

## Immortal 171

### Chapter 171: Human Seal

"Why don't you give it a guess?" There was a teasing edge to Mi Li's guess.

"I don't want to," replied Zu An. Please, an auntie who already bore a child like you should stop acting cutesy here. Though, it was not as if he would really dare to say those words aloud.

"You'll know once you save me," said Mi Li. "Zhang Han has already claimed the upper ground there. It won't be long before he returns. Are you sure you want to continue discussing this with me here?"

"Then you should at least tell me how I should release the Heaven, Earth, and Human Seal, no?" replied Zu An. Surely you should know that, right?

"Look ahead of you. You should see a passageway behind the altar. Walk to the end of it, and you'll see a formation. As long as you stand on the formation, you'll be able to trigger the Human Seal. If you can undo the Human Seal, the formation will automatically trigger the Earth Seal, and finally the Heaven Seal.

"I'm not sure what you'll encounter in each seal, but if one thing is for sure, you'll meet with great danger. There's a good chance that you might end up losing your life. If you wish to back down, there's still time for you to do so."

Zu An shot a glance at Chu Chuyan and said, "Why would I regret saving a person I treasure?"

Redness crept onto Chu Chuyan's fair complexion upon hearing those words. Too embarrassed to look him in the eye, she quickly averted her gaze. There were actually many things bottling in her heart that she wanted to voice out, but she suddenly found herself at a loss for words.

Meanwhile, Qiao Xueying alternated her gaze between Chu Chuyan and Zu An before sighing deeply in her heart.

Zu An grasped Chu Chuyan's hand and said, "Honey, I'll be undoing the seal now. Don't worry, I'll definitely find a way to rescue you. If I end up losing my life in there, you mustn't marry another man, or else I won't be able to rest in peace."

"..." Qiao Xueying.

This fellow really is as hateful as ever.

Chu Chuyan was still moved by this touching scene a moment ago when the mood suddenly shattered under Zu An's remark. "I would die too if you lose your life inside. How would I be able to marry another man?"

"But what if some powerful sword immortal or something descends from the sky and saves you from Zhang Han's grasp? I mean, that's how it's always written in books!"

Chu Chuyan's face immediately turned scarlet red. "You saw my book that day!"

He lied to me saying that he saw nothing at all! Just thinking about how that embarrassing book title was seen by another person made her feel so ashamed that she wanted to dig hole and bury herself in.

Zu An burst into laughter before walking toward the passageway where the Human Seal was. As he walked away, he raised his hand and waved it as an expression of farewell to her.

“Ah Zu!” Chu Chuyan suddenly called out.

Delighted, Zu An turned around, expecting to hear words like ‘I’ll surely wait for you to come back. If you don’t, I’ll live my life as a widow’. Ah, looks like my sacrifice wasn’t in vain after all.

Unexpectedly, things didn’t proceed in the direction he expected.

“Ah Zu, if you dare die in there, I’ll immediately marry another man!” shouted Chu Chuyan.

Qiao Xueying was flabbergasted. What’s wrong with the young miss?

Then, Chu Chuyan quickly added, “So, you must come back alive!”

Zu An was initially feeling a little stifled by those words, but upon hearing her change in tone, his mood cleared up, and he replied heartily, “Roger that!”

Qiao Xueying bit her lips. Damn it, the young miss has been led astray by that fellow!

Zu An slowly headed deeper into the passageway. Unlike the underground passageway he passed by earlier, this passageway was clearly much more exquisite. Be it the floor or the walls by the side, they were all elaborately carved into beautiful artworks.

There were all kinds of animal sculptures placed by the sides of the passageway. Taking a brief look, Zu An could see pairs of leaping horses, crouching tigers, proning elephants, wild boars, stonefishes, bears, lions, panthers, camels, qilins, and so on. There were also some animals which he didn’t recognize, and he wondered if they were mythological beasts or creatures unique to this world.

Every few meters, he would see a copper maid sculpture gilded in gold. The sculpture was sitting in a kneeling position, holding up a lantern. Its posture was elegant, resembling the sculpture of ‘Changxin’s Palace Lantern’ he had seen in a museum in his previous life.

After advancing for around a hundred meters, he finally came to a halt outside a stone chamber. He noticed that the stone chamber had an incredibly elaborate formation constructed around it, and at the very center of the intricate patterns was the character, human (人).

This was likely to be the Human Seal he had heard about from Mi Li. He was just about to activate it using the method he had just learned from her when he suddenly heard footsteps. He turned around, only to see a willowy woman standing right behind him.

“Hm? What are you doing here?”

The willowy woman was no other than Qiao Xueying.

“It’s meaningless for me to remain by the young miss’ side. Since I can’t release her from the black rope or protect her from the black-armored general, I might as well come with you and see if I can be of any

help. Besides, I doubt that a third rank cultivator like you to break the seal all by yourself,” replied Qiao Xueying.

“I sure do wonder why the world put a decent-looking face on you, only to ruin it with a vile mouth,” retorted Zu An.

Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes. “The same goes for you too.”

Despite their bickering, Zu An was still glad to have another person’s help. An additional pair of helping hands meant a higher chance of breaking the seals.

Qiao Xueying took out a couple of recovery medicine and ki pills and swallowed them. She hesitated for a moment before passing a set to Zu An too. “Do you need it?”

Despite the differences they had, they were somewhat standing on the same front right now. It was only right for her to share her resources with him too.

Zu An shook his head. He felt that he was in the perfect state at the moment. If he really recovered from his injuries, the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra would lose its effects right away.

“Forget it then,” replied Qiao Xueying with a pout. She thought that Zu An was throwing a tantrum with her, so she decided to ignore him too.

The two of them walked to the corner of the formation. Zu An stretched his hand over and said, “Give me your hand.”

“What?” Qiao Xueying was perplexed as to what Zu An was up to, but she still handed her hand over obediently.

Unexpectedly, she found her hand being grasped by a warm and firm grip right after. She immediately frowned at the abrupt physical contact. She was just about to blow her top when Zu An explained his action, “Mi Li mentioned earlier that we’ll be teleported into another space once we trigger the seal. We should keep our hands together so as to avoid getting teleported into different locations.”

He wasn’t certain how this teleportation formation worked, after all. He had played plenty of games in his previous life to know that there was something called ‘random teleportation’. If they were to be teleported into different locations, it could pose a great deal of trouble trying to meet up with one another.

“Are you sure you aren’t just trying to take advantage of me?” Qiao Xueying eyed their linked hands with a look of skepticism on her face. She wasn’t used to being in physical contact with other men, let alone this hateful fellow.

“You’re doubting that I’d take advantage of you?” scoffed Zu An. “Please! My wife is the number one beauty of Brightmoon City! Do you think that I would choose a washboard without breasts and bum like you over her?”

“Who are you saying is a washboard?” bellowed Qiao Xueying with gritted teeth. To think that my perception of him actually improved a little earlier on. Tsk! Looks like a leopard can’t change its spots. He’s still as hateful as ever!

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +468 Rage!

She lowered her head to look at her own breasts. Fine, it's not very big, but it isn't small either! Besides, you're saying that my bum is small? You must be blind!

Just thinking about this matter was enough to make blood surge into her head. She was just about to blow up once more when Zu An pulled her into the middle of the formation. There was a mysterious outburst of light, and their visions suddenly blurred. For a moment, there was a sudden feeling of weightlessness, as if they had fallen into a hole.

By the time they snapped out of it, they realized that their surroundings had brightened up. They were no longer in the dingy underground palace but a grand city. There were towering city walls and grand city gates right before their eyes, emanating an air of ancient majesty.

"Holy shit, how in the world is it this big?!" exclaimed Zu An.

Qiao Xueying's face reddened.

This pervert. Staring at a person's breasts. Hm? Wait a moment, how could there be a big-breasted woman inside the seal?

She quickly raised her head to take a look, but there was no one in her line of sight aside from Zu An. It was then that she noticed that he was looking at the sky, so she quickly followed his line of sight, only to freeze up in the next moment.

Right before the city gates stood twelve humongous copper giants gleaming with a golden light. They stood in two rows before the city gates, facing one another. They were already ten meters tall in a sitting position, and their feet looked to be at least two meters long. Their very presence felt incredibly intimidating.

Qiao Xueying subconsciously leaned a little closer to Zu An before her heart would calm down a little. "How do we break this seal?"

Zu An pondered for a moment before replying, "Since it's called the Human Seal, it should be safe to assume that it has something to do with humans. I don't see any signs of humans in the surroundings though... Do we have to enter the city in order to trigger the event?"

Qiao Xueying contemplated for a moment before nodding in agreement. "Let's enter the city to take a look then."

Judging from the tremendous height and span of the city walls, they could already imagine just how prosperous the city would be.

However, when they finally walked up to the city gates, they realized that they couldn't open it no matter how they pushed.

One must know that Zu An's strength was at least half a ton now, which should have been more than enough to open this city gate. Yet, despite the two of them exerting their forces in unison, the city gate wasn't budging at all. They tried knocking too, but there was no response.

"Let me try flipping over the city wall to take a look."

Qiao Xueying took several steps back before running forward and leaping upward toward the top of the city wall.

While fifth rank cultivators were still incapable of flight, they could easily cover great distances with their leaps, reminiscent of the qinggong[1] often seen in wuxia novels. Considering how she had even built up some momentum before her leap, she should have been able to easily get to the top of the city wall.

Yet, to her surprise, she realized that she was only able to reach half of the height of the city wall even at the highest point of her leap.

So, she tapped her foot on the side of the city wall to make a second leap. At the same time, a vine shot forth from her sleeves to head for the top of the city walls.

But to her astonishment, the city walls suddenly grew even taller, resulting in her constantly being stuck at the halfway point of the city walls no matter how high she tried to climb.

In the end, she could only give up and leap back down. "There's something amiss about this city wall."

Zu An had also witnessed the shocking sight earlier, so he understood what she was referring to. He took a moment to think things through before suggesting, "Should we try ramming the city gate down?"

With their combined strength, they should be able to exert a force comparable to those ancient battering rams commonly used for fortress sieges.

"Shoo, I'll do it!"

After her earlier failure, Qiao Xueying was anxious to restore her reputation before Zu An. Her hair began to flutter along with the wind, growing longer and longer before abruptly darting toward the city gates.

Zu An had personally tasted the prowess of her 'hair whips' before. It was powerful enough to even tear apart the walls of his residence as if they were made of paper. Given her prowess, it should be more than enough to smash a hole into the city gate.

But unexpectedly, when her hair finally rammed onto the city gates, a resounding 'bam' echoed, but the city gates still wasn't budging at all..

"Hm?" Qiao Xueying was stunned.

Unwilling to accept the outcome, she wanted to give it another try, only to be stopped by Zu An. "Stop. Look behind you."

Qiao Xueying quickly turned around, only for goosebumps to rise all over her arms. The twelve copper giants who were standing in two rows facing one another earlier had all turned their gazes toward them.

These copper giants started rising to their feet, their height growing to over twenty meters in height. With huge strides, they began making their way toward the two of them.

The ground shuddered under their heavy footsteps, as if an earthquake was currently rattling the earth. Zu An gulped fearfully as he remarked, "Bloody hell... Are copper giants considered 'humans' too?"

## Chapter 172: The Twelve Golden Giants

Zu An couldn't help but remember a legend. It was said that after Qin Shihuang unified the Central Plains, he gathered all of the weapons of his enemies in Xianyang, melted them down, and had them constructed into twelve humongous copper sculptures, each weighing over a thousand boulders. He placed these copper sculptures in his imperial court.

In ancient China, copper and gold were used interchangeably, so copper sculptures were considered golden sculptures too. Also, the 'weighing over a thousand boulders' should have been an exaggeration too, but it seemed to have been realized in this world. No matter how he looked at it, the copper giants before him had to weigh at least tens of tonnes each.

"Be careful!" Seeing how Zu An was still blanking out even though the copper giants were already charging over, Qiao Xueying quickly grabbed his hand and pulled him aside.

With a loud 'bam', the area where the two of them were standing earlier was completely smashed under the foot of one of the copper giants. When it finally removed its foot, there was a massive footprint left in its wake. Had Zu An and Qiao Xueying not run away, regardless of whether they were at the third rank or the fifth rank, they would have surely been smashed into pulp.

"You owe me yet another life." Qiao Xueying harrumphed.

"That doesn't count. I would have dodged even if you didn't pull me away," retorted Zu An.

"You sure are shameless!" berated Qiao Xueying.

There was no time for them to argue on. Another copper giant had begun charging in their direction, so they hurriedly dodged once more.

These copper giants gleamed with a golden glow, and their narrow eyes carried an inexplicable air of imposingness. There were some weird symbols on their forehead, which resembled the characters for '1' to '12'.

Could these copper giants be called Copper Giant One, Copper Giant Two, so on and so forth? Hm. This kind of reminds me of those fellows from the Plum Blossom Sect.

While his mind wandered, he rushed toward the back of the closest copper giant. He knew that while the massive physique of these copper giants looked terrifying, it also limited their ability to maneuver around agilely. It would be hard for them to turn their bodies around and make small adjustments.

