

Immortal 751

Chapter 751: Rune Master

"Get lost!" Yun Yuqing exclaimed. Since Zu An was in critical condition, she was clearly unhappy. When she saw the fatty with the malicious expression run at her, she raised her hand and traced a rune symbol into the air with her finger.

The cryptic and profound rune glowed with a purple radiance. It was as if a transparent shield had formed all around her and Zu An out of thin air.

Contempt flickered through the short and robust man's eyes. Forget about this frail looking thing; even if it were a heavy-duty shield from the army, it wouldn't be able to handle a full-powered swing from him.

He continued to swing his hammer forward. At the same time, he added thirty percent more power, concerned that the rune might really have some tricks. In his decades of life as a warrior, there weren't many things he couldn't smash through. If it survived the first strike, he would just swing again.

However, the loud rupturing noise he had expected never happened. He felt as if all of his strength had sunk into a ball of cotton. His eyes almost popped out of his head, because he saw his hammer sink into the shield membrane, yet it still couldn't be torn apart.

He used even more strength, making the membrane cave in more. It seemed just about to touch Zu An and that woman's body, but it just couldn't continue further.

"Be careful!" his comrade cried out in alarm.

The robust man also sensed that something was wrong. He subconsciously thought of running, but as soon as he stopped exerting force, the cotton-like shield suddenly changed. It was like a spring that had been compressed to its limit. It would immediately expand if given even the slightest opportunity.

The man felt an earth-shattering force rush toward him. He had used almost all of his strength earlier, so how could he hope to match it? Blood gushed out of his mouth as his body hit the ground like a broken sack of sand.

He tried to climb to his feet, but he couldn't get back up even after trying for a long time. His body instead continued to twitch, and blood trickled out endlessly from his mouth. There were even some pieces of his internal organs mixed into the blood.

Zu An was incredibly shocked as he 'watched' all of this happen. Yun Yuqing's move was just too splendid and formidable.

The man with the red-tasseled spear and the man with the two rings quickly arrived at their comrade's side. The spear user squatted down and quickly examined his condition, saying, "At least sixty percent of his bones are smashed! He has internal injuries as well. He might never recover to his peak again, even if we save him."

The man with the two rings frowned. He looked intensely at Yun Yuqing and said, "Woman, you have quite the vicious methods."

Yun Yuqing harrumphed. "Your companion has no one else to blame but himself. This rune's ability is 'ricochet'. He only suffered this much force because he relied too much on strength. Why would he be in such a sorry state if he hadn't been so ruthless?"

Zu An inwardly voiced his praise. He hadn't expected it to be a force-reflecting skill. My girls are all so outstanding.

"A rune master?" the spear user responded with a frown.

The atmosphere immediately became tense. After all, there were many cultivators in this world, but rune masters were rare and precious. Enchanted weapons, defensive tools, and formations all needed the skills of rune masters. The imperial palace and various influential figures' residences all had defensive formations made by rune masters. The higher the level of the runes, the greater the status of the master.

Low-level rune masters were one thing, but high-level rune masters were on an entirely different level. They were mostly concentrated in the Royal Academy, and every single one of them was treasured like a pearl. They were a strategic resource publicly acknowledged by the empire. It was to the point that they were all incredibly arrogant, unwilling to even show respect to the court.

This woman had been able to injure a seventh rank expert so easily with a rune. She was definitely a high level rune master. However, those rune masters in the Royal Academy were all old already. Where had such a stunning female master come from?

The man with the two rings changed his attitude as well. His tone softened as he said, "Excuse me, madam rune master. We don't share any grudges, so how about we let this matter go? We won't bother you about our comrades' injuries, so please don't..."

Halfway through his sentence, however, he thrust his hands outward. The gold and silver rings on his arms quickly flew toward Yun Yuqing. He had clearly only had two rings before, yet in that instant, they split into countless golden and silver rings. They shot straight at Yun Yuqing's vital areas.

Zu An was so upset he almost opened his eyes and cursed the man. You're way too shameless! What the hell? You sounded like you were trying to compromise, but then you attacked while she was distracted?

Fortunately, Yun Yuqing's feet tapped lightly against the ground, and she was able to dodge off to the side. The silver and gold rings continued to chase after her relentlessly.

With so many rings moving together, it was as if a yellow and white snake were pursuing her. There were even several smaller 'snakes' that separated and waited in areas where she might land, forming a large net.

However, Yun Yuqing didn't land at all. Her feet tapped against the air, leaving layers of flickering runes. She continued to walk on air, her figure graceful and elegant. It was as if a goddess were walking on water.

The man with the two rings flicked his wrist, and the countless shadows returned to his wrist, becoming two rings again.

The spear user was shocked and upset, exclaiming, "Are you mad? You've offended a rune master!"

The man with the two rings had an overcast expression as he replied, "Do we have any other choice right now? If we can't kill and silence her, we won't live anyway."

The man with the red tassel spear sighed. "Whatever, succeed or die trying it is. Everyone, attack her together!"

A flash of vicious light rushed out as soon as he finished speaking. Then, his spear thrust outward like a dragon.

Even though they were enemies, Zu An had to admit that this fellow looked like a calm and composed man when he wasn't doing anything, but once he did act, his spear gave off an incredibly threatening feeling. It really felt as if he would fight to the death here. These were spear skills that had definitely been tempered on a corpse-littered battlefield.

Zu An became serious as well. A siege crossbow, coordinated blade users, that hammer user, this spear user... There are just too many signs of involvement from the military. Don't tell me it really was the Qin clan who did all of this? What should I do about Chuyan and Youzhao, who are stuck in the middle?

However, now wasn't the time to think about such things, because the man with the rings had already made his move. His rings attacked Yun Yuqing's vitals unpredictably. The deathsworn soldiers also used their blade formations to cut off possible avenues of escape.

Yun Yuqing's expression was still calm. Her slender fingers quickly formed seals as she drew several strokes in front of her. Flickering runes began to float around her, one after another.

"Be careful! Don't let her create that formation!" The man with the rings was furious and shocked. He tried to attack the runes in the air, but they seemed like intangible objects. His rings passed straight through.

However, the surrounding ki was getting agitated. The atmosphere gradually became more and more harsh, clearly showing that these runes weren't just decorations, but were instead forming an absolutely terrifying attack.

No wonder the people of this world all feared rune masters! Their attacks were just too mysterious and profound. They were almost completely impossible to trace.

However, the man didn't feel despair. His initial alarm and fury disappeared. Instead, a strange smile gradually appeared on his face. He rushed in a certain direction and shouted fiercely, "Fire!"

In that instant, a massive streak of black light fired from a nearby building. A terrifying force arrived in front of Yun Yuqing.

The man had deliberately feigned panic and helplessness precisely to force her into this position. It was clear that after facing powerful opponents over the years, even a high level rune master had unknowingly fallen into their trap.

Even though rune masters had all types of tricks, their bodies were much more frail than those of ordinary cultivators. Once she was blasted by such a siege crossbow, none of her tricks could save her.

Yun Yuqing was greatly shocked. Most of her attention had been focused on the formation. However, she had only completed half of it. If she managed to finish, then these people wouldn't have any chance of turning the situation around. But she had never expected to run into a hiccup now!

It wasn't easy for her to dodge all the frenzied attacks coming her way. Her strength was spent, and the siege crossbow was too fast. How could she possibly evade in time?

I'm finished! Yun Yuqing thought as she subconsciously gave the wall corner a look. She wanted to see that man one last time before she passed on... Huh? Where did he go?

