

Immortal 1141

Chapter 1141: Great Danger

Yan Xuehen's pretty brows furrowed. She didn't sense Yu Yanluo's aura. She had already faced Yu Yanluo several times, and so naturally knew her aura's distinct characteristics.

Of course, there was a chance of Cloudcenter City being too noisy. She wasn't sure if she was overlooking anything. After thinking to herself for a moment, she took out a divination circle. Then, her fingers formed a hand seal. The divination circle shone, then began to slowly spin. Then, a strand of light emerged, stretching out in multiple directions. In the end, it formed a larger divination circle in the air.

The circle quickly drew the attention of the people in the city. When they saw the floating figure in white and the sparkling radiance surrounding her, many people cried out, "The descent of a goddess!"

Even Xiao Yao, who was near the city walls, looked in her direction in a daze. Of course, he didn't covet her beauty like the common people and instead muttered to himself, "White Jade Sect's Natural Change Art?"

This White Jade Sect technique was renowned. Forget about just being able to discern good or bad luck, it could even calculate one's dao path.

Xiao Yao could sense a wave of incredibly profound energy even from far away. He sighed in amazement. That technique had a well-deserved reputation after all. He felt a bit of inspiration toward enlightenment even from so far away.

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Meanwhile, Yan Xuehen's mood was completely serious. The cries of alarm coming from ordinary people and the expressions of worship from cultivators didn't affect her in the slightest.

Her eyes followed the trail of light passing through the divination circle in midair. In the end, she looked outside the city, muttering, "She is to the north?"

But then, her expression changed, because the divination circle became impossible to interpret.

"A great danger?" Yan Xuehen exclaimed, confused.

The Natural Change Art has never acted like this before. It was actually difficult to read? If it weren't for her proficiency in the skill, she might even have suspected that her calculations were wrong. She really couldn't figure out what else in this world could threaten her. Unless the emperor Zhao Han himself descended or the Fiend Emperor came personally, how could such a thing be possible?

After thinking for a bit, her figure vanished from midair as if she had never been present in the first place.

All of the common folk who had been admiring her rubbed their eyes. "A daoist immortal really is holy after all..."

Xiao Yao's brows furrowed tightly. He had already secretly locked onto Yan Xuehen's aura just then, intending to use her to show him the way and chase after the escaped Yu Yanluo. Unfortunately, it

made no difference. The instant Yan Xuehen vanished, he couldn't find a trace of her aura no matter what he tried. It was as if everything had just been an illusion.

Xiao Yao was speechless. Looks like the distance to the grandmaster rank is further than I thought...

After that experience, he no longer felt his previous desire to face her in battle.

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Several dozen li away, a white figure reappeared out of thin air. Yan Xuehen's white dress fluttered as she floated in midair. She spread her divine sense and began to search nearby.

Even though the divinatory art was miraculous, it still probed the mysteries of heaven. There was no way it could show an exact location. But that was already enough. With her grandmaster ability, it wouldn't take her too long to search the entire place anyway.

That was especially true where she was, outside of the city in the wilderness. It wasn't as noisy, so it was much easier to find what she was looking for.

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Under Yu Yanluo's lead, the pair had already arrived at a canyon at the foot of Great Snowy Mountain. There were guards patrolling the canyon, and all of them were Yu clan members.

Yu Yanluo said, "Farther in is the Yu clan's ore vein. Let us go in secretly; I do not want to involve them."

She held incomparable prestige and popularity in the Yu clan. If Xu Yu's people came to interrogate them later, these people might not reveal where she is, but they would still experience a harsh trial, or even torture. Rather than that, she would rather not let any of them know anything to begin with.

Zu An chuckled and remarked, "Everyone else only knows the Medusa's cruelty, they don't know just how kindhearted you are."

"My mother wasn't evil either. Even though I didn't spend much time with her, I still have a bit of an impression," Yu Yanluo said, somewhat unhappy about the Medusa's reputation.

"Every race has good and bad people," Zu An said with a nod. "It was probably because of the Medusa's eyes that could petrify all who saw her that made everyone so scared of her. That was why they created such a terrifying image of her."

"There's nothing that can be done about that," Yu Yanluo said. She had already lived in human society for so long, she obviously knew just how deeply ingrained into people's bones that thought was. Changing something like that was really difficult.

She felt a deep sense of powerlessness when she thought of that. She turned around and gave Cloudcenter Commandery a look, and there was a great sense of reluctance in her expression.

Zu An guessed what she was thinking and tried to console her, saying, "Don't worry, I'll definitely find a way to bring you back."

Yu Yanluo smiled and replied, "Thank you."

Since she had always had a worried frown the entire time, her sudden smile created a powerful visual clash. Even Zu An, who had already seen his fair share of beauties, was still stunned. He said, "You were able to become the most beautiful in the human world. Now, you might stun all of the fiend races with your beauty, becoming the first to achieve both."

Yu Yanluo hit him lightly with her fists, complaining, "Come on, do you know what kind of situation we are in? And yet you are still teasing me..."

The two chatted happily as they entered deeper. The outside world was bitterly cold, and the place was far out and remote. It was late at night as well. Even though there were guards, there was no way the security would be particularly rigid.

With their cultivation, sneaking in wasn't too difficult. The two of them headed inside. Zu An noticed many wooden houses off to the sides, and he could see that there were fires going on inside. The fragrance of food also wafted through the air.

"There's a village here?" he asked curiously.

Yu Yanluo explained, "Mining ore not only requires the miner, but also a large number of people to work on the logistics. This is also a place where all kinds of goods are collected for distribution. At first, people built some temporary homes, but later on, the Yu clan built several houses here. The people who live here are the miners and various other workers."

Zu An looked all around him. He saw that there were giant wooden arms everywhere, similar to the cranes found in construction sites in his previous world.

"These are all things researched by the academy. They can lift some things from a lower position to a higher one. They are really useful," Yu Yanluo explained, sounding quite proud of her clan's industry.

Zu An said with a sigh, "The academy's research is much more helpful for the common folk than what cultivators have done for them."

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They continued inside. Zu An suddenly noticed two familiar strips of metal. There were even some carts on them, and he could vaguely make out some ores on the carts.

Yu Yanluo explained, "The Yu clan's ore veins do not only produce ki stones; most of the mining is for ordinary mineral resources like iron and copper."

"That's not what I was surprised about. You actually have rail tracks?" Zu An asked, having been paying attention to something else. He pointed at the two strips on the ground.

"That was something a miner came up with in the past to help the miners transport goods. We discovered that they were extremely useful, so we spread them throughout the mines," Yu Yanluo replied.

"Where is that miner now?" Zu An asked curiously. Don't tell me he's a transmigrator too?

"He seemed to have lost his life later on in a mining accident." Yu Yanluo grew a bit emotional. "No matter how many security measures one puts into place, mining disasters still happen from time to

time. That is why these ores are excavated through the blood and sweat of these miners. Unfortunately, those bigwigs in the court do not care about such things at all.”

Zu An fell silent. It wasn’t just in this world; that was the case no matter which world he thought of. It was just a pity that the miner who had come up with the rails had passed away. If he hadn’t, he might have come up with even more useful things. If he had been a transmigrator too, that was an even more unfortunate thing.

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They continued, but after a while, they both stopped. Zu An was speechless when he saw a massive pit before them, exclaiming, “This is the Yu clan’s mine?”

The pit was several thousand meters wide. A pathway wound down it one layer after another. It was easy to imagine just how great the scale of such an engineering project was. It was also pitch-black; even with Zu An’s sight, he couldn’t see what was inside at all. It was like the mouth of a massive beast, waiting for him to jump in.

“Indeed, the mines are all underground, and the roads lead in all directions. Please watch your step; even many seasoned miners have lost their way inside,” Yu Yanluo replied.

Zu An nodded, saying, “Now we don’t have to worry even if Xiao Yao chases us here.”

“Follow me,” Yu Yanluo said as she kicked off. She didn’t follow the winding miner paths along the walls, but rather jumped straight down. But every so often, she still used the wall to stop. She didn’t dare to jump straight into the pitch-black pit.

Zu An also followed her down. As he fell, the light around him grew dimmer and dimmer. Eventually, he couldn’t even see his own fingers in front of him.

Yu Yanluo moved next to him and quietly said, “No open fires can be used inside the mines. You absolutely cannot use anything like a torch.” She took out a luminescent pearl afterward. The soft radiance scattered down across her body, making her skin look even more moving and beautiful.

Zu An chuckled and said, “I know. There are all sorts of natural gases in the mines. There would be an explosion if they made contact with fire.”

A terrifying roar emerged from the depths of the pit just then. Then, the entire mine began to shake.

Chapter 1142: Black Fog

“What kind of sound is this?” Yu Yanluo exclaimed as her face turned extremely pale. She subconsciously moved closer to Zu An, as if only then could she feel a bit more at ease.

Zu An frowned. He had never heard such a sound before. It was practically a soul-shaking noise. He wasn’t even sure whether it was the roar of a beast, or something created by the wind blowing through such a massive cave. However, he replied, “This is your Yu clan’s cave; why are you asking me?”

Yu Yanluo was a bit embarrassed. After thinking for a bit, she said, “I do not know too much about this place, but from what I do know, this kind of thing should not have happened before.”

“Then we have to be careful.” Zu An’s expression turned strange as he spoke. “In my opinion, something isn’t right. I have strength comparable to a master rank now, and you’re the infamous monster Medusa. If there really is something strange, it should be scared of us.”

“What you say makes sense,” Yu Yanluo replied, subconsciously nodding. But she immediately pinched him out of embarrassment, retorting, “You are the infamous monster; that sounds so awful!”

Zu An chuckled. He wrapped his arm around her waist, then jumped down. He had to admit that the woman’s waist was slender and fine. It was narrower than those of basically all the other girls he knew. It was also much more supple. Because Yu Yanluo was half fiend race, her waist was more slender than those of other humans.

“Hm? Something is not right,” Yu Yanluo suddenly said.

Zu An grew vigilant, asking, “What is it?”

Yu Yanluo stared at the pit below and said, “The miners should still be working at this time, but I cannot sense a single person. It is far too strange.”

Zu An was shocked, remarking, “It’s already so late at night, but you still make them work? What a heartless capitalist...”

Yu Yanluo said in annoyance, “There is no day or night down there; there is no difference whether they go in during the day or night. Of course, we do not make them work day and night, but rather have them work in different shifts.”

