was already mid night and Zhao Tian was sitting alone in the courtyard within the Sect and at this time, someone walked up to him from behind.

He turned back to look at the woman and smiled...

"Xueyan..."

Chapter 506: The Sisters' past [1]

Sitting in the sect's courtyard, Zhao Tian glanced at the moon glowing in the sky, its light illuminating the world below them.

As he felt a presence behind him, he turned his head to look at Li Xueyan and smiled gently "Xueyan..."

Eh? He was quite surprised as Li Xueyan's face had a faint touch of makeup, a pink blush softening her cheeks.

Li Xueyan quickly sat beside him on the bench and leaned her head on his shoulder "Why did you suddenly call me out on a night like this..." she asked placing a hand on his thigh, her fingers curling up.

Hearing the shyness in her tone, Zhao Tian sighed in his heart 'I just called her to have a talk, but seems like she thought of something else...'

'How can I bring that topic when she is like this?'

Letting out a soft sigh, he muttered "I just want to spend some time with you, nothing much."

Oh...

Li Xueyan's heart fluttered, and her hold on his arm tightened slightly.

She gently rested her cheek against his shoulder, her body relaxing as she let out a contented sigh.

Time passed as both of them sat there silently, with the chirping of some insect noises filling their ears.

Eventually, after what felt like hours of quiet comfort, Li Xueyan lifted her head. The cold night breeze played with strands of her hair, brushing them across her face.

"By the way... Tian, Jia pulled you aside earlier today. What happened after that?" she asked, her tone casual but with a hint of curiosity.

Zhao Tian glanced at her and muttered "She pulled me to the training chambers and we were sparring for some hours, that's it."

Upon hearing this, Li Xueyan gave a faint nod "I see..."

Gently intertwining his fingers with hers, he asked "And I was speaking with Jia... why she hates you."

Hearing this, Li Xueyan's gaze trembled and she spoke "She must have told you that I killed our father."

"Yeah... Xueyan, did you really?"

H-Huh? Li Xueyan's face went pale, and she shook her head quickly, her voice rising in panic. "No, Tian! I didn't... I didn't kill my father!"

Her breath came in shaky bursts, and her fingers tightened around his hand, as if trying to hold onto him, hold onto something solid in that moment.

Zhao Tian's frown deepened seeing her scared expression and gripped her fingers tightly "Xueyan, tell me the truth... Jia told me that she saw you killing your father and his friend."

Tears moistened Li Xueyan's eyes as she remembered the terrific day "W-Why are you making me remember that.. Tian."

Li Xueyan took a deep, shaky breath, wiping the tears from her cheeks. She met his gaze, her eyes full of sorrow and determination. "You want to know the truth, right? Fine... I'll tell you," she whispered.

...

A few years ago-

It was a dark rainy day-

Amidst the noises of the heavy rain, Li Xueyan heard the knocking sound from the front door.

As her room was downstairs, she quickly got down from her bed and made her way towards the front door.

creek Opening the door, she saw two men standing outside, drenched in rain and she could sense the strong smell of alcohol from them.

"F-Father?" she stammered, her voice trembling as she recognized the middle-aged man in front of her, struggling to stay upright, leaning heavily on the other figure beside him.

The man supporting her father let out a dry, humorless chuckle, his breath reeking of alcohol as well. "Looks like your father had a bit too much to drink tonight. I just came to make sure he got home safe."

"Y-Yeah..." Li Xueyan hurriedly nodded and opened the door fully for them to enter.

She pointed at the living room couch and spoke, "Place my father there.. I will go and bring towels for both of you."

As she left for her room, the man looked at her back with a hint of lust in his eyes as he licked his lips "Just as you told... your daughter does look very beautiful."

Her father, who had been pretending to be drunk, straightened up slightly, a cold smile tugging at the corners of his lips. "I told you... didn't I? She's yours for the night."

