

Immortal 161

Chapter 161: Superficial Brothers

“How could you be in the mood to joke despite being in such a situation?” exclaimed Chu Chuyan.

Zu An dodged an attack coming from one of the zombie spearmen as he replied, “Since I’m already injured, shouldn’t I at least try to maximize whatever benefits I have for myself? Otherwise, I would just be getting hurt for nothing.”

“...” Chu Chuyan.

She was really having difficulties trying to catch up with Zu An’s leap in logic. Is this what a normal person should be thinking about in a situation like this?!

Despite Zu An’s lackadaisical tone, he was already giving it everything he got. He hurriedly consumed a Blood Replenishment Pill to heal himself up, or else he would probably die right away if he were to be struck even once more.

A warm flow of energy gushed through his body and his limbs. While the rate of recovery wasn’t instantaneous like ‘Faith in Brother Spring’, it was still fairly fast by conventional standards. He could feel his injuries slowly closing up, and his mind felt invigorated once more.

Zu An was earnestly glad that Ji Xiaoxi had teamed up with him earlier on and given him so many precious medicines from Divine Physician Ji. Otherwise, he would have already died by now.

In any case, the recovery in stamina gave Zu An the strength he needed to continue his fight against the zombie spearmen. His arm was still persistently aching, but he forced himself to turn a blind eye to it and pushed himself. There were several times where his spear grew dull from overuse, and he would simply decisively toss away his spear and snatch a new one from his enemy’s hands.

Through sheer tenacity, he eventually managed to defeat the dozens of zombie spearmen around him.

Zu An stabbed the current spear he had on hand into the ground and leaned his body on it in order to remain standing. He was desperately gasping for air, and his chest was pumping up and down intensely. His face was reddened, and his hair was drenched in sweat, which dripped down on the beauty he was holding onto.

Chu Chuyan took a good look at the man who was giving his all to protect her. She knew deep well that if not for him insistently holding onto her, he should have been able to escape easily with his formidable movement skill and speed.

Was this how it felt like to be protected by someone?

Zu An wasn’t exactly strong, but his persevering spirit and tenacity touched her heart. She had never been protected by a man in such a manner before. The sweat and blood that had soaked part of her cloak carried the thick scent of masculinity that made her heartbeat hasten.

Seeing that Zu An was looking at him, Chu Chuyan quickly averted her gaze.

"It's fortunate that it was only this much. If there were any more zombie soldiers, I might not have been able to last until now," said Zu An.

He immediately regretted raising that flag, for the sound of coordinated footsteps sounded once more right after he made that remark. He raised his head to take a look, only to see yet another platoon of zombie soldiers walking over. This time around, they weren't equipped with spears but swords.

Sensing a far greater aura from them than from those zombie spearmen, Shi Kun's face turned livid. "Zu An, you really have a foul mouth!"

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +666 Rage!

Zu An was also rendered speechless.

First the zombie axemen, then the zombie spearmen, and now the zombie swordsmen. The hell, is this Civilization V? Bloody hell!

Zu An cursed under his breath, but he still slowly got to his feet. His hand was still trembling at the moment, not from fear but from having overexerted himself earlier on.

"Put me down! You might still stand a chance if you run away now. You have already saved me many times so far, and I'm earnestly grateful to you. However, there's no need for you to persevere. Even if I don't die in their hands, I also don't have much time left to live. You don't have to give up your life for me!"

As the two of them were close together, Chu Chuyan could clearly sense his trembling body. She knew that he had already reached his limit and would die without a doubt before the assault of these zombie swordsmen.

"Say no more. You're my wife, so how can I abandon you?" Zu An revealed a bitter smile. "Of course, if you wish to help me, you're more than welcome to give me a kiss. You might just be able to unlock my hidden potential with that."

"..." Chu Chuyan.

How can you still act like a ruffian at a time like this?

Zu An still wanted to continue elaborating on this topic, but those zombie swordsmen weren't giving him any slack at all. They charged toward him with their swords in hand, moving at a speed that was a third faster than those zombie spearmen.

Astonished, Zu An quickly raised his spear to protect himself.

Bam!

The spear and the sword collided with one another heavily. The powerful rebound from the impact nearly sent his spear flying from his hand.

Astonishingly, the individual prowess of these zombie swordsmen had actually reached the fourth rank!

Zu An should have been able to overpower them in terms of strength and speed in his berserk state, but due to his severe injuries and the earlier prolonged battle, his body was already utterly exhausted and weakened, which put him in no state to clash directly with these zombie swordsmen.

While he was clashing with the first zombie swordsman, the others flitted over to launch their attacks too. Zu An hurriedly swept his spear horizontally and barely managed to fend against their attacks with difficulty. Unexpectedly, one of the zombie swordsmen suddenly raised his leg and kicked him squarely in the chest, sending him flying three meters away.

The impact of the kick left the ki in Zu An's body in disarray, rendering him powerless for a moment there. The nearby zombie swordsmen also had no intention of allowing him to recover either. They quickly charged forward to hack down on his body.

Zu An thought that it was the end, but a green silhouette suddenly appeared in front of him. She quickly weaved a massive net made out of vines, blocking off the swords coming from all around.

Taken aback, Zu An stared at the slender woman standing right before him.

Qiao Xueying glared at him and said, "What are you looking at me for? I'm not saving you! Anyway, you owe me two lives now!"

Zu An chuckled cheekily and replied, "Yes yes. It looks like there's no other choice for me than to repay your magnanimity by betrothing myself to you."

Qiao Xueying's face reddened. While blocking off the attacks from the surrounding zombie swordsmen, she harrumphed furiously, "One of these days, I'll make sure to rip off that stinky mouth of yours!"

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +233 Rage!

"You've never had a taste of it before. How do you know whether it's stinky or not?" Zu An burst into laughter.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

"..." Chu Chuyan.

Unable to take it anymore, Qiao Xueying snapped, "If you have the strength to talk, hurry up and get up from there. I can't hold on much longer!"

The zombies surrounding her and Shi Kun earlier numbered even more than Zu An's, so she didn't have it easy either despite her higher cultivation. It was true that the life force from her wood element cultivation was able to curb these zombies to a certain extent, the reverse was true as well. The deathly aura lingering in this cavern was also suppressing her prowess too.

Due to that, the difficult battle she had earlier had also nearly sapped her dry. Under the relentless sword slashes coming from all around, her vine began to slowly wither.

Just as the vines were about to collapse, Zu An suddenly stood up, and his spear morphed into a blur. In just an instant, he released over a dozen thrusts, piercing several zombie swordsmen closest to them dead.

“Y-you... How did you...” Qiao Xueying was shocked.

The strength and speed Zu An had exerted in that split moment were greater than what he had revealed thus far in the entire battle!

Zu An shrugged in response. “Well, I managed to make a breakthrough while I was fighting.”

One of the reasons why he was caught off guard earlier, other than the fact that his ki was in disarray, was because he realized that he had made a breakthrough.

Phoenix Nirvana Sutra allowed him to raise his cultivation by suffering hits, and he had sustained significant injuries over the course of the battle. The earlier heavy kick he suffered provided the last few golden specks required to fill his fourth formation.

The rise of every cultivation step could recover one’s vitality and injuries to some extent, providing Zu An with the strength needed for him to continue fighting at least for the moment.

“...” Qiao Xueying.

“...” Chu Chuyan.

“...” Shi Kun.

One must know that even making a breakthrough of a single cultivation step was incredibly difficult to even for prodigies like them. It was unthinkable to them that a person could actually make a breakthrough in the midst of a battle!

To make things worst, Zu An even spoke with a matter-of-fact tone, as if it was perfectly normal for everyone else. It made it seem like the effort they had put into advancing their cultivation rank had been in vain.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +211 Rage!

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +444 Rage!

Looks like my wife is the best after all. She doesn’t get jealous of my rise in cultivation, unlike the other two. Hmmm? Why didn’t I receive any Rage points from the other fourth rank cultivator?

Curious, Zu An turned to look over at Shi Kun’s side, only to find that the only surviving fourth rank cultivator had been pinned on the wall. His body was filled with glaring wounds, which made it seem like he had been hacked to death. His eyes were widened large, a sign that he had died with many grievances.

Why is it that a third rank cultivator is able to hold his ground here whereas a proud late fourth rank cultivator like me ended up biting the dust? Goddamnit!

Zu An could roughly fathom the thoughts of the fourth rank cultivator in his final moments, but he had been too preoccupied with fighting the zombie soldiers on his side that he couldn’t spare any attention toward the system, so he didn’t know if the fourth rank cultivator had provided him with any Rage points.

All of a sudden, Zu An heard the sound of wind whooshing around him. The zombie swordsmen had begun swarming around him once more.

He quickly activated Sunflower Phantasm and treaded amidst the enemies. From time to time, whenever he spotted an opening, his spear would dart forth to launch a surprise attack.

Unfortunately, these zombie swordsmen were far more skilled than the earlier zombie swordsmen. Most of them were able to react on time to block his surprise attacks, and he had to trade at least ten blows before he could end his target's life.

Shoosh shoosh...

A sharp sound of something piercing through the air sounded. Zu An's heart skipped a beat as he raised his gaze to take a look. Just as he had expected, several arrows were headed from different directions toward him and Chu Chuyan.

There were around eight archers in the vicinity!

Zu An was able to deflect these arrows with his spear, but he could hardly feel relieved at all. The worst-case scenario had indeed happened.

He had witnessed the prowess of these zombie archers back in the valley. While there weren't too many of them at the moment, their ability to coordinate with the zombie swordsmen made them a major threat. It would be nigh impossible to fight the archers and the swordsmen simultaneously.

Zu An's worries were swiftly proved right.

Every time he was about to kill a zombie swordsman, an arrow would whiz in his direction, leaving him with no choice but to retract his spear and go on the defensive. And if he tried to go for the zombie archers first, the zombie swordsmen would swiftly tie him down with a barrage of attacks.

He had to weave around the zombie swordsmen using Sunflower Phantasm and use their bodies to hide from the zombie archers. He was still barely able to hold on for the time being, but now that his movements had become severely restricted, it had gotten far harder for him to launch counterattacks.

He knew that he would be a goner at this rate. If he lost focus for just a split moment, he would be either pierced by an arrow or hacked to death. Otherwise, he would also fall once he ran out of ki.

"Brother Shit, why don't you come over and lend me hand? We're on the same boat now. Why don't we put aside our grievances so as to tide through this crisis together?" said Zu An.

He was a little perplexed as to why these arrows were aimed at him but not at Shi Kun. It was weird how these zombies were specifically coming after him.

On the other hand, Shi Kun had already noticed the situation over on Zu An's side, and he said with a chuckle, "With Brother Zu's formidable skills, I believe that dealing with those minions shouldn't be an issue with you. I shan't embarrass myself here."

Chapter 162: I'm Actually An Expert

Zu An's strength frightened Shi Kun. Despite being at the third rank, the prowess he displayed was not beneath that of a fifth rank cultivator. Other than the fact that he was unable to tap into elemental powers, he was effectively no different from a fifth rank cultivator.

On top of that, the earlier 'recovery' was completely incomprehensible to him. Those who could make breakthroughs in the midst of the battles were truly the prodigies of the prodigies; every single one of them would eventually leave the mark in history.

Without a doubt, Zu An was a major threat to him which he had to stifle in the cradle right now!

But at the same time, he was worried about all of those weird skills that Zu An had displayed thus far, so he was thinking of making use of these zombies to force them out.

With such thoughts in mind, he said, "Doesn't Brother Zu have that skill to make others pregnant? Shouldn't you be able to get out of this quandary by using it on these zombies?"

"Did someone slam a door into your head? Just how dumb must you be to actually think that zombies can get pregnant?" cursed Zu An.

In the first place, these zombies were obviously insensitive to pain, but even if it worked, he only had one use left of 'Knock-You-Up Eyes'. Given the army he was standing before, it would be meaningless even if he used it.

Shi Kun nearly choked after hearing Zu An's words. Bloody hell. If even a man can get pregnant, why can't a zombie do the same?