Zu An looked no more than ant before these humongous copper giants, but he wasn't afraid at all. He concentrated his ki in his leg and kicked its heel.

These copper giants were shaped like a human, which meant that their massive bodies were currently pivoted on their heels, making it one of their weaknesses. If he could even just twist their heels, the copper giants might find themselves unable to sustain their body weight anymore and collapse to the ground.

Unfortunately, there tended to be a divergence between theory and practice.

Despite putting his full might into his strike, the copper giant he attacked remained completely unfazed. There wasn't even any mark left on its heel. Instead, the terrifying rebound left a stabbing pain reverberating through his bones, leaving him feeling as if he had fractured his leg.

All of a sudden, he remembered a joke he had read about in his previous life.

An ant saw an elephant on the road and dived into the earth, leaving just one of its legs exposed. A passing rabbit saw it and asked in incomprehension, "Why are you exposing your leg out in the open?"

To that, the ant replied, "Shh! Don't make a noise. I'm going to trip the elephant over!"

Right now, Zu An felt that he was the overly confident ant, attempting to use his measly leg to trip the copper giant over.

The copper giant seemed to be provoked by Zu An's attack, and it raised its leg to kick back at him.

Zu An immediately made a sidestep, but he felt another gush of wind headed in his direction. So, he quickly executed the Sunflower Phantasm to flee several meters away.

Soon, the jarring sound of metal scraping against one another sounded. Another copper giant had drawn a several meters long sword and cut it down on where Zu An was standing a moment ago, scraping out sparks from the friction against the ground.

Zu An gulped fearfully. He had noticed right from the start that these copper giants had a sword sheath hanging by their waists, but he thought that they were just ornaments. Who could have thought that they were actually real weapons?

It was a sword by the copper giants' standards, but to Zu An, it looked more like someone was hurling a massive billboard straight toward his face.

"What do we do? These copper giants are invulnerable to swords and spears; my sword has already shattered against them!" Qiao Xueying dodged several of the copper giants' attack before rushing over to regather with Zu An. They stood back-to-back with one another, gasping hard to catch their breath. It would appear that she wasn't faring any better either.

Zu An noticed the broken sword in her grasp and murmured, "I don't believe that they're really invulnerable to weapons!"

So, he summoned Poisonous Prick and dashed right for one of the copper giants.

Even if you can't be hurt with kicks and swords, I don't believe that you'll be able to remain unharmed before my Poisonous Prick!

While these copper golems were clearly inanimate beings, which meant that the sure-kill effect of Poisonous Prick wouldn't work, its sharpness should still be more than enough to slice right through their defenses.

Zu An was moving so fast that Qiao Xueying was actually seeing multiple copies of Zu An around. She knew that this was the effect of his extreme speed and unique movement skill, and she couldn't help but be impressed by his means. It's no wonder why so many of us are unable to kill him even though he's only at the third rank.

Zu An executed his 'Bixie Swordplay' to its limits. With every flit, he would appear right beside one of the copper giants and swipe his dagger with lighting speed, shaving off a large slab of 'meat' from the copper giant's heels.

The heat had really gotten to him. Now, he was more determined than ever to make them fall.

Ahhhh!

The copper giants began howling out loud, frightening Qiao Xueying. Wait a moment, do these copper giants feel pain?

The copper giants continued swinging their swords down on Zu An. Their movements were slow, but this weakness was complemented by their long limbs and massive swords. Every strike from them really felt like a finishing blow from a boss monster. Even with Zu An's powerful movement skill, there were still many times where he nearly got swept away by those huge ass swords.

On top of that, the copper giants also didn't hesitate to use their legs and fists whenever the situation warranted too. It made it look as if twelve humans were desperately trying to swat off a fly, creating quite a ludicrous scene. But putting aside the ridiculousness of the sight, their attacks were effective, especially since they stirred powerful shockwaves that battered down on Zu An even if they missed their target.

A while later, Zu An found himself staring in shock at the twelve copper giants. He was certain that he had already sliced off huge slabs of 'meat' from the copper giants, but for some reason, they were still moving perfectly normally, which didn't make sense at all!

"Look, they're regenerating from their wounds!" Qiao Xueying pointed to the heels of the copper giants as she shouted.

Zu An quickly took a look too. Just as Qiao Xueying had said, their wounds were healing at a visible pace. The copper slabs he had sliced off slowly sunk into the ground, and it tallied with the rate of regeneration of those copper giants.

"It looks like they are able to regenerate automatically in this environment," said Qiao Xueying with a pale face.

Even though these copper giants were lacking in agility, their attacks were powerful and they were nigh indestructible. How could they possibly win this match?

To make things worse, they were severely short on time. If they dragged things out, Chu Chuyan might have already died in Zhang Han's hands by the time they returned to save her.

"I heard that fire curbs metal. Are you able to use any fire element skills, like fireball or something?" asked Zu An.

Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes. "Don't you know better than anyone else that I'm a wood element cultivator? If I can use fire, the first one to burn is myself!"

Zu An clicked his tongue in disdain. "Trash. I don't expect you to be like those novel protagonists who can pull out all five elements from their ass, but shouldn't you at least be at the level of a lesser villain



with two elements or something? Haa, I really shouldn't bear any expectations of you at all lest I get disappointed again.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

"What kind of nonsensical novels do you read? Cultivators in this world can only awaken to a single element. This is common sense, common sense!!!"

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +233 Rage!

Qiao Xueying gnashed her teeth furiously. This fellow really is my nemesis. We must have been enemies our previous life!

"Since you're all-so-knowledgeable about common sense, why don't you tell me what we should do now?" Zu An dodged an attack from the copper giant as he asked.

Qiao Xueying fell silent for a moment before murmuring, "As the saying goes, 'The great dao is complete at fifty, fate accounts for forty-nine, and the final one comes up to unpredictability.' There's no such thing as an unbreakable seal in this world. These copper giants must have a weakness, just that we haven't stumbled upon it yet."

"A load of nonsense. Give me something that I can work with!" scoffed Zu An.

Qiao Xueying's face reddened. She glared at Zu An and said, "I'm saying that you should stop staring at their legs! They must have a weakness somewhere else!"

"Somewhere else?" Zu An examined the copper giants once more, specifically choosing to eye their crotch first. However, there was nothing there, which seemed to indicate that these copper giants didn't have the concept of gender. If so, a ball kick was unlikely to be too effective.

The two of them split up and continued weaving around the copper giants while searching for their weakness, and soon, Qiao Xueying noticed something.

"Hey, could their weakness possibly be that strange mark on their foreheads?"

She noticed that the marks on their foreheads would glow dimly every single time the copper giants moved.

Hearing her analysis, Zu An nodded in agreement. "Yes, that does seem to be likely. I guess there's some truth to the common adage that big-breasted women tend to be not too smart."

Qiao Xueying was stunned. Huh? What does being big-breasted have to do with me? My breasts aren't too big in the first...

Realization suddenly struck her. He was basically insulting her for having small breasts in an indirect manner!

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +666 Rage!

"But these copper giants are way too tall. We can't reach them even if we know what their weakness is," grumbled Zu An.

Of course, as cultivators, both Zu An and Qiao Xueying were able to easily leap over twenty meters in height, but the problem was that the copper giants they were dealing with weren't stationary objects. They would attack them as soon as they came close!

Zu An might have been able to outmaneuver them on the ground, but if he were to leap right up to their faces, wouldn't that just be courting his own death?

He had no intention of being swatted down like a mosquito, so he hurriedly racked his brain for a solution. Soon, his eyes lit up, and he exclaimed, "Ah, I got it!"

"What is it?" asked Qiao Xueying.

"How long can your hair extend for? How resilient are they?" asked Zu An.

Qiao Xueying's ability to extend her hair as she pleased and lash them around like whips had left quite a deep impression on him.

Qiao Xueying was hesitant to answer those questions. These were secrets that a cultivator would never tell another soul, or else others would be able to guard against her attack. However, seeing the earnest look on Zu An's face, she eventually still answered honestly, "I should be able to extend them over thirty meters long. As for their resilience... it'd be hard for normal swords and sabers to sever them."

"Good. I need your hair to extend as long as possible now," said Zu An as he grabbed onto her hair and started tugging on it.

Qiao Xueying felt enraged and humiliated by how a man was actually holding onto her hair. Just as Zu An wished, her hair immediately extended outward, morphing into whips that threatened to lash down on him.

"Hey hey hey, calm down! I'm doing this in order to break the seal!" explained Zu An hurriedly. While grabbing her hair, he weaved around the copper giants and wrapped her hair around all of their legs.

The sharp-witted Qiao Xueying swiftly figured out his intention. Hmm, he does have quite some ideas in mind. But at the same time, she felt a little frightened too. Given the strength of these copper giants, wouldn't they simply tug out all of her hair and make her bald?

As soon as those thoughts arose in her head, she suddenly felt a strong tug on her head. Before she could even react, she was already sent flying by the movement of the copper giants. With tears brimming in her eyes, she cursed the culprit who put her in her miserable state, "Zu An, you bastarddddddd!"

### **Chapter 173: Earth Seal**

It was then that a massive sword swiped down in Qiao Xueying's way. Even from afar, she could already hear a thunderous rumble swiftly crescendoing the closer it came to her. The sheer force was so great that even if it could probably amputate a limb from the other copper giants, let alone her frail body.

Qiao Xueying's first instinct was to dodge, but she was currently flying through the air with nowhere to pivot her body on. It was impossible for her to dodge at all. Seeing the sword growing bigger and bigger before her eyes, she sighed softly and closed her eyes, resigning herself to fate.

She was already tired of living anyway, so it didn't seem too bad for her to die just like that. The only regret she had now was to be unable to see the breaking of three seals through and save the young miss. Will Zu An be able to do it alone?

The thought of Zu An made rage explode within her head.

It's all due to him that I'm dying right now! Will he even feel the slightest tinge of guilt toward me when he thinks about this in the future? Haa, I doubt so. How could that man possibly know of guilt?

"I bet that you're cursing me right now."

A teasing voice suddenly sounded right beside her as Qiao Xueying felt herself falling into a warm embrace. She quickly opened her eyes, only to see Zu An staring at her, leaving her taken aback.

However, she quickly snapped out of her daze. She pointed right behind him and exclaimed, "Sword! Sword! ..."

She was so panicked that she couldn't even construct a complete sentence properly.

A black shadow flashed across the air, and her hair was suddenly severed. Then, Zu An quickly pulled her several meters away, and by a close shave, she managed to avoid that incoming sword.

Feeling the frenzied shockwave caused by the massive sword that landed just several inches away from her, Qiao Xueying found her hair scattering messily all over her face. She stared at the man holding on to her with a dazed expression, her heart inexplicably thumping faster.

"What's with this feeling? Why is my face turning red? Why is my heart beating so fast? Why am I reacting to this fellow..." Qiao Xueying's mind was an utter mess.

"I saved your life again. We should be equals now, right?" said Zu An with a smile.

Qiao Xueying's face reddened. She opened her mouth, but no word would come out.

"Are you feeling your heart beating fast? Do you feel an emotion you have never felt before engulfing your body?" Zu An suddenly dropped this question.

"S-so what if that's the case!" Qiao Xueying blurted those words out so quickly that she regretted it right now. How could I have admitted to it? Damn it, this fellow is going to act all smug over it now!

Unexpectedly, Zu An replied, "You shouldn't think that you're in love with me just because of that. This is a perfectly normal occurrence. Using professional jargon, it's called 'Suspension Bridge Effect'. It's perfectly normal for your heart to beat fast when crossing a dangerous suspension bridge, and if you coincidentally meet with another person then, you'll mistake your physical reactions as a sign of affection for that person. But no, that's not love."

"..." Qiao Xueying.

That long speech was more than enough to make her snap out of her unusual state. “Hah, of course! Even if I fall in love with a pig, a dog, or even a zombie, I’d never fall in love with a guy like you!”

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +111 Rage!

Zu An was speechless. Your words don’t look too credible with that little amount of Rage points you’re supplying me with. “Don’t worry, I won’t fall in love with a venomous little lass like you either.”

Despite the bicker, Zu An’s attention was still on the battle. Without any hesitation, he charged toward the copper giants with Poisonous Prick in hand.

Those copper giants had been tied together using the ‘rope’, and of course, Zu An didn’t expect Qiao Xueying to be able to trip them over with her strength. Instead, he tied the legs of those copper giants together, hoping that they would trip each other over with their own strength.

As their movements weren’t coordinated, with one heading one way and the other heading another, it didn’t take long for the first copper giant to trip over and fall. Like a set of dominos, more and more copper giants fell down to the ground.

Had the copper giants been normal humans, they would have tried to sever the hair wrapped around their ankles. With their astounding strength, it was likely that they would have been able to rip through Qiao Xueying’s resilient hair with ease.

Unfortunately, it was clear that they were lacking in intelligence. They simply flailed their legs around in futility, unable to free themselves from the hair wrapped around their legs even to the very last moment.

Zu An made use of this opportunity to run to the nearest copper giant and stab Poisonous Prick into the center of their forehead.

At close proximity, he could feel more concretely than ever just how huge and powerful these copper giants were. Looking at their whopping heads and big eyeballs, he couldn’t help but feel a little intimidated. If Snow is wrong about this, I might really just meet my end here.