Zu An realized that his own thoughts had been off. He replied, “If you put it like that, something is indeed wrong. Did something happen down there?”

“Apart from these miners, I am more worried about Maid Xing and the others. I had them escape down there, but if something really has ended up happening, they may be in danger,” Yu Yanluo said worriedly.

“Let’s take a look first,” Zu An replied. The two had already arrived at the bottom while they were talking.

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The air at the bottom was comparatively heavier than the air up top. But it wasn’t too big of a deal for cultivators.

Everything around the two was pitch-black. By borrowing the luminescent pearl’s radiance, they could see many simple and crude wooden houses wherever they looked. There were many tools and miner’s carts all over the place.

“This is the mine’s supply station, which distributes the goods from the surface to different supply points farther down. At the same time, the ores that are excavated can be picked up and brought back to the surface.... There should be a lot of guards watching this place. It seems as if something happened here after all,” Yu Yanluo explained as she looked around them. She didn’t see any signs of people present.

“There’s an announcement post here,” Zu An said, pointing at a board off to the side.

Yu Yanluo walked over and read, "The vibrations below are abnormal and several unexpected events have taken place. Out of consideration for everyone's safety, all personnel are to evacuate to the surface and wait until the clan sends an investigation squad before continuing..." She was shocked when she read that, exclaiming, "Why have I heard nothing about this?"

Zu An investigated his surroundings a bit and said, "Judging from these traces, they probably evacuated recently. Furthermore, you were locked up by Xu Yu for a while, and the Yu clan's elders were arrested too. The clan has no leader right now, so it's natural that you don't know what happened."

"Something major definitely happened," Yu Yanluo said, looking worried. "In all these years, these mines have never stopped. Furthermore, these workers stopped without permission from the clan. The workers must have realized that they absolutely had to stop working, or else no one would have dared to issue this kind of order."

"Judging from how there are tools scattered everywhere, they clearly left in a hurry. The situation was probably pressing," Zu An remarked as he looked at the tools scattered all over the ground and the overturned mine carts. There were even several ki stones that hadn't been collected in time, scattered across the ground like discarded scrap.

He stood up again and asked, "Should we ask the people stationed outside? There seemed to still be people guarding this place when we entered before."

Yu Yanluo thought for a bit, then shook her head. She replied, "It would be way too troublesome to go back up, and I do not want to trouble them either. Based on the current circumstances, they probably experienced something like an earthquake collapse. Let us look for Maid Xing and the others first. We can think about the rest after we find them."

"That works too," Zu An replied. He had thought that the earthquake and strange noise were pretty scary. It made sense for ordinary miners to be scared, but the two of them were already powerful individuals in this world. They naturally didn't have quite as many misgivings.

"Ah Zu, follow me closely. This mine has many side roads, and we cannot see too well. It is easy to get lost," Yu Yanluo reminded him.

"Ah, it's that dangerous? Then I guess I have to stay closer to you," Zu An replied. He looked worried and quickly moved closer. He naturally grabbed her hand.

Yu Yanluo was speechless. Her heart pounded, a red blush crossing her cheeks in the darkness. However, she didn't shake him off and instead said, "Mm, holding my hand is fine too. That way, we will not be easily separated."

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At first, the tunnel was quite spacious, but the further in they went, the narrower the road became. Many places were only the height of a single person. But since it was a tunnel used to transport ore, the width was fine.

Zu An had completely calmed down now that he had Yu Yanluo's soft little hand in his. The surrounding darkness even seemed to have become bright and beautiful.

Yu Yanluo was a mature woman. After her initial alarm, she had a relieved smile on her face too. Her fair fingers wrapped around his, and she even unknowingly moved a bit closer to him. The two of them headed deeper into the mine just like that.

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This eerie and silent cave was even starting to feel warm and charming. Yu Yanluo had begun hoping that the path wouldn't end that quickly. Unfortunately, happier times always ended quickly. She suddenly stopped, exclaiming, "Huh?"

Zu An knew why she was shocked. There was a strange black fog in front of them. Even though the surroundings were pitch-black, their cultivations were powerful. The light coming from the luminescent pearl was already enough.

"This black mist is a bit strange," Zu An said, looking at the beauty beside him.

Yu Yanluo knew what he wanted to ask. She replied, "This fog has never appeared before in the mines."

Zu An tried to sense it with his soul, but discovered that his soul actually couldn't penetrate the black fog.

That was something completely unprecedented. Ever since his soul had been condensed, every single blade of grass within a range of several dozen zhang had been within his perception. And yet now, he couldn't even sense something a few meters away!

He wasn't willing to give up and used the jade badge, trying to summon any surrounding little creatures. He figured there had to be a lot of rats in places like the mines. But he was bitterly disappointed. There wasn't a single living thing nearby!

"Looks like the evacuation of those miners has something to do with this black fog," Yu Yanluo said. She began walking into the black mist, intending to personally look around.

Zu An quickly stopped her and said, "Let me go first!"

Yu Yanluo smiled sweetly and replied, "Do you really think I am a weak and helpless girl? For better or worse, I still have the Medusa's bloodline within me; my body is much sturdier than those of ordinary humans. Furthermore, I have some resistance to poison, or at least more than you."

Zu An still grabbed her and said, "In terms of sturdiness, not even a dragon might be able to compare to me. If you're talking about poison immunity, if you really are that formidable, why were you poisoned by Xu Yu's tea?"

Yu Yanluo was hard pressed to respond, but said, "That was specially made to target me! It is not a normal poison at all."

Zu An chuckled. And said, "Just let me go first. My body is already poison immune. At the very least, it's stronger than yours."

"Poison immune?" Yu Yanluo exclaimed, feeling shocked. What kind of special constitution was that?

"You don't believe me? Why don't you bite me and give me a try?" Zu An asked as he brought his hand over to her mouth.

Yu Yanluo flung his hand away with an annoyed laugh, replying, "I am not a venomous snake!"

The two teased each other for a bit, then Zu An gently touched her cheek with his hand. His voice was unquestionable. "I don't want your beautiful skin to be ruined by poison. Wait here for me." He walked into the black fog as soon as he spoke.

As she watched his figure disappear into the black fog, Yu Yanluo's heart pounded crazily. She called out to him, asking, "Are you alright?"

But there was no response.

Chapter 1143: Accidental Meeting

"Ah Zu?" Yu Yanluo called out several times, but there was no response. She sounded as if she were half-sobbing. She couldn't wait any longer. She took out her World Painting and covered her head. Then, her eyes flickered with red light, her hair flying around as she seemed about to transform into her most powerful state.

She was just about to go in when a figure appeared, calling out, "Don't go in, don't go in!"

Yu Yanluo quickly closed her eyes when she heard Zu An's familiar voice. When she opened her eyes again, they were back to their original color. She asked, "You're... you're fine, right?" She grabbed his arm and looked around. She saw that there were already several tears around his clothes, asking, "You're wounded?"

"I'm fine," Zu An replied with a chuckle. He brought up his ruined sleeves for her to see. "My skin underneath is still just as soft as usual."

Yu Yanluo wiped her tears and tugged on him gently, replying, "What kind of situation are we in already? And yet you're still in the mood to joke around?"

Zu An put away his mischievous smile and became serious, explaining, "This black fog is indeed strange. It can isolate one's senses, and it has a certain level of corrosiveness. However, cultivators above the sixth rank can defend against the black fog with their elemental ki barriers. Of course, one can't remain inside forever. This black fog also corrodes elemental barriers. Those with lower cultivation levels definitely wouldn't last for a long time."

"Even with your cultivation, you only lasted for that short time?" Yu Yanluo asked, shocked. She looked at his tattered clothes.

"Of course I can last longer. But I restrained my elemental barrier to test the strength of the black fog," Zu An replied.

Yu Yanluo bit her lip. She said, "You're not cherishing your body at all. What if something happened?"

"Don't worry. The technique I cultivate is a bit special. My body has been tempered several fold as well, making me stronger than a dragon. This black fog can't do much to me," Zu An said to comfort her.

"I fear that Maid Xing and the others weren't so lucky." Yu Yanluo looked at the black mist before her. "Many of them haven't reached the sixth rank. They might not be able to see through the black mist."

Zu An shook his head and said, "It would be useless even if they had reached the sixth rank. I gave it a try just now. The cave entrance has been plugged up. I don't think Maid Xing and the others were able to cross over."

"Could it have collapsed after it caved in?" Yu Yanluo asked.

"That's impossible." Zu An explained what he had heard and seen in the cave. "The collapse doesn't seem new at all; it should already have been several days. There are many tools scattered all over too, even things like shoes and hats. They were clearly left behind when the miners were running away in panic. Judging from what we saw on that announcement at the supply station, all of that happened a few days ago. Maid Xing's party only came here a bit earlier today."

"Then they changed directions and tried the other tunnels, trying to move around this cave-in," Yu Yanluo said, continuing to think to herself. "These underground mines are accessible from different directions; there are definitely other paths they can take. But unfortunately, she would not know which one to take."

"Let's look around. We might be able to find some traces that they might have left behind. Maid Xing is smart; she would probably have anticipated that we would follow her and left behind something for us." Zu An looked behind himself as he spoke.

He arrived at a spacious fork in the road and saw something. "Huh? Is this it?" he wondered. He saw a strange marking by another entrance that looked like a little coiled snake.

Yu Yanluo walked over and said, "Indeed, this is our clan's special symbol."

Zu An said teasingly, "Isn't this a bit too much? It's clearly your Snake race's marking. Other people might follow it and pursue them."

Yu Yanluo shook her head and said, "This is a marking only we understand. Leaving it by the cave does not mean people went inside. In truth,, the number of coils and the direction of the head and tail all mean different things... Mm, this is the way they went."

Zu An was amazed, thinking, You can't look down on outstanding people after all. At the same time, he was moved that she hadn't hesitated to tell him her Snake race's secrets at all.

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The two of them walked toward the cave Maid Xing and the others had gone through. Yu Yanluo turned around and looked at the black fog by the other entrance, asking, "Right, does the black fog block sound?"

"Block sound?" Zu An replied, stunned. He answered, "I don't think so?"

"Then why didn't you reply when I called out to you before?" Yu Yanluo asked, looking at him in puzzlement.

Zu An reached out a finger and gently wiped away the teardrops that hadn't fully dried next to her eyes yet. He said, "I wanted to see if you would shed tears for me."