However, the experience he had with labor pains earlier on was so traumatic that he didn't want to talk about it before his goddess and lackey, so he could only bottle his anger up inside.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +456 Rage!

Zu An naturally knew that Shi Kun wouldn't help him, and he was just intending it as a casual remark. He was trying to think out of the box to see if there were any means he could resort to in order to resolve the situation before him. Unfortunately, no matter how he racked his brain, he was unable to figure out a solution.

These zombies are simply too hard to deal with. If only I have light elemental magic that novel protagonists usually wield... Hm? Wait a moment, light?

Zu An suddenly remembered that he had drawn a bizarre flashlight earlier on. He had no idea what it was used for, but it had the ability to emanate light in the presence of light. Could its light possibly be effective against the undead?

It felt like a waste to spend a use of the flashlight to verify his conjecture, but desperate situations called for desperate measures. He had to try everything possible.

There's no use keeping all three uses of the flashlight if I died anyway.

So, the breather he got while weaving amidst the zombie swordsmen, he stabbed his spear onto the ground and summoned the Magical Flashlight.

It was fortunate that even though he was in the midst of a mausoleum, the walls of the cavern, for some reason, emanated a faint luminescence. That was also why he could see his enemies and fend against them for so long.

Not too far away, Shi Kun and Qiao Xueying had been keeping a lookout on the happenings over on Zu An's side. When they saw him tossing away the weapon in his hand, the two of them were shocked.

Shi Kun wondered if Zu An had finally crumbled to the pressure and decided to give up here.

On the other hand, Qiao Xueying was more worried about Chu Chuyan. As for Zu An... for some reason, she thought that he was like a persistent cockroach that continued grasping onto life no matter how dire the situation was. She had a feeling that he would still be standing even after she passed away.

Soon, the two of them saw Zu An taking a short stick out of nowhere. Realizing that he was up to something, they made sure to keep a close eye out on him. They knew that he was a person with many mysterious means up his sleeves, so they couldn't help but wonder if that short stick was his trump card.

Meanwhile, Zu An was feeling utterly jittery. The zombie swordsmen were already charging toward him whereas he didn't have a weapon in hand anymore. If the Magical Flashlight didn't work as well as he thought, both he and Chu Chuyan would be goners today.

With his heart thumping in trepidation, he switched on the flashlight.

Overwhelming light poured forth, nearly blinding Shi Kun and Qiao Xueying.

While there was some luminescence in the mausoleum, it was barely faint enough for one to see. When the 'short stick' in Zu An's hand suddenly lit up, for a moment there, they thought that they were staring at the sun in the eye.

The zombie swordsmen fared even worse against the light. They let out miserable screeches as they desperately tried to back away. Those who were closest to Zu An even began smoking up.

Zu An was delighted. The Magical Flashlight was indeed useful against the undead! He noticed that the zombie archers in the distance were in the midst of nocking their arrows, so he quickly aimed the flashlight in their direction.

No matter how fast an archer's arrow was, there was no way it could have been faster than the speed of light. Under the scorching brilliance of the flashlight, the zombie archers shrieked in horror as they tossed aside their bows, covered their eyes, and ran away.

Chu Chuyan was baffled by what she was seeing. The scene before her transcended her common sense. It was one thing for this 'short stick' to be able to light up, but who could have thought that the zombies would be afraid of its light?

While light did have a curbing effect on zombies, it wasn't at such an exaggerated degree.

Delighted by the amazing effect of the torchlight, Zu An delightfully cast the flashlight on the zombie soldiers all around him, mocking them, "Heh, why don't you come here? Weren't you acting all smug earlier on?"

Where his light shone, the zombies fled. It felt almost like a shepherd dog herding sheep.

He aimed his flashlight here and there, and soon, the zombie soldiers were forced to retreat to the two corners.

You have successfully trolled Zombie Axemen for +6 +6 +6...

You have successfully trolled Zombie Spearmen for +6 +6 +6...

You have successfully trolled Zombie Swordsmen for +6 +6 +6...

You have successfully trolled Zombie Archers for +6 +6 +6...

Zu An was overjoyed. These zombie soldiers contributed a small number of Rage points each, but there was practically an army of them right in front of him. It all added up to an incredible sum.

Shi Kun was dumbfounded. "What is that in your hand?"

Zu An sighed deeply and said, "Since things have already come to this point, I shan't continue my act anymore. I'm actually a light element cultivator, a hidden expert of this world."

"..." Chu Chuyan.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

"..." Shi Kun.

To hell with light element! Is there even such an element in the world?

Besides, someone like you actually claims to be an expert? Hell! Who was the one who was chased around like a headless chicken earlier on?

"Brother Zu, you should have brought that item out earlier!" Shi Kun wondered if he could snatch that item over. No matter how he looked at it, it was clearly a powerful artifact.

Zu An shrugged casually. "I forgot about it."

Due to his shrugging action, the flashlight ended up casting its brilliance on the zombie soldiers on the right side of the cavern, inducing them to shriek in pain.

You have successfully trolled the Zombie Soldiers for +6 +6 +6...

Shi Kun was rendered speechless. How the hell can you forget something like this? Do you know how desperately I've been fighting all this while? I even lost most of my lackeys! Yet, you're trying to get away just by saying you forgot about it?

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +999 Rage.

"What can I do? I have too many skills on me that it's hard for me to keep track of them all," replied Zu An with a helpless tone.

"..." Shi Kun.

Listen to what that shithead is saying! Damn it, I really want to sink my fist into his face!

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +334 Rage!

However, given the current circumstances, he had no choice but to suppress his fury and squeeze out a smile. "Since that's the case, may I trouble Brother Zu to drive the zombies away so that we can explore the depths of the cavern? I feel that there are great treasures hidden in here. Let's bury the hatchet, and I'll let you have the first pick of whatever we find inside. How does that sound?"

"Sounds good to me," replied Zu An.

Chu Chuyan immediately tried to stop him, only to see Zu An herding all of the zombies toward Shi Kun's side in the next moment.

Shi Kun's face warped in horror. "Brother Zu, what do you mean by this?"

"With Brother Shi's formidable skills, I believe that dealing with those minions shouldn't be an issue with you. I shan't embarrass myself here," replied Zu An with a smile.

He returned Shi Kun's words back to him.

"Alright, I'll be making a move first." With Chu Chuyan in his embrace, Zu An waved his hand and walked away coolly.

"..." Shi Kun.

"..." Zombie soldiers.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +999 Rage!

Chapter 163: The Mysterious Woman's Voice

Zu An headed deeper into the cavern with Chu Chuyan in his embrace. Had it been half an hour ago, if he had a chance to shake off Shi Kun, he would surely turn tail and leave the mausoleum. After all, the zombie army was a huge threat to him.

However, after witnessing the ability of the Magical Flashlight to curb the undead, he changed his mind.

His experience in games and novels told him this creepy mausoleum he was in had great dangers lurking in here, and rewards and risks came hand-in-hand. There was a good chance that there were incredible treasures lying in wait here.

In the first place, his motive for entering the Ursae Dungeon was to secure the Evanescent Lotus and release his seal. Whether he would live in bliss or misery for the rest of his life counted on this, so naturally, he wouldn't give up this precious treasure hunting opportunity!

Since he had an ace in his hand right now, it would be a waste not to use it to its fullest potential.

"I wonder how the 'use' for this flashlight is calculated by."

Zu An remembered that the Magical Flashlight could only be used thrice. Since it had remained lit all this while, did it mean to say that as long as the light didn't go out, it would still be considered as one use?

If that was the case, it was truly a relief that this mausoleum had been emanating a faint light all this while to keep the flashlight powered. Just to be safe, he even fumbled for an ignitable paper roll he was

carrying with him and kept it in his hand, prepared to light it up in case he ever stumbled into a completely dark location.

"Honey, did you see Shi Kun's expression earlier? How in the world did he find the confidence to ask me to cooperate with him after what he has done?" Zu An harrumphed. "It's just a huge pity for Snow. She's likely going to die with him there. Will you blame me for that?"

Given how depleted Shi Kun and Qiao Xueying were, it was unlikely that they would be able to stand their ground against so many zombie soldiers.

"Eyy. Honey, Snow did save us twice earlier. Am I being too heartless leaving her to the lurch here? Should I turn around and just save her? Heh, I bet Shi Kun is going to be so angry that he would explode like a volcano." Just imagining the situation was enough to bring a smile to Zu An's face.

"Hm? Honey, why aren't you saying anything at all?" Zu An suddenly noticed that something was amiss. He hadn't heard Chu Chuyan's voice for a while now. So, he lowered his head to take a look, only to see the woman in his embrace had her eyes tightly shut and face ghastly pale. She was hardly breathing at all anymore.

Ever since she used the forbidden art, her life had already been hanging by a thread. If not for Zu An feeding her so many of Divine Physician Ji's recovery medicine, she would have already breathed her last by now.

But even so, Divine Physician Ji's medicine only provided her with some respite; it couldn't cure her affliction. On top of that, they had been so busy on the escape that she hadn't been able to get any rest at all. She was forcing herself to focus earlier on out of worry for Zu An's safety, but now that they were finally out of danger, her tensed nerves finally relaxed, and she was swiftly consumed by exhaustion.

"Honey!" exclaimed Zu An in a panic.

He might not be a physician, but he could sense Chu Chuyan's life slowly slipping away. He quickly took out a bunch of medicine and fed it into her mouth.

"It's useless. Her ki meridians have been destroyed. Your medicine cannot fit the root of her problem," a feminine voice suddenly sounded. The voice had a pleasant melodious quality to it, but at the same time, it carried an air of authority too.

"Who?! Who is the one talking?!" Zu An quickly swept his flashlight around the cavern, searching for the person who had just spoken to him. However, he was unable to find anyone at all. A chill suddenly crept down his spine. Could it be a ghost?

"You need not care who I am. I'll only ask you one question. Do you wish to save her?" the feminine voice sounded. The voice seemed to have been whispered in his ears, but at the same time, it sounded so vague that it could have been from a far distance away too.

"Of course I do!" replied Zu An.

"Very well. Walk on, and you'll stumble upon a spirit medicine. Harvest it and feed it to her, and she'll be able to preserve her life," the feminine voice sounded.

Zu An didn't get to action right away. Instead, he asked grimly, "How can I trust your words?"

He knew that there was no such thing as a free lunch in the world. He did often fantasize himself as the protagonist of the world, but he wasn't so naive as to think that a random stranger he met in this mausoleum would actually help him out of goodwill.

In his view, the owner of the voice sounded more like a demon often depicted in stories. It was probably trying to lure him into its trap through temptation.

"You have no other choice but to trust me. There's no other way for you to save her," replied the feminine voice coldly.

Zu An's heart sank. He knew that the other party was right.

Unless he was lucky enough to stumble onto the other teachers of the academy and Ji Xiaoxi as soon as he walked out of this mausoleum, and they happened to have some sort of incredible treasure on them that could treat Chu Chuyan's condition... but how could that be possible?

In the first place, if the others had stumbled upon such a precious treasure, it was unlikely that they would spare it to Chu Chuyan. They had no obligation to do that. Besides, he had a feeling that not even Ji Dengtu would be able to treat Chu Chuyan even if he was here, or else Chu Chuyan wouldn't have been so despaired.

"Alright, tell me where to go!" Zu An gritted his teeth.

For Chu Chuyan's sake, he could only march on no matter what kind of dangers lurked ahead of him.

Judging from how the mysterious voice had spoken with a rude tone earlier instead of trying to entice him, Zu An reckoned that she wasn't lying to him.

Damn it, what's wrong with me? Why am I more inclined to trust her just because she was rude to me?

Zu An carried Chu Chuyan's body and walked in the direction pointed out by the feminine voice. Somehow, looking at this seemingly endless path before him, he felt that he was walking right into the mouth of a gigantic beast. Only the illumination coming from his flashlight was able to calm his unease a little.

Unlike before, he found himself faced with many divergent paths along the way, making the road far more complicated than before. He felt that he had walked into a labyrinth, and it didn't take him long to lose his sense of direction.