Puchi!

His dagger stabbed right into the copper giant’s forehead. However, due to the size of the giant’s head and short reach of the dagger, somehow, it looked more like a toothpick poking into someone’s head instead.

Feeling more and more uneasy about this, he quickly retrieved his dagger and backed away, fearing the copper giant’s retaliation.

To his surprise, the sharp glint in the copper giant’s eyes gradually dimmed before vanishing altogether. It had reverted back to a dead copper sculpture.

Delighted to see that it was effective, Zu An quickly used the Sunflower Phantasm to rush for the next copper giant. He plunged his dagger into the center of its forehead and retracted it before rushing to the next target...

He was extremely efficient about this. In just a few seconds, he had already eliminated eleven of the copper giants. However, just as he was about to deal with the twelfth one, the final remaining copper giant suddenly roared furiously and successfully struggled free of the hair binding its leg. It climbed back up to its feet and smacked its palm down toward Zu An.

Seeing the twist in the situation, Zu An quickly changed his direction and retreated several meters away. The force of the palm was so great that even the shockwave might have been enough to end his life. Considering that he was already injured at the moment, he didn't want to take this risk.

In just a few short moments, the copper giant had managed to rise back to its feet. Looking at its collapsed comrades, it still felt a surge of anger despite its lacking intelligence. It roared furiously to the sky.

You have successfully trolled First Emperor's Copper Giant No. 1 for +9 +9 +9...

As expected of the number 1. The boss of the group is indeed much harder to deal with.

Zu An backed off to Qiao Xueying's side, and he couldn't help but notice that her long hair had been chopped off to barely ear length. He chuckled a little and remarked, "Say, wouldn't it be interesting if my hand had slipped earlier and chopped off all of your hair?"

"On the account that you saved me earlier, I shan't hold this one against you." Qiao Xueying harrumphed. She patted her hair softly, and her short hair swiftly grew longer, even forming a ponytail on its own.

Zu An was dumbfounded. He couldn't resist touching her newly-grown ponytail, remarking, "Oh? I didn't think that you would have such a function. Must be convenient not to comb your hair every morning."

Qiao Xueying shot a piercing glare at Zu An as she snatched her ponytail back. "Don't you know that a man and a woman should keep some distance between each other?"

Zu An was amused by that remark. "We had far more intimate interactions than this in the past, and you're suddenly talking about distance with me?"

Qiao Xueying's eyebrows shot up. "You still dare to talk about that!"

Zu An burst into laughter. "Alright, let's talk about serious matters. I need to extend your hair again. I'll tie that big fellow up."

The earlier long lock of hair had scattered all over the place due to the copper giant's struggling, so Zu An couldn't use it anymore.

Qiao Xueying was troubled by the request. "That wouldn't do. I've exerted myself too much today, so I won't be able to regrow it in the short-term."

Earlier in the underground palace, she cut off a huge chunk of her hair because it was stained in bat's blood, and another huge chunk of it was severed here. On top of that, she had been exerting herself all this while, so there was no way to replenish her lost energy.

"What do we do then?" Zu An looked at the copper giant charging toward them with a contemplative frown.

"What are you blanking out for? Hurry up and dodge! We can think of another way later on!" exclaimed Qiao Xueying.

To her surprise, Zu An shook his head and replied, "Chuyan won't be able to wait that long. I need to take care of it right now."

Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes. "Stop bragging over here! If you can really take care of it right away, I'll follow your... surname..."

Before she could finish her words, Zu An suddenly vanished from the spot. The next moment, he was already right before the copper giant's forehead, the black dagger in his hand plunged right into the center of its forehead.

The copper giant's movements jolted from the sudden attack, and the light in its eyes gradually faded. Its body started falling frontward under the force of inertia.

Zu An quickly pulled out his dagger before pushing his leg against the copper giant's head and leaped backward. The copper giant crashed heavily onto the ground, causing a cloud of dust to rise into the air.

Witnessing this grand sight, Qiao Xueying's face reddened a little. Why does this fellow suddenly look a little charming?

"What did you say earlier?" asked Zu An as he made his way over to her side.

"N-nothing." Qiao Xueying was relieved that he had moved too quickly to hear what she had said, or else she would have been placed in an awkward position. "How did you manage to do it?"

While his movement skill was formidable, it would at least still leave behind traces for one to track his movements. Yet, the earlier attack was so swift that it almost looked as if he had teleported right in front of the copper giant in a flash.

"Curious?" asked Zu An as he leaned in toward her.

Qiao Xueying leaned backward unnaturally as she nodded her head, "Yeah."

"Call me big brother, and I'll let you in on the secret," replied Zu An cheerfully.

He had used Grandgale's power earlier. Due to the earlier advancement in his cultivation, he had enough ki to barely use it thrice a day.

This skill was perfect for fleeing, dodging, and assassination, but his cultivation was simply too low at the moment that it was only useful for dealing with dumb oafs with the copper giants. If he tried using it on other high-rank cultivators, who possessed inhuman reflexes and all sorts of elemental abilities, the chances of a successful assassination would have been much lower.

Qiao Xueying simply ignored him. She was more concerned about something else here. "We should have cleared the Human Seal, right?"

Right after she said those words, the twelve copper giants vanished in a burst of light. Then, the feeling of weightlessness shrouded the two of them once more as their surroundings blurred. Before they knew it, they were already back at the underground palace.

It was then that Qiao Xueying noticed that their hands were linked together, so she quickly shook it off.

Zu An shrugged casually, thinking nothing of it.

“Hm? I never thought that you would be able to clear the Human Seal,” Mi Li’s voice sounded. Her excitement was showing through her tone, as if she was finally seeing a ray of hope.

Barely after those words were spoken, the sealing formation beneath them suddenly opened up, causing them to fall to a deeper level beneath.

Zu An noticed that there was another similar sealing formation on this deeper level, and he figured that it was the Earth Seal.

“The Earth Seal will be harder than the Human Seal. Do you want to rest a bit first before entering?” asked Mi Li.

Zu An shook his head and replied, “There’s no need for that.”

Chu Chuyan was still waiting for him outside, so they needed to make haste here.

Qiao Xueying also shared the same thought too. The two of them stood on the Earth Seal, not saying a word at all. Mysteriously, the two of them instinctively reached out in unison to hold each other’s hands.

The same feeling of weightlessness assaulted them. When they opened their eyes once more, they realized that they were in the midst of darkness.

A frown formed on Zu An’s face as he remarked doubtfully, “Why are we still in the underground palace?”

#### **Chapter 174: How Lonely It Is to be Invincible**

“No, that’s not right. This isn’t the underground palace we were in earlier,” said Qiao Xueying with a shake of her head. Her cultivation was much higher than Zu An’s, so her senses were far sharper. “The area we were at earlier was filled with death aura, but it’s much weaker here.”

Zu An scanned their surroundings carefully, and his face suddenly scrunched in bitterness. “If we aren’t in the underground palace, what’s with those things then?”

Qiao Xueying traced his gaze before jolting in horror. Several hundred meters away from them stood an army of terracotta soldiers. It was identical to what they had encountered back at the underground palace!

“Earth Seal, huh? These terracotta soldiers are made out of mud and are buried underground, making them intricately related to the earth. They must be the enemies we have to face here,” said Zu An grimly.

Qiao Xueying suddenly thought of something and sighed, “It’s a pity that the bizarre light-emitting stick of yours fell into the lake earlier, or else you’d be able to easily deal with these fellows and break the seal.”

A mysterious smile surfaced on Zu An's lips as he summoned the Magical Flashlight out. "Are you referring to this?"

Qiao Xueying widened her eyes in astonishment at the black stick he had in hand. "Ah? Didn't it fall into the lake earlier? Why do you still have it? Wait a moment, does that mean that you have a lot of it in your possession?"

She was quite certain that Zu An hadn't picked up the stick after it fell into the lake earlier.

"How could I have duplicates of an artifact as precious as this? This is the same one you saw earlier on," replied Zu An. "It's just that it is linked to me telepathically, so it would automatically return to my side."

Qiao Xueying looked at Zu An with a complicated look on her face. Just a month ago, she still thought that this man was a good-for-nothing, only to be bombarded with surprises one after another. "Why is it that the undead in the underground palace is so fearful of the light emanated by that stick?"

Zu An chuckled softly and said, "You haven't called me big brother yet. I'll answer your question once you do it."

Qiao Xueying spat on the ground and said, "Pui, you sure are shameless! You shouldn't be hooking up with other women behind the young miss' back!"

"You're a different case though. Have you forgotten that Chuyan has already given you to me? Since my wife has already approved of this, how can this be called 'hooking up'?" said Zu An. "Besides, if anyone is hooking up with who, it's you. You're the one holding onto my hand tightly now."

Qiao Xueying immediately retracted her hand hurriedly. With a reddened face, she explained in a fumble, "Y-you were the one who told us to link hands in case we strayed apart!"

It was quite entertaining to Zu An to see her furiously blushing cheeks. Despite her vile tongue, she does have a good face and an alluring figure. There's no denying that she's a beauty.

Zu An felt that he was suited to become a wastrel of a rich family. He would be perfectly satisfied living an idle life, spending his free time teasing some women. It didn't seem like that bad of a way to spend his whole life.

Pui! Zu An, how can you be won over by her charms so easily? Have you forgotten how she tried to kill you time and time again? You mustn't be so shallow!

Zu An scorned himself.

Meanwhile, Qiao Xueying looked at him with a bizarre face. "Why are you looking at me with such licentious eyes? You must be thinking of something perverted."

"What do you mean by licentious eyes? Please watch your use of words, young miss. This is called a caring gaze!" corrected Zu An.

It was then that some noises began sounding ahead of them. The two of them quickly turned their gazes over, only to see the terracotta soldiers turning in their direction.



“Hurry up and use that flashlight of yours to deal with them! It feels kind of weird getting stared at by so many eyes.” Qiao Xueying fidgeted uncomfortably under their stare.

“Alright.” Zu An felt rather disturbed by their gazes, so he switched on the flashlight and directed it toward the terracotta soldiers.

A white pillar of light immediately shone down on the army of terracotta soldiers, causing them to immediately break out of their neat formation.

“What do we need to do in order to break the seal? Do we really need to get rid of all of them?” Even with a rough sweep of the surroundings, Qiao Xueying could spot at least a thousand terracotta soldiers around. It definitely wouldn’t be an easy feat to deal with them unless Zu An used the light-emitting stick in his hand.

Zu An also shared the same thoughts in mind. He continued shining his flashlight on the terracotta soldiers. Where the light shone, the terracotta soldiers in the area would find their colors swiftly fading before crumbling into pieces, reminiscent of a snowman exposed directly under the sun.

“It’s no wonder why we weren’t allowed to take pictures in museums. It turns out that light is quite a powerful weapon against antiques,” murmured Zu An as he walked into the enemy’s formation with his flashlight in hand.

“So this is what it means for a person to single handedly defeat thousands. Ah, what a pity that there’s no spectator here to witness my greatness, or else my name would surely shake the world,” lamented Zu An. He suddenly remembered a song from his previous world and began singing it aloud, “Alas, how forlorn it is to be invincible~ Alas, how empty it is to be invincible~”

“...” Qiao Xueying.

Why did he suddenly start singing? The melody of the song sounds so weird. Also, aren't the lyrics a little too arrogant? Hmmm, but it does carry quite a bit of impact.

I wonder which formidable expert composed this song. It’s impossible for an ordinary man to compose such a majestic song. Argh, but it sounds so incongruous hearing such a song from a mere third rank cultivator!

Meanwhile, Zu An was still busy flashing at the terracotta soldiers with an excited smile on his face, “C’mon! I dare you to come nearer!”

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

Why is this human so despicable? Why don’t you put down that light-emitting stick in your hand and have a proper fight with us then? I swear that I’ll beat the shit out of you within seconds!

“Heh, a bunch of weaklings!” sneered Zu An.

However, he noticed that while the flashlight could suppress them, its killing prowess was still severely lacking. For one, he had to shine the light directly on them in order to deal damage, and the damage output stopped as soon as he moved the light away.

“Wuwuwuw~”

A warhorn suddenly sounded at this moment. The terracotta soldiers standing on war chariots waved the flags in their hands, and the formation gradually calmed down. Soon, a row of warriors armed with shields marched to the forefront to block off the terrifying light shining down on them.

Zu AN was stunned. These fellows are actually capable of strategizing?

He tried to shine the flashlight from different angles, but the light was completely blocked by the shields. The soldiers had wisely chosen not just to block in front of them but above them too.

This is ridiculous!

It was then that Zu An's eyes narrowed in horror. He noticed that the archers standing at the far end at the back of the terracotta soldiers were nocking their arrows on their bows.

"Run!" Zu An immediately turned around and ran. He noticed that Qiao Xueying still hadn't snapped out of her daze yet, so he quickly grabbed her hand and pulled her away with him.

"What are you doing?!" Once again, Qiao Xueying was angry by the sudden physical contact, but the whooshing sound above her soon silenced her rage.

She raised her gaze and saw a rain of arrows headed their direction, and her face immediately paled in fright.