A little later, Li Xueyan came back with two towels in her hand and extended one of them to the men standing "Here, you can use it..."

The man smiled wickedly and directly gripped her wrist as his gaze lingered on her chest "You can warm me up in another way tonight."

H-Huh?

Li Xueyan was startled and hurriedly pulled back her hand "What are you...." her heartbeat raising in panic.

Her father, who had been silent until now, stood up with a sorrowful expression on his face. "Please, Yan'er... just this once. Do this for me."

H-He is sober this whole time?

Li Xueyan panicked even more and muttered "Father.. what is this?"

The man laughed wickedly and spoke "Your father lost the bet.. and his loss is his eldest daughter, for tonight, you belong to me."

Li Xueyan's breath hitched in her throat, and her eyes darted to her father, searching for any sign that this was some kind of sick joke.

But the cold, detached look in his eyes shattered any hope she had.

Father?

He smiled softly, as though his words weren't ripping her world apart. "Just endure it, Yan'er. It's only for tonight."

"W-What the hell are you saying to your own daughte-"

Her father cut short her words "I have raised you all these years after your mother died and you are complaining?"

"I already got my money.. tch, I just thought of using your body for money."

Li Xueyan shook her head "N-No.. this is wrong, I won't let you...." she spoke, slowly backing away from them.

woosh Suddenly she felt a pressure on her and her gaze flickered to the man's wicked smile as he licked his lips "I am also a cultivator, dear... I like it when they resist, I shall train you properly in the bed."

Feeling the pressure building upon her, her eyes quivered 'I-I can still handle it.. he is just one level above me it seems.'

As she gritted her teeth to stand the pressure she tried to move her body.

The man slowly made his way towards her, enjoying the panic on her face.

"Struggle more.. kukekeke."

Chapter 507: The Sisters' past [2]

Li Xueyan's heart raced, every fiber of her being screaming at her to fight back, to resist.

"Urghhh!" But the overwhelming pressure of the man's aura made it difficult to even breathe.

Li Xueyan gritted her teeth, her muscles trembling under the strain.

She could feel the man's dark, malicious energy crawling toward her, suffocating her, but she refused to give in. 'I won't let him touch me,' she swore to herself, her eyes narrowing in defiance.
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As the man reached out to grab her, Li Xueyan let out a sharp breath and used her water elemental ability, letting out a burst of energy.

The room filled with the sound of rushing water as a protective shield of shimmering blue enveloped her, pushing the man back with a force he hadn't anticipated.

The man staggered, his wicked grin faltering for the first time. "Oh? You want to resist? Good... that makes this even more fun."

Li Xueyan's heart pounded, but she held her ground and she knew she couldn't overpower him for long.

"You will never touch me," she hissed, her voice low and fierce.

The man's eyes gleamed with sadistic excitement, but he underestimated her resolve.

"Then let's see how long you can keep that up, little girl," he taunted as he charged at her, his aura flaring with malicious intent.

"Your tricks won't save you!" he snarled, as his hand ignited with flames and he threw a powerful blast toward her, but she dodged, barely escaping the searing heat.

As he advanced again, Li Xueyan's eyes flashed and with a swift movement, she thrust her hands forward, summoning water from the air.

Streams of liquid coiled around her like serpents, and she focused all her energy on controlling them.

The man scoffed. "Water? Against me?" He laughed mockingly, his confidence still unshaken. "You're just delaying the inevitable!"

But Li Xueyan didn't respond and her focus narrowed to the swirling water in her hands, shaping it with precision.

The man lunged at her, but this time she was ready.

slash

A whip of water lashed out, faster than the man could react, striking him square across the chest and sending him stumbling backward.

His eyes widened in surprise. "You-"

Before he could finish, Li Xueyan snapped her hand again, and the water whip cracked in the air like lightning, striking him across the face.

"Argh!" Blood sprayed from his mouth as he growled in rage.