Had it not been for the feminine voice guiding him along, he would have been utterly lost.

He did encounter quite a few zombie soldiers along the way, and some of them were even stronger than the zombie swordsman. However, under the shine of his Magical Flashlight, the zombie soldiers were forced to run away from him, as if he was the monster here.

Even the feminine voice couldn't help but remark, "Looks like it's the will of heaven. If not for that mysterious item you have there, you would have never been able to reach the center of the underground palace with your strength."

Zu An made use of this opportunity to strike up an opportunity with that voice, "Based on what you're saying, it seems like you have already been here for quite some time. Are you a human or a... ghost?"

The feminine voice giggled softly. "What do you think?"

The image of a demure woman laughing gently surfaced in Zu An's head. "Well, regardless of whether you're a human or a ghost, you're bound to be a very beautiful woman."

"Beautiful..." The voice suddenly fell silent at this point. There was a long pause before it sighed in desolation, "What's the use of being beautiful?"

It was a casual remark, yet it sent Zu An's body trembling. His heart began beating nonstop, as if something had triggered his adrenaline. Back when he watched 'Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils', he couldn't understand why Duan Yu would be so entranced with Wang Yuyan just by hearing her voice.

However, at this very moment, he finally understood that there were some women who had voices so entrancing that it could draw a person in.

I guess perverts can be turned on by just about anything.

Zu An made a jab about himself before his eyes suddenly lit up. He realized that the passageway was opening up into a wide space. Even with a brief look, it seemed to be at least several football courts large.

What caught his attention the most was the lake in front of him. It wasn't weird for there to be an accumulation of water inside a cavern, but the pristine clarity of the water was unnatural. On top of that, there were sprouting plants emanating a faint green light growing above the water. The surface of the lake was cloaked in a thin layer of mist. All in all, it looked extremely conspicuous in the midst of the dark underground palace.

While Zu An was lacking in common sense in this world, he could still tell as much as the plants were anything but ordinary.

As if having guessed his thoughts, the feminine voice said, "Indeed. The medicine that can cure your companion is inside the lake."

Zu An could sense that Chu Chuyan's breathing was becoming lighter and lighter. It was to the point where he couldn't hear it anymore unless he was focusing hard. Knowing that there was no time to be lost, he rushed over to the lake with her in his arm.

However, an instinctive shudder ran through his body in the next moment, compelling him to stop in his footstep. He turned his stiffened neck toward the left.

He was too excited upon seeing the glowing plants above the lake that he forgot to assess his surroundings carefully, and it was only now that he was able to see what he had neglected.

There were rows of terracotta halberdiers standing in a neat formation in the midst of this massive underground square. They had towering figures, standing at around 1.85 meters tall. Even with a rough glance, Zu An could tell that there were several thousands of them.

By the sides of the halberdier formation were formations of war chariots, and behind them was a huge battalion of archers...

In other words, he was really faced with a complete army here!

Zu An rubbed his eyes in disbelief, wondering if he had returned back to Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum he had visited in his previous life.

Isn't this practically the terracotta army?

However, there was a difference between the two. The terracotta soldiers before him were dressed neatly in vibrant armor. Their sharp weapons hinted that they were all elite soldiers. They couldn't be compared with the dilapidated terracotta soldiers he had seen in the Mausoleum Site Museum in his previous life.

As if having sensed an intruder, blue light started gleaming in the eyes of the sleeping terracotta soldiers, and all of them suddenly turned to look at him simultaneously.

It was hard to describe this feeling. The eeriness of being stared down by thousands of terracotta soldiers all at once was so intimidating and sinister that he nearly suffocated.

Kacha!

The terracotta soldiers in the front row began moving. They held their halberds loosely in their arms, but for some reason, they seemed to be pointed toward Zu An. Their movements were still a little awkward at the start, but slowly, they were becoming more nimble.

Zu An gulped. He couldn't even be bothered to gauge the individual fighting prowess of these terracotta soldiers anymore. With their numbers, they could easily crush him to death if they swarmed down on him all at once.

Chapter 164: Choice

"What are you in a daze for? Hurry up and beam that light on them!" the feminine voice lectured. She was displeased with how he was losing his focus at such a critical moment.

Zu An finally snapped out of his daze. He quickly raised his flashlight and aimed it at the terracotta soldiers before him.

Under the glaring radiance of his flashlight, the vibrant colors on the terracotta soldiers began fading at a visible pace. They had been charging forward mightily a moment ago, but without a shred of hesitation, all of them turned tail to flee in the presence of the flashlight. Some of them even tripped over in a moment of anxiety.

The huge contrast between how they acted before and after made the scene appear quite ludicrous. They quickly returned back to their original position and turned their heads around, acting as if they couldn't see or hear anything at all.

The blue light in their eyes also quickly receded. It was almost as if they had returned back into lifeless sculptures.

"Looks like it's in the instinctive nature of all lifeforms to oppress the weak and fear the strong." Zu An continued directing his flashlight toward the terracotta soldiers, but none of them reacted at all.

However, Rage points was still steadily flowing into his system.

You have successfully trolled the Terracotta Soldiers for +6 +6 +6 +6...

If not for the fact that Chu Chuyan is in a bad condition, I'd stand here and suck all of your Rage points dry!

Seeing that the terracotta soldiers no longer posed a threat for the time being, he quickly made his way over to the lake. It was only in proximity that he realized that the green plants floating were all lotus leaves, nearly covering nearly the entire lake. The faint green light he saw earlier on came from them.

What was different about these lotus leaves was their glistening verdant exterior that greatly resembled jade. Interestingly, the huge cluster of lotus leaves surrounded a small lotus flower that sat at the very center of the lake.

Despite the sombre environment in the cavern, a divine and beautiful lotus was in full bloom. Its petals were snowy in color, resembling the beautiful fingers of a lady. At the center of its petals was a yellowish core that emanated a mysterious glow that resembled the stars in the sky.

Zu An was delighted. This must be the medicine that the mysterious voice was talking about. He was just about to head over and harvest it when he suddenly froze in place. He realized that the lotus had suddenly vanished from view, leaving behind just its verdant leaves around.

Is there someone else around? Is that person's cultivation rank so high that I couldn't even see his movements?

Zu An quickly scanned his surroundings, but there was no one else to be seen other than the terracotta soldiers. At that moment, he felt like his body had been plunged into icy water. I came so far, only to be foiled at the last moment. Am I doomed to watch helplessly as Chu Chuyan loses her life?

"What are you doing? Isn't the lotus still at the same spot?" Noticing Zu An's crestfallen expression, the feminine voice spoke up once again.

Taken aback, Zu An quickly raised his head to take another look, but mysteriously, the lotus had reappeared at the same spot where he last saw it.

"Huh? What's going on?" Zu An rubbed his eyes in confusion, only to see that the lotus had disappeared once again. This time, instead of averting his gaze, he chose to stare intently on the same spot.

As he had expected, the lotus reappeared once more a few seconds later!

It seemed like the lotus possessed the mysterious ability to phase out of appearance.

All of a sudden, he remembered what Ji Dengtu had said to him, and his face warped in astonishment. With a slightly bitter voice, he asked, "By any chance, is it possible that this lotus is called 'Evanescent Lotus?'"

"Indeed, it's called Evanescence Lotus," the feminine voice replied.

Zu An's breathing immediately hastened. He had finally stumbled upon what he had been searching all this while! However, still unable to believe his luck, he asked, "I heard that the Evanescence Lotus blooms

once every thousand years, and its flower only remains for several hours each time around. How long has this flower bloomed for?”

His voice was quivering in fear, as if he was afraid that the lotus would wither in the next moment.

“While the Evanescent Lotus does take a long time to bloom, it doesn’t take a thousand years. Also, this flower is a little special. You need not worry about it withering,” replied the feminine voice.

“It won’t wither? How can that be possible?” Zu An was stunned. That was different from what he had heard from the others.

“Due to the environment this lotus grew up in and several other factors, it’s different from the other ‘Evanescent Lotuses’,” the feminine voice said. “Do you want to slowly discuss this with me or save your companion first? I can sense her life force gradually extinguishing. In around sixty seconds, she’ll die for good.”

“Are there any other Evanescent Lotuses here?” Zu An asked hurriedly.

“Other Evanescent Lotuses? Hah, it’s already a huge blessing that you were able to find this one, but you’re still hoping to find more here?” the feminine voice harrumphed. “You need not worry. This one is more than enough to save her. If she manages to repair her ki meridian, she can even raise her cultivation by an entire rank right away!”

“The Evanescent Lotus cannot repair her ki meridian?” Zu An was stunned. He didn’t expect this medicine to only be able to preserve her life. For someone as proud as Chu Chuyan, there was no way she could bear living as a cripple for the rest of her life.

“This woman must have used a forbidden art far beyond her means to end up in such a state. It wouldn’t be a forbidden art if one didn’t have to pay a price for it,” remarked the feminine voice.

Zu An’s face darkened. Had it been any treasure, no matter how formidable it would be, he would have unhesitatingly used it to save Chu Chuyan.

But this was Evanescent Lotus, the treasure he had been searching hard for all this while!

Being sealed down there really shattered his pride and dignity, and he couldn’t bear to allow himself to remain in this state. He knew that it was already a huge stroke of luck that he was able to stumble upon this Evanescent Lotus, and if he missed this opportunity, it was unlikely that he would ever find another one in his lifetime.

If so, he could only hope that he would one day reach Master rank and dispel the seal using his own power. Now that he was finally a cultivator, he knew how difficult it was to raise his cultivation rank. Even at the very least, he felt that it would take him fifty years to reach Master rank.

But he would have already turned into an old man by then! What was the use of unlocking ‘little Zu An’ when he was already a step in the grave?

Besides, there was no guarantee that he would ever reach Master rank. After all, cultivation was not just all about hard work. There was also a chance that he might never get to regain his functions as a man.

And most importantly of all, the Evanescent Lotus couldn't repair Chu Chuyan's meridians. Even if he saved her, she would have to live her life as a cripple. She might be thankful to him, but how long would her gratitude last?

If she were to meet a man that was far more outstanding than him in the future, what would become of him?

He wouldn't be able to say a thing at all, for he couldn't even fulfill his basic duties as a husband. Women had physical needs that needed to be satisfied too. Having read all kinds of adultery cases in his previous life, he couldn't neglect the possibility of Chu Chuyan leaving him for another man.

He would be doing a noble deed now by saving her, but could he really confidently say that he wouldn't regret it when she scorned him for his impotence and ended up getting together with another man?

He lowered his gaze to look at the sickly Chu Chuyan, then he clenched his fists tightly. He gently put her down before hurriedly leaping across the lake to pluck the Evanescent Lotus out.

...

Back to Shi Kun and Qiao Xueying's side, they were currently encircled by an army of zombie swordsmen.

These zombie swordsmen were incensed by how Zu An undermined them earlier, but the blinding light he emanated earlier on was so terrifying that they instinctively dared not to exact vengeance on him. So, they could only vent their rage on the two remaining victims with them. In their view, the humans had come to this cavern together, so they were all comrades.

The ones to suffer the aftermath of Zu An's taunting was, needless to say, Shi Kun and Qiao Xueying. For some reason, the zombie axemen, spearmen, and swordsmen suddenly seemed to be stronger than before.

In the first place, the two of them were already approaching their limits, placing them in a very dangerous position.

While Shi Kun was cursing Zu An furiously in his mind, Qiao Xueying said, "Young master, we shouldn't remain here any longer. Let's return to the surface."

Shi Kun fell silent. To be honest, he felt indignant to retreat just like that. He had lost so many of his lackeys and used his most treasured trump card, but even so, he was still unable to attain Chu Chuyan.

However, he also understood that it was meaningless for them to remain here. They couldn't even deal with the zombie soldiers before them, let alone venture any deeper from here.

Unlike Zu An, they didn't have a tool that could repel the zombies.

Goddamnit, why does Zu An have so many weird artifacts on him?

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +345 Rage!