Yu Yanluo was stunned. She was so angry she grabbed his arm and bit down on it, exclaiming, "You scoundrel!"

A girl might not remember someone who had made her laugh, but she would never forget someone who had made her cry. Zu An begged for mercy, and the two of them fought playfully like that for a while. Yu Yanluo finally vented her anger after leaving behind several bite marks on his arm.

Yu Yanluo was just about to let him go when an ice-cold voice called out from beside them, "I was wondering who was so extraordinary that they could save Yu Yanluo. So it was you."

Yu Yanluo shivered and quickly turned around. Zu An felt goosebumps all over his body, because the voice couldn't be more familiar. Who else could it be but Yan Xuehen?

As expected of a grandmaster... I didn't notice a thing even when she was this close.

"So it was big sis goddess." Zu An greeted her with an awkward smile, trying to close the gap between them.

"Big sis goddess?" Yan Xuehen was confused about the title.

Zu An said, "Whenever I meet you, those common folk always privately call you a goddess. I think that term is pretty fitting. Only a phrase like that can fully describe how outstanding big sis is."

He tried to confuse her while thinking of a way to run. She clearly hadn't arrived with good intentions. If they really fought, with her grandmaster cultivation, it would be hard for him to win.

Yan Xuehen was speechless. She sneered and replied, "Hmph, if my memory serves me right, didn't you curse me last time? What did you call me again?" For some reason, she didn't care at all if someone else praised her, and yet when this guy had said that, she instead felt a bit happy. Of course, she wasn't stupid. There was no way she would suddenly be flustered because of a few words of praise.

"No way; big sis is so outstanding and refined. Which rascal would dare curse you?" Zu An replied with a straight face.

Yan Xuehen remained expressionless and retorted, "If you have the guts, would you dare say that in front of that woman Yun Jianyue?"

Zu An's breath caught for a moment. Uh oh, big sis sect master ended up getting dragged into this.

Yan Xuehen harrumphed. "Is this how you conned the beautiful Medusa next to you? Through those smooth lips of yours?"

Yu Yanluo said unhappily, "Please conduct yourself with dignity, Sect Master Yan."

Yan Xuehen ignored her. Instead, she looked at Zu An and said, "I never thought that you were a good match for Chuyan. Now, that indeed turned out to be the case. You are a court official, and yet out of your greed for beauty, you selfishly broke out a criminal and colluded with the fiend races. If this were exposed, the entire world would reject you. How did Chuyan end up favoring a perverted man like you?"

Zu An put away his smile and said, "Sect Master Yan, I originally thought that since you were an honorable sect master, your knowledge and experiences would reach far. Today, I unexpectedly learned that you're no different from ordinary people."

"Are you lecturing me?" Yan Xuehen shot back, her eyes turning cold.

"I'm merely trying to discuss reason with the sect master." Zu An replied/ "There are good people among humans, but there are bad people as well. Similarly, the fiend races have good and bad folk too. Yu Yanluo has remained in Cloudcenter Commandery for so many years; when has she done anything to harm the human race in the slightest? On the contrary, she's helped countless poverty-stricken civilians.

"Sect master didn't direct your anger at the heartless officials who prey on the people, and yet instead came here to target the kindhearted Yu Yanluo. Just what are you even cultivating for, then?"

There was no meaning left in refuting Yu Yanluo's identity in front of Yan Xuehen. He could only play his hand using that angle.

Yan Xuehen's brows shot upward. She scolded him, retorting, "What does a brat like you know? You never experienced the war between the humans and the fiend races in the past; you know nothing about the evils the fiend races have committed. Our White Jade Sect takes it upon ourselves to protect the human race, so there is no way we would let our path be shaken by a few words from you."

"Sure, since you're protecting the human race," Zu An said, pointing at Yu Yanluo. "Her father is human, so she's half human. Why aren't you protecting her? She's lived in the human world ever since she was little, and she experienced a human upbringing. When has she acted like a fiend in the slightest?"

Yan Xuehen frowned and said, "You have cultivated to your current level already, and yet you are still so attached to appearances? Fiend races often inherit power through their bloodlines. Once her bloodline awakens one day, it will naturally be her fiend nature that takes over."

Zu An replied, "The fiend races do inherit their power through their bloodlines, but the humans inherit knowledge. Yu Yanluo has experienced so many years of human education and upbringing; don't tell me that can't compare to a fiend race's bloodline? If that's the case, why did the fiend race lose to the humans back then?"

"You are just twisting words however you want!" Yan Xuehen exclaimed unhappily. "In the end, was it not because you lusted after her beauty? If she were not so pretty, why would you have taken such huge risks to save her?"

Now, even Yu Yanluo looked at Zu An out of curiosity, wondering how he was going to reply.

Chapter 1144: Medusa's Eye

Zu An had claimed to not be able to distinguish beauty, and Yu Yanluo had felt moved at the time, but she had already realized that he was just teasing her. That was why she really wanted to know how he felt about her appearance.

Yan Xuehen waited for his reply, clearly amused. Her words had the will of a grandmaster infused into them, which would make one subconsciously choose to reply with the truth.

Hmph, let's see how Yu Yanluo will act once she finds out that this kid really was coveting her beauty. She could then tell her disciple what had happened to show her the true face of this man.

Zu An said with a firm expression, "I saved Yu Yanluo because she helped me when I was in danger in the past. A true man pays back grudges, and also returns gratitude."

"Is it really only gratitude..." Yu Yanluo murmured, lowering her head. No one could see her current expression.

Yan Xuehen asked, "Is it really just repaying a debt of gratitude? Is that enough for you to squander away your prospects, or maybe even your life? From what I know, even though Yu Yanluo has helped you before, she did not really sacrifice anything back then. You are repaying her several times over in return, and yet you are still saying that you do not covet her beauty?" Even though Yu Yanluo was a fiend race individual, Yan Xuehen had to admit that she was an exceptional beauty. Even she was a bit moved, let alone this perverted fellow.

"Gratitude isn't something like a business deal; how can it be weighed in terms like that? Sect Master Yan, you've made an error here," Zu An replied, giving her a strange look.

Yan Xuehen nodded slightly. She wasn't someone truly unreasonable. She realized that there were flaws in what she had said as well.

Zu An continued, "Besides, there are too many pretty girls in this world. For example, Sect Master Yan, you're a beauty who isn't inferior to Yu Yanluo in any way. Would I risk my life to save you, though?"

Yan Xuehen was stunned. Meanwhile, Yu Yanluo covered her mouth and secretly laughed. This guy! He's clearly mocking her, yet he also snuck in a bit of praise. No wonder he's always so charming.

"You rascal, I am an honorable grandmaster. Would I need a junior like you to save me?" Yan Xuehen replied with a snort. The temperature in the cave dropped a few degrees.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +222 +222 +222...

Zu An said, "Sect master, please don't set up flags randomly like that. The world is variable and fickle, no one knows if this day will one day come."

Yan Xuehen's expression remained still as she replied, "Worry not. If that really happened, I would rather die than be saved by you. Furthermore, in a situation that would put me in that much danger, you would already have departed from this world long before me."

Zu An shrugged and said, "I'm merely explaining that the reason I'm saving Yu Yanluo, apart from our past gratitude, is more importantly because of how well we get along. We're close friends who connect with each other. Why wouldn't I be willing to go so far for a friend like that?"

A smile finally appeared on Yu Yanluo's face. We're not just close friends, but rather...

Yan Xuehen quickly interjected, cutting her thoughts short. "Out of consideration for the bit of loyalty you have, I will spare your life. However, step aside and let me bring this Snake race criminal back."

Zu An's expression changed. He stood in front of Yu Yanluo protectively, replying, "Sect Master Yan, only death awaits her if she's brought back. I hope that the sect leader can be generous in this matter."

Yan Xuehen said coldly, "I am only acting like this to erase a hidden danger to the human race. If you insist on going about things the wrong way, I will not mind acting in the heavens' place to remove one of Chuyan's inner demons."

Zu An was speechless. Isn't that last bit going a bit too far?

This old nun really is doing everything she can to break me and Chuyan up!

He was about to say something, but Yu Yanluo had already stood in front of him, saying, "I have already received young master's kindness. I am really grateful that you have helped me so much, so I cannot be a burden on you any longer. Please step aside. I will deal with the rest myself."

She knew that there was no way they could defeat a grandmaster even if the two of them worked together. Rather than both of them going down, it would be better if one of them made it through the situation.

Zu An said with a frown, "I'm not that scared for my life. If I let you die after everything I went through to save you, what meaning would be left in everything I did before?"

Yu Yanluo looked at him quietly through her beautiful eyes. She said through ki, "I know you have good intentions, but what else can we do? If we continue like this, you will just be throwing away your life in vain. If you really still feel that strongly, then please help me search for Maid Xing and the others, and escort them to my hometown safely. I will repay the young master's gratitude in the next life."

Zu An shook his head and replied, "Please don't talk like that anymore. I won't abandon you here."

Yu Yanluo's eyes glittered with tears. She was about to say something else, but Yan Xuehen was growing impatient. She snapped, "Are you two done with your mumbling yet? Are you two displaying your affection to me right now or something?" She thought, This guy really is a piece of work. He knows that I am Chuyan's master, yet he is still flirting with another woman in front of my eyes.

Yu Yanluo blushed, but she didn't try to persuade Zu An further. Instead, she pushed him aside, then looked up at Yan Xuehen. She didn't use the World Painting, though. Against a grandmaster, that was no different from a toy. As such, she immediately went with her most powerful skill, knowing that she only had one chance.

Her beautiful gemstone-like eyes flickered with red fiendish radiance, and the entire cave filled with bitter and harsh energy. She slowly rose into the air. Her hair fluttered around, turning into small snakes. Every single snake's eyes glowed with a faint red light.

All the red lights surrounded Yan Xuehen's body, and she began to petrify at a visible rate. In just a few breaths of time, her entire body rapidly turned into a stone statue.

Zu An exclaimed in shock, "You killed her?"

He was shocked not only because this was the first time Yu Yanluo had used the power of Medusa's Eye, but also because Yan Xuehen was Chuyan's master. How was he going to explain things to Chuyan if she really did die here?

Yu Yanluo's body grew weak in midair. She seemed to have used up all of her strength, dropping from the sky. Zu An quickly caught her to prevent her from hitting the ground.