He tried to retaliate, unleashing a blast of fire energy toward her, but Li Xueyan was quicker, her movements fluid and relentless.

She darted to the side, summoning another surge of water to block the attack, and with a flick of her wrist, the water lashed out again, wrapping around his legs and yanking him to the ground.

thud "Get... off!" he roared, his aura flaring as he struggled against her control.

"Tch!" She extended her arm, and the water shifted, solidifying into a thick whip that coiled around the man's neck.

"Wha- argh!" His eyes bulged as he clawed at the watery noose tightening around his throat.

He thrashed violently, panic finally creeping into his expression as he realized what was happening.

"You won't touch me. You won't touch anyone ever again," she said, her voice cold and unwavering.

"AARGH!! WHAT ARE YO-" The man's struggles grew more desperate as the whip tightened, cutting off his air.

His hands flailed, his feet kicking wildly, but it was no use.

The water whip constricted, choking the life out of him with every second that passed.

Li Xueyan's heart pounded in her chest in panic, but she didn't relent.

This man, this monster, had to die. He had to pay for what he tried to do.

As his eyes rolled back and his body convulsed in a final, futile attempt to escape, Li Xueyan gritted her teeth and pulled the whip tighter.

The rain continued to pour, mingling with the blood and sweat on the ground, the sound of the man's gurgling breaths slowly fading into nothing.

With one final twist of her wrist, the water whip crushed his windpipe.

thud The man's body went limp, collapsing in a lifeless heap on the floor, his eyes wide open in frozen terror.

Li Xueyan stood there for a moment, her breathing ragged, the adrenaline still coursing through her veins.

Her hands shook as she let the water fall away, dissolving into droplets that splattered onto the ground.

H-HUH?

Looking at his friend's dead body on the ground, the man raged and walked to Li Xueyan "D-Do you know what have you done?"

Li Xueyan gritted her teeth and twisted her arm, giving a punch right off his face.

puchi Blood sprayed from his mouth as he crumpled to the ground, his body landing with a dull thud against the floor.

His hand instinctively went to his face, clutching his bruised jaw in pain, but his eyes were wide, filled with fear.

Li Xueyan stood over him, her breath coming in steady, cold puffs as she glared down at him with a mix of anger and disgust. "The thing you tried to do... there is no guarantee that you won't try it again."

Her heart twisted in pain feeling her father's betrayal and gritted her teeth.

Remembering Li Jia's face, her eyes trembled "I don't want her to experience any of that..."

She kneeled down pinning her right knee on her father's back.

"ARGHHH!!!!!"

The man screamed feeling her knee crushing his spine and Li Xueyan raised her hand forming a whip of water.

"I will kill you too..."

The man struggled beneath her, gasping for breath as the pain from his spine intensified.

His face was pressed into the floor, his body writhing in agony, but Li Xueyan's knee remained firm against him, locking him in place.

"Please... please, don't kill me!" he whimpered, his voice barely audible over the sound of the rain.

With a sharp crack, she brought the whip down around his throat.

The man's eyes bulged in terror as the water coiled tightly, cutting off his air.

He clawed at the watery whip, his fingers scraping at his neck in a desperate attempt to free himself, but it was useless.

The more he struggled, the tighter it became.

Her hand tightened around the water whip's handle, and with a final twist, she pulled it hard, pulling it tighter around his neck.

"GRAARGH!!" The man's gurgling cries slowly faded as his body convulsed beneath her.

His hands fell limp at his sides, his breath reduced to shallow gasps, until finally, there was nothing.

Li Xueyan let out a long, shaky breath as she released the whip, letting the water dissipate.

"B-Big Sister?" Li Jia who was sleeping in her room upstairs finally came down hearing some noises..

Hearing a shaky voice, Li Xueyan turned her head and looked at Li Jia standing on the stairs with a terrified expression on her face.

"Jia...."

Chapter 508: A date with Jia [1]

Hearing Li Xueyan's story, Zhao Tian's gaze condensed and he felt that Li Xueyan really did the right thing by killing her father and his friend.