"Alright, let's head out now and camp outside the tomb. They can't possibly camp there their whole life!" Shi Kun harrumphed.

He had already made up his mind to snatch Chu Chuyan over and take away all of Zu An's treasures. Why choose when he could have it all?

The two of them slowly retreated while fending against the zombie soldiers. When they were just about to return back to the passageway, a terrifying pressure suddenly crushed down within the area.

Shi Kun and Qiao Xueying's face warped in horror. Without any hesitation, they tried to channel all of the ki they had and run away. However, for some reason, their ki simply wouldn't heed their control. They found themselves frozen on the spot, unable to move at all.

A black fog arose in the center of the room, and a black-armored general riding on a steed slowly appeared amidst the black fog. All of the zombie swordsmen, zombie spearmen, zombie axemen, and zombie archers immediately halted their attack and bowed down to pay respects to it.

Qiao Xueying found her heart beating rapidly.

The aura emanated by the black-armored general is even more terrifying than the Devouring Kun the young master summoned earlier. On top of that, the fact that the zombie soldiers are bowing down to it shows that it has the ability to command lower-level soldiers. There's no way we would stand a chance against it!

The black-armored general glanced at the duo, and astonishingly, it began uttering human speech, "Hah! Two weaklings had the lot of you terrified to such an extent?"

Its voice was hoarse like the vilest demons in the innermost depths of hell.

The zombie soldiers quickly tried to explain the situation, producing some bizarre noises while making some gestures. It would appear that their lacking intelligence disallowed them from speaking.

However, the black-armored general listened to their words and muttered to itself, "There are still two more of them, and one of them is holding onto an artifact that releases terrifying light..."

It swept the surroundings and noticed the body of Shi Kun's lackey pinned on the wall. With a wave of its hand, the corpse flew into its grasp. "He might be dead, but we shouldn't waste his flesh and blood."

As it said those words, the corpse began to dry up at a terrifying rate. In just a few seconds, all that was left of it was a ball-sized leftover that seemed to be made up of a mishmash of bone and flesh.

"The scent of fresh blood is ever so alluring." The black-armored general tossed the 'ball' to the side as it moaned in pleasure, as if it hadn't felt so exhilarated in a long time now.

Shi Kun gulped fearfully.

This is too terrifying! That fellow actually feeds on human flesh and blood! Am I going to die in this darned place? Had I known earlier, I wouldn't have used Devouring Kun in a fit of recklessness earlier. Now I don't stand a chance against that monster anymore.

With such thoughts in mind, he began cursing the culprit who had led him into this situation.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +777 Rage!

The black-armored general finally turned his gaze upon the two of them, and it said, "So, which of the two of you should I dine in to first?"

Chapter 165: Heh, Men!

Seeing that the black-armored general had turned its sight to him, Shi Kun nearly peed his pants. He had lived a life of greatness, being born into a prominent clan, blessed with both looks and talent. There was a bright future ahead of him.

Am I really going to die in this lousy place like that?

When he thought about how his brawny subordinate was sucked down into a ball by that black-armored general, he began shuddering in fear.

All of a sudden, green light surfaced on Qiao Xueying's body, then she spurted a mouthful of blood. It was hard to tell what she had done, but she had managed to break free of the restraint rooting her in place. She quickly ran over to Shi Kun's side and touched his head, and the same green light swiftly suffused his body too.

This was the power of life force, and it had the ability to curb the death aura of the undead.

Qiao Xueying's face had turned pale, and blood was trailing from the corner of her lips. Clearly, using this power was extremely draining on her.

"Young master, we need to run!"

There were still another few more seconds before Shi Kun was released from his seal, but before an expert of the black-armored general's caliber, even a second or two was enough to take their lives. Not daring to waste any time, Qiao Xueying grabbed Shi Kun's body and immediately ran toward the passageway.

"You're courting death!" The black-armored general flew into a state of rage and charged toward the duo.

Looking at the speed of the black-armored general, a hint of despair flashed across Qiao Xueying's eyes. She gritted her teeth as her face steeled in determination. She knew that it was impossible for her to get away, so she decided to sacrifice herself to buy some time for the young master to escape instead.

Her hair morphed into countless vines that began whipping at the black-armored general. She was already completely depleted, and she was burning her life force here in order to sustain herself.

She considered using her two remaining uses of Moon Reflection here as well. While it wouldn't allow her to get away from the black-armored general, at the very least, it could buy them some time for the young master to run away.

Her only worry right now was that the young master wouldn't be able to flee decisively.

If he insists on standing alongside me to fight the black-armored general, it's likely that both of us will end up dying here.

But all of a sudden, she felt a force pushing her from behind, sending her flying in the direction of the black-armored general. She had been too focused on defending against the enemy in front of her that her back was unguarded, which resulted in her falling frontward helplessly.

At that moment, Qiao Xueying's mind went completely blank. The only person behind her was the young master, so there wasn't even any doubt on who could it be.

Even so, she was reluctant to let go of that tiny sliver of hope that she might just be mistaken. She still turned around, hoping that she had it all wrong.

And when she finally saw Shi Kun's frantically fleeing silhouette, she finally descended in despair. It turned out that in Shi Kun's heart, she was nothing more than a pawn that could be thrown out at any moment in order to block an arrow...

The black-armored general reached out and wrapped its massive hands around Qiao Xueying's neck. The force was far greater than what Qiao Xueying could deal with, but it didn't matter anymore as her heart had already died.

She closed her eyes and waited for the moment that she was reduced to a dried corpse.

Unexpectedly, nothing happened even after a while later. She opened her eyes, only to see a perplexed look on the face of the black-armored general. To be more exact, its face was hidden in a layer of black mist, but for some reason, she was still able to perceive its feelings.

"Another betrayal scene, huh?" remarked the black-armored general wistfully before sighing deeply. It seemed to have dredged up memories from the distant past.

Then, it harrumphed coldly and said, "I've always looked down on those who dared to betray their comrades. Come back here!"

It raised its other hand and began conjuring black mist, which swiftly revolved to form a black hole directed toward the entrance of the passageway.

Shi Kun was in the midst of fleeing frantically in the passageway when he suddenly felt a powerful force pulling him back from behind. He immediately lost his balance and tumbled a few rounds backward. In his fluster, he whipped out a sword and stabbed it into the walls of the passageway before barely stabilizing himself.

He was astounded by how a wind cultivator like himself was actually utterly helpless before this furious wind pulling him back. He could only desperately grasp onto the handle of the sword to hold his position.

But soon, the suction force grew stronger, causing him to fly in the air. His hands were also gradually slipping from the handle of his sword. In the end, one of his hands couldn't hold on anymore and slipped off the handle, and he hurriedly reached out to claw at the cavern wall beside him before he could steady himself.

He knew that he would be a goner once he got pulled in, so he could only grit his teeth and hang on. His fingers were starting to bleed from clawing against the rough cavern wall, but he couldn't care about that right now.

“Looks like you have a strong desire to live, but it’s meaningless.” The black-armored general’s fingers twisted as the suction force grew even greater, determined to pull Shi Kun back.

But all of a sudden, its body stiffened before it exclaimed in a mixture of horror and anger. “How dare you covet the Evanescent Lotus!”

It was in no mood to deal with Shi Kun anymore after the emergency struck. Black mist rose from his back and covered it and its steed before vanishing without a trace. Qiao Xueying, who was in its grasp, was brought away with it.

Shi Kun was still desperately struggling in the passageway with a despaired look in his eyes as he knew that he was swiftly approaching his limits. But all of a sudden, the suction force vanished without a trace, and he fell heavily onto the ground, knocking his face swollen.

Even so, he was delighted by the turn of events. He wasn’t sure what had happened, and he didn’t dare to investigate either. He quickly fumbled to his feet and ran out of the mausoleum desperately. Even when he had finally escaped through the stone doors, he continued running until he was finally several li away.

...

Meanwhile, Zu An pulled out the Evanescent Lotus before slowly plucking out its petal one after another to feed his wife. There was a pained look on his face. “Honey, do you know what I gave up for your sake? If you treat me badly in the future, you would be worse than a human...”

“Heh, men~” sneered the feminine voice. “Your wife’s life is hanging by a thread, but you’re still dreaming of raising your cultivation. If I was her, my heart would be chilled by your deed.”

“You don’t know shit at all!” cursed Zu An. However, he couldn’t be bothered to explain it since his seal wasn’t anything honorable either.

“How dare you speak to me in such a manner?” said the feminine voice sharply.

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +314 Rage.[1]

Zu An was stunned. Is that the name of that mysterious woman? What a queer surname she has. Had I not watched ‘Legend of Mi Yue’[2] in my previous life, I wouldn’t even know how to read that character.

However, he was in no mood to bother about her. He realized that Chu Chuyan couldn’t swallow the petal because she was already unconscious. Recalling how the feminine voice had reminded him that she only had sixty seconds left to live, Zu An didn’t dare to hesitate at all. He first bit the flower petals himself before feeding it to her mouth-to-mouth.

It was a dream of countless men to share a kiss with Chu Chuyan, but Zu An was in no mood to enjoy it at all. His mind was dominated by his worry for her to think about it at all.

He didn’t dare to dawdle in the slightest throughout the entire process. He fed the petals of the Evanescent Lotus a mouthful by a mouthful to her. Both his nose and mouth were filled with a fragrance, but he couldn’t tell whether it was coming from the lotus itself or Chu Chuyan.

A while later, Chu Chuyan finally opened her eyes. It was hard to tell whether it was because she had recovered from her earlier frail state, but she stared at him with a red tinge on her cheeks.

"You're awake?" Zu An was delighted. His heart was finally put at ease.

"W-what are you doing?" Chu Chuyan looked at the petals in his hands before glancing at his lips.

Feeling a little guilt-ridden, Zu An quickly clarified, "I was saving you earlier! I wasn't trying to take advantage of you."

Chu Chuyan was silent a while before nodding. "I know."

The atmosphere was a little awkward. Zu An didn't know what to say, so he instinctively bit the flower petals and leaned forward to feed her again. However, halfway through his actions, he suddenly froze up.

She's awake now, right? There's no need for me to feed her like that anymore.

Chu Chuyan was also stunned by his action. She fidgeted unnaturally for a moment before turning her head away, saying, "I can do it myself."

Zu An knew that she wouldn't accept his mouth-to-mouth feeding now that she was already awake, so he could only pass the remaining petals over to her. "Here you go."

Meanwhile, he swallowed the petal of the Evanescent Lotus that was already in his mouth, wondering if one was enough for him to dispel his seal. He took out the unsealing pill that Ji Dengtu had forged for him and swallowed it down right away.

Then, he quickly began examining the changes in his body.

As soon as he swallowed the unsealing pill, he could sense surges of heat gushing toward his abdomen. At the same time, there was also a refreshing pulse that appeared to be from the Evanescent Lotus.

The surges of heat swiftly mixed together with the refreshing pulse as they moved downward, opening several of his ki meridians. He felt like the shackles on his body were gradually being pried open.

"There's a chance!"

Zu An's eyes lit up and he focused his attention on channeling the combined energy flow to open up his sealed meridians.

Everything went well at the start, but the combined energy flow suddenly seemed to have met with a particularly resilient barrier that he couldn't break down no matter what he tried. Every time he tried, the combined surge of energy would whittle down a little. Eventually, he could only watch helplessly as it vanished.

There's not enough medicinal energy!

Zu An was on the verge of tears. Heaven, just why is my life so hard?!

However, it was not all in vain. Zu An realized that his fifth formation had been filled up. Theoretically speaking, it would have required 377 Ki Fruits, which would have taken him a great deal of time. However, he managed to clear it easily with just a single flower petal here.

The rumors were true! A single flower petal could indeed raise one's cultivation by a step.

But what's the use of that? The ability I really wanted still hasn't returned yet!

"What is this medicine?" asked Chu Chuyan.