"Are you looking for me?" said a gentle voice beside her ear. She felt herself sink into a warm hug. Then, the terrifying siege crossbow brushed right past her.

Chapter 752: Yin-Yang Man and Cat Woman

"Ah Zu!" Yun Yuqing was surprised and happy when she turned around and saw that the one carrying her was Zu An.

When he saw the fine sweat on Yun Yuqing's forehead, Zu An realized that she had been incredibly high-strung all this time. He said somewhat apologetically, "You've really had a hard time."

"I'm fine." Yun Yuqing quickly looked at Zu An's chest and asked, "What about your wound?"

Zu An laughed and replied, "Don't worry, I'm fine. Did you forget that I'm the world's hardest man?"

Yun Yuqing blushed. She harrumphed. What kind of situation were they in right now? Despite that, this fellow still didn't forget to say such things.

"Impossible!" The black-clad figures looked at Zu An in disbelief.

What kind of power did a siege crossbow have?! A normal person might have already been blown to smithereens. It was already incredible for someone to still be in 'one piece' to the extent Zu An had been earlier. So why was it that not only had he not died, he instead looked completely fine? Only his complexion had paled a bit.

After all, they had all seen how he had been nailed to the wall by that massive crossbow bolt. Even if he didn't die, he should still have sustained serious injuries. His internal organs should have been blasted rotten from the impact!

Once one cultivated to the seventh rank, they would obtain powerful regeneration abilities. However, they would still need at least half a month to recover! And yet, how long had this fellow taken? A stick of incense?

"Let me get rid of these annoying fellows first." Yun Yuqing's finger traced a final stroke through the air. A purple rune appeared in midair, and then the other faintly discernible runes became several times brighter.

“Tempest’s Exorcism!” Yun Yuqing exclaimed as her hands formed a seal. The runes shone brilliantly, firing countless lasers.

All the black-clad figures dodged frantically. The seven blade-wielding deathsworn took out multiple to defend themselves. Unfortunately, when the purple lasers struck their shields, they pierced straight through. Bloody holes opened up all across the deathsworn’s bodies. They fell to the ground one after another, dead.

Countless spear mirages appeared in front of the spear user, dispersing the purple lasers one after another. However, he knew he couldn’t keep it up forever. As such, he tapped his foot against the ground, launching his body and spear into a helix-shaped spin. He flew directly toward Yun Yuqing.

He knew that fighting against a rune master in long range combat was complete suicide, and only through close combat would he have a chance at victory. Unfortunately, a purple barrier of light flickered in front of him, blocking his advance.

The spear master roared, and his body began to spin even faster. Sparks flew between the tip of his spear and the barrier.

When he saw that the speartip had managed to penetrate the barrier, Zu An quickly moved in front of Yun Yuqing to protect her, calling out, “Be careful!”

Yun Yuqing smiled and said, “Don’t worry, this formation will use his power and add it to its own. The more power he exerts, the stronger its defenses will become.”

Zu An was stupefied. Isn’t this skill kind of ridiculous? Wouldn’t you be dead once you got trapped inside?

However, he also quickly realized that all things had a limit. If an opponent greatly exceeded Yun Yuqing in strength, they could just use brute force, or perhaps just tank straight through the purple rays.

Hadn’t that old dragon taken on her ultimate move when Zu An was on his way to the capital? He had still been fine afterward. Unfortunately, the opponents here were still far from being able to compare to that old dragon. Eventually, the spear could no longer resist the powerful force, and with a crisp crack, it snapped clean in half.

The tall and slender man became listless when he saw his spear break. His spear had been his life for many years. He had never parted with it, even when he slept. He was already one with the spear. His master had told him that as long as the spear still existed, so too would he. If the spear perished, he would as well.

As soon as that thought entered his mind, his body was penetrated by several streaks of purple light. Blood burst from his body. Even the powerful regenerative abilities of a seventh ranked cultivator had limits. It was completely impossible to recover from so many fatal wounds.

But even as he closed his eyes, he continued to stand in place without falling, like a spear.

Zu An sighed. “This person already reached a level where he was one with his spear. If not for the fact that he had encountered a rune master like you, rather than a close combat specialist, it would have been hard to say who would come out on top.”

Yun Yuqing nodded in deep sympathy. "His spear skills were indeed formidable."

There was only a single person left standing. Countless silver and gold rings floated around him, protecting him like an eggshell and continuously fending off the surrounding rays.

However, those purple lasers were just too formidable. Many of the ring shadows vanished as soon as they made contact with the lights. Soon, the rings had decreased by a third of their original size.

The man was enraged. "How much longer are you all going to just watch?!" he screamed at the top of his lungs, his voice full of bitterness and resentment.

However, it was in that moment of distraction that a purple ray penetrated through the center of a ring and hit his chest. His movements became sluggish. Then, he was hit by even more lasers, covering his body in bloody holes

He collapsed, frantically gasping for breath. It was clear that he wouldn't make it. At that moment, he felt a bit of regret. Why the hell had he chosen rings with holes in their centers instead of shields?

However, he was even more resentful about another matter. He held out to his last breath, his eyes wide as he stared at a certain direction.

Zu An warned Yun Yuqing in a suppressed voice, "Be careful, there are people hiding in the shadows. One of them is even a spirit element cultivator."

Yun Yuqing voiced her acknowledgment. She looked in another direction with a grave expression.

A figure out of view let out a seductive and flirtatious laugh. "Weren't you so arrogant that you looked down on all of us before? What, you finally remembered us now that you're dying?"

The figure's laughter was filled with the sound of melodious bells, making their voice seem to seep into the souls of those who heard it.

A male and female daoist slowly entered area. Their attire was quite different from that of the black-clad figures.

The man's clothes were half white and half black, divided perfectly down the middle. What was even more terrifying was that his face was actually half white and half black as well. He carried a soul banner in one hand, and his entire figure looked eerie and sinister.

A zebra? A yin-yang man? Several terms popped up in Zu An's head.[1]

However, his attention was quickly drawn to the other person, whom even Yun Yuqing was subconsciously drawn to. She was a woman who walked with an alluring, catlike gait. She was covered in a blue mantle from head to toe, with a hood that completely covered her face. Zu An and Yun Yuqing could only vaguely make out her chin and her bright red lips. They could also vaguely see some golden hair on either side of her face.

The reason why their eyes had been drawn to the woman, apart from her mysterious outfit, was her massive chest. Not even her strange attire could hide it. Beneath her mantle were two fair legs. There was a red rope tied around her right ankle; attached to it was a small and exquisite bell that made pleasant sounds whenever she walked.

But right now, the man with the silver and gold rings didn't feel any sense of admiration, and instead felt only endless resentment. He said, "Jia Sili, Shu Shuhao, master won't let you go once he finds out that you watched us die without doing anything."

Zu An was surprised. This fellow seemed to be cursing them on the surface, but in reality, he was telling Zu An their names. He probably wants me to get rid of them if I end up escaping. Tsk tsk tsk, just how much do you have to hate them to do this? You're betraying a comrade even as you die.

The woman named Jia Sili giggled. "Didn't you already use those deathsworn soldiers to test out that woman? We were also learning through you. But it seems you couldn't handle being the ones who were used instead?" She added, "Besides, don't try to scare us using your master's name. I still haven't settled my debt with all of you over what happened on the southern border back then!"