What the hell! This fellow was still singing his lamentations about being invincible at one moment, and in the next, he was fleeing faster than anyone else. Know some shame!

"We won't make it in time!" Zu An knew that they couldn't possibly outrun the arrows, so he turned to Qiao Xueying and asked, "How long can your barrier last for?"

"Not too long," replied Qiao Xueying with a pale face.

"Buy some time for me!" Zu An halted his footstep as he began digging the ground with Poisonous Prick.

Qiao Xueying was unsure what he was up to, but she still waved her wrist and weaved several tree vines together to form a shield. Right after that, the arrows began striking squarely on the vine shield.

Qiao Xueying let out a muffled groan upon the strike. Forcefully bearing the powerful impact of the arrows was inflicting significant internal injuries on her.

She wasn't even in a state to speak at all. She focused all of her ki on repairing her tattered vine shield. She should have been able to last several minutes, but for some reason, she felt like an eternity had already passed her by.

"Ah!" Qiao Xueying suddenly exclaimed loudly as she sensed one of the arrows piercing through her defense and plunging into her shoulder. She gritted her teeth tightly to bear with the pain as she continued to focus her ki on her vine shield.

Nevertheless, she knew that she was swiftly approaching her limit and could only last for another three more seconds before her defense crumbled. By then, the two of them would be turned into porcupines.

3!

2!

1!

Qiao Xueying felt her body finally caving into exhaustion. Before she closed her eyes, she muttered, "I never thought that I would end up dying with this fellow."

"Oh? I never knew that you were so interested in a lovers' suicide with me," a teasing voice sounded.

Stunned, Qiao Xueying hurriedly opened her eyes, only to see that she was lying in a shallow pit. The arrows flying over simply fell to the other side of the pit

So this was what he was digging all this while...

Qiao Xueying finally understood Zu An's intention, but she soon became conscious of the fact that she was held tightly in Zu An's arm. They were directly in front of one another, such that she could feel Zu An's breathing on her face. Just a slightly closer, and their lips would be touching.

"What are you doing!" Shocked, Qiao Xueying began struggling instinctively.

However, Zu An held onto her closely and said, "Stop moving! It wasn't easy for me to dig this trench hole! You'll expose yourself and get shot if you continue struggling!"

As if to verify his words, an arrow happened to brush across her sleeves right after. Seeing this, she immediately remained still, not daring to move at all.

In order to alleviate the awkwardness she felt, Qiao Xueying turned her head sideward and asked, "What's the theory behind digging this pit? Why does the arrow shoot right above us and not on us?"

Zu An began explaining patiently, "This is what we call a trench hole. As you know, arrows usually fly in an arc, descending diagonally down on their enemy. However, this trench hole is created in a way such that it's impossible for any arrows to hit us unless they fall vertically downward. That's why no arrows are able to hit us."

It was a relief that his dagger was able to slice through any material as easily as if ripping through paper, and his strength was freakishly great now. Otherwise, there was no way he could dig out a trench hole big enough for the two of them to hide in within such a short period of time.

Qiao Xueying still looked a little confused. She couldn't help but ask, "Why do you know so much stuff?"

"It took you awhile, but I'm glad that you finally realized my wisdom. You must have been blind to not recognize my greatness in the past," replied Zu An. Even though she's hateful, I must admit that she really has a soft body.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

Will you die if you just stop arguing with me for a moment?

The rain of arrows suddenly began to thin. Clearly, the archers had realized that they weren't able to hit them.

Just as the two of them were about to heave a sigh of relief, the ground began to rumble loudly.

It was the cavalry! The cavalrymen had begun on their charge!

## **Chapter 175: Big Brother**

The two of them arched their head upward to take a look, only to see a platoon of cavalrymen charging furiously in their direction. They were so fast that it would only take moments for them to arrive at the trench hole.

Given the charging prowess of the cavalrymen, there was little doubt that they would be reduced into meat slab right away.

Zu An instinctively shone the flashlight toward the cavalrymen, only to see them raising a shield in front of them. So, he changed his target toward their steed, only to be shocked once again to see that their horses' eyes were covered in cloth.

He was utterly dumbfounded. What the hell? You're terracotta soldiers, beings made out of mud! Where in the world did you get the cloth from?

In any case, he had to figure out a way to resolve the crisis right before his eyes.

An idea came to his mind, and he activated Sunflower Phantasm and continuously executed 'Pick' of the Elementary Swordplay, digging out a small hole.

He was rather impressed by how simplistic the Elementary Swordplay of Brightmoon Academy really was. The idea of 'pick' was fully expressed in the movement, evidenced by how efficient his blade was picking up the rock floor and tossing them aside.

If the creator of the Elementary Swordplay were to learn that his successor was using his technique to dig a hole, he would probably be so mad that he would leap right out of his coffin.

But of course, that was none of Zu An's concern right now. He was only glad that Poisonous Prick was incredibly sharp, or else he wouldn't have been able to dig so efficiently.

Qiao Xueying was completely confused by Zu An's action. Is he intending on building a hole to hide from this platoon of cavalrymen?

Hda it been in the past, she would have surely shrugged over Zu An's action as utter nonsense, but after everything they had gone through together, she decided to aid him as well. She gathered the remnant of her ki and placed her hand on the ground. Soon, vines shot out from the ground, creating a circular hole.

As the cavalrymen were getting closer and closer, Zu An suddenly abandoned the hole and pulled Qiao Xueying away with him, retreating from the area.

"Isn't it too late to run away right now?" Qiao Xueying was perplexed.

However, what confused her even further was that Zu An actually stopped after barely running thirty meters.

He turned around to face the charging cavalrymen with his dagger in hand, reminiscent of a panther ready to pounce at any moment.

Qiao Xueying couldn't make sense of anything at all. Is he really intending on facing the cavalymen head-on? That's suicide!

But in the next moment, she witnessed a sight that slackened her lower jaw. The cavalymen's steeds in the front row were suddenly alarmed by something and abruptly fell over, crashing heavily onto the ground. The brittle material they were made of caused them to shatter into bits.

With the front row suddenly collapsing over, there was suddenly an obstacle for the cavalymen behind them. In such a situation, the other cavalymen ought to stop or divert to another pathway, but unfortunately, the inertia from their furious charge disallowed them to stop. As a result, the damage snowballed further as more and more cavalymen fell over and collapsed.

It was then that Zu An moved. He charged toward the chaotic cavalymen and ended the life of those who hadn't died yet while assassinating those who were still on their steeds.

Typically speaking, even though the cavalymen had lost the momentum of their charge, they should have still been in an advantageous position due to their higher altitude from being on the back of a horse, making them hard to deal with. However, Zu An was equipped with the Magical Flashlight. By shining the light here and there, those cavalymen swiftly flew into chaos, creating the best setting for Zu An's Sunflower Phantasm to shine.

He weaved amongst the cavalymen with unpredictable footsteps, occasionally executing the 'Bixie Swordplay' to lop off the heads of the terracotta soldiers.

After having fought with them for a while, he had already figured out what their weakness was—their heads!

Roughly an incense's time later, over a hundred cavalymen returned back to the dust. Half of them died from stumbling over one another, and the other half was killed by Zu An.

"Is that fellow really a third rank cultivator?"

Looking at the Zu An flitting around the battlefield like an apparition, Qiao Xueying felt a chill running down her back. Despite Zu An's low cultivation rank, he looked more like an assassin than the most formidable assassin she had seen. His attacks were simple and clean, devoid of any excess movement. Every time he made a strike, he would be able to reap a life with him.

Meanwhile, Zu An gasped for breath from his overexertion. He had managed to achieve fair results, but he ended up expending himself greatly too.

It was also then that the remaining members of the terracotta soldiers finally snapped out of it. The archers at the backline decided to continue firing even at the expense of shooting their own comrades, resulting in a rain of arrows swiftly falling.

"Quick, hide in the trench hole!" Qiao Xueying pulled Zu An over, afraid that he was too tired to move.

Unexpectedly, Zu An threw a shield to her and said, "What are you running for? We got a shield now."

The best tool to deal with archers were naturally shields. It was out of desperation earlier that Zu An had to dig a trench hole in a hurry earlier, but after clearing away the cavalymen, the battlefield was now littered with shields.

The two of them quickly set up a couple of shields in front of them to conceal their bodies. The arrows rained down on them furiously, but they couldn't hurt them at all.

Zu An made use of this opportunity to ask Qiao Xueying, "We already have shields, but you still wanted to pull me into the trench hole. Be honest, are you hoping that I would embrace you in there once more?"

"Embrace your head!" Qiao Xueying kicked him with a reddened face. It's all this fellow's fault! He always brings out weird ideas that I end up getting thrown off tempo. "Speaking of which, how did you make those cavalymen fall over just by digging those round holes?"

Zu An wagged his finger and said, "That's a secret too. Call me big brother, and I'll tell you."

Qiao Xueying gritted her teeth angrily. She took a look at the battlefield and saw that there were hundreds of terracotta soldiers in front. On the other hand, she was severely injured at the moment. Given the current circumstances, it seemed unlikely that she would be able to live to the end of the ordeal.

Not wanting to die ignorant, she succumbed to her curiosity and muttered almost inaudibly, "Big... brother..."

"???" Zu An.

He didn't expect that Qiao Xueying would actually do as he said. Did the sun rise from the west today?

Seeing the utterly shocked look Zu An was directing toward her, Qiao Xueying's face reddened. She glared back at him and said, "What are you looking at? I've already done what you told me to. Hurry up and tell me the answer!"

"What did you do? I didn't hear clearly," said Zu An with a smile creeping on his lips.

"You're toying with me?" Qiao Xueying flew into a state of rage.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +398 Rage!

Zu An quickly added, "I mean, I really didn't hear it clearly. Just do it once more, and I'll give you the answer right away."

Qiao Xueying bit her lips and her pride clashed with her curiosity. In the end, she tilted her head sideways and murmured, "Big brother..."

"Ah, my good lil' sister." The gleeful smile on Zu An's face enraged Qiao Xueying. "Alright, the theory is actually pretty simple. If you have lived in the grassfield before, you should be aware that grassland horses are afraid of rodent holes. They're afraid that they would break their legs if they accidentally step into it. In order to avoid being affected by my flashlight, the terracotta soldiers covered the eyes of their horses, preventing them from seeing the holes on the ground. But by doing so, they ended up courting their own death.

"As long as we can get the first row to collapse over, the remaining horses behind would follow suit due to the speed of their charge and the fact that the eyes of their horses were covered. As a result, they ended up tumbling over one after another like domino tiles."

“You’ve lived in the grassfield before? Why do you know such details?” Qiao Xueying was perplexed. Based on the intelligence she had received while infiltrating the Chu clan, she was certain that Zu An couldn’t have been to the grassfield before.

Zu An shrugged arrogantly. “Don’t you know that your big brother is a knowledgeable man well-versed in every field? Even without traveling out of the city, I still know what’s going on in the outside world!”

The internet in his previous life was filled with all sorts of weird trivia that one couldn’t earn money off. A true keyboard warrior would make sure to diligently learn such trivia so that they could utilize them in arguments to make them appear informed.

“Pui, shameless!” Qiao Xueying spat with a furious blush on her face. I must have been possessed to actually call this fellow big brother!

The rain of arrows soon ceased after the terracotta soldiers knew that their arrows weren’t working. The first row of footsoldiers began marching forward. Remaining strictly in their formations, they marched their way forward slowly but steadily. The shields in their arms remained raised in order to fend against the mysterious beam of light.

Zu An remembered reading trivias on forums mentioning that the best way to deal with footsoldiers was to strike them from the sides or the rear, messing up their formation. Otherwise, even cavalymen would suffer heavy losses if they had to go through an army of footsoldiers in their formation.

He looked at the steeds lingering in the area. As the cavalymen platoon has just been defeated, quite a few horses were left lying around the area.

“We’ll ride the horses to circle to their back.”

Zu An quickly leaped on top of one of the horses before urging it forward. Even though these horses were made out of mud, they really felt no different from war steeds. In fact, they looked even suaver than the steeds Zu An had seen in dramas.

“Hurry up!” Seeing that Qiao Xueying was still standing in a daze, he quickly beckoned her.

“Yes...” Qiao Xueying forced a smile as she struggled to walk over and leap on top of a horse, only for her body to waver and collapse to the ground.

It was fortunate that Zu An noticed her anomaly and quickly rushed down to catch her. “What’s wrong?”

To his astonishment, he felt something wet on his hand. When he took a closer look at his hand, he realized that it was stained in blood. He quickly flipped her around to take a look, only to see that an arrow was piercing into her back, soaking her robe in blood.

“Why didn’t you tell me that you’re injured? You had the time to bicker with me, but you didn’t have the time to tell me something as important as this?” Zu An tore out a piece of cloth to apply slight pressure on her wound to slow the bleeding.

Qiao Xueying opened her mouth to retort, but she found that she was too weak to mutter a word.

“Bear with it!” Zu An bellowed. He eyed the footsoldier formation, which was steadily advancing on them, and made a quick estimation of the time they had left. Then, he tore off the robe covering her back.