Her mind was in a mess earlier, so she subconsciously swallowed down all of the flower petals which Zu An gave her. But when she felt a surge of mystical calming energy suffusing her own body, she immediately realized that what she had just consumed was not anything ordinary,

Her ki meridians were still in tatters, but her injuries were healing at an insane pace. In fact, she had a feeling that as long as she recuperated carefully over the next few years, she might just be able to reforge her devastated ki meridians!

While her cultivation would probably still remain crippled, and her movements might be even less nimble than that of an ordinary person, still, it was much better than being paralyzed her entire life.

"I chanced upon this medicine here, and I noticed that you were already on your last breath, so I gave it to you." Zu An was not the type of person who didn't leave his name behind after doing a good deed, but it felt way too intentional if he revealed the name of the Evanescent Lotus here. Besides, he was feeling too frustrated at having lost a chance to unseal 'little Zu An' that he didn't even want to mention it right now.

Then, it suddenly dawned on him why he hadn't heard the feminine voice all this while.

"Who dares to touch my Evanescent Lotus?" a furious voice bellowed not too far away.

1. It's a different Mi from Old Mi. However, this surname is quite rare, notably the surname of Queen Dowager Xuan in the Qin Dynasty.

2. It's a famous historical drama on the Qin Dynasty following Queen Dowager Xuan, otherwise known as Mi Yue.

Chapter 166: Soul Suppression Seal

You have successfully trolled Zombie General Zhang Han for +999 Rage!

Zhang Han?[1]

Zu An was taken aback. Why does this name sound so familiar?

However, he didn't have any spare attention to be thinking deeper into this matter. Even the zombie soldiers were hard enough to deal with, and now a zombie general had emerged too. Without a doubt, this wasn't someone whom he could deal with.

He was still perplexed as to why he could harvest the Evanescent Lotus so easily earlier. Such treasures tended to have powerful beasts protecting them.

Speak of the devil indeed!

Zu An quickly picked up Chu Chuyan with the intention to flee, but the zombie general was simply too fast. There was no chance for him to run away.

Black mist rose out of nowhere, and a black-armored general emerged from it. It scanned the surroundings before finally glaring at the terracotta soldiers by the side. "Why didn't you stop the invader?"

"..." Terracotta soldiers.

We did try, alright! But that terrifying light in his hand is able to strip us of our colors easily...

It was then that Zu An noticed that the black-armored general was holding Qiao Xueying in his hands. Looking at the dazed look in her eyes, he couldn't help but wonder what the black-armored general had done to her.

Ah, why isn't Brother Shit anywhere to be seen? Is he dead? Also, why did this black-armored general spare Qiao Xueying's life? Do zombies have lust too?

Zu An was impressed with how he still had the leisure to think about such random thoughts even when he was in such a dangerous position.

The black-armored general looked at Zu An and Chu Chuyan before turning his attention toward the lake behind them. His face warped in horror as he exclaimed, "No!"

His figure blurred, and almost instantaneously, he appeared right beside the two of them. He gazed at the disappeared Evanescent Lotus in the lake and shuddered fearfully. "You two actually... plucked the lotus out. Do you know how big of a calamity you're bringing to the world?!"

You have successfully trolled Zombie General Zhang Han for +1024 Rage!

Zu An finally understood what Qiao Xueying and the others had gone through earlier. The terrifying pressure exerted by the black-armored general was so great that he was nearly rendered breathless.

He was still feeling confident from having raised his cultivation by a step, but cruel reality poured a pail of cold water over him.

He knew that there was a huge gap of power between him and the black-armored general, so he could only hope to use the Magical Flashlight to deal with it. He bit his tongue to regain his rationality before quickly aiming the flashlight toward it.

Noticing the white light in Zu An's hands, the black-armored general harrumphed coldly before warping into a blur. As fast as the speed of light was, it was limited by the movement of Zu An's hands. With its strength, it wasn't too difficult for it to dodge the radiance coming from the flashlight.

Sensing that the black-armored general was right by his side, the alarmed Zu An quickly tried to turn his flashlight earlier, but a sudden numbing sensation in his arm caused him to drop the flashlight into the lake. Perhaps it was due to it falling into the water, its light flickered for a moment before switching off.

Zu An was relieved that he had kept the Magical Flashlight back into his keyboard's space in the nick of time, or else he would have been pained by its loss.

Knowing that it was unlikely for him to be able to curb the black-armored general even if he brought out the Magical Flashlight again, he decided to just feign as if it had disappeared into the lake.

"Where's the Evanescent Lotus? Bring it out!" The black-armored general glared at Zu An and Chu Chuyan coldly. By this moment, it had already tossed Qiao Xueying to the side.

Zu An gulped fearfully as he replied carefully, "What lotus? I didn't see anything at all?"

At the same time, he cursed that feminine voice in his mind.

Why didn't she warn me that there was such a formidable fellow guarding this place? I wouldn't have come if I knew in advance!

Wait a moment, she lured me here before disappearing all of a sudden. Could it be that she has some other intentions in mind?

The black-armored general harrumphed coldly. It was just about to say something when it suddenly caught the scent of something. It immediately turned its sights toward Chu Chuyan and exclaimed, "You actually ate it!"

Chu Chuyan widened her eyes in astonishment. She quickly turned to Zu An and asked in disbelief, "You... The flower you fed me earlier is the Evanescent Lotus?"

Zu An nodded his head helplessly. The black-armored general was obviously no fool, so there was no point putting on an act anymore.

Chu Chuyan immediately lost her patience. "Weren't you waiting for an opportunity to use the Evanescent Lotus to undo the seal on your body? Why did you give it to me?"

Zu An sighed deeply and said, "There's bound to be another way out of this. Otherwise, I'll just have to make do with it. I can't simply watch as you die before my eyes."

By the side, Qiao Xueying also snapped out of her daze, and a hint of astonishment surfaced in her eyes. She was also aware of Zu An's affliction, and she couldn't believe that the latter actually gave away something that could have cured his impotence to save the young miss...

To be honest, she had always looked down on this good-for-nothing ruffian, and she believed that he was nowhere in comparison to the young master. However, everything that had happened today made her doubt her judgment, especially when she remembered how Shi Kun used her as a shield earlier on. On the other hand, Zu An was actually willing to make such a huge sacrifice in order to save Chu Chuyan.

The contrast couldn't be made more obvious here.

The black-armored general, however, had no interest in listening to their conversation. He stood by the side of the lake with a grave expression on his face. The calm surface of the water began to ripple as a light blue luminescence emerged from the depths of the lake.

It quickly raised its hands to form an incredibly complicated seal before spreading a layer of black aura over the surface of the water/

Some time later, the water surface finally regained its composure. Nevertheless, one could still vaguely see the light blue luminescence striking on the layer of black aura, seemingly intent on bursting forth.

“What is he doing?” Zu An noticed the unnatural actions of the black-armored general too. He was thinking of making use of this opportunity to flee, but the pressure crushing down on his body kept him firmly in place, leaving him unable to move at all.

“He seems to be setting up some kind of formation to seal something beneath the water,” replied Chu Chuyan distractedly. Her mind was still an utter mess from having learned that Zu An had used the Evanescent Lotus to save her, such that she couldn’t even focus on the current situation they were in.

Despite being a young lady who had never done that kind of thing, she was still aware of how important a man viewed potency to be. In some cases, they might even value it even more than their life.

He made such a huge sacrifice for me...

Chu Chuyan stared at Zu An in a daze as many thoughts flashed across her mind.

Meanwhile, the black-armored general finally turned its attention back to Zu An and Chu Chuyan. It looked considerably more exhausted than before, but its face warped in ferocity as it bellowed, “You actually dared to foil the Soul Suppression Seal here. It’s fortunate that it hasn’t been long since you consumed the Evanescent Lotus, so its medicinal effect hasn’t receded entirely. As long as I use your body as a tribute, I should be able to calm those rampaging dead souls beneath!”

With a wave of its hand, Chu Chuyan immediately flew out of Zu An’s grasp and into its hand.

Alarmed, Zu An roared, “What are you doing?!”

“As I’ve said, I’m going to use the blood and flesh of you invaders to repair the formation so as to appease the rampaging souls of the dead!” The black-armored general waved its hand, and the terracotta soldiers rushed forward to hold Zu An and Qiao Xueying down. “Bring them over to the altar!”

With a flit, it immediately arrived outside a circular platform around a hundred meters away. It placed Chu Chuyan down on top of a stone table.

Chu Chuyan’s ki meridians were currently all severed, so she couldn’t even struggle at all. She wasn’t afraid of death, but she couldn’t help but worry for Zu An. He had sacrificed so much for her that her conscience wouldn’t rest easy if she were to die right now.

Zu An’s heart was in disarray as the terracotta soldiers pushed him and Qiao Xueying over to the circular platform. He thought of what the black-armored general said about them breaking the Soul Suppression Seal, which sounded like some sort of sealing formation.

However, they didn’t do anything after entering this place other than to harvest the Evanescent Lotus.

Wait a moment!

He quickly turned toward the lake and saw that the verdant lotus leaves had lost their luster and had started withering, and the mist shrouding the water surface had vanished too.

Could the lotus leaves be the formation, and the Evanescent Lotus is its formation core? Goddamnit!

Zu An cursed angrily in his mind. If it's such an important formation, why didn't you protect it well? You shouldn't have allowed me to get close so easily!

But then, he caught sight of the huge army of terracotta soldiers by the side and went completely silent.

Ah...

Those terracotta soldiers were obviously here to protect the formation. With their prowess, even Chu Zhongtian wouldn't have been able to get close to the Evanescent Lotus. Yet, who could have thought that Zu An would have a tool that could suppress all of these undead beings...

I wonder what's sealed at the bottom of the lake that even this powerful zombie general is so afraid of it. Could it be that woman named Mi Li?

Thinking back, there was no way the feminine voice would have lured him here without any reason. Most likely, this was what she was aiming for.

But again, given how melodious that woman's voice was, it was hard to imagine her as some sort of terrifying monstrosity.

"What are you thinking of?" Qiao Xueying's voice suddenly sounded at this moment.

Zu An turned over and saw Qiao Xueying looking at him with large eyes. "Ah, you aren't dead yet?"

"..." Qiao Xueying.

Why is this fellow so hateful? I really feel like pummeling him every time he opens his mouth.

But to her own surprise, she didn't get mad at Zu An this time around.

"Why did you give the Evanescent Lotus to the young miss?" asked Qiao Xueying.

"She's my wife. Do you expect me to watch as she dies before my eyes?" Zu An harrumphed in response.

To that, Qiao Xueying replied calmly, "Others might not know better, but I know how the relationship between the two of you are. You can't even be considered a proper couple."

"Will you cut it out?" Zu An spat venomously. "I was already regretting it, but you just have to continue harping on it, huh? Are you here to rub it on me?"

A faint smile finally emerged on Qiao Xueying's lips. "That sounds much more like you."

She previously thought that Zu An's ruffianlike attitude was hateful, but in a change of circumstances, she felt that he looked authentic instead. There wasn't that disgusting layer of hypocrisy around him.

Shi Kun surfaced in her mind, and her face darkened once more.

By then, the two of them had already arrived on the circular platform.

“Honey!”

“Young miss!”

Upon seeing Chu Chuyan on the stone table, the two of them called out worriedly.

“I... I’m fine,” replied Chu Chuyan feebly, though she knew that she wouldn’t be very soon.

Zu An finally got a chance to assess this place carefully, and he noted that the area looked very alike to those tribute altars he had seen on television in his previous life. The altar was circular in shape, filled with all sorts of esoteric runes. At the center was the stone table where Chu Chuyan was lying on. Around her were all sorts of jars and vats that seemed to be filled with all sorts of horrors.

At the perimeter of the altar, there were nine massive pillars that were sculptured with a coiling dragon often seen in eastern legends. Even the scales of the dragon looked incredibly lifelike.

Zu An and Qiao Xueying were tied to two of the pillars.

The black-armored general walked over with a saber in its hand and said, “Let’s start with your blood to warm up the altar. So, who shall be going first this time around?”

1. He’s a famous military general in the Qin Dynasty in its waning years.

Chapter 167: I am Qin Shihuang!