Chapter 753: Spirit Master

The man with the rings was shocked, his eyes widening. "I knew you creatures from the southern border weren't trustworthy! All nonhumans are treacherous and evil!"

The gloomy-looking, half white and half black man had an intimidating smile as he retorted, "You only realized that now?" His voice was hoarse and unpleasant to listen to, like that of a crow. It was as if there were sharp stones grinding in his throat.

The man with the rings said sternly, "You two already pledged your loyalty to the master and established a vow. You'll definitely suffer the wrath of the world for this."

The one called Jia Sili giggled coquettishly. "But we didn't do anything wrong...? It's not as if we were the ones who killed you; they did. It doesn't have anything to do with us."

"You're merely getting others to do your dirty work for you! Master definitely won't let you two go!"

The man with the rings gritted his teeth in anger. His voice was full of resentment.

"Your master's already pretty helpless himself; I really don't think he has the energy to deal with us!" Jia Sili giggled and said, "As for that vow... We'll be free after helping him with this matter. Actually, aren't we the ones avenging you here? You should be thanking us."

The man with the rings opened his mouth. He seemed to want to curse the two, but his injuries were too grave. He had already used up all of his strength after saying so many things, so how could he still hold on? A mouthful of blood poured out, and then he passed away.

Zu An clicked his tongue in wonder. This woman seemed pretty well suited to the path of a keyboard warrior, no? Even though her words didn't sound all that special, they always stabbed right where it hurt. She had practically killed that man with just words.

He thought for a bit and then said, "Since the two of you have a grudge with their clan's master, how about we just shake hands and move on? We can all just do what we need to do."

Jia Sili burst into laughter, her entire body rocking back and forth. "Oh my, this little brother here... I'm honestly so tempted to agree, but we unfortunately made this little vow, you see. We have to complete this mission. Sorry!"

As soon as Jia Sili finished speaking, Zu An suddenly felt that needle-pricking feeling in his head again. Yun Yuqing was already clutching her forehead, her face full of pain.

Zu An harrumphed. He had been caught off guard the previous time, and that was why he had ended up being schemed against. But now that he knew this person was a spirit element expert, he was already on guard.

He summoned the Hundredwarble. Its bright and clear cry instantly sent rings of invisible sound waves out. The stabbing feeling vanished the instant the Hundredwarble appeared, and Yun Yuqing also returned to normal.

Zu An was quite curious. After all, Yun Yuqing was also a spirit element expert due to her Devil's Eye. Why did she seem to have suffered from that attack?

However, he quickly realized that that was an ability of the Devil Race, and they were currently in the capital. She probably didn't want to expose her real identity, because that would bring her too much danger.

"Ah?!" Jia Sili voiced her surprise. She clearly hadn't expected Zu An to retaliate so fiercely. She clutched her head and screamed in pain.

How could Zu An let such a great opportunity go? His figure flickered, and then he reappeared in front of her. The Tai'e Sword was already in his hand, stabbing straight at her throat.

His Grandgale's instantaneous movement, together with the Bixie Swordplay he had practiced to perfection in Brightmoon City, made his sword thrust fast and precise. He didn't allow his opponent any room to breathe.

Even though he couldn't see Jia Sili's expression, that smile that had always been lingering at the edge of her lips was already gone without a trace. It was easy to imagine just how alarmed she was right now. She subconsciously moved backward to evade, but how could she possibly dodge such an attack?

And yet, at that very instant, a soul banner was thrust into the sword's path, blocking Zu An's strike. Jia Sili was also pulled back several zhang.

Peak of the eighth rank... Zu An didn't continue to attack. The recoil force from that momentary interaction had told him that this white and black yin yang man was definitely not an easy opponent. Meanwhile, if Jia Sili was his partner, then these two were probably at the same rank. Furthermore, it was clear from their unique outfits that they cultivated unusual paths. It was best to collect more information for now.

"Thank you, big brother Shu Shuhao!" Jia Sili patted her chest in alarm after surviving by the skin of her teeth, thanking her comrade.

That yin-yang man is named Shu Shuhao. Why does he have such a weird name?[1] Zu An thought mockingly. However, as they had come from the southern border, he didn't think too much of it.

Shu Shuhao harrumphed and said, "Stop showing off and being an idiot. You were almost killed by that brat. Don't you find that embarrassing?"

“Oh no, big brother Shu, please don’t get mad! It has to be this way for it to be fun.” Jia Sili had a lovely smile on her face as she looked at Zu An. “Little brother over there, I didn’t expect you to have the spirit element. We didn’t see that in the information at all!”

“The spirit element is such a rare talent; how could I have the fortune of having something like that? It’s still cute sis over here who’s the true expert in that field,” Zu An responded. In truth, he was curious. The legendary spirit element was something only one in a million cultivators had. He had never met someone with it before, yet he had ended up facing one today. What a pity it was that she was here for his life.

“Cute sis?” Jia Sili was stunned at first, and then her body rocked back and forth with laughter. “That little mouth of yours really knows how to please me.”

Yun Yuqing suddenly harrumphed. “Ah Zu, don’t let that woman fool you. She isn’t some spirit element cultivator, but rather a Spirit Master from the southern border. She excels at spirit subduing arts, and her methods are difficult to defend against. You need to be careful.”

“Spirit Master?” This was the first time Zu An had heard of the term.

Jia Sili voiced her surprise. She was full of curiosity as she looked at Yun Yuqing, remarking, “This lady over here knows quite a lot. There aren’t many of us Spirit Masters left already.”

Yun Yuqing looked away. She clearly didn’t want to look at the woman’s flirtatious appearance or talk to her.

“Oh my, oh my! Look at how pure and innocent this girl is acting. I’ll have big brother Shu over here properly subdue you and teach you a lesson. Let’s see if you can continue to act so arrogantly then,” Jia Sili said with a giggle. Her voice was charming and gentle, but the words she spoke were incredibly sinister.

Shu Shuhao stared at her coldly and replied, “Not interested. I’m only interested in ice-cold corpses. Those are the world’s most perfect works of art.”

Zu An and Yun Yuqing were both speechless. This guy likes corpses too?

Yun Yuqing warned Zu An through ki transmission, “Ah Zu, you need to be careful. He’s probably an expert from the southern border’s Gu clan. The Gu clan’s methods are often impossible to prepare against.”

“Gu clan?” Zu An was stunned. “Are they also part of the fiend race?”

Yun Yuqing replied, “It’s a race that’s half human and half fiend. They’re proficient in all types of strange and grotesque Gu arts. The power they can display isn’t inferior to that of any cultivator. This person looks like a corpse Gu who specializes in the manipulation of all types of corpses. You won’t even be able to rest in peace if you die under his hands.”

Jia Sili laughed. “Isn’t that easy enough? We just need to turn her into a corpse.”

When he heard those words, the originally deadpan and apathetic Shu Shuhao’s eyes lit up. He stared at Yun Yuqing. “Hm, even though this woman’s face is covered, judging from her curves, she’ll definitely be

a wonderful work of art once she's turned into a corpse puppet. Ahhhh... I'm getting excited just from thinking about it. I'll definitely sleep with her every night once I turn her into a corpse puppet!"

Zu An was speechless. What the fuck? I thought those who played around with corpses were already disgusting enough, but this guy is even weirder! He has no interest in living beauties and only feels something after turning them into zombies?

"You're courting death!" Yun Yuqing exclaimed. was still a respected madam after all. She was normally always treated with respect. She was someone with great dignity even among the demon race. How could she endure this type of slander? She screamed and thrust her short sword at th man.