The little snakes that had replaced Yu Yanluo's hair had already closed their eyes, while her own eyes had also returned to their normal color. At that moment, her complexion was pale. She asked, "Do I look really ugly right now?"

Zu An was speechless. What kind of situation were they in right now? And yet, she was still concerned about such things? Hadn't he already made it clear that her appearance didn't matter?

"These little snakes are pretty cute," he said in amusement as he gently lifted a strand of hair.

Yu Yanluo's entire body trembled, as if she could clearly feel him touching the small snake. She blushed and explained, "I have never used the Medusa's Eye at full strength before, so I do not know how strong it is. In the end, she is still a grandmaster, so I did not dare to hold back. I am truly sorry; I did not want to do this either." Only then did she remember that Yan Xuehen was the master of Zu An's wife.

Zu An sighed and said, "Things have already turned out this way, so just bring her remains to the surface. We'll find a way to send her back to the White Jade Sect. We can't just leave her in a place like this that won't ever see the light of day."

He hadn't expected the Medusa's Eye to be that powerful either. Based on his understanding, the skill was a sort of reason-defying weapon. It wasn't something that could be evaluated through normal means.

Yan Xuehen had underestimated Yu Yanluo too much and faced the Medusa's Eye head-on. Zu An carefully walked up to her, scared that she might shatter if he used too much strength.

A cold voice suddenly called out, "At least you have a bit of conscience."

Zu An jumped in alarm, because the voice had come from the stone statue. He was alarmed. He was just about to take Yu Yanluo and run, but a terrifying pressure surrounded him. He felt a bone-piercing chill attack him, making him feel as if every single cell had been frozen still.

Meanwhile, a layer of frost began to visibly cover the surroundings. This entire cave seemed to have turned into a world of ice and snow.

So this is what a domain is? Zu An realized something. He had sensed a similar thing in Brightmoon City before. Back then, Chu Chuyan had used a forbidden technique to defeat Shi Kun, who had been several cultivation ranks above her. However, the technique's power from back then couldn't compare to the one right now at all.

Suddenly, the stone statue cracked loudly. Then, its surface broke down inch by inch, ultimately crashing down and revealing Yan Xuehen's real appearance. Her skin that was normally fair like snow had turned an unnaturally dark red. She said, "I was indeed careless just now. If you were allowed to grow for a bit longer, I might really have been completely petrified. Unfortunately, you will never have that chance." She took a step forward, clearly about to make a move.

Zu An panicked. He used his Fire Phoenix power to counteract the cold around him. He stood right in front of Yu Yanluo, calling out, "Yanluo, hurry and run!"

A frown spread across Yan Xuehen's pretty face when she saw his choice. She said, "I planned to spare you before because you still had some filial piety, but it seems you cannot distinguish between right and wrong. In that case, do not blame me for being rude."

She raised her hand after speaking. At that moment, however, her movements seemed to be accompanied by brittle cracks. She looked down in shock, seeing that her clothes looked like butterflies, scattering into the air piece by piece.

Chapter 1145: Call It Even

A snow-white burst erupted into the air, revealing a graceful and wonderful figure that was like the finest white jade, its surface flowing with sparkling radiance. It carried a clean and cold aura, a certain unique charm manifesting in its pure holiness.

Zu An and Yu Yanluo were speechless. Never could they have expected things to develop in such a direction.

Yan Xuehen was stunned for a moment, but eventually snapped out of it. Just then, Yu Yanluo's Medusa's Eye had petrified her. Such skills were difficult to defend against, as their power wasn't something that could be measured strictly through cultivation.

Fortunately, she was already at the grandmaster rank. Grandmasters all had unique domains. In a moment of imminent peril, she had used her own domain of absolute cold, redefining the principles of the surroundings to benefit her. Only then had she managed to fend off the Medusa's Eye skill, which seemed to be a kind of reason-defying ability.

But the power created from the clash of two different laws was just too great. Furthermore, petrification usually made things brittle and prone to cracking easily. Yan Xuehen could protect her own body, but she had forgotten about her clothes. That was why after experiencing all of that, her clothes shattered from even the smallest movement.

Even though she had already cultivated for so many years and reached a level of mental control sufficient to let go of most emotions, at that moment, she still couldn't help but scream. Soon afterward, a snowstorm appeared around her, covering her exposed body.

Zu An felt a huge headache, but he still subconsciously said, "I have some clothes on me. They're Chuyan's. Do you want them?"

It would have been one thing if he hadn't said anything, but since he had, Yan Xuehen immediately realized that her disciple's man had actually seen everything! What the hell is this?!

"Get lost!" she cried. A wave of air swept outward, sending Zu An flying.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +702 +702 +702...

Zu An fell right by Yu Yanluo's side. He supported her back up, crying, "Run!" Remaining where they were was definitely not a smart decision.

"Are you alright?" Yu Yanluo asked, examining his body worriedly.

"I'm fine," Zu An replied. He picked up Yu Yanluo and rushed into a cave off to the side. Yan Xuehen had acted impulsively just then, while his body was extremely tough. Thus, even though his internal energies had been stirred a bit, he had quickly recovered.

Soon after they left, the wind and snow that had surrounded Yan Xuehen gradually disappeared. She walked out, dressed once more. For someone of her status, it was only natural for her to have a storage pouch on her. Changing into a new set of clothes wasn't particularly difficult.

When she thought about how close Zu An had been, as well as about how he had seen everything, her expression changed several times. Killing intent erupted in her gaze.

Previously, even though she had spoken aggressively, she had only intended to teach him a bit of a lesson. She hadn't really planned to kill him. After all, he was her disciple's husband. She hadn't wanted her relationship with her disciple to fall apart over such a thing.

But now, things were different. If she didn't kill this man who had seen her body, the indifferent and emotionless state she had maintained for many years would become flawed. At that point, falling from her current cultivation would be the least of her worries. If it got out of hand, she might become seriously wounded. Whether it was for personal reasons or the White Jade Sect's interests, she couldn't permit something like that to happen.

She looked in the direction the two of them had disappeared toward, and vanished.

...

Meanwhile, Yu Yanlou said worriedly, "Ah Zu, you should run on your own; do not worry about me anymore. Otherwise, both of us will die here!" As a woman, she knew that there was no way Yan Xuehen would let Zu An go after what had just happened.

She had just used the Medusa's Eye against a grandmaster at full power. The rebound her body had suffered was powerful. She was already wounded quite badly. As such, she had already resolved to buy some time for Zu An.

Zu An could roughly guess her intentions from her expression. He replied, "Don't do anything stupid. I've worked so hard to save you, and I don't want everything to fail at the very end. Things aren't that bad yet. We can use the black fog to cut off her perception. The cave's paths are confusing, so she might not be able to find us."

Afterward, he took her straight into the black fog. Their elemental barriers immediately began to sizzle noisily, corroded by the fog. Fortunately, their cultivations were rather profound; furthermore, the black fog wasn't everywhere, but rather gathered in clouds. That was why they were able to hold on.

After they ran for a long time, things finally calmed down. They couldn't feel Yan Xuehen's icy cold aura anymore.

"We should be alright for now," Zu An looked behind him and said with a sigh of relief.

I really am unlucky... Who could have expected that Yan Xuehen would suddenly become buck naked?

No wonder big sis sect master calls her a stone cold woman. Her entire body is like a chunk of ice.

With how close they had been, he had even sensed cold seeping out from her skin.

Yu Yanluo said with a sigh, "Ah Zu, I always sense a vigorous will to live from you. No matter what kind of situation you are in, you always remain optimistic, and you always manage to find a solution."

Zu An chuckled and replied, "What's wrong? Did you unknowingly fall in love with me?"

Yu Yanluo's face turned red. She said, "We are already in this kind of situation, and yet you still remember to tease me." Since they were no longer in danger, she also felt a bit naughty, asking, "So? Is Sect Master Yan... pretty?"

Zu An was speechless. Are girls all this gossipy? He replied, "Didn't you see her yourself too? Why are you asking me?"

Yu Yanluo smiled and replied, "Most of her body was covered by you, so I did not see much. Come on, tell me."

Zu An thought back to that splendid scene. He subconsciously said, "Her figure is pretty decent..."

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +809 +809 +809...

Zu An jumped in fright when he received the string of Rage points. He quickly changed his answer. "Uhh, actually, I didn't see either... Huh, Sect Master Yan, why are you here?"

Yu Yanluo was also shocked. She quickly turned around and saw Yan Xuehen with a sword in hand, standing there with a completely cold expression.

Yan Xuehen had already changed into white clothes. She was no longer wearing a dress like before, but instead had a daoist robe on.

Perhaps she had subconsciously chosen to dress a bit more conservatively, but the more that was the case, when he thought back to the scene he had seen before, Zu An couldn't help but think 'innocent and sexy'.

Damn it, why the hell am I thinking about this old nun that way?

"Did you two really think you could shake me off by relying on that strange black fog?" Yan Xuehen put away her divination circle and remarked coldly.

"Not even that black fog is an issue for the sect master? Your cultivation really is deep and profound," Zu An said while thinking about the thing she had just put away. This woman knows fortune-telling?

This was a world of cultivation, so he obviously wasn't thinking of the scamming technique. There were many powerful individuals who really could probe the mysteries of the heavens.

Sigh, that makes things really annoying. We can't get rid of her even if we want to!

"If it were not, I would not have been able to hear you two talk behind my back," Yan Xuehen replied with a terrible expression.

Yu Yanluo was alarmed, feeling deep regret. Her gossipy heart really had ended up harming Zu An now.

“But I didn’t say anything bad about you!” Zu An exclaimed, seeing Yan Xuehen’s expression. He continued, “Ah, is sect master talking about what just happened? I saw a flash of sacred light before me. Maybe it was because of the Medusa’s Eye or your own domain, but my eyes were hurt and I couldn’t see anything for a while. Right, what just happened? I’m still confused about that.”

“Are you taking me for a fool?” Yan Xuehen shot back. She was starting to really respect this kid. Even now, he had still managed to create a ‘logical’ pretext. If it were any other matter, she might even just let it go.

But there was no way she could forget about what had happened.

Zu An knew that well too. Playing the fool hadn’t worked, so he could only say with a sigh, “It’s not as if I wanted to disrespect you. It was you who ran up to me, and then made your clothes explode. I’m completely innocent here! If you feel that you’re losing out here, why don’t I just take off my clothes for you too? We’ll call it even?”

As he spoke, he used his ki and began to make his own clothes explode too.