As soon as Zu An heard those words, he pointed to Qiao Xueying and exclaimed, “Her! Let her go first!”

“...” Qiao Xueying.

“Wow, I really should thank you for your generosity, huh?” Qiao Xueying shot Zu An a deathly glare.

“You aren’t even my woman, so why should I protect you? Not to mention, we’re enemies now. Haven’t you heard of the saying ‘kick them while they’re down’?” Zu An wasn’t embarrassed in the least.

Qiao Xueying sighed deeply and said, “Haaa, you do have no reason to protect me.”

Zu An was a little flabbergasted by how easily Qiao Xueying was going along with him. “Am I hearing things? You’re actually agreeing with me?”

Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes and said, “What’s wrong with you? Why do you look so horrified when I’m agreeing with what you said? Do you actually enjoy having me refute you? Disgusting!”

On the stone table, Chu Chuyan burst into laughter. The two of them always bicker with one another whenever they meet. It really feels like a love-hate relationship.

The black-armored general shot a glance at Zu An before saying, “At least you’re much franker than that man earlier on, a genuine scoundrel.”

"Wait a moment, why am I a scoundrel? Haven't you seen how devoted I am to my wife?" Zu An immediately lost his temper. "Oh, wait a moment. Does that mean that Shi Kun abandoned her? Did he try to use her as a shield so as to buy time for his own escape?"

Qiao Xueying was taken aback. "How did you know? Have you been spying on us?!"

"I don't have such an interest." Zu An shrugged. "Do I even need to watch to see it to know? It's a scene so cliché in drama series that it hardly interests me anymore."

"What is 'drama series'?"

Neither Qiao Xueying nor Chu Chuyan had heard of it before.

"That's not important. The important thing is that you should have finally seen what kind of a man Shi Kun is. He's someone who values his own life above others. Putting aside a servant like you, I reckon that he wouldn't hesitate to abandon his own father in times of danger!" said Zu An. "That's why I say that women like you are shallow. You think that good-looking guys are bound to have pretty hearts too. Please! Men who look good are bound to be creeps!"

A split second later, he quickly supplemented, "Cough cough, I'm the exception, of course. Someone as handsome and gentle and kind as me is one-of-a-kind in the world!"

"Stop it, I'm going to puke." Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes. "It's already bad enough that I'm going to die here, so can you at least stop torturing me?"

"Hey, are you going to continue being so rude?" Zu An was displeased.

The black-armored general finally interjected with a cold harrumph. "How long are the two of you going to fight for? Don't worry, I'll take both of your lives at once so that you can continue bickering on your way to hell."

It raised its hands, and two sabers materialized before their heads like a guillotine. It looked like they would fall at the next second and decapitate the two of them.

"Ah Zu!" Chu Chuyan cried out in alarm, but she couldn't move at all. Even if she was in her peak condition, she still wouldn't have been a match for this black-armored general.

Qiao Xueying closed her eyes. Ever since she was treated like a shield by Shi Kun, her heart had already died. At this point, death felt almost like a relief to her.

It was then that Zu An suddenly spoke up, "Brother Zhang Han, there's a question that I need to ask you."

Those abrupt words left Chu Chuyan taken aback. Even Qiao Xueying also opened her eyes in intrigue. Who is he talking to?

The two women took a look around, but there was no one else around.

"Zhang Han..." The black-armored general shuddered upon hearing the name. It took a long while before he finally responded wistfully, "It has been a long time since anyone has called me that. I've almost forgotten my own name."

Qiao Xueying's lower jaw nearly dropped to the ground. The zombie general has a name, and Zu An actually knows it? What's the world coming to?

Chu Chuyan was stunned too. Zu An had really given her a lot of surprises over the last few days. More and more secrets were surfacing from him, stoking her curiosity. She realized that she had never really gotten to know the real Zu An all this while.

"How do you know my name?" Zhang Han turned to Zu An with doubt in his eyes.

Zu An smiled and said, "If I say that we're friends in our previous life, would you believe me?"

He had already used his skill 'Befriend a Rich Man'. Yet another 100,000 silver taels going to waste... Damn!

He had learned his lesson from his previous failure with Shi Kun. He knew that even if he became friends with the target, he still couldn't change the target's train of thought. Thus, he chose to proceed with this matter carefully, not daring to be too direct.

"Friends?" Zhang Han was stunned for a moment before roaring into laughter. "I, Zhang Han, have no friends. I didn't have any before, and I'll never have any!"

Despite those words, Zu An noticed that the two sabers in the sky subconsciously moved sideward a little.

He sighed softly and said, "Y'know, we have a word for people like you—tsundere. Are you sure that you don't want to have friends? Surely it must be lonely for you to guard this lifeless tomb all alone for so many years?"

Zhang Han was silent for a while before sighing deeply. "Lonely? Time already holds no meaning to me, so what does loneliness count as?"

Both Qiao Xueying and Chu Chuyan glanced at one another in bewilderment. The scene before them was simply too incomprehensible. In the dingy depths of this underground palace, Zu An is actually having a philosophical debate with a zombie?

However, Zhang Han soon snapped out of his daze. He stared at Zu An with blue flames burning intently in his eyes as he asked, "Who in the world are you? How do you know my name?"

"A woman named Mi Li told me," replied Zu An.

He made sure to assess the black-armored general skeleton carefully as he said those words, hoping to garner some information from the latter's reaction.

"Hmmm~" A surprised, feminine remark sounded from the depths of the underground cavern. However, it was so soft that others couldn't hear it at all.

"Her Majesty? No, that's impossible!" Zhang Han shook his head vehemently with a fearful look on his face, as if he had just learned something incredibly terrifying.

"Her Majesty?" Zu An's eyes lit up as he remembered a piece of history in his previous life.

In the Spring and Autumn–Warring States period, the Qin Country was originally on good terms with the Jin Country. It supported the fleeing Duke Wen of Jin onto the throne, ushering in prosperous times for the Jin Country, who swiftly moved to conquer the states around it. Unfortunately, the Qin Country harbored great ambitions—it intended to conquer the Central Plains, and the Jin Country was both literally and figuratively standing in its way.

The Jin Country couldn't bear the notion of the Qin Country expanding its influence to the Central Plains either, so a conflict broke out between the two countries. It eventually led to the Battle of Xiao, where the Jin Country set up traps for the Qin Country along the way and defeated the latter's army. That led to a complete fracturing of relations.

Having become enemies with the Jin Country, the Qin Country soon proposed a political marriage with the Chu Country in order to strike an alliance. It just so happened that the Jin Country was a common enemy between the two of them, so it didn't take much for them to get together on the same bed.

In the next hundred years to come, the Qin Country and Chu Country sustained their bonds by intermarriage. The queen of the Qin Country would often be the princess of the Chu Country, and the men of the Chu Royal Family went by the surname of 'Xiong' while its women went by the surname of 'Mi'.

'Mi' was a truly rare surname, so it was easy to link it to the Chu Country.

However, the Chu Country's princesses who had married into the Qin Royal Family were only able to become queens. Theoretically speaking, there were only two of them who were qualified to be termed as empresses.[1]

However, based on what he knew, neither Qin Shihuang nor Qin Ershi had any historical records on their empresses.

"How do you know Her Majesty's name? There should have been no one in the world who knows who she is. Who are you?" The black-armored general rushed up to Zu An as it demanded with a fevered tone.

The other party's powerful presence made it hard for Zu An to breathe. He gulped fearfully as his heart quivered in hesitation. Should I gamble it?

He was aware that even if the black-armored general viewed him as its friend, it was unlikely that it would let Chu Chuyan go. Since that was the case, he had no choice but to give it a try.

Go big or go home! If I'm right, it'll be all good. If I'm wrong, well, death is the worst that can happen.

"Hahaha! You're asking who I am?" Zu An suddenly burst into hearty laughter.

Qiao Xueying turned to stare at him with a bewildered look. Has this fellow been scared silly?

"I'm the one who has risen above the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors[2] to become the first sovereign emperor of the world! I am Qin Shihuang, Ying Zheng[3]!" Zu An put on an air of royalty as he spoke. "How could I possibly not know the name of my own empress?"

In a hidden space in the depths of the underground palace, within a big crystal coffin, lay a beautiful woman dressed in the fineries worn only by the empress. She opened her eyes and spat, "That bastard! How dare he take advantage of me?"

On the altar, Zhang Han was utterly shocked. He staggered a few steps backward in shock before murmuring weakly, "Y-Your Majesty?"

Qiao Xueying was baffled, unable to comprehend what they were saying at all.

What sovereign emperor and Qin Shihuang? Why haven't I heard any of that before? It's lucky that we're the only ones here, or else if word were to spread that he proclaimed himself as emperor, the whole Chu clan will be executed together with him.

Only Chu Chuyan frowned upon hearing those words. She remembered hearing those names from the historical records in the academy, but there were very few details stated in there. This world was severely lacking in the research of historical text.

"Zhang Han, why are you not kneeling despite being in my presence?!" Zu An roared majestically, but his heart was beating quickly in unease. Did I go too big this time around?

"Chamberlain of Palace Revenue, Zhang Han, pays respects to Your Majesty. Long live Your Majesty!"

The black-armored general recalled how it thought the latter felt close to it earlier on. With all of this circumstantial evidence in place, it quickly knelt onto the floor and kowtowed to Zu An.

The two women were so shocked that their eyeballs nearly popped out. It was unbelievable to them how a powerful expert like the black-armored general was actually kowtowing to Zu An. They would have never imagined this to be possible.

Chu Chuyan fell into deep thought. The black-armored general had identified himself as the Chamberlain of Palace Revenue, which was one of the Nine Ministers. He was in charge of collecting land taxes and managing the imperial family's vault. He was also responsible for maintaining the imperial garden, imperial chambers, and all building-related matters.

That would explain why the black-armored general was so powerful. It turned out that it was a ninth rank cultivator. This would also explain why this place resembled the mausoleum of the imperial family.

But what is happening with Ah Zu? Is he really that Ying Zheng he claims himself to be?

"How long are you going to continue holding me hostage?" said Zu An coldly.

"I dare not to!" Zhang Han quickly released the bindings around Zu An as it wondered why the emperor had turned so weak.

Having guessed its thoughts, Zu An added, "I've only just regained my memories. I haven't regained my strength yet. You may rise."

Zhang Han nodded in realization, satisfied with the explanation. "Thank you, Your Majesty. It looks like Xu Fu has successfully found the art of longevity for Your Majesty. Congratulations, Your Majesty! Long live Your Majesty!"

Zu An was dumbfounded.

Wow, this is really queer. It's exactly as what I've heard about the Qin Dynasty in my previous life... but did the Qin Dynasty in my previous life have such formidable cultivators too?

Something must be wrong here!

However, since he had already begun the act, there was no choice but to see it through to the end. So, he sighed deeply and said, "What's the point? My Great Qin Dynasty has already fallen!"

Zhang Han quickly kneeled onto the ground frightfully and cried out, "I deserve death for my incompetence!"

1. The distinction is made between the Qin Country and Qin Dynasty. Before the Qin Country united the Central Plains and formed its own empire, it had kings and queens. It's only after the unification that emperors and empresses came to be.
2. They are mythological rulers of ancient China. Qin Shihuang believed that he's above them, which is why he put the two words together to highlight his high standing.
3. Qin Shihuang is his title, which means Founding Emperor of Qin, whereas Ying Zheng is his birth name.

Chapter 168: The Undead Army

Zu An was surprised, not expecting his words to frighten the other party so much. He made use of this opportunity to ask, "What's your crime?"

Zhang Han's face tremored amidst the black mist, as if tears were streaming down his face. "Even though I was able to hold on for a moment, the empire's elite forces were still wiped out under his leadership. I was the one who ruined the final hope of the empire, resulting in it being destroyed by the remnants of the Six Eastern Countries[1]."

The history was indeed no different from what Zu An remembered. Fearing that he would agitate Zhang Han, he chose not to probe any further. Instead, he heaved a deep sigh and lamented, "Such is life. There's little that a man can do before heaven's will."