Zu An was speechless. Sis, you're a rune master! Shouldn't you be fighting against him at a distance? Mages who are no good at close combat really aren't good fighters...

He was worried that something would happen to Yun Yuqing and moved to help her. However, he was stopped by Jia Sili, who said, "Little brother, why don't you keep this big sis company for a while?"

Chapter 754: Should I Just Watch with Folded Arms?

Zu An's eyes shifted to her chest as he said, "Cute big sis, if you're going to call me brother, then just call me brother. Why do you have to add the word 'little' to it?"

Jia Sili chuckled and replied, "Whether you really are small or not, won't this big sis know if I give you a try?"

Zu An was speechless. He was usually the one who teased others, yet the tables had been turned today. This woman was a true master of the field!

He looked at her mantle in surprise, asking, "Why are you covering your face with a mantle? Judging from your figure, you should be really pretty. Isn't covering yourself up like this a bit of a waste?"

Jia Sili's body jerked back and forth from laughing too hard. "Little brother over here really has a sweet tongue. Big sis will make sure you can leave this world painlessly later."

"Looks like there's no choice but to fight..." Zu An sighed. His figure flickered as he thrust a sword at Jia Sili. But then, he sensed that stinging pain in his head again.

Zu An harrumphed. "The same little trick again!" He immediately used Hundredwarble to counter it.

The other party had suffered badly from using that skill last time, yet she dared to use it again. There was definitely something fishy going on.

Sure enough, he saw that a void outline of a massive bell had appeared around the other party. It was like an enlarged version of the bell around her ankle. Hundredwarble's invisible sound waves smashed into the bell, releasing waves of sharp and beautiful ringing sounds.

Jia Sili kicked off the ground, sending her body drifting backward. It was clear that as someone who was proficient in spirit element techniques, once she was prepared, Hundredwarble's attacks could no longer injure her.

Jia Sili's fair white legs were faintly discernible within her cloak as the bell tied to her ankle rang. Even though they were fighting to the death, Zu An had to admit that it was a beautiful scene. However, he wasn't the type to show mercy because his opponent was attractive. His sword struck ruthlessly at her vital areas.

"Little brother, you really are vicious! Every single attack is aimed at such a dangerous place." Jia Sili's figure darted left and right, disappearing and reappearing in different places.

"A blink ability?" Zu An finally experienced the frustration others had when they fought against him. Of course, this blink ability was entirely different from his. His instantaneous movement was in a straight line, and it took him farther, while this blink could only move within a short range. To a certain degree, it was more similar to his Sunflower Phantasm.

Mages were always full of tricks!

Zu An thought to himself that he had really chosen the wrong profession. Look how cool these mage skills were! Meanwhile, the path he had taken was that of a stupid meat shield warrior. He felt incredibly lame. At least I don't use a spear. Nothing good has happened to spear users in history. Huh... Wait, if I say I don't use a spear, Yun Yuqing over there might be the first to disagree.

Just then, he suddenly felt an indescribable feeling of fear. Hundredwarble subconsciously activated, allowing him to recover a second later. Was it a kind of fear skill? He had played a lot of games in the past, so he naturally wasn't surprised that something of the sort existed.

He couldn't just keep letting her have the initiative. As such, he immediately launched his counterattack. He asked, "What are you looking at?"

Jia Sili had just been about to dodge, but when she heard those words, her movements paused momentarily. She involuntarily replied, "I'm looking at you, sh*thead!"

Zu An had been waiting for this opportunity. His Tai'e Sword rushed out like a shooting star and planted itself into her throat.

"Urg..." Jia Sili clutched her throat with one hand, while her other hand pointed at him in disbelief as if she wanted to say something. However, in the end, she collapsed without being able to say anything.

Shu Shuhao saw the situation from the opposite side of the area. "Jia Sili!" he roared furiously as he charged over.

Only now did Zu An realize that the ones who had died earlier—the man with the gold and silver rings, the red-tasseled spear user, and the golden hammer user, as well as the blade wielding deathsworn—had all been 'revived'. No, they hadn't been revived, but had instead turned into zombies.

Yun Yuqing had mentioned that that fellow could use corpse Gu-like things to control corpses. As such, these were likely his corpse demons.[1]

The bloodstained corpse demons charged over with sinister expressions. Zu An discovered, to his irritation, that even though these corpse demons looked like zombies, they actually retained a large portion of the host's original cultivation and skills! What the hell? How is that fair?! Wouldn't this guy be unrivaled if he were on a battlefield?

While Zu An was getting a headache wondering how to deal with these corpse demons, the sound of orderly hoofbeats suddenly filled the area. Then, countless Embroidered Envoys jumped over the courtyard wall. Even though the corpse demons were formidable, they suffered a disadvantage in terms of numbers and were quickly detained.

Shu Shuhao saw that the situation was unfavorable. He immediately fled, even abandoning the corpse of his comrade Jia Sili. However, no one could have expected a hand to suddenly reach out in midair, perfectly clamping down on his throat.

"Cough, cough..." Shu Shuhao struggled frantically, his legs waving about. He tried everything he could to pry open that hand, but it was as immobile as a metal clamp. His black and white face turned purple as he choked.

The large hand twisted. With a crack, Shu Shuhao's intense struggle immediately came to a screeching halt.

Zhuxie Chixin! Zu An immediately recognized the figure on the courtyard wall. Having an organization backing him really was the best after all! He hadn't had to work too hard to defeat these people himself.

"Commander Zhuxie!" Zu An greeted him as he walked over with a smile.

However, Zhuxie Chixin's face remained expressionless. He pointed at Yun Yuqing and said, "Arrest this Demon Race monster!"

"Understood!" The Embroidered Envoys voiced their confirmation.

Zu An was startled and angry. How did they know that Yun Yuqing was of the Demon Race? After all, she had even made sure not to use her Devil's Eye skill, precisely so she wouldn't expose herself.

However, he already couldn't be bothered to think about that, because Yun Yuqing was already injured. There were so many Embroidered Envoys here. If they all attacked at the same time, Yun Yuqing wouldn't have any chance.

He couldn't just watch a beauty be ruined like this. He stopped the Embroidered Envoys' attacks and brought Yun Yuqing to a vacant area. Then, he quickly said to Zhuxie Chixin, "Sir Zhuxie, isn't there some kind of misunderstanding here? She isn't a Demon Race monster, but rather Madam Wu!" He could only see if he could get by with that identity now.

Zhuxie Chixin harrumphed. "Through our investigation, we've already found out that she is indeed Madam Wu, and she's also a Demon Race monster. Sir Zu, please don't let yourself be deceived."

Zu An's face became overcast. This was the worst case scenario.

Yun Yuqing gently pushed him away and said, "This is how things are. You don't need to sacrifice yourself for me." Then, she walked over on her own and faced the ruthless Embroidered Envoys alone.

Zu An's expression changed several times. He knew that in the current situation, watching everything happen without doing anything was the smartest choice. But this woman had already engaged in close skinship with him, and she had even saved his life twice. How could he just watch without doing anything?

He walked over and grabbed Yun Yuqing. He took a deep breath, and then said to Zhuxie Chixin, "Commander Zhuxie, even if she really is from the Demon Race, she was a king's wife all these years. She has never acted improperly and was instead content with her position. Why is there such a need to pursue this matter? His majesty has conquered the world, and he has also done his best to convert the various races. There are many fiend races even in the capital. Hasn't his majesty been magnanimous and benevolent, allowing them to coexist with humans?"