With a soft sigh, he asked "And you never tried to explain it to Jia?"

Li Xueyan, who had been fighting back her tears, slowly rubbed her eyes, trying to hold her emotions together.

Her voice was barely above a whisper, strained with regret. "I-I tried to... I tried to tell her, but she refused to listen. What can I do?"

Zhao Tian wrapped his arm around her shoulder and patted her head "Don't worry... I shall try to talk to her."

She hugged him and in his arms, she gave a subtle nod.

They sat there, together in the courtyard, as the cool night breeze danced through the trees, brushing past them.

Li Xueyan relished in the warmth of his embrace, his strong arms making her feel safe for the first time since her world had fallen apart.

Zhao Tian's thumb absentmindedly stroked her shoulder as he gazed out at the dimly lit courtyard.

He turned to look at her and his gaze squinted in thought 'Hm... I see.'

A few more minutes passed and looking at her, Zhao Tian spoke "Leave for today... if anyone saw us this late, it might cause problems."

With a nod, Li Xueyan stood up as there are rules that an inner court disciple should not be in a relationship with an outer disciple.

After she left, Zhao Tian's eyes narrowed in thought 'I still can't get a clue of it...'

...

Back in the artifact, Zhao Tian is sitting on the bed, leaning his back on the headboard with a book in his hand.

Fei Ziyu and Fei Lingxi are sitting beside him in the bed looking at the weird symbols and patterns on the book.

Looking at it, Fei Ziyu asked curiously "Master.. what are you reading?"

Zhao Tian glanced at her and muttered "Just rune language... for that teleportation rune I am creating."

Fei Lingxi who was leaning on his shoulder smiled faintly, as they have a lot of time to spend together with Zhao Tian these days.

He returns from the Sect during the night and spends time with them or spars with Shi Yixian.

As she gently moved her ass to sit in a comfortable position, Zhao Tian looked at her "If you want to sleep, both of you can sleep..."

Fei Lingxi hurriedly shook her head "No master, I don't... it is my duty to serve, how can I sleep before you?"

Zhao Tian's left hand slipped to her waist and he raised his hand cupping her breast as he gave a squeeze making her smile.

"Master~"

Pulling her closer, he kissed her tender lips and she also reciprocated it, sucking his lips with the same fervor.

The book on his right hand disappeared and he pulled her naked body, placing it on his lap as he made her look towards him.

Pulling back from the kiss, he trailed kisses down her neck, then further down to her cleavage.

He nuzzled his face into the soft mounds of her breasts, his breath hot against her skin as he inhaled her sweet scent, savoring the warmth and softness of her body.

Fei Lingxi's fingers tangled in his hair as her body arched into him, her breath coming out in soft gasps. "Master..." she whispered, her voice trembling with anticipation.

His eyes flickered open as he realized that this must be the thing Shi Yixian was talking about... 'You should keep my dragon in your pants and control your lust.'

Just now he was studying... but now he is about to have sex again.

As he thought, his gaze flickered to her inverted nipple and he tenderly grabbed it, his finger grazing her nipple.

Fei Lingxi's eyes trembled and a muffled moan escaped her lips "Master..."

He kissed down the valley of her breasts, his hands roaming over her smooth skin.

"Mngh~" Fei Lingxi tilted her head back, her eyes half-lidded with pleasure as her breathing became more erratic.

She pressed herself closer to him, her body trembling with excitement, craving his touch.

Fei Ziyu pouted her lips in annoyance 'Why is Master always attached to Mom when we three are together? Must be because of her beautiful mature body.. well, it will take some years for me to get that charm.'

"Haa~ Master..."

...

Zhao Tian stepped out of his room, slightly groggy from sleep, but that all vanished when he saw the figure standing in front of him.

"Jia?"