“W-what are you doing?!” Qiao Xueying was alarmed by his sudden action and quickly struggled.

“Stop moving! I’m helping you pull out the arrow, or else there’s no way we can stop the bleeding.” Zu An picked up a dagger from the ground and gently cut away a thin piece of flesh around the arrow. Then, he pulled out the arrow lodged inside her body.

“Ah!” Qiao Xueying’s body shuddered as sweat continued trickling down her forehead profusely.

Zu An quickly applied pressure on her wounds with a piece of cloth as he asked, “Where’s your medicine?”

He had finished his stock in the earlier battle, but he recalled that Qiao Xueying still had some.

“It’s inside my robe, but...”

Before Qiao Xueying could finish her words, Zu An had already slipped his hand into her robe to look for it.

“You!” Qiao Xueying raised her hand to slap him, but she was too frail to do anything at all.

“Stop grumbling! It’s an urgent situation here. Besides, it’s not as if I’ve never touched you before,” said Zu An.

He moved on to apply the medicine on the wound before hurriedly wrapping it up.

His words reminded Qiao Xueying of the encounter they had with one another back at the Chu clan, and her pale face tinged in red.

“It’s a pity that this fellow is unable to...”

As soon as this thought surfaced in her head, Qiao Xueying jolted in horror. What in the world am I thinking about here?!

## **Chapter 176: Desperation**

Seeing that the footsoldiers were getting closer and closer, Zu An dared not to waste any more time. Knowing that Qiao Xueying was in no state to ride a horse by herself, he pulled her into his embrace and rode on the same steed together.

He grabbed a cloth and tied Qiao Xueying onto himself before squeezing his thighs on the horse, urging it to gallop toward the flank of the footsoldiers.

Qiao Xueying was deeply embarrassed by their amorous position, The two of them were currently sitting face-to-face on the steed. In order to prevent her from falling from the shakiness, Zu An had wrapped her thighs around his body, resulting in her sitting in his embrace.



It was fortunate that she was small in size, or else Zu An wouldn't even be able to look at the road ahead of him.

Even though it was hard for her to accept it, she knew that this was the most logical solution out of the quandary they were in. If he had left her be, she would have been torn apart by those terracotta footsoldiers. She was simply too weak to ride on a horse herself, and even grabbing onto Zu An's body was beyond her current means. This was the only position they could take for her not to hinder his movements by too much.

Still, it didn't change the fact that this position was too humiliating! She was too embarrassed to even talk in such a position, so she simply leaned her head against his shoulder and feigned unconsciousness so as to avoid the awkwardness.

Meanwhile, Zu An wasn't in any mood to enjoy the situation either. He was just glad that Qiao Xueying was light enough not to affect his movements by too much.

He skirted around the formation of the footsoldiers, searching for an opening to strike.

When the footsoldiers noticed that he had moved to their flank, they immediately turned around to face him. However, this was within Zu An's expectations. He continued circling around their formation while shining his flashlight in their direction, waiting for an opportunity to strike.

Initially, the archers were still firing their arrows in hopes of suppressing Zu An, but the horse was moving too fast for their arrows to land properly. On top of that, the archers couldn't change their positions freely out of fear of the flashlight, so their maneuverability was severely limited.

As the formation of the terracotta soldiers fell into disarray, the archers gradually lost their coordination, making their arrows far less threatening than they were at the start.

Zu An galloped around the place with all sorts of fancy maneuvers, such as the famous 'S'-shaped and 'B'-shaped movements, but nevertheless, it was only to the point that he was about to puke from the twisting and turning he was doing that he finally saw a small opening he could capitalize on.

He immediately grabbed hold of the opportunity and charged straight forward, heading diagonally to the back of the footsoldiers' formation, where the archers were hiding. He knew that he had to get rid of the archers first, or else their long-ranged attacks would be a huge problem once they regained their momentum.

The furious charge of the war steed scattered the archer formation, putting them in a flustered state.

Zu An leaped down from his horse while sending it straight into the footsoldiers' formation to buy him some time. Using this opportunity, he morphed into a blur and reaped the lives of the archers in the vicinity.

These archers might be a huge threat from a distance away, but once Zu An managed to close the distance, they became no more than docile sheeps waiting to be slaughtered. They were far less skilled than footsoldiers and cavalrymen in close-quarter combat. On top of that, Zu An's swift and unpredictable movement made it impossible for them to even nick his sleeves, let alone stop his rampage.

Meanwhile, Qiao Xueying continued hanging in front of him like a koala bear latching onto a tree. In order not to affect his movements, she gathered whatever that was left of her strength to hug him tightly.

She tried paying attention to his movement skill, hoping that she could figure out the crux behind it now that she was looking at it up close, but it only ended up making her giddy instead. So, she decided to turn her head away and just listen to the voices in the surroundings.

Somehow, listening to the clean sound of his dagger tearing through the bodies of the archers one after another sounded oddly pleasing.

It's fortunate that the young miss isn't around, or else his suaveness would have surely...

A while later, the surroundings finally quietened down. All she could hear was Zu An's heavy breathing. She opened her eyes to take a look, only to see that all of the archers had collapsed to the ground. However, Zu An had also sustained considerable injuries too. No matter how weak the archers were, they had a decisive numerical advantage, so they weren't completely helpless against him.

Noticing that all of the wounds were on his back, Qiao Xueying's heart jolted in shock. "You must have suffered a lot of injuries while protecting me."

"I can't possibly use you as a shield, right?" Zu An shrugged. "Besides, I was the one who tied you in front of me. How embarrassing it would be for me if you were to get injured right before my eyes?"

Qiao Xueying bit her lips.

"Oh right, do you have any recovery medicine?" asked Zu An.

He was already severely injured right from the start, and it was only thanks to the effect of the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra that he was able to deal with the archers. However, the new injuries he had sustained further worsened his state, such that he could feel himself swiftly approaching his limits.

It was good that he had managed to deal with the cavalymen and archers, but there were still another 500 footsoldiers left. It was unlikely that he would be able to last to the end against them in his current situation.

"I don't have any left," replied Qiao Xueying guiltily.

She had been charging from battle into battle, suffering severe injuries one after another. She ended up having to pop a recovery medicine every now and then, resulting in the fast depletion of her medicine.

"I guess I can only wish myself all the best." Zu An took in a deep breath before charging toward the footsoldiers next. He held onto the Magical Flashlight in one hand, intending to use it to open up a path for himself, while tightening his grip around Poisonous Prick in the other.

Under normal circumstances, even a fifth rank cultivator like Shi Kun wouldn't stand a chance against all of these terracotta soldiers, but there was still a small sliver of hope for Zu An here. Their formation had already fallen into chaos due to his earlier disruptions, allowing him to weave amidst them with his Sunflower Phantasm, and he could use the Magical Flashlight to curb the terracotta soldiers if he was placed in a dangerous position.

On the other hand, the terracotta soldiers were also enraged too. They never thought that their cavalry platoon and archer platoon would actually be wiped out by just two individuals. On top of that, the two individuals still dared to charge right into their formation.

He really is looking down on us!

You have successfully trolled the Terracotta Soldiers for +9 +9 +9...

The footsoldiers charged forward like a gushing wave, drowning Zu An out.

Using Sunflower Phantasm, Zu An skillfully dodged the attacks of the footsoldiers while sneaking in attacks here and there. If he really found himself cornered, he would randomly point the flashlight around, hoping to intimidate the footsoldiers so as to buy himself some room.

It was like a small piece of leaf floating in the midst of stormy waters. It looked as if it would sink at any moment, but it still continued to hold on against all odds.

Zu An couldn't tell how long it had been, but his arms started to grow heavier and heavier. He was incredibly glad that his weapon was a dagger at this moment. While it was short, its light weight allowed for speedy maneuvers without taking too much of a toll on his stamina. If it had been a sword in his hands instead, there was no way he could have lasted this long.

Even so, it didn't change the fact that his cultivation was only at the third rank. While both Sunflower Phantasm and the Elementary Swordplay didn't consume too much ki to execute, there was still a limit to his ki capacity. After battling for so long, his ki was nearly on the verge of drying out.

Every strike that he made seemed to be ten times more arduous than usual.

He began to regret it. He should have spent all of his Rage points before entering the Earth Seal. Even if he didn't obtain some sort of cheat artifact or skill, it would be good if he could get some Ki Fruit to raise his cultivation too.

He was just too fearful of exposing his Keyboard earlier. After all, Qiao Xueying was by his side and the unfathomably powerful Mi Li was keeping an eye on him. But if it could save his life, he would rather expose the existence of the keyboard to the rest of the world.

However, it was already too late for regrets. He was surrounded by enemies, and the slightest carelessness would result in his death. In such a situation, there was no way he could afford to multitask and draw the lottery simultaneously.

It was then that ten terracotta soldiers thrust their halberds toward him, and he quickly used Sunflower Phantasm to dodge to the side. Unfortunately, in his exhausted state, the area where he stopped ended up deviating slightly from where he intended to, resulting in him stepping on the broken leg of a terracotta soldier on the ground.

It was a fatal error. He lost his balance and fell sideward.

There was no way the terracotta soldiers would miss out on this golden opportunity. Multiple halberds immediately shot toward Zu An's body right away.

In order to protect Qiao Xueying from knocking against the ground, he had instinctively positioned himself in a way such that her body was exposed on top, but this also meant that the halberds would stab into her first.

So, Zu An used his dagger to deflect two of the halberds, but there were two more that he couldn't knock away in time. Left with no choice, he raised his left arm and blocked the remaining halberds for Qiao Xueying.

Pu!

Two halberds stabbed into his left arm, causing blood and flesh to scatter all around the air. Strength receded from his left hand, leaving him unable to maintain his grip on the flashlight anymore.

More terracotta soldiers marched up then, brandishing their halberds at him.

Knowing that he was really on the verge of death this time around, Zu An roared furiously as he severed the head of the halberds lodged into his arm with his dagger before rolling sideward with Qiao Xueying. This set of maneuver allowed him to dodge the attacks coming his way in this critical moment.

He continued to execute a series of Sunflower Phantasm to regain his momentum, but he was still unable to shake off the terracotta soldiers chasing after him. Left with no choice, he could only squeeze out the remnant of his ki to execute Grandgale one last time, allowing him to instantaneously move a hundred meters away and escape from the encirclement of the terracotta soldiers.

Despite having survived, he couldn't bring himself to feel relieved at all. His ki was really completely depleted this time around, and he had lost the Magical Flashlight too. Perhaps it was due to the distance, he wasn't even able to retrieve it back into the Keyboard.

On top of that, his vision was also beginning to blur. He knew that this was the side effect of having lost too much blood and the overwhelming fatigue.

"It looks like we're really going to die here together..." murmured Zu An as he gasped for his breath.

He couldn't even find the strength within him to remain standing, so he slumped onto the ground and watched helplessly as the terracotta soldiers charged his way.

Unexpectedly, Qiao Xueying didn't respond to him this time around. She stared at his profusely bleeding arm and the tips of the halberds still lodged into his flesh.

She lowered her head and remarked softly, "You might have been able to defeat them if you didn't bring me along with you."

Zu An shook his head and replied, "Even if I didn't bring you along, I still wouldn't be able to defeat so many of them. My cultivation is too low for me to deal with so many soldiers at once."

Qiao Xueying's eyes were still focused on his bleeding arms. "Why did you block that attack for me? You could have lasted a bit longer if you hadn't done so."

Zu An groaned in dismay as he remarked weakly, "Argh, it maddens me just to think about it. Indeed, why did I do that? It's not like you're my wife, so why did I even try to save you? If I had another chance

to do things once over, I'd surely hurl you over to take the blow for me. Goddamnit, it angers me just to think about it..."

Looking at the remorseful attitude he was putting on, Qiao Xueying burst into laughter. "Really, you always come up with the most inappropriate responses to situations. It's no wonder why you're so hated."

"Hey, I just saved your life, right? The least you can do is stop being so foul-mouthed..." rebuked Zu An.

Before he could finish his words, Qiao Xueying suddenly raised her head and planted her soft lips on his.

Zu An widened his eyes in shock.

This time, he had to admit that her mouth didn't taste foul at all. On the contrary, there was a hint of sweetness even.

However, he couldn't understand why she would kiss him at a time like this. Could it be that she has been coveting my body for too long and couldn't resist my charms anymore now that we're already on the verge of death?

It was a long while before their lips parted away. Her pale cheeks flushed red. She was about to say something when Zu An suddenly exclaimed in horror, "That was my first kiss!"

"..." Qiao Xueying.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +999 Rage!

### **Chapter 177: Half Life's Fate**

"What are you looking at? Ah, I get it now. You actually fancied me all this while. You only fought with me often because you wanted to attract my attention!" Zu An thought about how those in their adolescence first came to know of love but didn't know how to express their feelings, so they ended up bullying their crushes so as to attract their attention.

Mm, makes perfect sense.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +999 Rage!

"Forget it, since we're going to die now, I shan't hold it against you," continued Zu An with a sigh. "Don't worry, I won't tell Chuyan what you did to me even if we reunite with her on the way to the afterlife."

"..." Qiao Xueying.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +1024 Rage!