Chapter 1146: Can You Let Me Look Again?

Yan Xuehen was stunned. She was about to faint from anger. Even something like this can make things even?

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +233 +233 +233...

The worst part was that this guy really had intended to do it! He had turned around after speaking, and all of his clothes had exploded!

A blush spread across her face, and she quickly turned around. She yelled, “Damn brat, what are you doing?!”

Yan Xuehen had experienced her fair share of things over the years. She obviously wasn’t a little girl anymore. If Zu An had only exposed his upper body, she wouldn’t even have batted an eyelid. But she recalled how previously, her dress had even...

If he wanted to ‘make things even’, his pants had to explode too... Right?

Even though she had already let go of most of her emotions, she was still a woman, after all. The situation was way too embarrassing for her.

Then, she heard a loud noise. She quickly turned around and saw that Zu An had taken Yu Yanluo through a cave in the corner. Even though his upper body was bare, his pants were still on. He had clearly never intended to take them off for her to begin with.

Hmph! He clearly did that to confuse me!

“You little bastard!” Yan Xuehen cursed, gritting her teeth. She immediately chased after them.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +444 +444 +444...

Just after turning the corner, she suddenly grew vigilant and quickly came to a stop. A strange red light appeared in front of her eyes: Medusa’s Eye.

Yan Xuehen sneered. "Nothing more than a last-ditch effort!"

Yu Yanluo had already used up all of her strength. The attack's power this time would definitely be greatly reduced. Yan Xuehen didn't even need to use her domain to counteract it, intercepting it with just her usual skills. Her body's flexibility seemed to decrease a bit, though.

Even so, she didn't lower her guard at all, because her keen grandmaster senses told her that Zu An was rushing at her from the shadows with a sword. Even though she really wanted to rip him apart because of what had just happened, as a grandmaster, she couldn't help but praise him a bit for his sensible choice.

If the two of them had run, they definitely wouldn't have been able to outrun her. Rather than being chased until they were completely exhausted, it would be better to retaliate while they were still in better condition.

Such a sudden ambush would catch many powerful individuals off guard. Unfortunately, Zu An had still underestimated a grandmaster's abilities. The difference between a grandmaster and weaker cultivators was like heaven and earth.

Zu An's movements were extremely fast, and he had arrived in almost an instant; but in Yan Xuehen's eyes, he still appeared to be moving in slow motion. She raised her sword. Her movements looked slow, and yet her attack arrived first, striking at his vitals.

Such swordplay that was close to the dao wasn't something anyone under the grandmaster rank could understand. They could only see the result. Even at the moment of their death, they wouldn't understand why even though the sword looked slow, and still seemed far away, it had still hit them.

Right at that moment, Yan Xuehen heard a shrill bird cry. She vaguely saw a strange bird rushing at her. Then, she felt as if her soul had been pricked.

Unfortunately, her expression didn't change at all. She coldly asked, "Is this your trump card?"

How powerful was the soul of a grandmaster, let alone one like her who had already been a grandmaster for so long?

Even though Hundredwarble was a miraculous skill, its power still depended on Zu An's strength. At his level, it still couldn't harm Yan Xuehen, and she seemed completely unaffected. Zu An looked shocked as her longsword stabbed into his chest and blood gushed out.

Just then, Yan Xuehen felt a hint of hesitation. Am I going too far here?

Chuyan seems to have feelings for him. If I, as her master, kill her lover, our relationship might become poor.

Furthermore, strictly speaking, what happened was not Zu An's fault...

But she had already lived while casting aside her emotions for a long time. The ripples in her heart quickly calmed down. For a grandmaster, all others beneath them were ants. He shielded a fiend race person and disrespected me. He deserved to die.

As for Chuyan, she will hate me at first, but she will be able to understand the reasons behind what I did in the future. Once she attains a selfless state, she will understand just how senseless love is, and how it is just a waste of time.

Her expression became cold, like an eternally frozen mountain. She no longer hesitated to strike with her sword either. But she couldn't have expected that Zu An wouldn't show pain or alarm when the sword stabbed through him. He instead grabbed her sword, then pushed forward.

This guy's body is pretty hard...?

Still, her longsword was the White Jade Sect's supreme treasure. It had accompanied her for so many years as well, harmonizing with her aura. It could even easily cut through a giant dragon's body. As such, it pierced through Zu An easily.

His brows didn't even furrow. At least he has some traits of a real man, Yan Xuehen thought. She was used to seeing his mischievous side, but when she saw his courageous side, she felt it was somewhat praiseworthy. If not for what had just happened, she might even have felt a bit of pity and reluctance for someone with that level of mental fortitude.

Her slender fingers gently clasped Zu An's Tai'e Sword. Normally speaking, with a grandmaster's cultivation, a snap of her fingers should have been enough to break a longsword. However, the sword instead released a shrill noise and wasn't damaged at all.

"Hm?" She hadn't expected such an unremarkable looking sword to be a powerful weapon. At that moment, however, she noticed a faint smile on the corner of Zu An's lips. She felt a hint of alarm.

A pitch-black dagger shot out from Zu An's sleeve. The black runes on it seemed to carry profound and mysterious principles within them. Not even she could see through it. But she knew that the dagger was extremely dangerous, and frighteningly so. Even as a grandmaster, she knew that there might be danger to her life if she were wounded by it.

She finally understood that he had risked taking a serious injury to approach her. That had been his true plan.

Clang!

A loud and sharp noise rang out. A divination circle appeared out of thin air, blocking the pitch-black dagger's path. The dagger fell to the ground as it was neutralized.

When Zu An saw that his attack had failed, he quickly backed up, widening the gap between them.

Yan Xuehen still felt lingering fear, however. At that kind of distance, forget about another ordinary cultivator, even a grandmaster like her had almost been in danger! If not because she had previously divined that there was danger and still remained vigilant, she really might have died.

Yu Yanluo saw that Zu An was seriously injured. She rushed over to support him, taking out all sorts of precious medicines and crying, "Hurry and eat this!"

Zu An shook his head. He gently pushed her away, saying, "I'm afraid I won't have the chance to make use of these."

Yan Xuehen was already approaching them step by step. She said, "You haven't even reached the master rank, and yet you've put me in such a sorry state. If news of this got out, it would be enough to shake up the entire world."

Zu An said indifferently, "My name has already spread throughout the world."

Yan Xuehen's breath caught briefly. Even though this person's cultivation was ordinary, what he said seemed to be true. He seemed to have been involved in all of the recent major events that had occurred.

Whether it was the time the emperor had personally ordered his arrest, or the great cases he had solved in the capital one after another, or how he had helped the crown prince stabilize his position on the throne through the exam... There weren't many powers in the world who didn't know about him.

Wait, even though his cultivation isn't much before a grandmaster, just how old is he? Having his level of cultivation at his age is already absolutely horrifying!

Not even the disciple she was so proud of could compare to him. In all of human history, there had never been someone so young with such high cultivation.

She said emotionlessly, "I will give you one final chance. Kill that Snake race fiend and take me as your master. Make a vow to abandon all emotions and focus on cultivation, and that you will no longer disturb Chuyan. I can then spare your life." She had decided to be lenient, out of consideration for his talent.

Zu An was shocked, replying, "You don't care that I just saw you buck naked anymore?"

Yan Xuehen was speechless. Why are you touching this sore spot now? I have finally decided to give you a chance, and yet you are not going to cherish it?

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +111 +111 +111...

She took a deep breath and said, "I have lived for much longer than you. If you take me on as your master, you will become my junior. Twenty years ago, you were merely in swaddling clothes. It is not a big deal to be seen by someone like that in your own family."

Zu An voiced his surprise. "Since it doesn't matter, can you let me look again?"

Yan Xuehen was stunned.

Chapter 1147: No Way Out

Yan Xuehen's first reaction was that she had misheard something. However, since she had grandmaster rank cultivation, she reacted quickly. How could she have possibly misheard?

As such, her expression turned cold and she retorted, "Are you mocking me?"

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +444 +444 +444...

Zu An sighed and replied, "Is sect master not directing the very same mockery at me? I only had a simple request for you, and yet you disagreed. Now, you've made so many requests of me, none of which I would ever agree to."

Both separating from Chuyan and abandoning Yu Yanluo were conditions he would never agree to. The only one that wasn't too big of a deal was calling her master...

Yan Xuehen's expression turned cold. She said, "It looks as if you have decided to go about things the wrong way. Do not blame me for being impolite then."

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +109 +109 +109...

She felt she had already been benevolent enough. She had given him many chances, but unfortunately, he hadn't treasured them and had even harassed her verbally.

She lashed out with her palm as she finished speaking. She didn't move at all, only casually waving her hand. The air instantly condensed into a faint palm, striking toward Zu An's face. It was so fast that not even Yu Yanluo had time to react.

With things being the way they were, Yan Xuehen didn't hold back. The strike of a grandmaster definitely wasn't something Zu An could handle at his current cultivation level. It should have been enough to cut his life force short right there and then.

It was just unfortunate that a cultivation genius was going to fall here. Zu An had been infatuated by the Medusa's beauty, and he carried compassion for the fiend races. If the fiend races roped him into their faction, with his talent, he would definitely become a disaster for the human race in the future. As such, Yan Xuehen felt that it would be better to just nip this calamity in the bud.

But her expression quickly changed. She saw Zu An raise his hands, and something that resembled a black hole seemed to appear in front of him. When the terrifying force of Yan Xuehen's palm arrived, it was continuously sucked into the black hole and quickly dissipated into nothingness.

"Huh?" Yan Xuehen exclaimed in confusion. She wasn't too sure what had happened, so she instantly drew closer to try attacking again.

Zu An frantically evaded her with the Sunflower Phantasm, turning into several clones and darting in different directions. However, Yan Xuehen said, "Your movement technique is indeed mysterious; every clone is identical to your original body in aura. It would be hard for even a master rank cultivator to tell the difference. Unfortunately, you ran into me."

Her longsword instantly struck Zu An's sword as soon as she spoke. Intense pain shot through Zu An's fingers, and he almost lost his grip on his weapon. He quickly used the Heaven Devouring Sutra to disperse his opponent's powerful strike.

The ki of a grandmaster wasn't so easily absorbed, however. Every single strand carried a trace of her soul imprint, which meant that there would easily be issues if he took it into his body.