Zhuxie Chixin said indifferently, "The Demon Race is different from other fiend races, and the arrest of Madam Wu has been mandated by his majesty himself. What Sir Zu has said just now already makes you a suspect of collusion. Out of consideration for our past interactions, I will not pursue this matter further. Please step aside."

Zu An fell silent. He felt that this matter was strange. Why would the emperor know about Yun Yuqing's true identity? Could it be that there had been traces left behind from when she had used the Devil's Eye to deal with the Embroidered Envoys in King Wu Manor? But why did they know that Yun Yuqing would just happen to be here?

Just then, Yun Yuqing spoke to him through ki transmission. "Ah Zu, thank you, but this matter has nothing to do with you. Please don't act recklessly."

After saying those words, she looked at Zhuxie Chixin. Her eyes erupted with purple brilliance. "I've heard that Sir Zhuxie is one of the most powerful cultivators under the grandmaster level. I wish to experience your skills for myself today."

Chapter 755: Moments Before Death

"Devil's Eye!" Zhuxie Chixin's expression grew serious. "Everyone, don't look into her eyes!"

But unfortunately, it was already too late. There were many Embroidered Envoys whose eyes were filled with purple radiance. Then, they turned their weapons on their companions.

How could these Embroidered Envoys have predicted that these comrades who had fought with them through life and death would attack them? They immediately suffered serious casualties. Then, the Embroidered Envoys whose eyes were shining purple rushed at Zhuxie Chixin while screaming.

Zhuxie Chixin was furious. He immediately evaded the attacks and defended himself, because these were all Embroidered Envoy elites. He didn't want them to suffer injuries, which was why he had to hold back a great deal.

Unfortunately, the Embroidered Envoys who were being controlled by the Devil's Eye were absolutely ruthless. All of them screamed while attacking his vitals.

These individuals had been proficient in coordinated attacks to begin with. Even with Zhuxie Chixin's profound cultivation, he was still quickly placed in a difficult situation, since he had to hold back.

After some time passed, he roared in anger. He knew that he was going to have to pay a hefty price as well if he continued this, so he no longer held back. His figure turned into a red afterimage, quickly cutting through the Embroidered Envoys' formation.

He was just too fast. The others couldn't keep up at all. Miserable screams filled the place as they flew outward one after another.

Soon afterward, all of the Embroidered Envoys collapsed. They were all clutching their arms or legs while screaming in pain. Zhuxie Chixin hadn't taken their lives, and had instead broken their arms and legs to temporarily rob them of their mobility.

Even though their injuries were serious, they would at least live. After a few months of recovery, they could return to their posts. However, the Embroidered Envoy's power would weaken substantially for a few months.

Zhuxie Chixin stared at Yun Yuqing and exclaimed furiously, "Disgraceful woman, you're courting death!"

Then, with a flick of his wrist, a terrifying chain flew out from his sleeve. At the end of the Soul Reaping Chain was a pitch-black sickle. Its bloodthirst and the hatred of the vengeful souls within could be sensed even from far away. This sickle had clearly reaped the lives of countless powerful cultivators.

Yun Yuqing's expression was serious. Her eyes erupted with purple light, even leaving a bit of purple color in Zhuxie Chixin's eyes.

However, his eyes became clear again a moment later. He harrumphed and said, "I might have really been controlled if your cultivation were a bit higher. What a pity, you're still too far off!"

That pitch-black sickle had already somehow appeared behind Yun Yuqing by the time Zhuxie Chixin finished speaking. Yun Yuqing's foot tapped against the ground. Runes flickered by her feet, and she quickly evaded. At the same time, her finger began to draw runes in retaliation.

Unfortunately, her opponent was Zhuxie Chixin. How could someone who was nearly a grandmaster give her this chance?

That sickle reappeared at an inconceivable angle, tangling around Yun Yuqing relentlessly. It was to the extent that Yun Yuqing had no choice but to give up on drawing her runes several times to dodge. She was interrupted more than ten times and couldn't even draw a single complete rune.

Zu An's brows furrowed deeper and deeper. He noticed that Yun Yuqing had less and less space to evade. He reckoned that she would be done for in less than a stick of incense's worth of time.

He sighed. In the end, he still wasn't the type to have a heart of stone. His figure flickered, and then he instantly appeared beside Yun Yuqing. He brandished his sword, blocking the attack that would have taken her life. Then, he quickly said, "I'll help you hold him off. Hurry and draw a rune."

A rune master like Yun Yuqing needed precisely a meat shield like him to buy time.

Yun Yuqing opened her mouth. Her beautiful eyes glistened with tears. However, she didn't say anything useless and instead quickly drew a rune. She knew that Zhuxie Chixin's cultivation was far above theirs. Only by gambling with both of their lives would there be a chance of life.

Zhuxie Chixin was shocked and furious when he saw this. "Zu An! Do you know what you're doing right now?!"

Zu An sighed. "Thank you, commander, for your concern. Unfortunately, she has saved my life twice, so I can't just watch her die."

"You're committing treason!" Zhuxie Chixin screamed. "There will be no place left for you in this entire Great Zhou Dynasty, in all of human society! Is it worth it?"

Even Yun Yuqing subconsciously looked at him, because she wanted to hear how he was going to reply.

Zu An sighed. "There are many things in this world that can't be weighed in terms of 'worth' or 'not worth'. I only know that if I don't save her today, I'll spend the rest of my life in conflict and suffering."

Zhuxie Chixin's expression immediately turned cold. "Since you're willing to ruin your own prospects for a woman, then you can just... die as well!" His aura surged powerfully. His Soul Reaping Chain instantly split into many, and countless scythes rushed at Zu An.

Zu An focused a hundred and twenty percent of his attention, but he still couldn't dodge, or else Yun Yuqing would be instantly diced into pieces behind him. His expression was grim as he used everything he had learned to defend against the myriad of scythes. Soon afterward, there were countless cuts on his body from which blood dripped.

The gap in cultivation between the two of them was just too great. It was futile no matter how hard he tried. Fortunately, he had the Primordial Origin Sutra, which helped him repair his body's injuries. Otherwise, he would have already been turned into a bloody mist by those terrifying scythes of death.

Zu An sighed. He remembered how easy it had been for Yun Jianyue to deal with this scythe back in the Eastern Palace. Only when he faced it now did he realize just how terrifying the scythe was.

"Tempest's Exorcism!" Yun Yuqing screamed, half-sobbing. She watched as Zu An protected her without taking a single step back, no matter how much he suffered. She really wished she had another hand so she could complete the rune formation even faster.

Myriad runes flickered in midair, and endless streaks of purple light erupted from them. All of them had the same target: Zhuxie Chixin.

Zhuxie Chixin's expression changed. He flicked his arm, retracting all of his Soul Reaping Chains. Then, he quickly spun them above his head, forming an umbrella-like barrier to defend against the incoming purple rays.

Yun Yuqing's forehead was covered in sweat. She maintained the runes with great difficulty while telling Zu An, "I can't injure him; I can only stall him. You need to run, or else we'll both die here!"

Zu An's expression was overcast, but he replied, "That might not be the case!" His figure flashed as he rushed in Zhuxie Chixin's direction.

Zhuxie Chixin sneered when he saw Zu An charge toward him. "You're courting death!" The sickle in his hands blocked Zu An's path, spinning like a meat grinder. Zu An would turn into mincemeat before he even got close.