Zu An was still going to continue saying something when Qiao Xueying finally exploded. "Are you done yet?!"

“Not really. I reckon I can go on for three days straight if need be. Heaven has blessed me an astoundingly wonderful mouth—I mean, even you couldn’t resist the temptation to kiss me, no?” said Zu An as he reached out to touch his lips.

“...” Qiao Xueying.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +1024 Rage!

She was really frenzied at the moment. This bastard!!! I must have been possessed earlier to actually bear all that kind of thoughts toward him earlier!

She took a deep breath and harrumphed coldly, “Don’t you feel anything different about your own body?”

“Different? What difference could there possibly... Hm?” Zu An lifted his hand but suddenly froze up in shock. He realized that his injuries had mostly recovered, and even his ki had been fully restored. “W-what’s going on?”

“I just used one of my race’s secret art on you—Half Life’s Fate. From now on, you’ll share half of my lifespan and vitality. As for the recovery of your wounds, that’s just a bonus,” explained Qiao Xueying.

“What? I only have half of your lifespan and vitality?” Zu An was alarmed. “Just what grudge do you hold against me to do this to me? I could have lived to a ripe hundred years of age, but I only have of your lifespan now?!”

“...” Qiao Xueying.

Zu An sighed deeply and said, “Forget it, I know that you’re doing this to save me too. So be it then.”

Qiao Xueying gritted her teeth angrily and spat, “Do you not know how long my original lifespan is?”

Zu An assessed her from head-to-toe before replying, “Well, looking at your curved eyebrows and small lips, I doubt that you’re a person blessed by fate. I reckon you don’t have too many years ahead of you. Seventy to eighty at most, I’d say.”

“Under normal circumstances, I can at least live till 1500 years old, but I shared half of it with you. Yet, you’re still complaining about that?” sneered Qiao Xueying coldly.

Zu An was stunned. “W-what? 1500 years old?!”

Qiao Xueying turned her head away angrily. “That’s the minimum here. As I raise my cultivation further, it’s not impossible for me to live for 2000 years.”

“How can a human live for so long...” A thought suddenly struck Zu An. “Wait a moment. You aren’t a human?”

“Who told you that I’m a human?” Qiao Xueying rolled her eyes. “I just happened to grow up in the human world.”

“What race are you then? Dragon girl? Vixen?” Curious, Zu An tried to pry up her skirt to take a look.

Qiao Xueying was both embarrassed and angered. She quickly pulled her skirt back down and bellowed, "What are you doing?"

"I'm trying to see if you have a tail," replied Zu An earnestly.

"..." Qiao Xueying.

Unwilling to let the matter rest at that, he continued probing on, "Speaking of which, what's your main body then? Ah, I remember that you were able to conjure vines at will. My gosh, you can't be a tree demoness, are you?"

His impression of tree demons stopped at old men forcing beautiful young women into becoming their concubines... Well, at least that was how it was portrayed in dramas.

"You're the one who's a tree demoness! Your entire family is tree demonesses!" screamed Qiao Xueying.

"What are you then?"

"I shan't tell you!" Qiao Xueying looked at the two halberd tips that were still lodged in his arm, and she suddenly found her heart mellowing down once more. "Nothing good will come out of you knowing my identity. It'll only bring you trouble."

"Alright alright, if you aren't going to tell me, so be it," grumbled Zu An.

After the short bicker they had with one another, the terracotta soldiers were already barely tens of meters away from them. He quickly plucked out the halberd tips in his arm before charging toward them with Qiao Xueying wrapped around him.

With his body healed and ki restored, it was as if he had been born anew. The recovery of his injuries meant that he no longer enjoyed the enhancements from the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, but at the very least, he didn't have to be scared of suddenly dropping dead anymore.

Still, the sharp reduction of his speed made it much harder to him to dodge the attacks from the terracotta soldiers even when he was using Sunflower Phantasm. He managed to make a decent comeback, but it didn't take long for his body to be covered in cuts once more.

He looked for an opportunity to escape from the terracotta soldiers before gazing down on Qiao Xueying. Before her doubtful gaze, he leaned down and kissed her.

"Uwuu!" It took Qiao Xueying a bit of effort to struggle free of him in her injured state. She glared at him furiously and bellowed, "What are you doing?"

"Nothing much. Since I was able to be restored back to full health with one kiss, I thought that I could continue recovering from my injuries by kissing you a few more times."

Zu An was perplexed as to why it wasn't working. Do I need to maintain the kiss a little longer?

"Ridiculous!" shouted Qiao Xueying. "Half Life's Fate is the most valuable secret art for those of our race. It can only be used once in our lifetime!"

"It can only be used once in your lifetime?" Zu An was stunned. "You gave your most valuable thing in your life to me?"

Qiao Xueying's face reddened. "I just didn't want to die here, so don't think too much into it."

"You could try to cook up a better lie. You were still mired in despair earlier," remarked Zu An.

"Why do you have so many things to say? I just suddenly don't want to die anymore, alright? Besides, I'm only here to help you save the young miss!" bellowed Qiao Xueying.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +213 Rage!

He still wanted to continue asking about it, but the terracotta soldiers had already caught up with him at this point, so he could only turn his focus back to the fight.

At this point, the terracotta soldiers were already completely confused. They were certain that Zu An was on the verge of collapsing a moment ago, but all of a sudden, he was filled with energy once more.

Are humans supposed to be as resilient as cockroaches?

They watched helplessly as their comrades fell one after another. Despite each and every one of their desperate attempts to inflict a wound on him each, they were still unable to end his life.

And things only took a worse turn when that human picked up the glowing stick. The burst of light would force them back whenever they wanted to launch a decisive assault, thus hastening their defeat.

After a bitter fight, Zu An finally managed to defeat all of the terracotta soldiers, but he left one of them alive at the very end.

He noticed that the woman in his embrace had already lost consciousness. In the first place, she was already severely injured and lost a lot of blood, but she still activated her race's secret art to save him. The huge decrease in her vitality caused her to fall into a worse state.

Zu An initially tried to anger her so as to keep her conscious, but it was impossible for him to continue talking to her while he was busy dealing with those terracotta soldiers. By the time he noticed it, she had already lost consciousness.

He placed his fingers on her philtrum and noticed that her breathing had grown incredibly shallow.

Putting aside the fact that they still had to overcome the Heaven Seal afterward, even if he brought her out right now, it was unlikely that she would be able to last till he finally found someone to treat her.

So, he decided to slow down his pacing at this crucial moment and finish spending all of his Rage points. He was hoping that he could get something to save her life. He did draw 'Faith in Brother Spring' several times in the past, so things were not completely hopeless yet.

If he could draw some artifacts to help him deal with the Heaven Seal, that would be even better. Just the Earth Seal itself nearly had them killed, and the Heaven Seal was guaranteed to be even harder.

As for why he chose to draw the lottery here, it was because he didn't want to do it in front of Mi Li, which was why he intentionally spared the final terracotta soldier for the time being lest he got automatically teleported out for clearing the Earth Seal.



He had 49,217 Rage points at the moment, much less than the usual amount. The terracotta soldiers did supply him with quite a bit of Rage points, but due to their lacking intelligence, the amount he received from each of them was limited.

In any case, he had 492 tries here. As Qiao Xueying's life was already hanging by a thread, Zu An couldn't be bothered to do his usual rituals anymore, diving straight into the lottery.

## **Chapter 178: You Actually Did that Kind of Thing to Me**

Thanks for participating... Thanks for participating... Ki Fruit... Thanks for participating...

Zu An would usually feel depressed when he got 'Thanks for participating', but he wasn't even in a mood to brood over it anymore. He simply continued redrawing the lottery again and again, praying hard to get what he wanted.

However, his complexion slowly turned more and more awful. He didn't get 'Faith in Brother Spring' or any artifact or skill. He did get quite a few Ki Fruits, drawing 49 of them... but that was not what he needed right now!

There were only two more draws left right now.

"Shit, I can't possibly be that unlucky, can I? Oh please, Jade Emperor, Gautama Buddha, and all of the great gods of the world, please bless me so that I can draw a 'Faith in Brother Spring'!" Zu An prayed.

However, the result of the first draw was still 'Thanks for participating'...

With this, he was really down to his last try. A conflicted look appeared on his face as he murmured, "Great gods above, please bless my draw. I'd willingly not draw anything good for the next time if I can get 'Faith in Brother Spring' this time around!"

Zu An was just about to click on the draw button when he still felt worried, so he supplemented, "Forget it, I'll stake my luck for the next three times here. As long as I can get 'Faith in Brother Spring', I'd rather not draw any skills or artifacts at all for the next three times!"

He was feeling the pinch even while making the promise as he felt that he was making a huge loss here. However, thinking about how Qiao Xueying sacrificed half of her lifespan in order to save him and was currently on the verge of death, he felt that he should at least do this much for her.

He had never felt so uneasy drawing the lottery before.

This shaky hands pressed down on the enter, and the light marker began moving all over the Keyboard. When it finally stopped on the number '1', he was so moved that he could burst into tears. "O' heaven, it looks like I'm still your favored one!"

But looking at it from another perspective, the fact that he wasn't able to get it in the past few hundred draws, only for it to finally appear after he made a vicious vow felt like the world was playing a nasty prank on him.

In any case, he quickly supported Qiao Xueying up. Her body felt frighteningly limp and cold, making his heart skip a beat. He hurriedly poured 'Faith in Brother Spring' into her mouth.

However, Qiao Xueying was unconscious at the moment, such that she wasn't even able to swallow the fluid by herself. Soon, a droplet of medicine leaked from the corner of her lips.

It made Zu An's heart bleed. That's worth more than gold! Left with no choice, he could only pour the medicine into his own mouth before feeding it to her mouth-to-mouth. He gently guided the medicine down her throat bit by bit.

Fearing that the precious medicine would leak out, he dared not to move his mouth away, leaving the two of them in an amorous position.

'Faith in Brother Spring' was as incredible as ever. Not too long after she drank the medicine down, Qiao Xueying began to slowly open her eyes. The first thing she saw was a magnified view of Zu An's face in front of her, and it left her dazed by the sight for a moment before quickly snapping out of it. She immediately pushed him away and shouted, "What are you doing?!"

As she spoke, she subconsciously raised her arm to wipe her mouth because she felt a moist sensation by the corner of her lips.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +123 Rage!

"Why are you wiping it away?! That's precious medicine over there!" exclaimed Zu An. "I'm not even complaining about your saliva here, yet you're acting as if I took advantage of you?"

Qiao Xueying's body trembled. "You pervert! How could you do such a thing to me while I'm unconscious?!"

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +168 Rage!

What's with this woman? She's so angry, but she only provided me with so few Rage points? What happened to her usual 999s?

"What do you mean by 'such a thing'? I'm saving you here, alright! You wouldn't swallow the medicine I fed you earlier, so I had no use but to force-feed you."

Qiao Xueying was stunned. She could indeed taste medicine on the tip of her tongue, and the medicine seemed to be of rather high quality at that. She had never drunk anything as potent as this before.

She could feel most of her injuries recovering. Even the arrow wound on her shoulder didn't hurt anymore; there was an itch instead, a sign that the wound was in the midst of recovering.

It was then that she realized that she had misunderstood the other party. A hint of awkwardness appeared on her face as she said, "Ah... I'm sorry. I hope that you can understand that any woman would react greatly when placed in such a situation."

"That's because they're strangers. It's not the first time the two of us are kissing anyway, so why are you reacting so greatly?" retorted Zu An.

Qiao Xueying's face reddened. "How can that be the same? I did it earlier in order to save you. It's not like I really wanted to kiss you or anything."

Zu An felt wronged. "I also did that earlier to kiss you... Pui, I mean to save you!"

Qiao Xueying felt a little awkward at the situation. She untied the bindings on her and put some distance between the two of them. "Anyway, I kissed you earlier in order to activate Half Life's Fate. There's nothing more to that. We aren't a couple, so please do not kiss me casually in the future."

"Do not kiss you casually?" Zu An was amused by that remark. "In other words, I kiss you as long as there's a legitimate reason or if you agree to it?"

Qiao Xueying felt that her mind was getting muddled by all of the semantics he was arguing about. She exclaimed furiously, "How could I possibly agree to that?"

"That's hard to say," Zu An said with the smile of a wily, old fox.

Qiao Xueying was made a little uncomfortable by his smile, so she averted her gaze and murmured, "There's not a chance that would happen... Hm? Wait a moment..."

She suddenly realized something and turned over to glare at him, "If you had such a medicine, why didn't you bring it out in the first place? Did you intentionally do it in order to trick me into using Half Life's Fate?"

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +666 Rage!

There were all sorts of conspiracy theories filling her mind. I actually fell for this fellow's despicable plan and gave away my most important thing!

"I'm being slandered here," exclaimed Zu An. "I paid a huge price in order to get that medicine out at the last moment. If I had it all along, I would have drunk it long ago! Besides, I didn't even know of that Half Life's Fate or something skill in the first place, so how could I have tricked you into using it?"

Qiao Xueying thought that those words made sense. Half Life's Fate was her greatest secret, such that even Shi Kun was unaware of it. It was unthinkable for Zu An to possibly know of its existence prior to this.