Zhang Han was taken aback. He remembered the emperor he remembered was a strong-willed and austere figure, so the other party's gentle attitude caught him off guard.

Zu An turned to gaze at the lake and asked, "What's sealed in there to make you so frightened?"

This was what he was so frightened about. He wasn't too worried about giving himself away with that question since Zhang Han was mostly active in Qin Ershi's era, so it was only normal for Qin Shihuang to not know of his affairs.

"It's the dead spirits of the hundreds of thousands of rebels from the Six Countries. We've used the Soul Suppression Seal to seal them in the lake thus far, but I didn't expect Your Majesty to..."

"Then we have to make sure to seal it well. The armies of the Six Countries bear a great grudge against our Great Qin. It'll alarm my empress if they rush out."

Those words made the blue flames in Zhang Han's eye sockets flicker a bit, but he didn't say a word.

"My subordinate, is there no other way to suppress these dead spirits?" Zu An gestured toward Chu Chuyan. "She's a friend I've made in this generation. Spare her."

"Your Majesty, these dead spirits have been sealed using the Evanescent Lotus as the formation core over the past thousands of years. Now that the formation core has disappeared, the Soul Suppression Formation's collapse is imminent. We have to use her flesh to appease the raging dead spirits before she fully assimilates the medicinal properties of the Evanescent Lotus so that we have more time to think of another way to reinforce the seal!

"The empire should take priority! Your Majesty, please rethink your decision!"

Zu An was frustrated to hear Zhang Han insisting on using Chu Chuyan's blood as a tribute. He was, after all, not Qin Shihuang, and there was a huge disparity in their strength. There was nothing he could do if the other party insisted on not listening to him.

"However, we can release this woman and have her serve Your Majesty." Zhang Han pulled Qiao Xueying over with a grasp and pushed her down before Zu An.

Qiao Xueying struggled, but how could she possibly be able to overpower Zhang Han?

Looking at the indignant woman kneeling before him, Zu An was a little amused. "Why don't you try calling me master?"

"Pui!" Qiao Xueying spat at Zu An, but her saliva was blocked off by Zhang Han.

"How dare you offend Your Majesty? Die!" Zhang Han roared coldly as his black aura intensified.

"Forget it, I'll spare her life. She's still somewhat a friend of mine." Zu An hurriedly stopped him.

"Friend?" There was a hint of disdain in Zhang Han's voice.

Zu An's heart skipped a beat. He could sense that the latter's tone wasn't as respectful as it was before. Could he be sounding me out? What the hell! Are zombies supposed to be that intelligent?

All of a sudden, effervescence suddenly sounded from the lake. The surface of the water was bubbling furiously, threatening to push through the black mist on the surface. There were numerous blue figures which appeared to be struggling free of the lake.

These blue figures were dressed in armor and wielded sharp sabers. They looked like elite soldiers.

Zhang Han was alarmed. His black steed had silently manifested by his side, and he swiftly hopped onto it and rushed toward the lake.

At the same time, the terracotta soldiers also raised their weapons and charged toward the lake.

In just a few moments, over a hundred translucent blue soldiers had rushed out from the lake. Unlike the zombie soldiers, they didn't have corporeal bodies. They looked more like just souls.

When they saw Zhang Han, they began howling furiously at them. Even though it was hard to discern their voices, their tones were more than enough to reveal the deep-seated hatred they bore for him.

They swiftly got into formation before charging toward Zhang Han.

“Am I seeing things?” Zu An rubbed his eyes in confusion. He felt that the formations both armies were taking looked oddly similar.

However, he knew that this was no time for his thoughts to be wandering. He quickly rushed toward the stone table at the center of the altar, intending to use this opportunity to save Chu Chuyan and take her away.

Qiao Xueying bit her lips as she ran together with him too, clearly hoping to save Chu Chuyan too.

“You saved me previously, and I’ve returned the favor now. You can call it equals,” said Zu An.

“Thanks,” replied Qiao Xueying softly. But soon after, she harrumphed, “But I saved you twice previously. If we really count it carefully, you still owe me once.”

“...” Zu An.

This woman sure doesn’t give in!

Not wanting to bicker with her now, he turned his attention to untying the black rope tying Chu Chuyan down to the stone table. To his astonishment, even though the black rope didn’t appear to be tangible, it was more resilient than any other material he had come by.

He even tried using Poisonous Prick on it, but it was to no avail.

“Step aside!” Qiao Xueying formed a hand seal, and countless green leaves began revolving around her body. With daggerlike sharpness, they darted toward the black rope.

Unfortunately, as soon as the crisp, green leaves came into contact with the black rope, they quickly began to wither. Qiao Xueying tried it for a few more times, but the black rope simply wouldn’t budge. Instead, she only ended up depleting the ki she had barely regained by half.

“This rope is made out of the zombie general’s death aura. There’s too big of a difference between your cultivation ranks, so you won’t be able to sever it,” said Chu Chuyan. “You should hurry up and leave. There’s no need to bother with me.”

However, Zu An shook his head and said, “You’re my wife, so how can I abandon you? Besides, I even fed you the Evanescent Lotus! If I don’t save you here, I’d be making a huge loss!”

Chu Chuyan was rendered speechless. She was still pretty moved a moment ago, but in the next moment, Zu An went back to being Zu An.

“Didn’t that fellow kneel down to you earlier? Hurry up and order him to free the young miss!” exclaimed Qiao Xueying.

Zu An rolled his eyes. “Are you blind? Didn’t you see me ordering him to free her earlier?”

Qiao Xueying turned to look at the lake, where Zhang Han was fighting against the blue warrior spirits, and bit her lips in anxiety. “What do we do then? By the time he finishes dealing with those dead spirits, he would surely return to activate the blood tribute!”

Zu An was also put on a spot. The absolute power difference left him very little room to maneuver in this situation.

"I'll take a more forceful attitude later on. Hopefully, he'll be intimidated and back down." Given the circumstances, he could only try to pull something with his identity as Qin Shihuang,

"Hmph, childish!" a feminine voice suddenly sounded in his mind.

"You're finally back!" Zu An gritted his teeth in fury. Ultimately, all of this trouble stemmed from this woman.

"Who are you talking to?" Qiao Xueying and Chu Chuyan asked in bewilderment.

Zu An was taken aback to hear those words. Can't the two of them hear this woman's voice?

"Did you think that Zhang Han really believes that you're Ying Zheng? Once he's done dealing with those dead spirits, not only will that woman die, you won't fare any better either!" remarked the feminine voice coldly.

1. The Qin Dynasty annexed the Six Countries, which are the main powers of the Central Plains then, but there were still constant revolts, especially when Qin Ershi, the son of Qin Shihuang, took over. He committed a lot of atrocities that forced lots of people to rise up and declare themselves 'independent states'.

Chapter 169: Ancient Secrets

"Nonsense! If he doesn't believe me, why would he kneel to me..." Zu An suddenly snapped out of it.

"Wait a moment, I nearly got led by the nose. What can he possibly do to me? I'm the First Sovereign Emperor, Ying Zheng!"

"..." The feminine voice.

"You're still going to continue that act?" sneered the feminine voice. "Do you know who I am then?"

"You are..." Zu An was just about to reply when he suddenly remembered his role and quickly corrected himself, "You are my wife, the empress of the Qin Dynasty?"

"..." The feminine voice.

"Then shouldn't you know better than to talk nonsense in my presence?"

Zu An scratched his head sheepishly. "What can I say? I just regained my memory after all. There are many things that I still don't remember..."

"Shut up! How could I possibly not recognize my own husband? Don't bother trying to use that nonsense you fooled Zhang Han with on me!" sneered the feminine voice. "Besides, you didn't even fool Zhang Han at all."

"What do you mean?" Zu An remembered the other party saying something similar to that previously. Did Zhang Han really see through me?

"You made three mistakes before Zhang Han earlier," said the feminine voice. "First, Ying Zheng is a vicious tyrant who knows no compassion. If he really comes back to life and learns that Zhang Han has sent the main army of the Great Qin to its grave, there's no way he would spare that man that easily."

"I'm still weak from having just regained my memories. There shouldn't be anything wrong with me trying to placate him for the time being." Zu An felt that he was getting more and more immersed in the act.

"There's nothing wrong with trying to placate him, but your words are too childish. You remarked earlier that 'Such is life. There's little that a man can do before heaven's will', but that's not Ying Zheng's personality. Ying Zheng believes that his merit surpasses that of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, and he sees himself as an existence on par with the sun and the moon. How could he possibly bow down to life or heaven?" scoffed the feminine voice.

Zu An fell silent. He was a keyboard warrior after all. He might be able to dominate the online community, but feigning the First Sovereign Emperor without any practice beforehand was clearly beyond his means.

"The second error you made is to claim that the ponytail girl is your friend," said the feminine voice.

"What's the problem with that?" asked Zu An in confusion.

"Ying Zheng is an arrogant person. He wouldn't allow anyone to be on the same standing as him, let alone have any friends. You could have called the woman your subordinate, servant, or even plaything, and Zhang Han would have spared her. Yet, you chose to address her as your friend," explained the feminine voice.

Zu An nodded in realization. That would explain why Zhang Han's tone changed after that. However, unwilling to give up just like that, he tried to argue, "Hmph! I'm already a new man after having lived a new life. What's wrong with me having a new personality? How could he be so certain that I'm a fake from all that?"

"How could a person's personality change that much? Besides, you still have an even more fatal error aside from those two," said the feminine voice.

"What is it?" Zu An's heart skipped a beat.

"You mentioned that you're worried that those dead spirits will alarm me if they manage to rush out from the lake?" The feminine voice was filled with ridicule when she said those words.

"Is there something wrong with that?" Zu An was confused.

Instead of answering the question directly, the feminine voice asked, "Do you know who those undead spirits are?"

"Aren't they the dead souls of the revolutionaries from the Six Eastern Countries?" asked Zu An.

"Hahaha! If you wish to act as Ying Zheng, you shouldn't trust the words of others that easily!" The feminine voice laughed chillingly. "Those dead spirits aren't the revolutionaries of the Six Eastern Countries but the 200,000 soldiers that formed the core army of the Qin Dynasty!"

“What?!” Zu An was shocked.

“Back then, Zhang Han, as the Chamberlain of Palace Revenue, was in charge of supervising the prisoners at Mount Li for the construction of the imperial mausoleum. The world was in disarray then, and the Qin Dynasty was at threat. He led the prisoners of Mount Li to defeat the invading revolutionary armies. In view of his contribution, the imperial court began supplying him with more and more soldiers, eventually entrusting the core army to him.

“Zhang Han was indeed fairly capable. With his skills, he suppressed the enemies and nearly quelled the revolution. However, a formidable figure emerged then... In the Battle of Julu, both he and Wang Li were defeated by the Hegemon-King of Western Chu, Xiang Yu[1], and he suffered yet another defeat in the Battle of Zhangwu too. On top of that, he’s also on bad terms with Zhao Gao[2]. Out of fear that he would be killed, he chose to side with Xiang Yu, so he led the 200,000 elite soldiers of the Qin Dynasty on a losing battle against Xiang Yu.

“The ones sealed under the lake are the dead spirits of the 200,000 elite soldiers of the Qin Dynasty.”

Zu An was alarmed. It was no wonder why those dead spirits were filled with hatred for Zhang Han... It turned out that they were betrayed by him!

“So, they wouldn’t alarm you because they are Qin soldiers?” Zu An analyzed where he had gone wrong.

“No. It’s because Ying Zheng wouldn’t worry about that,” replied the feminine voice.

“???” Zu An was bewildered.

What’s wrong with you and your cliffhangers? Can’t you just finish your sentence properly in one go? Don’t you know how tiring it’s me to keep cueing you to continue on?

“Do you know what Zhang Han was doing before he led the soldiers to suppress the revolutionaries?”

“Didn’t you mention earlier that he was the Chamberlain of Palace Revenue, in charge of building the imperial mausoleum or something?” replied Zu An.

“To be more exact, he wasn’t building the imperial mausoleum but the empress’ mausoleum,” replied the feminine voice.