Zu An raised his Tai'e Sword, and then roared out one word after another, "Domain of Power!"

In that instant, a powerful pressure spread outward from the Tai'e Sword. The Tai'e Sword pursued the sword dao of power, and this was its domain. However, this skill had a cooldown time of roughly a month. That was why Zu An wouldn't use it unless he had absolutely no choice.

"This is..." How could Zhuxie Chixin defend himself from such a terrifying force? His entire body began to subconsciously tremble. This was a force that shook his very soul. A momentary sluggishness overtook the Soul Reaping Chains in his hand.

Zu An seized this moment to arrive next to Zhuxie Chixin. He took out the Poisonous Prick, and it cut through Zhuxie Chixin's neck.

"You..." Zhuxie Chixin clutched his throat. Unfortunately, black runes spread from the wound. Soon afterward, he collapsed without drawing another breath.

Zu An sighed in relief. He arrived at Yun Yuqing's side and picked her up, asking, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." Yun Yuqing looked at him with a gentle expression. "Ah Zu, you treat me too well."

Zu An smiled bitterly and said, "Let's leave for now. We might have startled others with the commotion we caused here."

He didn't even have time to tell Chuyan goodbye. The only fortunate thing was that he didn't have any family. Chu Chuyan had already severed her relationship with him in name, so his actions wouldn't involve her.

Suddenly, a terrifying pressure descended, and a voice intoned, "You want to leave?"

Zu An's eyes narrowed. He immediately turned around and saw a dragon robed figure standing on the roof. Who else could this be but the emperor?

"Why is it him?!" Zu An muttered as his thoughts went ice-cold. I'm finished, I'm done for! Even though he was unyielding at heart, he wasn't stupid. He needed time to grow! There was just too much of a gap in strength between him and the emperor right now.

The emperor scanned the battlefield. He saw the Embroidered Envoys scattered everywhere, particularly Zhuxie Chixin's corpse. He erupted with rage, exclaiming, "You dare betray this emperor? I'm going to make sure you die a miserable death!" He raised his hand as soon as he finished speaking. In an instant, a massive palm projection crashed down from the sky.

Zu An and Yun Yuqing felt that the air had become hard to breathe. They wanted to escape, but their bodies were locked in place. The terrifying power before them made the two of them feel absolute despair.

Yun Yuqing looked at Zu An in distress, saying, "Ah Zu, let's give up. The emperor is the most powerful man in the world! It's useless no matter how we resist. The only thing I'm grateful for is that I can die with you. We lived different lives, but we can rest together, so I have no regrets. You have to hold my hand tightly when we cross the yellow springs of hell, so that we might truly become husband and wife in our next life..."

Zu An frowned. He had felt as if something was wrong from the beginning, but he had never had the time to think about it. Now that he was locked down by this terrifying pressure, in this final moment

before death, he suddenly recovered his wits. He suddenly raised his head and completely disregarded that descending palm. He pointed at that dragon robed man in the sky, exclaiming, "You aren't the emperor!"

Then, his palm struck the body of Yun Yuqing, who had been clinging to his arm.

Chapter 756: Fantasy Materialize

"Ah!" Yun Yuqing cried out in alarm. Her eyes were full of disbelief as blood gushed out of her mouth.

"Ah Zu, what are you doing?"

Zu An didn't reply to her, but instead stared at the dragon robed individual.

The emperor roared with laughter. "Husbands and wives will abandon each other before the face of true disaster. Unfortunately, it's already too late, even if you express your loyalty to me by killing her. Die!"

That palm was now already less than a zhang from Zu An's head. The pressure that descended created a palm imprint where he was standing. However, he still continued to stand proudly in place.

Zu An lowered his head and muttered quietly to himself, "This kind of power and pressure is indeed quite similar to the emperor's. Looks like he really did leave a deep impression of his power in my mind."

"However..." He suddenly raised his head, his eyes scorching as he stared at the dragon robed man on the roof. "After experiencing everything that happened that night, you will forever be a loser in my eyes."

He raised his hand and intoned, "God said, let there be light!"

The skies seemed to respond to his words. The originally overcast skies scattered, and a strand of golden light seeped through the clouds and scattered the gloom.

Then, it enveloped the emperor. The emperor's body began to smoke, and then his robes began to burn. Soon afterward, his entire figure was swallowed up by the flames. He screamed in agony. The terrifying palm in the sky also vanished like smoke in thin air, and the horrifying pressure vanished.

Screaming bitterly, the emperor ended up being burned to ashes.

Zu An had a self-deprecating smile as he said, "In the world of my own consciousness, I am obviously god. Who dares to be stronger than me?"

Yun Yuqing's eyes widened in horror as she murmured, "That's impossible..."

As she spoke, the surrounding scenery warped. There was no more emperor, no Zhuxie Chixin. All of the Embroidered Envoys were nowhere to be seen. All that was left were the figures of the deathsworn, who were currently fighting against Yun Yuqing.

Meanwhile, the expression of the 'Yun Yuqing' Zu An had just 'killed' warped as well. With that mysterious mantle and that golden hair, who else could it be but Jia Sili?

Zu An sighed. Jia Sili hadn't died, as expected. The scene of his sword stabbing through her throat had been an illusion. Wait, when did I end up falling into her illusion? I was always on guard. Not even Hundredwarble gave me any warning signs. His eyes shifted to that bell around her ankle. It had kept making sounds ever since they began to fight. It was probably the source of the illusion.

Jia Sili stared at Zu An and asked, "Just how did you realize that world was fake? I didn't think there were any flaws."

Zu An sighed as he answered, "I found the entire thing strange from the start. I felt that Zhuxie Chixin and the others' timing was too much of a coincidence. They came as soon as we finished fighting, as if they had been waiting in ambush all this time. These are the suburbs, after all! Even if the activity here alarmed some people, the ones who should have arrived first would be the City Defense Army, not the Embroidered Envoy."

After all, he had always been the one investigating this case, so he should have the most intelligence. Not even he had anticipated that these people would be waiting in ambush, so how could Zhuxie Chixin and the others possibly react in time?

"You were able to deduce it was fake just from that?" Jia Sili found that answer inconceivable.

Zu An said indifferently, "There was also the matter of the emperor. He appeared too abruptly as well."

In theory, the emperor needed him to harass King Qi. He wouldn't kill Zu An the moment he saw him unless he knew about what had happened between Zu An and the empress. But how could that be possible? He wasn't an omnipotent god.

Of course, there was a more important reason that had made Zu An even more certain, which was that he had never received any Rage points this entire time. Even though the other party could create such a powerful illusion, she couldn't imitate the soul fluctuations of every single being.

"Now that I've answered your questions, you can rest in peace." Zu An didn't want to be like a villain who talked too much. He had always been waiting for his opportunity to strike. Now that the other party was distracted from hearing his answer, he charged over.

A black figure rushed over to intercept Zu An. He saw that it was one of the deathsworn that had died previously, and was now a corpse puppet controlled by the yin-yang man. He casually waved his palm to blast the corpse to pieces. He didn't want it to delay what he needed to do.

But he immediately sensed that something was off, and quickly dodged several zhang to the side. That corpse suddenly exploded with a loud bang. Countless black and green body fluids splattered everywhere, and a foul stench spread through the air.

Zu An felt the urge to throw up. Damn it, it smells even worse than canned fish.

When the grass on the ground made contact with the body fluids, it immediately darkened and withered. Even the ground released sizzling sounds and began to smoke. It was obvious that every single drop was poisonous.