However, when she scanned the surroundings, she couldn't help but ask doubtfully, "How did you manage to exchange for that medicine in here?"

"I have my means, of course. Just like how you paid a heavy price to use Half Life's Fate, I had to pay a heavy price for this medicine too!" Technically speaking, Zu An wasn't lying. Just thinking about how he wouldn't get anything good in the subsequent three rounds of lottery draws made his heart bleed.

However, Qiao Xueying seemed to have misunderstood his words. She thought that he had used some sort of skill he could only use once in a lifetime like her, which made her feel incredibly grateful.

"Actually... you really don't have to treat me so well."

Zu An waved his hands and said, "Putting aside our history, you did save my lives several times here, so I won't leave you to the lurch. I count my debts quite clearly."

Qiao Xueying stared at Zu An in a daze as emotions rippled in her eyes.

Why is it that some people simply don't understand such simple reciprocation? In times of danger, all he cares about is himself.

Seeing tears welling up in Qiao Xueying's eyes, Zu An shook his head and said, "You're feeling moved with just this much? Tsk tsk tsk, you must have led a miserable life."

"Nonsense, who is moved here? Sand just got into my eyes, that's all. Look at the dust flying all around the place!" Qiao Xueying turned her face away as she grumbled obstinately.

"Since you've fully recovered, go and deal with the last terracotta soldier. I'm too tired, so I want to rest a little," said Zu An as he sat down.

"Alright." Not daring to look at him, Qiao Xueying unhesitatingly made her way over to subdue the last terracotta soldier.

"Pitiful fellow. Looks like he has turned into her punching bag," remarked Zu An. He took out the 49 Ki Fruits he had just drawn earlier and swallowed them. A warm surge of energy flowed through his ki meridians, leaving him feeling as if he was soaked in a warm spring. He felt incredibly comfortable.

Hm?

To his astonishment, Zu An realized that he managed to fill up the sixth formation after consuming the 49 Ki Fruits. One must know that the sixth formation should have taken him 610 Ki Fruits in order to fill up!

He had barely managed to fill up the fifth formation earlier from consuming a leaf of the Evanescent Lotus, so how in the world did he manage to fill up the sixth formation so quickly?

But then, he quickly remembered the hellish battle he had just been through, as well as the severe injuries he had suffered along the way. Had it not been for Qiao Xueying's Half Life's Fate, he would have already died numerous times.

The Phoenix Nirvana Sutra was a skill that increased one's cultivation through suffering a beating. It would appear that he hadn't suffered the beating in vain.

Of course, his greatest takeaway here was still the several centuries of lifespan he had gained from Half Life's Fate. It was such a huge gift that he didn't know what to say at all.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Qiao Xueying was walking back after dealing with the terracotta soldier when she noticed that Zu An was staring at her weirdly.

"I suddenly feel that you look pretty nice," replied Zu An with a chuckle.

He intended it as an empty compliment, but taking a closer look, her skin was fair like snow and her eyes twinkled like the stars. He instinctively neglected her appearance previously since she was dressed as a maid, but now that she was wearing normal clothes, her beauty was really starting to shine through. It was no wonder why she was ranked amidst the top in the Sweetheart Ranking.

Qiao Xueying blushed upon hearing those words. She spat, "Leave those words to fool Chu Chuyan instead."

"You aren't even going to call her young miss anymore?" asked Zu An.

"I am a spy who infiltrated the Chu clan, not a real maid of the Chu clan. Why would I continue calling her young miss?" Qiao Xueying sounded oddly exasperated. "Besides, I made such a huge sacrifice in order to save her this time around. I should have repaid the debt I owed to her all this while."

"Alright then..." Zu An still wanted to say something, but there was a sudden gust of wind that reduced the corpses of the terracotta soldiers into dust, causing them to dissipate into nothing. Soon, the space around the two of them distorted as the familiar feeling of weightlessness swallowed them.

By the time the two of them regained their awareness, they were already back at the underground palace.

Noticing that the two of them were standing at the center of the Earth Seal, they immediately realized what was going to happen next from their previous experience, and they exclaimed in unison, "Be careful!"

As they shouted those words, they grabbed the other party to leap away from the seal. But before they could move away, they suddenly became conscious of each other's movements and fell in a daze. Then, the Earth Seal suddenly opened up, and they fell to the third level.

"Oh? You were still arguing with one another earlier, but all of a sudden, the two of you started holding hands and worrying about one another. I wonder what happened inside to bring about such a huge change," Mi Li's teasing voice echoed from the surroundings.

The two of them quickly retracted their hands. Qiao Xueying turned her head sideward and murmured, "Who's worried about him? I would have lent a helping hand even if my companion was just a pig."

"I'm not that kind-hearted as you. If it was a pig standing beside me, I wouldn't have bothered to even reach out to it," replied Zu An.

"Who are you insulting here?" Qiao Xueying immediately turned over and glared at him.

"Didn't I pull you earlier? That proves that you're not a pig." Zu An shrugged.

"I don't need you to prove that I'm not a pig..." Barely as those words came out of Qiao Xueying's mouth, she suddenly realized how weird her words sounded.

"Looks like men really can't be trusted. Your wife is still in danger, yet you're still in the mood to flirt around with other women. Hah..." sneered Mi Li.

## **Chapter 179: Heaven Seal**

Zu An frowned.

This woman seems to bear a great deal of ill will for men. It seems like Qin Shihuang has really broken her heart back then, resulting in her hatred for all men in the world.

“Who’s flirting with him? Where’s the Heaven Seal? Let’s proceed to the third stage!” exclaimed Qiao Xueying.

Mi Li’s voice echoed once more, “How unexpected. I never thought that the two of you would be able to break the Human Seal and Earth Seal. While you seem to have struggled quite a bit, it doesn’t seem like you have exhausted yourself too much. This is truly a miracle. I’m aware of Ying Zheng’s means; it shouldn’t have been possible for the two of you to clear the two trials at all.”

Zu An knew that she was speaking the truth. For the Human Seal, if not for Qiao Xueying’s extendable hair tripping over the copper giants and the razor-sharp Poisonous Prick, it was unlikely that he would have been able to defeat those astonishingly resilient, self-recovering copper giants.

It was even much more of a close shave in the Earth Seal. Had it not been for the Magical Flashlight suppressing the terracotta army and the skillful maneuvers of Sunflower Phantasm, he would have died many times over. He was confident that even an expert of Chu Zhongtian’s caliber wouldn’t have fared better than he did if placed in the same situation.

Even so, he only survived due to Qiao Xueying’s sacrifice via the Half Life’s Fate.

“Since you knew that we wouldn’t succeed, why did you still put us through the risk?” asked Zu An.

A peal of euphonious but chilling laughter echoed. “I have nothing to lose anyway. Even if you fail, all I have to do is to wait a while longer for the next batch of people to enter the underground palace. Time is one thing that I don’t lack.”

“...” Zu An.

“...” Qiao Xueying.

“So we were just your guinea pig?” Zu An gritted his teeth when he thought of the various times he nearly lost his life in the trials.

“You had the choice but to challenge the seals. I didn’t force you into this,” replied Mi Li coldly.

Zu An really felt like leaving there and then, but knowing that Chu Chuyan was still waiting for him, he could only swallow his anger down and said, “Fine, let’s go!”

He walked up to the Heaven Seal together with Qiao Xueying and stepped on top of the formation together.

There was a burst of white light. When the feeling of weightlessness finally disappeared, the two of them froze in place. They thought that the Heaven Seal would be fraught with dangers, but their surroundings hardly looked threatening at all.

It was a peaceful sight of the countryside. There was a stream flowing gently with a small bridge above it. The light breeze delivered the songs of the birds far and wide. In the far distance, men could be seen plowing the field and women weaving cloth by their homes. Chickens were roaming the fields in search of food, and dogs were lying lazily under the sun.

“This is the Heaven Seal?” muttered Qiao Xueying uncertainly.

All she could see was a peaceful countryside village; she couldn't imagine any danger coming from here. However, Zu An remarked deeply, "Don't be fooled by appearances. This village might just be filled with powerful experts."

"Powerful experts?" Qiao Xueying looked at the people around and replied, "Doesn't seem to be the case. While few of them do emanate some ki, their cultivation doesn't seem to be even at your level. They can't possibly be experts."

"What do you mean 'even at my level'?" demanded Zu An angrily.

It was then that they realized that their hands were linked once again, and they quickly retracted their own hands.

"It's just in case we get teleported to different places!" Qiao Xueying's eyes swam around the area as she explained.

"That's what I was thinking too." Zu An was also a little astonished by how he kept instinctively grabbing the hands of that foul-mouthed woman.

In order to alleviate the awkwardness, Qiao Xueying quickly added, "Ah, I think we shouldn't trust that woman's words too. The fact that she's sealed here means that she's an extremely dangerous person. If we release her without preparing any means to curb her, there's a chance that she might renege on her promise and not save Chu Chuyan. In fact, it's completely possible for her to turn against us too."

Zu An knew that she was referring to Mi Li, and he replied, "I know that too, but there's no other option at the moment unless we're willing to watch helplessly as Chuyan is tributed."

Qiao Xueying fell silent. It was possible for the two of them to escape alone, but Chu Chuyan would be a goner. She wouldn't be able to live with her conscience if that were to happen.

Zu An gazed at the faraway village and said, "Let's focus our effort on dealing with the Heaven Seal first. Judging from the dangers we faced from the earlier two seals, the Heaven Seal is likely to have dangers hidden in here too."

Qiao Xueying nodded in response as she scanned her surroundings warily. It was fortunate that Zu An's medicine had allowed her to recover greatly. She wasn't back to her peak yet, but she was at least able to protect herself now.

They walked over to the entrance of the village, intending to approach one of the villagers to ask about the situation here. Unexpectedly, a dog that was basking in the sun suddenly started barking at the two of them.

Zu An initially thought that it was some sort of ferocious beast, but no matter how he assessed the dog, it looked just like a native Chinese dog to him. Put in a world of cultivation, it looked as harmless as a sheep.

However, its barks quickly piqued the attention of the villagers. Quite a few of them brought hoes and carrying poles with them and surrounded the two of them warily. A brawny man stood forward and warned deeply, "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Zu An clasped his fist and said, "Hello, we were passing by the area when we lost our way. May I know where we are at the moment?"

The brawny man frowned. "With that suspicious ratlike face of yours, you must be a fugitive. Leave our village right now, or else we'll be calling the constables over!"

"..." Zu An.

What the hell? It's one thing for you to say that I'm a fugitive, but suspicious ratlike face? How can this dashing face of mine be ratlike?!

You should really get your eyes checked out!

Zu An was infuriated and about to lash out like a shrew, but Qiao Xueying pulled him aside and stepped forward with a smile, saying, "Hello, fellow brothers. My brother and I encountered some bandits a few days ago and ended up having to flee desperately for our lives. It wasn't easy for them to shake them off, and we happened to stumble by your village right after. It's not our wish to disturb your peace, but we lost our luggage and possessions along the way, and we're now thirsty and hungry. May I ask you to spare some water for us?"

The brawny man's attitude immediately became much more amicable upon seeing Qiao Xueying's beautiful appearance. It was also only then that he noticed that the back of her dress was stained in fresh blood, which further piqued his pity. He quickly said, "Those bandits sure are hateful to harm a young miss like you! Come in and have a rest, we'll prepare some food and water for you. We'll get a physician to prescribe some medicine for you too."

Qiao Xueying was soon escorted into the village by a huge group of people. Before leaving, she even blinked her eyes at him, expressing her glee in full.

Excuse me?

What's wrong with these villagers? I approached them amicably, but they tried to chase me away as if I'm a thief. Qiao Xueying's body was cloaked in blood and clearly doesn't look like a good citizen at all, but they ended up getting so friendly with her?

Bloody hell! Is this world all about appearances? But my appearance doesn't lose out to her at all...

In the end, Zu An could only attribute the matter to the fact that Qiao Xueying was a girl.

Hmph, despite the honest looks of those villagers, they're all old perverts!

He trailed behind the group with a nasty look on his face, watching with a sullen expression as the villagers delivered a cup of water into her hands and even invited an old physician over to prescribe some medicine for her.

"Isn't Snow being too unguarded here? Isn't she worried at all that the water might be spiked?" retorted Zu An.

It was fortunate that Qiao Xueying hadn't lost herself in the preferential treatment she was receiving. She thanks the villagers before making use of this opportunity to gather some information, "Big brother Chen, may I know where am I at?"



It had only been moments since she entered the village, but she already knew the surname of the brawny man. It looked like women really had an advantage when it came to this sort of stuff.

“This is the Dong Commandery’s Chen Village,” replied the brawny man.

“Dong Commandery?”

Qiao Xueying was stunned. She didn’t recall there being a ‘Dong Commandery’ in the Zhou Dynasty.

Meanwhile, Zu An frowned upon hearing those words. He was aware that Qin Shihuang was from the Qin Dynasty, and he vaguely remembered there being a Dong Commandery under the Qin Country’s jurisdiction. It was located in the Henan, Hebei, and Shandong provinces.

What’s happening in the Heaven Seal?