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Li Jia smiled brightly at him, her eyes sparkling as she stood there, wearing an elegant set of robes that hugged her slender body.

"Good morning, Tian," she greeted him with a voice full of warmth.

Stepping out of the room, Zhao Tian asked "How did you find my room?"

Li Jia pointed at the nameplate just next to the door where it boldly displayed his name, 'ZHAO TIAN,' in large letters.

"Oh..."

Li Jia reached out and grabbed his hand, "Now let's go on our date to the capital city of Fenglei."

Date? Zhao Tian smiled wryly and let himself be pulled by Li Jia.

Looking at him, Li Jia smiled "I have already prepared the carriage to the capital city as we can't fly around here."

"And by the way, let us go to the Sect warehouse on our way."

Zhao Tian raised an eyebrow "Sect warehouse?"

With a nod, Li Jia spoke "Yeah.. did you forget that I got to choose a Mythic grade weapon and technique for getting the second place in the Sect Entrance Examination."

"For you, it's Radiant grade."

"Oh... yeah, completely forgot about it."

"Hehe, me too..."

...

They quickly reached the Sect warehouse, and upon entering, the two receptionists at the front desk quickly greeted them.

With a smile, Li Jia spoke "Uh, we are from the recent batch of outer disciples and we won top two places in the Sect Entrance Examination."

Upon hearing this, the receptionist nodded her head, "Oh, yeah. We have details for that."

She scrolled through the device and glanced at the two people in front of her "Zhao Tian and Li Jia?"

"Yeah..."

Chapter 509: A date with Jia [2]

Li Jia smiled and dragged Zhao Tian inside, her eyes instantly lighting up at the rows of gleaming weapons and neatly arranged scrolls.

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The place was vast, with high ceilings and walls lined with weapons of various sizes and shapes, all emitting powerful auras.

Li Jia walked down the aisle, inspecting a few of the weapons, running her fingers lightly over the handles of swords, spears, and halberds.

The receptionist inspecting them gestured toward a section and spoke "You can select one from this section. This is for Mythich grade."

Both of them entered and walked into the section, glancing around at the weapons.

Li Jia suddenly stopped in front of a display case where a sword hovered inside, its blade glowing with a faint blue light.

Its hilt was intricately carved with the image of a coiling dragon and seeing this Li Jia's eyes sparkled.

"This one... I think this is it," she said, her voice barely a whisper and she read the name below it "The 'Azure Dragon's Wrath.' It's perfect."

Zhao Tian walked up beside her, looking at the sword. "It's a fine choice, But make sure you can handle it."

Li Jia shot him a sidelong glance. "You doubt me, Tian?"

Zhao Tian raised his hands in surrender. "Not at all. I just know how overzealous you can get."

With a proud smirk, Li Jia motioned for the receptionist to unlock the case.

As the sword floated toward her, she reached out and gripped the handle, immediately feeling the rush of power surge through her body.

'So, this is a Mythic grade weapon.'

She closed her eyes, allowing the weapon's aura to meld with her own, and for a moment, Zhao Tian could see her energy harmonizing with the sword, faint wisps of blue and gold swirling around her.

With a smile, she opened her eyes. "Perfect," she said, giving the sword a small twirl before sheathing it.

"Now for the skill."

Soon, she selected a technique for her Water elemental and Zhao Tian too, picked a radiant-grade skill and weapon.

...

Sitting comfortably inside the plush carriage, Zhao Tian gazed out the window at the passing scenery.

Li Jia had leaned into him, resting her head gently on his shoulder, her hair brushing against his neck.

Zhao Tian glanced at her briefly, a soft smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

"By the way Tian, do you need anything specific to buy from the Auction house?"

Zhao Tian shook his head "No, just to sell some stuff..."

"I see..."

Soon, the distant outline of Fenglei City appeared on the horizon. The towering walls and tall spires of the capital city rose into the sky, shimmering in the morning light.

The once quiet road was now lined with other carriages and pedestrians, all heading toward the city.