"Can you not be so gross, please?" Jia Sili said in disgust. She used the bit of time Shu Shuhao had bought her to dodge, so she wasn't splattered by the body fluids. However, she tightly clutched her nose. She couldn't stand the smell either.

"Hmph, I just saved your life," Shu Shuhao said in his sinister voice. He leapt over to Jia Sili's side just as the corpse had, in order to cover her. The corpse puppets under his control scattered throughout the surroundings as well.

Now that Yun Yuqing had obtained a moment of respite, she quickly rushed to Zu An's side. Her face was covered in fine sweat, and her cheeks were flushed. The battle had clearly taken a toll on her.

Even though her cultivation wasn't bad, she had used up too much power when she fought against the man with the two rings and the other experts. This Shu Shuhao's cultivation wasn't beneath hers, and he had used vile and vicious corpse demons to fight against her. As a woman, she had a natural fear of such things, so her combat strength had been reduced by a bit.

Zu An walked forward a little to cover Yun Yuqing. Then, he raised his sword in front of him. All of the muscles on his body went taut, like a lion that was ready to pounce.

Jia Sili laughed and said, "Oh my, big brother, we don't want to fight anymore. Why don't we just shake hands and have a chat?"

"It was still 'little brother' not too long ago. Now I'm suddenly the big brother?" Zu An sneered. "Why should I do something like that?"

"Big sis over here has already had a taste of little brother's strength. That's why I don't dare to call you little anymore!" Jia Sili's flirtatious tone made Yun Yuqing's beautiful brows furrow. Jia Sili continued, "As for why we should just talk things out, that's because we have a common enemy. Why should we fight to the death then?"

"Common enemy?" Zu An harrumphed. "Who shares a common enemy with you?"

Jia Sili laughed out loud. "Big brother, please don't believe your own lies. The hostility you showed toward the emperor was clear enough. Also, you seem to have done something that has let him down. Even though big sis doesn't know what it is, I'm sure that thing is enough for the emperor to kill you."

Zu An's expression changed. This woman really was a problem.

Jia Sili didn't dare to remain careless when she sensed his killing intent. She pointed at the man with the two rings. "Big brother, please don't fret and listen to this sister's words. You should have heard what I said to those people just now. Back then, the Zhou Emperor invaded our southern border and killed countless clansmen of ours. We can never forget this blood enmity. But the emperor is too powerful right now and not someone we can face alone, so the enemy of my enemy is my friend. We don't wish to waste any bit of power that can go against the emperor."

Zu An said indifferently, "That's just wishful thinking. I don't wish to form alliances with others. On the contrary, I'll feel more at ease when you're all dead."

The black and white Shu Shuhao said coldly, "Damn brat, you sure know how to run that mouth of yours."

Jia Sili was also laughing so hard her body was rocking back and forth. “Big brother, I think you’re misunderstanding something! We really do want to cooperate with you, and not just use this chance to beg for mercy.”

She raised her hand and snapped her fingers. Suddenly, a bright circle of light appeared behind her out of thin air. Then, transparent weapons emerged from it one after another, aiming at Zu An and Yun Yuqing.

Jia Sili explained, “As a Spirit Master, apart from the mind illusion I just used, there is one other skill, which is ‘Fantasy Materialize’. I can make anything I imagine become reality. It’s hard to say who would come out ahead if we really fought to the death.”

Chapter 757: Five Poison Token

Zu An’s eyes widened in shock when he saw the roaring weapons. He really wanted to ask her if she was freaking Gilgamesh or Shirou Emiya with their ‘Unlimited Blade Works’.

Jia Sili had pulled out all manner of tricks during their battle, and each one was more dazzling than the last. Zu An was even tempted to change his class to Spirit Master.

It was just like when he had played basketball in school before. Whether or not the ball went in didn’t matter; what mattered was that it looked cool. Zu An really felt like crying when he thought of Yun Yuqing and Jia Sili’s dazzling skills.

Jia Sili casually took a sword and fiddled around with it. Yun Yuqing’s eyes widened in shock, and she subconsciously glanced at the sword in Zu An’s hand. In contrast, Zu An wasn’t surprised, and instead calmly watched the other party.

Jia Sili chuckled and said, “Judging from our earlier fight, I could tell that your sword isn’t bad. It’s probably some divine weapon. That’s why I decided to make one for myself. It might not be as good as the original, but it’s probably seventy to eighty percent as good. Furthermore, I still have many other divine weapons just like this one. If I materialize every single powerful weapon I’ve seen, I wonder if you would still wish to continue fighting?”

Yun Yuqing’s expression was filled with shock. Even though she knew that Spirit Masters were mysterious and powerful, she hadn’t realized that it was to this ridiculous degree. Materializing the enemy’s divine weapons, including their skills... just how oppressive of a skill was that?!

Jia Sili was extremely satisfied when she saw Yun Yuqing’s expression. This was exactly what she wanted to see. However, when she looked at Zu An, she saw that he seemed completely unfazed. “It seems you don’t care at all...?” she commented, frowning.

Zu An chuckled. “You might be able to fool others with this skill, but how can you fool me? Even though you can copy your opponent’s weapons and their skills, a fake is still a fake. It can’t compare to the original. Furthermore, mixing all sorts of weapons together will only make the skill disorderly and messy. As long as your opponent understands that, defeating your skill isn’t hard at all.”

Jia Sili was incredibly shocked. In truth, she had already vaguely realized the flaws of her skill as well, but she couldn't pinpoint them. Yet now, this fellow had hit the nail on the head just from a single glance. Just how frightening was his talent and discernment? There was no limit to this kind of person's future! He might even exceed the emperor himself one day.

This was the moment Zu An had been waiting for. His figure flashed, and then he appeared in front of Jia Sili. His speed was so fast that not even Shu Shuhao could react in time.

Jia Sili quickly raised the 'Tai'e Sword' in her hands. However, how could a mage defeat a warrior in close quarters combat? With a brittle sound, her 'Tai'e Sword' snapped in two. A line of blood flew across the sky as Jia Sili's figure was pushed back several times in succession.

Shu Shuhao quickly rushed in front of Jia Sili to block the attacks with his soul banner. He saw that her right arm had been cut off, blood gushing out endlessly from the stump. He turned toward Zu An and shouted, "Damn brat, you're courting death!"

You have successfully trolled Shu Shuhao for +444 +444 +444...

The soul banner stabbed into the ground. Two white, specter-like clouds of mist spun around Shu Shuhao as sinister winds howled. The temperature of the surroundings immediately dropped by several degrees.

Then, a black cloud of mist the size of a person appeared next to him. It was as if a gate to hell had opened, and a myriad of howls and wails emerged from inside.

Following the appearance of the mist, a corpse covered in black smoke shambled out from inside. The corpse demons with the two rings, the golden hammer, and the red-tasseled spear all began to tremble. They could no longer stand still and began crawling on the ground. This was due to a natural difference in level.

Yun Yuqing and Zu An's expressions changed, because they could sense that this new corpse demon's strength was on an entirely different level. This was a corpse demon that was already half a step into the master rank!

Shu Shuhao sneered. "You've forced me to do this. In that case, you can both forget about living."

However, the tinkling of bells resounded from behind him as Jia Sili blocked him with her remaining hand, saying, "There's no need to go that far." Then, she reached out her hand. The right arm that lay on the ground flew toward her.

Yun Yuqing was confused. She said quietly, "I didn't sense any ki fluctuations."