But Zu An was a smart person. He recalled that in 'The Smiling, Proud Wanderer', Xiang Wentian hadn't learned the real 'Star Swallowing Art', but rather had learned the 'Ground Redirection Method', which transmitted the opponent's force into the ground. As such, he just copied that technique, only sucking out the power but not absorbing it. To a certain degree, that evened the playing field.

Yan Xuehen was also greatly alarmed. After all, a grandmaster could plow through master rank cultivators. Zu An wasn't even at the master rank, however. Normally speaking, as long as the two faced each other with blades or fists in a frontal clash, Zu An should immediately have been severely injured.

No matter how strong an ant was, how could it withstand the stomp of an elephant? And yet, Zu An just happened to make such a miracle a reality.

Zu An took the chance to go on the offensive. Unfortunately, grandmasters could even fight while their attention was divided. Yan Xuehen easily stopped his attack, asking, "The Snowflake Sword? Where did you secretly learn that from?"

"My wife taught me, of course," Zu An replied while searching for anything else that could get him out of this emergency. Unfortunately, he couldn't find anything even after thinking for a long time. A grandmaster really was way too strong, let alone Yan Xuehen who wasn't merely an ordinary grandmaster. It was a pity that he didn't have the Heiress Ball of Delights anymore, or else he would teach her that even a gigolo had his pride.

"I was the one who taught Chuyan that sword technique, and yet you are actually using this skill to face me? Hmph, you are simply showing off your meager skills before a master," Yan Xuehen remarked, a bit annoyed. That girl Chuyan actually taught our secret manual to someone else! I am definitely going to discipline her once I get back.

Yu Yanluo cried out, "Sect Master Yan, you are a senior. It would be one thing if you acted against a junior once or twice, but how many times have you attacked already? Furthermore, Zu An is even seriously injured, and yet you are taking advantage of his difficulties. Is this how your orthodox sects do things?"

After using Medusa's Eye twice, she had already reached her limit. She could only use her brush to continuously draw diagrams in the air, providing Zu An with a supportive halo. But she knew that against a grandmaster, it wouldn't be enough at all.

She was already indignant about the fact that Yan Xuehen's sword had pierced Zu An's body. It would be dangerous even if an ordinary person stabbed one in the chest, let alone if it were a grandmaster's sword strike.

Yan Xuehen's eyes shifted to Zu An's chest. She was inwardly surprised. He can still fight as if nothing is wrong, even after taking my sword? Is this still the body of a human?

But her expression immediately turned cold as she replied, "Do not try to incite me with words. This is not a competition of martial arts, but rather a matter concerning the eradication of evil. I originally thought that Zu An was bewitched by your beauty, but now, it seems that he already fell into depravity. What he cultivates is actually an evil art that absorbs others' cultivation."

She was experienced and knowledgeable. Based on their brief interaction, she had already deduced that what Zu An had used to neutralize her attacks was some unknown evil art. Any methods that could absorb another's skills were known as evil arts.

No wonder his cultivation is so high at his age. So it was because of this evil art. Just how many cultivators did he cruelly absorb to reach his current level?

The more it was like that, the more she had to get rid of him as soon as possible. He might become a great demon if he were allowed to grow up. At that point, no one would be able to keep him in check anymore.

She no longer held back and unleashed her domain when she realized that.

Absolute Cold!

The temperature instantly dropped. The surrounding cave walls began to quickly freeze at a visible rate. Snowflakes even began to float in the air.

Yu Yanluo had always feared the cold to begin with, and now, her entire body was shivering. However, she didn't have time to think about such things and instead looked nervously at Zu An. She could clearly sense the pressure even from where she was, and yet Zu An had taken it head on. How could he possibly endure?

Zu An's entire body turned ice-cold as his limbs began to quickly freeze over. He immediately used Fire Phoenix, producing a raging flame around him. Only then did the ice around him melt. But that was it. The Fire Phoenix ability was only enough to prevent him from being frozen into a sculpture. Under the tremendous power of the domain, he still couldn't move at all.

"Huh?" Yan Xuehen exclaimed in surprise. She had seen him use an ice element ability before, the Snowflake Sword. But now, he was using the fire element. He cultivated both ice and fire!

She was well-informed and knew that there were a select few possessed dual elements. She immediately felt even more regret that she was going to kill such an incredible genius. But since he had already gone down the evil path, she had to eliminate him as soon as possible. She definitely couldn't let him escape.

Her sword flew out. Once it returned, it would take his head with it.

When he faced the incoming killing intent, Zu An suddenly thought of something. He quickly summoned the Tai'e Sword's Domain of Power. It wouldn't do too much against a grandmaster, but since it was called a domain too, it might have its own laws and principles.

Sure enough, the Tai'e Sword released a draconic roar. The domain of power spread out, and the Absolute Cold domain around him shrank back a few feet. When Zu An recovered the ability to move, he dropped and rolled, avoiding Yan Xuehen's lethal strike.

"Huh, a domain?" Yan Xuehen remarked. She had cultivated for so many years. She was already at a level where few things could surprise her. But today, this brat had brought her surprise after surprise. Just what level of cultivation is he at? He actually managed to create a domain of his own?

After her initial shock, her gaze landed on Zu An's longsword and she thought, The aura's domain seems to have originated from this sword... She hadn't even been able to snap the sword earlier, so it was definitely a divine weapon. Furthermore, it seemed she had even underestimated its grade previously.

Yan Xuehen's Flying Snow Sword returned to her side, and she took it in hand. She wouldn't give him any more chances. Her entire figure turned into a streak of light, shooting at Zu An.

Every single cell in Zu An's body was screaming that the situation was bad. He knew that no matter how strong his body was, he probably wouldn't survive such an attack. Yan Xuehen was now dead set on killing him. He wanted to dodge, but he could sense that her divine will was already locked onto him. He knew that no matter how he tried to evade, his body would be pierced through a moment later.

What do I do? What do I do?!

As the threat of death enveloped him, Zu An's thoughts moved quickly. He thought about all of the skills he had, but none of them could save him. He even secretly called out to Mi Li, but she didn't respond. She was clearly at a critical stage of repairing her soul and couldn't sense what was happening outside.

Am I really going to die here today?

Chapter 1148: Live to See Another Day

"Ah!" Yu Yanluo screamed. She was a powerful cultivator in her own right, and knew many things. But no matter how she racked her brains, she couldn't think of any ways in which Zu An could survive. She wanted to help him, but the Absolute Cold domain was too powerful. She couldn't even move her body.

Her beautiful eyes had begun to turn red. After all, Medusa's Eye wasn't a skill that could be used limitlessly. Each use would consume a tremendous amount of her body's energy. Her bloodline hadn't even completely awakened yet, so the cost of each use was great. She had already been left on the verge of breaking down from two uses of the skill; now, the only choice left was to burn her own life force. However, using Medusa's Eye at half strength wouldn't do anything to a grandmaster. She had to use it at full strength, but that might just exhaust the rest of her lifespan.

But she couldn't be bothered with all of that. Her only thought was to save Zu An.

Yan Xuehen also noticed something unusual about Yu Yanluo's behavior, and set aside a bit of strength in reserve to deal with her. In any event, she was within her Absolute Cold domain, which could offset the Medusa's Eye to a certain degree. She had confidence that she could first deal with Zu An, then turn around to finish off Yu Yanluo.

The moment she was about to stab Zu An, however, she suddenly heard a loud and clear phoenix cry. Then, a golden phoenix appeared before her. She was startled, but she just attributed it to another one of his strange abilities.

Light flickered around her. Even if another grandmaster attacked her at that point, she could still block it. However, that golden phoenix seemed like an intangible object. It passed through her splendid defenses and flew into her body.

Yan Xuehen was confused and alarmed, quickly examining her body. However, she discovered that there wasn't anything wrong with her. As a grandmaster, she had absolute knowledge over her body's condition; since she didn't sense anything strange, she had to be fine. But what was that golden phoenix? It couldn't have just been an illusion, could it?

It wasn't the time to be worrying about those things, though. She planned to get rid of Zu An first, then slowly examine what was going on. But when her sword was just a hair away from Zu An's forehead, she suddenly noticed the wound in his chest.

That was the wound she had inflicted earlier!

For some reason, she suddenly felt distress and remorse. She felt as if hurting him would be harder to bear than if she were injured herself.

All kinds of memories about him appeared in her mind. Before, she had only seen his flaws: How he was affecting the cultivation prospects of her disciple, and how he was slick-tongued and perverted. He colluded with the fiend races, and he cultivated evil arts...

But now, she suddenly realized that Chuyan had never seemed to be willing to cut things off with him. He was incredibly talented, and they might even be able to help each other by cultivating together. It might not be a bad thing for her cultivation.

Even though he seemed like a smooth talker, he was actually firm and unwavering. Even while facing death, he wasn't willing to bow down. As for his perverted side, which sane man wouldn't like an incredible beauty like Yu Yanluo?

Furthermore, Yu Yanluo was an experienced woman herself. There were so many outstanding men constantly flocking around her, and yet Yan Xuehen had never heard of her caring much about any of them. Now, she was actually willing to give up her life for Zu An. That meant the two of them really had an affinity for each other, and it wasn't just something superficial like infatuation.

As for colluding with the fiend races, since Yu Yanluo had saved him before, shielding her was completely understandable. If he ran as soon as he encountered danger, wouldn't that make him utterly shameless?

As for cultivating some evil art, she had never heard of Zu An ruthlessly killing any honorable cultivators. Instead, there were many evil faction experts who had died under his hands.

Was she really going to kill such a loyal and steadfast man?

...

If one's opinion of someone changed, one could look at the same matter from a completely different perspective.

After thinking to herself for a moment, Yan Xuehen slowly lowered her sword. Her vicious expression became gentle too, and the killing intent within her eyes gradually faded.

Yu Yanluo quickly stopped her Medusa's Eye when she saw that. She didn't know why Yan Xuehen would suddenly show mercy, but it was obviously a good thing. She was worried that taking any action would make Yan Xuehen change her mind, so she didn't even dare to breathe too loudly.

Yan Xuehen's expression was also extremely strange, containing a hint of embarrassment and vexation. She wondered to herself whether, judging from the way she had treated Zu An, would he hate her? He definitely will. How can I compare to Yu Yanluo, who is warm and considerate?

She frowned for a moment, but then her brows unfolded. Zu An looked so frightened he didn't dare say a thing for fear of accidentally offending her.