“Empress’ mausoleum?” Zu An was stunned. “Is there such a thing? I don’t recall there being such a thing in historical records. In fact, there’s nothing about Qin Shihuang’s empress at all.”

“That’s because Ying Zheng destroyed all of my records, just like how he torched all of the Confucian books,” replied the feminine voice. “Since you have some understanding of this piece of history, you should be able to guess my origin from my surname.”

“You’re a princess of the Chu Country?” asked Zu An.

“Indeed, I’m from the Chu Country. Due to my position as the empress, there are many nobles from Chu who have a high standing in the Qin Country too. At the start, our interests were aligned with Ying Zheng, so we helped him rule the country and even suppress all of the rebellions going on.

“Unfortunately, the Qin was ambitious and wanted to rule over the world. The Chu stood in its way too, which resulted in an irreconcilable conflict between us. My uncle is Lord Changping, Xiong Qi, and he even became the prime minister of the Qin Country. However, as a citizen of our Chu, his heart still lies with our country. So, when the Qin first raised its arms to invade the Chu, my uncle rallied his soldiers and rebelled, resulting in the worst defeat the Qin has suffered ever since it embarked on its ambitious conquest.

“Ying Zheng was infuriated with us. He entrusted 600,000 soldiers to Wang Jian[3] and tasked him to eliminate the Chu while clearing away all of Chu’s influence in the Qin. As the princess of the Chu Country, I’m naturally one of the first ones to be hit hard.

“I was soon removed from my position, and all of the nobles from the Chu in Qin are slaughtered too. Even my son, Fusu, due to having the Chu bloodline running through his veins, lost his right to succession and was exiled to the border to build the great wall...”

Zu An was taken aback. “Fusu is your son?”

“Is there anything wrong about it?” Mi Li’s voice suddenly turned chillingly sharp.

“No no, of course not. There isn’t anything wrong here...” replied Zu An sheepishly. He was still imagining her to be a beautiful and graceful big sister type woman, but all of a sudden, she turned into an auntie who already had a child. It broke the immersion of his fantasy.

He finally came to a realization. There was actually a lot of contention surrounding the succession to the throne after Qin Shihuang in his previous world. Many people believed that Fusu, as the eldest son, should have donned the crown, just that Huhai[4], Li Si, and Zhao Gao schemed to steal the throne, killing Fusu through their ploys.

Even so, historians still couldn’t understand why Qin Shihuang dispatched his eldest son, Fusu, away from the center of politics over to the border. Some claimed that he was intending to temper Fusu and have him build a good relationship with the Meng clan[5] and the military so as to prepare for his succession. There were also some who said that this was simply an act of exiling Fusu.

However, as it turned out, Fusu had simply lost his right to succession due to his mother’s bloodline!

“Ying Zheng had always hated women due to his mother’s adultery with Lao Ai, and the tragic defeat the Qin suffered to the Chu further fanned his hatred toward me. Unsatisfied with just stripping me of my position, he ordered Zhang Han to construct this mausoleum to seal me off lest I seek vengeance on him in the future. So, if you were truly Ying Zheng, why would you care about those soldiers alarming me?” scoffed Mi Li.

Zu An finally understood where it all went wrong. Goddamnit, why does the circle of nobility has to be so messed up?!

“Wait a moment, auntie. I have a question...”

“What did you call me?” There was a hint of fury in Mi Li’s voice.

Zu An was rendered speechless. You already have a child, but you still don’t want people to call you auntie? What should I call you instead? Lil’ sis?

Despite his internal retorts, he was a flexible man and quickly changed his tune, “Big Sis Empress, based on the history I know, Qin Shihuang and Zhang Han should have been ordinary mortals. They shouldn’t have possessed such mystical powers. Yet, Zhang Han turned into an indestructible zombie and possesses great power, and big sis, you seem to have lived for thousands of years now, becoming something that’s neither living nor dead...”

“I want to know what happened to you all. Why would you be brought over from Earth to this world of cultivation, and where did you learn these abilities?”

Mi Li was bewildered. “Earth? I don’t get what you’re saying. We’ve always been in this world, and our abilities are of course things that we slowly grasped over time. If not for Zhang Han’s strength, how could he have possibly become the Chamberlain of Palace Revenue, one of the Nine Ministers?”

“As Zhang Han’s current state, that’s because he cultivated a certain dark element cultivation technique, offering his own physical body up in order to attain eternal life.”

Zu An was baffled. “You have always been in this world?”

The confirmation left him extremely confused. It seemed like a huge coincidence that this world had the same dynasties and events as his previous one, the only difference being the existence of supernatural abilities.

Is this like a parallel world, just that it’s mixed with an additional element called cultivation?

Putting together what he knew thus far, he deduced that something major might have happened in this world after the Qing Dynasty[6], resulting in a huge gap in civilization. It was only a long time later before civilization began to resurface.

The new civilization had not only humans but all sorts of lifeforms. In the battle for resources, all sorts of wars broke out. Eventually, the first emperor of the Great Zhou Dynasty managed to rise up on top and achieve victory for mankind, driving all of the foreign races off to the borders to suffer.

As for all of the dynasties prior to the huge gap in civilization, the people in this world collectively termed them as the ‘ancient era’.

It was then that Mi Li’s voice suddenly broke his train of thought. “You have too many questions. Hurry up and make your decision. Once Zhang Han finishes curbing the escaping dead spirits, it’ll be the end of you and those two women.”

Chapter 170: Cold Sweat

Zu An finally snapped out of it. “What decision?”

“Help me break free of my seal. I’m the only one who can deal with Zhang Han here.” There was a hint of majesty in Mi Li’s voice.

“Oh~” Zu An finally came to a realization. “So, you lured me to pluck that Evanescent Lotus in order to create a distraction with those dead spirits so that you can make use of this opportunity to flee, is that it?”

"Is there a problem here? It's only normal to make use of all resources in one's possession," replied Mi Li.

"Since you're that formidable, why don't you break free of your own seal to deal with Zhang Han? Why must you go about it in such a roundabout manner?" retorted Zu An.

"Ignorant! This seal was constructed by Ying Zheng using the power of his dynasty! How could it be broken that easily?"

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +233 Rage!

"But I don't know whether what you said is true or not, and based on what I've heard, you're even more terrifying than Zhang Han. In my opinion, those who need to be sealed off are usually the most tyrannical villains. If you're actually a bad person, wouldn't I be placing myself into greater danger by saving you?"

Despite Zu An's words, he was already more or less convinced by Mi Li by now. After all, all of the details she provided fitted in with the history he knew.

"What about the 200,000 Qin soldiers who are innocently killed and sealed under the lake? Do you think that they're tyrannical villains?"

Zu An was rendered speechless.

"Besides, you don't have any choice. Once Zhang Han finishes dealing with those dead spirits, that woman over there will be killed without a shred of doubt." Mi Li continued pushing her point on.

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan and Qiao Xueying were baffled to see how Zu An was talking to himself, only to jolt in astonishment when a mysterious feminine voice suddenly sounded in their ears.

"W-who is talking?" Qiao Xueying scanned her surroundings warily.

Chu Chuyan was alarmed too, but she felt that this voice sounded familiar. She had a vague impression of hearing it in her semi-conscious state earlier on.

"Stop looking around. You won't be able to find her. You can think of her as the owner of this ancient mausoleum," explained Zu An.

"The owner of this mausoleum..." Qiao Xueying's face paled. If even the general was strong enough to plunge them into despair, she couldn't fathom just how powerful the owner would be.

"Ah Zu, don't agree to her request for my sake. There's already no point in me living on in my current state. You should quickly escape with Snow instead." The sharp-witted Chu Chuyan figured out right away that the feminine voice was trying to spur Zu An into doing something by using her plight as bait.

At the same time, she also realized that it was futile to persuade Zu An here. She had said such words innumerable times along the way, only to no avail. So, she quickly turned to Qiao Xueying and said, "Snow, in view that I've treated you well over the years, hurry up and take Ah Zu away! Otherwise, it'll be too late once the black-armored general returns!"

Qiao Xueying was hesitant. She couldn't bring herself to abandon Chu Chuyan, but her logical mind was telling her that she couldn't do anything here anyway. After all, they couldn't even break the rope tying Chu Chuyan down.

"Hurry up and leave!" shouted Chu Chuyan anxiously.

Qiao Xueying bit her lips. She decided to abide by the young miss' wishes and flee with Zu An. However, at that very moment, the feminine voice sounded once more, "You feel that it's meaningless for you to live on because you used a forbidden art and ended up devastating your ki meridians, turning into a cripple. I have a way to make you recover and even rise to a higher level."

Chu Chuyan was stunned. One must know that she had always been a lofty figure in Brightmoon City, and losing her cultivation was a huge blow to her. There was no doubt that Mi Li's offer was extremely tempting to her, but she eventually chose to turn it down. "There's no need for that. Snow, hurry up and take Ah Zu away!"

However, Zu An asked deeply, "Do you really have a way to make her recover?"

"Of course!" replied Mi Li proudly.

"What is it?"

"Do you take me for a fool? How could I possibly tell you right now?" Mi Li snapped impatiently.

"Very well, I'll agree to your request. I'll unseal you, but in return, you must save her."

With things already coming to this point, he decided to gamble once more.

Chu Chuyan was horrified to hear that. "Ah Zu, calm down and don't listen to her trickery. Snow, what are you doing? Why aren't you taking him away?!"

Qiao Xueying shook her head and said, "Young miss, even though I'm not fond of Zu An, I have to admit that he really has guts this time around. This is a rare chance for your recovery; it's worth taking this bit of risk. At most, we'll just die together."

I don't really want to live anymore anyway... And as for Zu An, his existence itself is a plague to the world. His death would be a blessing to all living beings! Hmph!

Seeing that the two of them had made up their minds, Chu Chuyan knew that she wouldn't be able to talk them out of it. She was touched by their gesture, but she wasn't the type to say any sentimental words.

"What does it take to remove your seal? Do I just have to pluck out a talisman or something?" asked Zu An.

"How could it be that easy?" replied Mi Li. "Back, in order to seal me, Ying Zheng set up this Soul Suppression Seal in order to ensure that I'll never be able to reincarnate. Zhang Han was the supervisor of this mausoleum, so he knows how powerful the formation is. So, he, together with Xiang Yu, made use of the power of this formation and the Evanescent Lotus to construct a pseudo Soul Suppression Seal to curb the 200,000 dead spirits.

“The pseudo Soul Suppression Seal is, after all, a fake, so you were able to release it easily just by plucking out the Evanescent Lotus. However, the one that has sealed me off is different. If you wish to remove the seal, you’ll have to destroy the seal’s Human Seal, Earth Seal, and Heaven Seal.”

Zu An was amazed. “Wow, you sure lived a tragic life. Aren’t the two of you a couple? Looks like he really hates you a lot.”

“Shut your mouth!” Mi Li’s tone was quite sharp. Zu An’s words had dredged up some of the terrible memories in her mind.

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +250 Rage!

“How am I going to help you without speaking?” Zu An harrumphed. Is this the attitude someone asking for a favor should have? “What are those seals you speak of, and how can they be released?”

Mi Li fell silent for a long while before she said awkwardly, “I... don’t know.”

“???” Zu An.

“Big sis, you don’t even know what the seals are and how they can be broken? Are you toying with me here?” Zu An was frustrated.

Mi Li was equally frustrated too. “Do you have no brain? Who in the world would let the person they are sealing know the way to overcome the seal?”

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +66 Rage!

Zu An was amused by the small amount of Rage points he had just received. Looks like she’s feeling a little embarrassed about this too.

“If I really want to deal with an enemy, I wouldn’t go through the trouble just to seal him; I’d have just killed him outright. Speaking of which, isn’t it weird that he went through so much trouble just to keep you down here? Isn’t it much easier to just kill you to end things there?” asked Zu An.

“Who said he didn’t kill me?” replied Mi Li.

Zu An felt a chill ran down his back. A sudden realization struck him, causing his tone to become much more courteous than before. “That means that you’re currently...”