Soon, their carriage entered the royal capital and both of them stepped onto the streets.

Li Jia's eyes wide with excitement as she looped her arm through Zhao Tian's and tugged him forward. "Come on, let's take a look around before we head to the auction house."

Zhao Tian allowed himself to be led through the crowded streets, a faint smile on his lips as Li Jia's enthusiasm rubbed off on him.

As they meandered through the city streets, they passed by a towering pagoda—the Fenglei Auction House.

The building was grand, with its multiple levels rising high above the other structures in the area.

The Auction House was one of the most renowned in the region, known for hosting auctions of rare and valuable items that attracted the wealthiest and most powerful individuals.

Li Jia glanced at the auction house "We'll go there soon, but first, let's enjoy ourselves a bit more."

They continued walking, eventually stopping at a small tea house nestled in a quiet corner of the bustling city.

The air was cooler here, and the scent of freshly brewed tea wafted from the open windows.

Li Jia led Zhao Tian inside, and they found a table by the window with a clear view of the city streets.

Sitting down, Li Jia leaned back in her chair, a satisfied smile on her face. "This is nice," she said softly, looking out at the busy streets.

Eventually, they finished their tea, and Li Jia stood up with renewed energy. "Alright, now it's time for the main event! Let's head to the auction house."

Zhao Tian followed her lead as they made their way back through the crowded streets toward the towering Fenglei Auction House.

...

As both of them entered the elevator in the Auction house, Li Jia glanced at Zhao Tian "Was it 4th floor for selling the stuff?"

"Yeah..."

Soon, both of them stepped into the room and walked to the Auction staff standing at the desk.

Looking at them, the young man who was working there smiled warmly "Esteemed customer, what would you like to sell here."

Zhao Tian took two radiant-grade weapons from his storage ring and placed them on the table.

Li Jia's jaw dropped as one of the radiant-grade weapons was the one he had just taken from the Sect warehouse "H-Huh?"

Looking through the grade of the weapon, the young man was quite surprised and took them in his hands "Really good and Esteemed customer, would you like to participate in the Auction as well?"

Zhao Tian gave a nod and the young man pulled a drawer and took a golden card from it, which had the number 34 on it.

"Since you are selling a radiant grade weapon like this, we will offer a VIP room for you."

With a nod, Zhao Tian took his card and the young man spoke "We will send the astral stones to your room itself after it has been auctioned, Mr..." his voice trailed off.

"Batman."

"Ah, Mr.Batman."

Zhao Tian and Li Jia entered the elevator to go to the 8th floor, where the Auction is going to happen.

"Tian, why did you sell a radiant-grade weapon? Do you know its value?"

Zhao Tian : -_-

Chapter 510: A date with Li Jia [3]

Zhao Tian and Li Jia were sitting in the private room in the auction house as they glanced at the auction happening through the one-way glass in front of them.

The auctioneer was in the middle of presenting another rare artifact, his voice booming through the hall.

A soft sigh escaped Zhao Tian's lips as there was nothing that caught his interest in the Auction.

Meanwhile, Li Jia had her jaw dropped on the floor "What the hell? How are they throwing money like this? They must be so rich.. eh?"

"And Tian, your radiant-grade weapons sold for 10,000 High-grade astral stones."

Looking at her shocked face, Zhao Tian just chuckled and spoke "Well yeah, Radiant grade weapons are quite rare"

Li Jia let out a sigh "Still... that's so much money." She glanced back at the auction hall, shaking her head in disbelief. "I could live off that for decades!"

At this time, Zhao Tian heard a knock on the door.

Rising from his seat, he made his way to the door and opened it to find two young men standing there, dressed in the fine uniforms of the auction house.

One of them held a silver platter with nine pouches neatly arranged atop it.

The lead servant bowed respectfully, offering the tray forward. "Esteemed customer, here are your 9000 high-grade astral stones, after deducting the 10 percent commission for the auction house."