I think I'm going to survive... Zu An's expression was also extremely strange. Just moments before, death had seemed imminent for him. However, he had suddenly remembered that there was one skill he had never used. That was the Gold Phoenix ability he had awakened after he broke through. According to the Gold Phoenix' skill description, it would make a girl love him if it were used.

Back then, Zu An had thought that the skill really wasn't anything useful. He was so handsome and charming, he could get any girl he wanted. He hadn't needed such a skill to get all the pretty girls around him at all. Furthermore, every single one of them was a goddess-level beauty in others' eyes.

He didn't like the ability that much either. In a relationship, it was important for the feelings to be mutual, and for both parties to have affinity for each other. What would be the point of using such a skill? Wouldn't it make him no different from those lowlives who used aphrodisiacs?

That was why he had always kept the skill on the backburner, having never used it. However, this was a life or death situation, so his survival instincts had made him go for broke.

If he died, Yu Yanluo would come to a bitter end. Furthermore, there was Chuyan, Manman, Zheng Dan... They were all still waiting for his return. He definitely couldn't just willingly accept such a conclusion without trying everything he had.

But he hadn't had any confidence in the ability. The first reason was that he had never used it before and hadn't known what its effects would be. The second reason was that his opponent was a grandmaster, and so it might not be effective. Even if it did, it might not stop her from killing him...

Fortunately, at least for the time being, it seemed as if the results had been good.

Yan Xuehen fished out a bottle of medicine and said, "These are the White Jade Sect's Ice Heart Pills. Take one orally, and crush one to apply over your wounds. They should help with your injuries."

Yu Yanluo had been extremely nervous the entire time. When she saw that, her eyes almost popped out. Did I hear wrongly? What do you mean, it should help?

In the past, many powerful cultivators had tried to show off in front of her. One of them had mentioned the White Jade Sect's Ice Heart Pill. It was rumored to even be able to revive the dead, and to be among the very best sacred medicines in this world. Since the materials needed to create it were priceless, every single pill was invaluable. The expert had been a bit sad that he hadn't had the fortune of obtaining one. Otherwise, it would be equivalent to a second life.

And yet, Yan Xuehen hadn't even hesitated to give Zu An a medicine so precious? Additionally, she had even given him another one to apply externally? If that expert were to hear of such a thing, he might just begin cursing, right? He might even just vomit blood on the spot.

Mere seconds prior, Yan Xuehen had still been after Zu An's life, so why was she suddenly treating his injuries now? Furthermore, her tone just then was no longer as arrogant and cold as before, but instead carried a trace of gentleness. There was even a hint of fear in her voice, as if she had done something wrong, and yet was too embarrassed to admit it because of her pride.

Yu Yanluo also saw that Yan Xuehen had deliberately looked away, but kept sneaking looks at Zu An from time to time. Her gaze was nothing like before, when it had been completely ice-cold, but rather... carried tender feelings?

She jumped in fright as soon as that thought appeared. How could that be possible?! She immediately dismissed that guess. Rather, perhaps Yan Xuehen felt misgivings about Zu An's relationship with her disciple, or maybe she felt pity for a talented genius...

...

While Yu Yanluo's thoughts were running wild, Zu An swallowed with difficulty. He couldn't help but feel a bit scared when a tigress kept eyeing him. The worst part was that he didn't know how long the Gold Phoenix's skill would last, or to what extent it would go.

"There's no need, my body's recovery ability..." he began, about to refuse. However, he suddenly saw her brows raise sharply, as if Yan Xuehen might become upset. He was startled and immediately changed his tone, saying, "Thank you, sect master."

He took the bottle, touching her hand in the process. It really was cold like ice, but also smooth like fine jade.

Yan Xuehen pulled her hand back, as if an electric current had just run through her body. A light blush appeared around her neck. She was a bit taken aback. She had never felt such a thing before in all her years of cultivation. Why is my heart beating so hard?

When Zu An ingested the Ice Heart Pill, all of the ki and blood within his body came alive. All of the internal injuries he had obtained from that intense battle recovered at a visible rate. He was greatly shocked. This medicine's effects were almost at the level of Faith in Brother Spring! Even though the pill was a bit slower, as his cultivation rose, it had become hard for those red bottles to completely heal him anyway. They would only heal him around halfway.

But the Ice Heart Pill didn't have such limitations. It was full of medicinal power, making him feel as if it could even heal a grandmaster if they were wounded. Even Ji Dengtu's Soul Return Pill was a bit inferior to it.

Zu An took the chance to say, "I'll repay the sect master for this medicine in the future. I have something to tend to for now, so I'll be saying my goodbyes first." He was worried that she might change her mind, so he quickly picked up Yu Yanluo and disappeared into the distant cave.

A bit of displeasure appeared in Yan Xuehen's eyes when she saw the two of them together. She felt an urge to break the two of them apart. She was horrified as soon as that thought emerged, however. She stood in place for a long time, looking confused. She muttered to herself, "What is wrong with me?"

Chapter 1149: Revenge

As a grandmaster, how sharp were her senses? Yan Xuehen quickly realized that something wasn't right about her current state. She had clearly wanted to kill Zu An before, so why did she not want to kill him at all anymore?

She even felt worried about his injuries, fearing that he might encounter some more danger. She was even more worried that he might be seduced by that beautiful woman. Yu Yanluo was so beautiful, and not even she as a woman could resist her charms, let alone a man.

Different events that had happened after she met Zu An appeared in her mind. A faint smile appeared on her originally ice-cold face.

The man's talents were one thing; what really mattered were his bravery and loyalty. He wouldn't give up even in a situation of absolute despair, and always managed to come up with all sorts of ways to survive.

She had seen her fair share of strong individuals. They could maintain their calm exterior while things were going smoothly, but if things went south, they broke down, becoming quite the sorry sight. Comparatively speaking, Zu An was way better than those people.

As she thought about those things, Zu An's naughty smile appeared in her mind. Her heart quickly began to pound, and she muttered, "I didn't notice it before, but he is pretty handsome."

Her face suddenly turned white. She thought about Chuyan. This guy was her disciple's man!

How am I going to face my disciple in the future?

She was horrified as soon as that thought emerged.

Why am I having these kinds of thoughts?

I seem to like that guy...?

Yan Xuehen's face turned completely pale when she realized that. Even though she had been hit by the Gold Phoenix's ability, liking Zu An didn't mean something was wrong with her mind, and yet she quickly noticed that something wasn't right.

How could she possibly suddenly like him? She recalled the golden phoenix that had rushed at her. Was it because of that thing?

She then thought about the strange bird that had been summoned when Zu An used Hundredwarble. His cultivation technique seemed to be able to produce all sorts of bird images.

She quickly sat down and used her ki to examine her own condition. Unfortunately, she didn't detect any traces of the Gold Phoenix no matter what she did. There weren't any abnormalities she could sense.

"Damn brat, what kind of trick did you use on me?" Yan Xuehen muttered, biting her lip. She was about to chase after him to find out, but she suddenly grew vigilant. She turned around and looked at the shadows behind her.

"Oh my, you really are on guard. I didn't expect to be noticed by you even like this," said a woman with hair reaching all the way down her back, as she slowly walked out from the shadows. There was a big smile on her stunning face, but the look in her eyes was completely cold.

"Yun Jianyue, were you planning on ambushing me just now?" Yan Xuehen asked, setting aside her young maiden-like thoughts. Her tone toward her old adversary was unkind.

"Ambush? You make it sound so bad. It's just been a while since we last met, so I wanted to surprise you a bit," Yun Jianyue said with a smile, even as she secretly examined Yan Xuehen. She seemed to be wounded; her aura was a bit weaker than when she was at her strongest.

Yan Xuehen obviously knew what Yun Jianyue was thinking. She had previously had absolute confidence because Yun Jianyue had been wounded by the emperor during the invasion of the Imperial Palace, and had never fully recovered since then. But she had just been injured by Medusa's Eye. Later, Zu An had left her in a sorry state with his various skills. Her current strength was indeed considerably lower than her peak. If the two of them really fought, it would be hard to say who would come out on top in the end.

A sweet smile appeared on her face when she thought of Zu An, but she immediately caught herself. What the hell did that rascal do to me?

She was well informed, and had once heard of an Affection Gu bug from the south used to make two individuals become an affectionate couple. Could it be that the Golden Phoenix from before had been a kind of Gu bug art? But in theory, with her cultivation, none of those techniques should have worked.

Yun Jianyue looked at her somewhat strangely. This ice-cold woman always had a deadpan expression; why did there seem to be a bit of a gentle smile on her face today? She looked almost like a young maiden in love.

She erased those thoughts as soon as they emerged. If this stone cold woman could feel maidenly emotions, I might as well get married at that point.

"Why are you here?" Yan Xuehen asked, suppressing the doubt within her. Dealing with the current problem was a top priority.

Yun Jianyue casually paced around. As her long hair rhythmically tapped against her bottom, even Yan Xuehen couldn't help but give it another look, thinking to herself, This witch's bottom is quite large.

Her cheeks heated up a bit as soon as she thought of that. She focused on being indifferent to everything normally, so she wouldn't notice such things at all. What was up with her today?

Yun Jianyue gave her a strange look. She just felt that Yan Xuehen was a bit different from usual, but she couldn't exactly say how. She replied, "Hmph, why else? Someone made such a flashy scene in the air, so I was curious about what happened. I followed your aura and came here."

She felt a bit annoyed as she spoke. The common people and even officials back at Cloudcenter City had all been praising Yan Xuehen. Only the other party's indifferent and aloof temperament could create such a reputation.

Even though Yun Jianyue's appearance wasn't inferior at all, the common people would only fear her, and not love and adore her the way they did Yan Xuehen. That was an innate flaw of the Devil Sect.

"This place is a bit strange. My divine senses don't reach very far in it. A huge battle seemed to have taken place, and yet I couldn't even find you," Yun Jianyue said while looking all around her. She asked, "Hm? Who were you fighting against just now?"

Yan Xuehen said indifferently, "I came here to catch Yu Yanluo."

"Yu Yanluo?" Yun Jianyue exclaimed, a bit shocked. "I heard that the former number one beauty was actually a Medusa. I wonder how many men's hearts will be crushed once they learn of this."

Yan Xuehen declined to comment on that. Yu Yanluo was indeed extremely pretty, pretty to the point that even other women felt something. When she thought about how Zu An had been with such a beauty, and that they had been willing to sacrifice themselves for each other earlier, she felt incredibly vexed.