He had been carefully examining his surroundings all this while, and he noticed that most of the villagers were ordinary civilians. Even the few cultivators amidst them were not too strong either. It was hard to believe that this was the final trial of the Soul Suppression Seal.

“Miss Qiao, you should hurry up and leave after taking a rest. You’re of unknown background, so our village dares not to keep you with us. If anything happens, our entire village might be collectively punished,” said the brawny man named Chen Wei.

“Collective punishment...” mumbled Zu An.

The Qin Dynasty was known for its draconian laws that employed collective punishments. In this era, farmers were bound to their lands, forbidden from leaving their ‘allocated areas’. People who roamed into other territories like Zu An and Qiao Xueying were either nobles or fugitives. It would be one thing if they were nobles, but if the local magistrate found their village guilty of harboring fugitives, everyone here might be killed under the crime of failing to report the matter to the authorities. Given so, there was no way they would dare to accept strangers.

“Thank you, big brother Chen, and all of the uncles and aunties here too.”

Qiao Xueying didn’t want to put them in a spot, so after chatting for a while longer, they left the Chen Village. While waving the villagers goodbye, Qiao Xueying asked Zu An softly, “What do you think is going on in this Heaven Seal? I don’t get what’s happening at all.”

“I’m also having trouble making sense of this,” replied Zu An with a shake of his head.

Qiao Xueying pondered for a moment before suggesting, “Should we try searching the area to see where the other roads lead to?”

“There’s no point doing that,” replied Zu An. “Have you forgotten how it was like for the Human Seal? We tried to enter the city, but we couldn’t get in no matter what we tried. Since we were teleported to this village, the crux is likely in here.”

Qiao Xueying bit her lips. She also knew that it was likely to be the case, but this didn’t bode well for them since there was nothing for them to work with. “What should we do now then? We can’t even enter the village.”

Zu An rolled his eyes. “Are you dumb? We can just sneak in at night to take a look!”

Qiao Xueying sighed deeply and remarked, “These people treated me quite well. I really hope that they won’t be our enemies.”

“The Chu clan treated you fairly well too, but you didn’t have any trouble turning your back on them,” scoffed Zu An.

Qiao Xueying immediately blew up. “Are you done yet? Your words have been carrying thorns since a while ago!”

“Is it? I’m just speaking the truth,” replied Zu An with a shrug before averting his gaze awkwardly.

Qiao Xueying suddenly burst into laughter. “I get it now. You must be jealous because you saw them treating me well despite having ignored you.”

“Rubbish! Would I care about all that?” exclaimed Zu An as he walked away. “Let’s take a look around the perimeters of the village to familiarize ourselves with the terrain first. It’s going to be sunset soon.”

He wasn’t too worried about time here because he realized that the flow of time in the trial was different from the outside world. As long as he didn’t stall for too long, he should still be able to make it in time.

“Just as I’ve thought! Heh, what a narrow-minded man he is!” Qiao Xueying followed him with an amused smile on her lips. Her mood suddenly felt much better than before.

## **Chapter 180: Antares Occupying the Heart**

The village wasn’t too big, having only just dozens of families or so.

It was already nightfall by the time they finished circling the perimeter of the village. The men working on the fields had returned home, and joyous laughter could be heard from some of the residences. Of course, there were also unfortunate ones filled with shoutings and sighs.

In any case, this was indeed a typical historical village.

Zu An and Qiao Xueying snuck into the village and listened in to the conversations from various households, hoping to gather some clues.

“Hm? There are some weird noises coming from there.” Qiao Xueying tugged Zu An’s sleeves and pulled him toward one of the residences.

Soon, when they were right by the residence, they were finally able to figure out what those weird noises were—heavy breathing and the creaking of the bed. There were also some flirtatious whispers between a man and a woman too...

Qiao Xueying’s face reddened. She clicked her tongue and said awkwardly, “How lewd it is of them to do this at such an early hour.”

"You're too accustomed to the extravagant life of rich clans that you don't understand the hardship of commoners. Most of them are too poor to afford oil lamps, so what else do you expect them to do after sunset?" replied Zu An.

Qiao Xueying covered her ears as she scoffed, "Spoken like a true expert in the topic. Enough, let's head to the other residences."

"Ah, this reminds me of a quiz. Do you want to give it a try?" asked Zu An.

"What quiz? Tell me about it." Qiao Xueying refused to believe that her intelligence was lacking, and the atmosphere was still quite awkward after hearing those amorous sounds coming from the residence. Thus, she decided to give it a try.

"Divine Physician Ji invented a medicine where the woman will succumb if the man ate it, and the man will succumb if the woman ate it. If both the man and the woman took the medicine, who do you think will succumb first?" asked Zu An.

Qiao Xueying's face reddened. She cursed softly, "That old man really is a darned pervert! To think that he's actually respected as a divine physician! Instead of bringing solace to those suffering, he wastes his time coming up with this sort of weird stuff!"

Zu An burst into laughter. "You can criticize Ji Dengtu all you want once you return to Brightmoon City. So, what's your answer to that question?"

"How could I possibly know the answer to a question like this?!" Qiao Xueying turned her reddened face away.

"Heh, I knew that there's no way you can figure out with that small brain of yours. Alright, I'll give you the answer. Naturally, it's the bed that succumbs first!" Zu An laughed heartily.

Qiao Xueying glared at Zu An and sneered, "If you dare to speak of such crude jokes before Chu Chuyan, she'll definitely chase you out of the Chu clan."

"Heh. She might chase anyone away from the Chu clan, but definitely not me," replied Zu An.

"I sure do wonder where your confidence comes from." Qiao Xueying harrumphed before stomping away to look for more clues.

Zu An shrugged leisurely as he quickly caught up with her.

A while later, they arrived at the village chief's residence, which happened to be the brawny man Chen Wei's home. It turned out that his father was the village chief.

As the village chief, it went without saying that their family was much better off. At the very least, they could afford oil lamps. The shadows of their silhouette could be seen on the walls as they chatted by the windows.

With a fearful voice, the village chief said, "Antares Occupying the Heart; that's the omen of an impending crisis!"

However, Chen Wei thought nothing of it. "Father, 'Antares Occupying the Heart' is nothing more than an ancient legend exploited by those in power to achieve their goals. How could something like this foretell disaster?"

"You don't get it because you're too young... When the world believes in it, even something that's false can become true. A crisis can be made to happen by human will," replied the village chief with a shake of his head.

"Even if 'Antares Occupying the Heart' does happen as the legends foretell, the one to suffer would just be the emperor. What does this have to do with ordinary civilians like us? In fact, it'll be a day of celebration for us all if that tyrant dies!"

"Shush! Are you tired of living?!" The horrified village chief immediately muffled his son's mouth. "That's a crime that warrants nine familial exterminations! If someone hears your words and reports it, we'd all be goners!"

Chen Wei harrumphed in response, "It's not like there's anything wrong with what I just said. The phenomenon of 'Antares Occupying the Heart' is something for the emperor and the nobles to worry about. It has nothing to do with us."

"I hope so..." The village chief's voice was filled with worry.

The two of them lost their mood to continue the conversation, so they soon retired for the night.

"What does 'Antares Occupying the Heart' mean?" Zu An was perplexed by the conversation. He was just about to ask Qiao Xueying when he noticed that she was staring at the sky in a daze.

"What's wrong?" Zu An also turned to look at the sky, only to see stars scattered amidst the cloak of darkness. He couldn't see anything amiss.

Thinking back, it had been many years since he saw such a starry sky due to light pollution in the city.

With a worried look on her face, Qiao Xueying pointed to a certain part of the sky and said, "Do you see the two brightest stars over there?"

Zu An looked in the direction where she was pointing toward and saw two stars that were visibly brighter than the others.

"The one on the upper left side is Antares, an ominous star thought to be the omen of disaster and death. There are three stars on the lower right side of it; they form the Heart Mansion of the Twenty-Eight Mansions[1]. The brightest one at the center represents the Son of Heaven, the emperor, whereas the two by the side represents the crown prince and the common populace. Right now, the Antares has halted inside the Heart Mansion, positioned right beside the star representing the emperor. This is one of the most ominous celestial events known as Antares Occupying the Heart."

"Celestial event?" scoffed Zu An. "Do you believe in such superstition too?"

Having been brought up in a world of science and logic in his previous life, there was no way he would believe in such stuff. But on second thought, his Keyboard system, the existence of cultivation, and all of the supernatural elements in this world weren't things that could be explained scientifically.

“How can that be called superstition? Every time this phenomenon occurs, it would end with the sudden death of an emperor or a prominent official. Sometimes, it could even result in great bloodshed!” Qiao Xueying was displeased with Zu An’s nonchalant attitude.

This is a common knowledge everyone knows of, so why does that fellow think nothing of it at all?

A thought suddenly surfaced in Zu An’s mind. “Say, could the trial of the Heaven Seal be related to this Antares Occupying the Heart?”

Qiao Xueying’s eyes widened in astonishment. “I hope not, or else we’ll be in grave danger.”

As she spoke, she suddenly realized that Zu An’s face was inexplicably getting brighter. She quickly turned to the sky and saw that the night sky had suddenly brightened up. A burning ball of flames was descending from the sky.

“A meteor!” exclaimed Qiao Xueying.

“You actually know of meteors too?” asked Zu An in surprise.

“Of course! Don’t you know that powerful fire element and earth element cultivators have a forbidden art where they can summon meteors?” Qiao Xueying felt that Zu An was making a huge fuss out of nothing.

The fireball grew larger and larger in their eyes, such that they could see the layer of flames cloaking its surface. Zu An murmured, “Where do you think the meteor will fall? Surely we can’t be so unlucky as to have it fall right where we are, right?”

Barely after he said those words, the meteor suddenly exploded, fragmenting into multiple smaller fireballs. The impact of the explosion seemed to have affected its trajectory, resulting in it descending toward their direction instead.

“You and your wretched mouth!” roared Qiao Xueying angrily. She grabbed his arm and immediately fled the scene.

The flames might appear to be faraway at first sight, but the speed of its descent was incredible. It took only a few breaths to appear right before their eyes.

Qiao Xueying’s face paled in horror. Such naturally formed meteor shower was far more powerful those produced by a cultivator’s forbidden art. It might look no more than a speck earlier in the sky, but as it came into proximity, the span of the flames turned out to be so vast that there was no way they could escape from it in time.

It was Qiao Xueying pulling Zu An away at the start, but it soon turned into Zu An pulling her away instead.

Using Sunflower Phantasm, Zu An weaved around the inferno rain and escaped. While it was easy for Zu An to avoid getting hit by the meteor shower, it was hard for him to cope with the shockwave produced when each fragment struck the ground. One must know that this bundle of flames was as destructive as a missile!

On top of that, the heat swiftly engulfing the area was threatening as well, swiftly devouring the oxygen in the area.

If Zu An had been a normal person, just a single bundle of flames falling in his vicinity would be able to take his life. Fortunately, his body was far more resilient than it used to be, allowing him to withstand the shockwaves ravaging the surroundings for the time being.

It was just that the meteor shower was endless; the flames kept pattering down, and it looked like there was no end to them. Zu An felt his entire body aching, and the air he breathed in was so hot that it felt like it was going to sear his lungs.

Qiao Xueying flicked her arms, and countless green leaves swiftly wrapped around them, forming a barrier that shielded them from the impact of the shockwaves.

"I feel like the wisest decision I have made today is to bring you in with me. I didn't know that you have so many functions to you," remarked Zu An.

"And the dumbest decision I have made today is to come in here with you. I feel like I've made a huge loss," grumbled Qiao Xueying.

Another loud explosion occurred, causing Qiao Xueying to let out a groan from the impact. She tumbled into his embrace as the leaf barrier she produced showed signs of scattering. However, she quickly rechanneled her ki to stabilize the barrier.

Noticing the blood sipping from her lips, Zu An quickly said, "Stay closer to me and make your barrier slower. You'll be able to better conserve your energy this way."

"No way in hell!" Qiao Xueying took a step back and intentionally made the barrier even larger.

"The hell! Are women all that unreasonable and irrational?" Zu An couldn't understand why she was doing this at all. So, he reached forward to wrap his arm around her waist and pulled her in toward him. By keeping a close posture, they could reduce the surface area of the barrier significantly, thus reducing the impact of the shockwave on them.

"What are you doing?!" Qiao Xueying struggled.

However, Zu An held her arm tightly and snorted impatiently, "What are you making such a huge fuss for? It's not the first time we're hugging and kissing anyway. There's bound to be more dangers further on in the Heaven Seal, so don't you think you should save up some energy to deal with the threats that'll be coming our way later on?"

Qiao Xueying knew that he was making sense here, so after a moment of hesitation, she decided to follow his instructions and decrease the size of her leaf barrier.

It took a while before the explosions finally subsided. Qiao Xueying finally dispelled the leaf barrier, and the two of them headed out from their hiding spot to take a look around. The surroundings had been utterly ravaged. The village had been set ablaze, and human figures could be seen rushing around to rescue the injured and put out the flames. Cries could be heard here and there.

Zu An fell silent.

The meteor shower was earlier was terrifying, but it's not enough to be considered as the trial of the Heaven Seal. Could there be more to this?