With a nod, Zhao Tian stored them in his storage ring and glanced back at Li Jia "Jia... let's leave."

Li Jia snapped out of her amazement, quickly standing up from the plush couch. "Oh, okay," she said, hurrying to his side as he stepped out into the corridor.

...

As they walked through the city, Li Jia glanced around at the various shops and stalls lining the streets.

"Oh, look at that..."

Li Jia spoke pointing towards an old man's shop which was selling talismans.

They walked to the shop and looked at the talismans arranged on the table "Oh, are they like.. good luck charms?"

"Seems like it..."

"Then let's buy."

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Soon, they bought two Luck talismans and exchanged them with each other "Here, you can have this."

"Hmm..."

Looking at him, Li Jia asked "Since we're already here in Fenglei, is there anywhere else you want to stop by?" she asked, her eyes catching on a nearby shop displaying some herbs.

Zhao Tian shook his head, his gaze fixed on the distant horizon. "No, I've taken care of what I needed. Let's head back. i will have to come here for Pill shop another day."

Upon hearing this, she hugged his arm "Call me at that time too."

...

In the stillness of the night, Zhao Tian sat quietly in the courtyard, gazing up at the silver glow of the moon that hung high in the dark sky.

Li Xueyan was sitting beside him in the courtyard, her head resting on his shoulder.

As the quiet wind rustled past them, she whispered in his ear "Tian... I want to break a rule."

Eh? Confused by her words, Zhao Tian arched an eyebrow and saw the blush on Li Xueyan's face deepening.

With a slight cough, she made her point "I mean... like, the rule that outer court disciples and inner court disciples can't be in a relationship."

Zhao Tian looked at her and couldn't help but chuckle "I see... then seems like we can break that rule."

Li Xueyan looked up at him, her eyes softening at his words.

She was relieved by his casual acceptance, but the depth of her feelings was still written all over her face.

The blush on her cheeks deepened, and she lowered her gaze, speaking in a quieter voice, "Then... we have to keep our relationship a secret from now on."

Zhao Tian glanced around as if making sure no one was around to overhear them, before leaning in closer to her.

"If that's the case, then we shouldn't be sitting out here in the open, should we? If we're going to keep it a secret, we should be spending our time in your room."

Li Xueyan's eyes widened, and she stiffened at his words. "H-His room?"

Her mind raced, and her heart fluttered in her chest as the implications of his suggestion hit her.

Her gaze flitted between his face and the ground. 'Isn't that too soon?' she thought, her cheeks turning even redder

Zhao Tian, noticing her sudden shift in demeanor, realized how his words might have been interpreted and chuckled "Well, I ju-

"Okay..."

Huh?

The blush on Li Xueyan's face deepened and her fingers curled into the fabric of his robes "T-Take me to your room, Tian."

Zhao Tian stared at her for a moment, taken aback. He hadn't expected her to agree so quickly.

They just started talking about their feelings. Weren't they skipping some important steps here?

He smiled back, shaking his head slightly in disbelief. "Well then..." He stood up from the stone bench, brushing off his robes.

Extending a hand toward her, he asked with a warm smile, "Do you want to come to my room?"

Li Xueyan looked at his outstretched hand, her heart beating faster.

Without hesitation, she reached out and gently took his hand, feeling the warmth of his palm against hers. She nodded softly, her lips curving into a faint smile. "Yeah..."

Hand in hand, they walked through the dimly lit courtyard, the sound of their footsteps barely audible over the soft rustling of the trees.

The sect was quiet at this hour, most of the disciples had already retired to their quarters for the night.

As they passed the gardens and training grounds, illuminated only by the faint glow of moonlight, they were alone.

Zhao Tian glanced at her from the corner of his eye, watching as she kept her gaze forward, her hand gripping his hand just a little tighter.

She was trying to maintain her calm composure, but he could tell she was nervous.