"Something's not right! Even if that woman does have the Medusa bloodline, she shouldn't be a match for you. Why was there such a huge disturbance?" Yun Jianyue muttered, still confused.

"There was the one who saved her too," Yan Xuehen replied. She hesitated for a moment, but in the end, she didn't speak Zu An's name. After all, Yu Yanluo was a fiend race individual and a criminal. The one who saved her would definitely become a criminal too, and that would make things in the future extremely troublesome.

"Someone who could save her from the security in Cloudcenter City and even create such a disturbance while fighting against you... Don't tell me some fiend race powerful figure came to save her?" Yun Jianyue remarked in amusement. However, her expression suddenly changed and she continued, "Wait, it's not that brat, is it?"

Yan Xuehen gave her a look of surprise. How had she guessed that?

Yun Jianyue wrinkled her nose, as if she were smelling something. She remarked, "I seem to be able to smell Zu An's scent. Is it him?"

Yan Xuehen's expression became even stranger as she asked, "Why can you tell what he smells like? What kind of a relationship do these two have?"

Previously, she wouldn't have thought anything more of it. After all, there was no way a demoness like Yun Jianyue would have any relationship with a junior. But she had just seen an incredible beauty like Yu Yanluo, who had been famous for so many years, fall for that guy; and now, even she herself...

That fellow seemed to have a strange sort of charm. All sorts of outstanding girls couldn't help but get close to him.

Yun Jianyue's expression became a bit unnatural. She had hidden in Zu An's room before, and the two had lived together for a long time. She couldn't be more familiar with his scent and aura. But she couldn't just explain those things, so she changed the topic. "Where is he?"

Yan Xuehen worried that her old adversary would notice something because of her abnormal sensitivity toward Zu An. She said indifferently, "He is dead."

"He's dead?" Yun Jianyue exclaimed in alarm. "How can that be? Where are their corpses?"

Yan Xuehen said expressionlessly, "That fellow's cultivation was too strange, so I had no choice but to fight with all my strength. How could there be any corpse left under the full power of a grandmaster?"

Yun Jianyue obviously understood what the full power of a grandmaster represented. Furthermore, when she heard Yan Xuehen say that Zu An's cultivation was strange, and she had no choice but to go all

out, that left her even more convinced. She had spent so much time with Zu An previously, so she naturally knew that Zu An's strength couldn't be evaluated like other cultivators.

"You actually killed him? You dare to kill him?!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed. Her black hair flew around, her expression turning ice-cold. A crescent moon appeared out of thin air. She instantly transformed into the demoness from the past who had inspired fear and awe throughout the entire world.

Chapter 1150: Strange Roar

Yan Xuehen jumped in fright when she sensed Yun Jianyue's killing intent. She exclaimed, "Are you mad? You are injured, but you are still going to fight against me?"

She was more interested in finding Zu An and finding out what had happened. She obviously didn't want to waste any more time. Furthermore, in a fight between two grandmasters, unless absolutely necessary, neither side would want to fight to the death. Regardless of who won and lost, they would suffer serious injuries that were difficult to recover from.

Yun Jianyue retorted coldly, "Aren't you injured too? We're in the same situation. Are you trying to scare me off or something?"

"What kind of a relationship does that person have with you? You are actually willing to even fight me to the death for him?" Yan Xuehen asked as she summoned her Flying Snow Sword to defend against Yun Jianyue's attack.

Yun Jianyue's expression was dangerous as she said, "He's shown me kindness, and he's my friend. I couldn't do much to repay him. Since you killed him, I'll get revenge in his place!"

"Friend?" Yan Xuehen thought to herself, This demoness actually called Zu An her friend! That was something that had never happened before.

For so many years, the sect master of the Devil Sect had been used to stop children from crying at night. She had always kept to herself. When had she ever had any friends? And yet now, she actually called a junior her friend, and she was even willing to fight against a grandmaster while disregarding everything!

She recalled how the other woman previously seemed to have appeared several times to help Zu An as well. It would be even stranger if there were nothing fishy going on between these two!

Yan Xuehen's expression turned cold. The two had clearly known each other longer than she had known Zu An. For some reason, that made her feel extremely unhappy. And because they had faced each other for so many years, she didn't want to tell the truth. Otherwise, she might seem scared of Yun Jianyue.

"Eliminating evil has always been our responsibility to begin with. It is that man's fault for being infatuated by lust and going astray," she said. She knew they could easily avoid fighting if she backed down even a bit, but she had always been a proud woman. How could she show any weakness in front of her old adversary?

"Then die!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed. She could no longer sit still, brandishing her crescent disk and attacking. Yan Xuehen gripped the Flying Snow Sword tightly and faced her.

What kind of matter was a battle between grandmasters? The surrounding cave quaked, and the nearby tunnels collapsed. However, the falling dirt and rocks didn't prevent the two from using their skills at all.

One side was eager to get revenge, while the other was proud and stubborn. Just like that, the two fought an incredibly intense battle.

...

Meanwhile, Zu An, who had been rushing through the underground paths with Yu Yanluo, sensed the terrifying power in the distance. He couldn't help but stop.

Yu Yanluo also sensed it, wondering, "Who is Yan Xuehen fighting?"

Zu An replied, "Who cares who she's fighting. Her cultivation is so high. Who could even hurt her unless the emperor himself came?"

Yu Yanluo nodded. That was indeed the case. Both she and Zu An were already quite strong, and yet they couldn't do much to Yan Xuehen at all. If Zu An hadn't managed to think of a way out, both of them might already have left this world. She couldn't help but become curious when she thought of that, however. She asked, "Just how did you make Yan Xuehen let us go?"

Zu An's face heated up. That method really was a bit despicable, so how could he say it out loud? He could only reply ambiguously, "Her conscience might have finally kicked in, and she could have been worried that killing me might affect her relationship with her disciple."

"But there was no reason for her to let me go, was there?" Yu Yanluo had guessed that as well, but she didn't understand why she had been allowed to escape as well.

Zu An said, "Maybe she did that out of consideration for how you've never harmed anyone all these years, and have instead saved many people. Or maybe she thought you were so pretty that even as a woman, she was captivated by your beauty. She couldn't bring herself to ruin a natural work of art the heavens created."

Yu Yanluo blushed. She said with playful annoyance, "You are always teasing me." But she still felt happy whenever she heard him praise her for being pretty.

In truth, many people had used even prettier words than Zu An in describing her beauty, such as calling her the most splendid flower. However, even though she always replied with a smile, she usually didn't feel anything inside. It had reached a point where she had even been a bit unhappy with her appearance, because it brought her too many unnecessary troubles and difficulties.

But now, when she heard Zu An praise her, she instead felt a bit shy for the very first time. She had been an incredible beauty to begin with, but now that she was showing her bashful side, she was even more charming. Even Zu An, who had his fair share of experiences, was a bit stupefied.

Yu Yanluo also noticed his scorching hot gaze. While she felt shy, she also felt a hint of happiness. She said, "Am I pretty?"

Zu An nodded and said with a smile, "You are." He wanted to use some fancier words to describe her, but when their eyes met, he instead felt that they were all unnecessary. It was instead the purest and truest feelings that were best.

Yu Yanluo's smile seemed to make the entire black cavern become a bit brighter. She said, "You can look at me as long as you want in the future."

She wasn't a little maiden who didn't know about worldly matters. She didn't have to mince words and hide her own thoughts. She had had favorable feelings for him to begin with. Furthermore, the two of them had fled through the mine together. When faced with Yan Xuehen's pursuit, both of them had been willing to give up their lives for each other. Since they had already faced life and death together, their relationship had also naturally advanced.

Zu An didn't notice her implication and instead replied jokingly, "I can look at you for as long as I want? Then can I look at you whenever I want?"

"When do you want to look?" Yu Yanluo's eyes swirled, and her voice even became a bit softer.

"For example, at night?" Zu An replied. He had gradually sensed that something wasn't right, but his thoughts hadn't gone in that direction.

Yu Yanluo replied, "Okay."

Zu An was stunned. What the hell?

When she saw his stupefied expression, Yu Yanluo giggled and said, "Dummy." After she spoke, she quickly placed her arms around Zu An's neck, kissing him with her red lips.

Zu An's entire body went rigid. He subconsciously held her waist while thinking, I let Yu Yanluo take the first kiss?

For so many years, there had always been so many men at her side, but none of them could get closer to her. And yet today, she actually took the initiative to kiss a man! Even if this matter got out, not a single person would believe it.

...

After a while, their lips separated again. Zu An only remembered that her lips were extremely soft, and also extremely sweet.

Yu Yanluo's face was already completely red, but she still said with a shy smile, "You're always such a smooth talker normally, so I thought you were some player. Turns out you're also a stiff and pure man."

What?! Are you kidding me right now? Zu An thought. How could he still hold back? He grabbed her wrist and pushed her against the wall next to them. Then, he lowered his head and kissed her.

When she felt the masculine pressure from Zu An's rough actions, Yu Yanluo was stunned at first. However, she reacted soon afterward, feeling that her words must have incited him. Her heart pounded crazily. She didn't get upset and instead slowly closed her eyes, letting him do what he wanted.

No matter how mature she was, she had still never done it before. How could she be a match for the seasoned Zu An? Under his ministrations, her entire body quickly softened like melted candy.

Zu An felt himself become incredibly hard when he sensed how soft she had become. He was soon no longer satisfied with just kissing. Yu Yanluo's breath quickened more and more when she sensed him invade her personal space further. However, she only opened her eyes and gave him a resentful look, but didn't stop him.

Zu An embraced her waist. He was just about to go a step further when a strange, ominous roar rang out. The cave around them rocked back and forth, and chunks of rock began to fall from above.

The two of them were shocked. That sound had emerged from the distance. They saw some black fog gradually closing in from the long, pitch-black tunnel, obscuring everything in its path.

"I think something was crying out just now," Yu Yanluo said. Her entire face was red. She was leaning against Zu An as if she didn't have a bone in her body. If Zu An hadn't been holding her, she might have fallen to the ground.

"We heard that when we first jumped down here too," Zu An said, his expression serious. He had thought that it might have been the wind or an earthquake, and that it had only become so loud after being amplified by the huge mine pit.

Now that they were farther inside, he realized it was a living creature's roar. Its voice carried a terrifying pressure that made both of them feel as if they were facing a great enemy.