Zu An replied, "It's probably something like telekinesis."

"Big brother's judgment is excellent as expected," Jia Sili said with a smile. Then, she reconnected her arm to her shoulder. Light flickered around the wound, and by the time its glow faded, her arm had actually returned to normal!

But that made sense as well. If she could even summon the divine weapons of others through her Fantasy Materialize ability, then it shouldn't be too difficult for her to reconnect a broken limb.

Zu An was really halfway between laughter and tears now. If this woman had been brought to his past world to reconnect limbs through surgery, she might have just become the world's most famous doctor.

Jia Sili said with a smile, "I know you might feel some resentment. They hit you with a siege crossbow, but now you've cut off my arm. We're even now, right?"

Zu An was speechless. It really was hard to hit a friendly person. Since this woman had such a good attitude, he couldn't really continue to act fiercely either.

Jia Sili continued, "I'm being sincere. I'm going to offer you another invitation for an alliance."

Zu An replied seriously, "I managed to severely injure you multiple times over. I believe you don't have much mental strength left."

"I will admit to that." Jia Sili nodded. "However, with my skills, it'll also be hard for you to take me down, let alone the fact that I still have big brother Shu over here. We can't say that we can definitely win, but we can last until the City Defense Army arrives."

Zu An voiced his curiosity. "That's interesting. Aren't we the court officials? Once the City Defense Army arrives, wouldn't you two be the ones who have to flee? Why does it instead seem as if you're looking forward to their arrival?"

Jia Sili smiled and looked toward Yun Yuqing. "I believe that out of everyone here, you're the one who wouldn't wish to be captured by the court the most, right? Oh, right. Should I call you Madam Wu?"

Yun Yuqing's expression changed. Her killing intent surged the moment her identity was exposed. She couldn't let them leave alive, or else things would really become troublesome.

Jia Sili continued with a charming voice, "Madam Wu must be confused about how I know your identity, but that's obviously because I saw you in big brother Zu's illusion earlier. The intelligence stated that big brother Zu was a perverted man, so I never expected him to be someone so loyal. He actually didn't hesitate to betray the entire world for you and fight against Zhuxie Chixin. In the end, he even faced the emperor... Sigh, if there were a man willing to treat me like this, then even death would be worth it."

Yun Yuqing was moved when she heard those words, and subconsciously glanced toward Zu An. The killing intent in her eyes disappeared, and was instead replaced with a complicated array of emotions all at once—shock, happiness, gentleness, and a feeling of being touched.

"Ah Zu!" Yun Yuqing exclaimed. Even though Jia Sili had only said a few things, she could already guess what had really happened in that world of illusion.

Jia Sili suddenly closed her eyes as if she sensed something. A while later, she said, "There's a city defense troop hurrying this way, and they'll arrive in less than half a stick of incense's time. You two need to make your decision."

Zu An was still a bit hesitant, but Yun Yuqing quickly replied, "Alright, we agree." Zu An was surprised, but he didn't say anything.

"A wise choice." Jia Sili patted Shu Shuhao and said, "Just give them the antidote."

Shu Shuhao harrumphed. He tossed over a bottle of medicine. "She's been hit with my corpse poison. Once you take this medicine and soak in hot water, the poison will be neutralized."

"You were poisoned?" Zu An asked as he quickly looked at Yun Yuqing. Yun Yuqing was stunned, suddenly feeling a bit light-headed. Her body swayed back and forth. Fortunately, Zu An reached out his hand in time, preventing her from falling.

Shu Shuhao looked at Jia Sili. He asked quietly, "I don't know why you're willing to make peace with them. They would have been dead for certain if we really did fight."

Jia Sili smiled and said, "Having another friend is always better than having another enemy." Then, she tossed over a dark token.

Zu An caught it and examined it. He saw that the tile depicted vipers, scorpions, centipedes, and all sorts of other poisonous creatures.

Jia Sili gestured toward Zu An with her finger. "Cute big brother, come visit us sometime in the southern border with that Five Poison Token. You'll be treated as our most distinguished guest." Then, she turned around to leave with light steps.

Zu An quickly called out, "Wait, since we're now allies, then tell me one thing. Who is your master? Who was it that sent you all to kill me?"

Chapter 758: Mysterious Teacher

Jia Sili turned around and said with a charming smile, "Even though big sis really wants to tell you, I unfortunately made a vow, so I can't tell you who he is. Otherwise, I'll suffer from the wrath of heaven, you know?"

Zu An asked out of curiosity, "What does your wrath of heaven have to do with me?"

Jia Sili was stunned. "Stupid big brother, you need to say nice things at times like this!" She harrumphed. "But I'm sure someone as smart as you can easily find out who sent us." Then, she drifted nonchalantly toward the corpses of the deathsworn soldiers.

Zu An knew she was giving him a hint. After all, these deathsworn soldiers had set out with siege crossbows and military blade formations. This was clearly the style of the army. Furthermore, the silver and gold rings, the golden hammer, and the red-tasseled spear were extremely unique weapons and fighting styles, and they were even at the seventh rank. They were definitely well-known individuals. It wouldn't be too hard to look into their backgrounds.

Zu An gave the two of them a curious look and said, "By the way, I heard something from your conversation earlier. Wasn't your mission this time to kill me? Won't you suffer from the rebound of that vow if you form an alliance with me instead?"

Jia Sili sighed and replied "We already did everything we could, but all of our methods were defeated by you. I even lost an arm, so how could we kill you? The city defense is here too, so we have no choice but to run."

Zu An was speechless. These fellows really are treacherous... They deliberately left behind some room even when making a vow.

"Enough, we're leaving. Otherwise, we really won't be able to leave once the City Defense Army arrives. I'm looking forward to our next meeting, cute big brother~" Jia Sili left, leaving a string of melodious bell sounds and charming laughter in her wake.

Yu Yuqing struggled free from Zu An's embrace and said weakly, "Hurry and take me out of here."

Zu An knew that she didn't want to be seen by the City Defense Army. He gave the deathsworn corpses on the ground a look. After some hesitation, he decided to just collect all of them into his Brilliant Glass Bead. But after thinking about it, he put back a few, as well as the siege crossbow.

He didn't know whether or not something would be wrong with the City Defense Army that rushed over. It would become troublesome if they ended up hiding the corpses, so he brought away some key evidence. And yet, he had to leave something behind. Otherwise, it would be hard for him to explain things to Zhuxie Chixin and the emperor later. After all, it would be extremely hard for a single person to transport such a large and clumsy siege crossbow.

After he finished, he quickly left while carrying Yun Yuqing. Not even a minute after they left, a group of soldiers arrived. They were all filled with shock when they saw the scene, especially when they saw the siege crossbow. The leader waved his hands and said, "Seal off this area! Everyone else, arrest anyone suspicious nearby!"

...

Zu An had already taken Yun Yuqing several li away. When he saw a bit of black energy come out from between her brows, he quickly took out the antidote Jia Sili had given him. He said a bit hesitantly, "I wonder if this medicine is real."

Yun Yuqing took the bottle from him and gave it a whiff, saying, "I think it's real."

"You have medical knowledge?" Zu An was still cautious. It would be no joke if she was wrong.

Yun Yuqing nodded. "Rune Masters all know a bit about medicine. Even though I don't have any profound achievements in that regard, I can at least tell if it's an antidote." She took the medicine, and then closed her eyes. "However, we still need hot water to get rid of the poison, and I'm still extremely weak. Sigh, I really was too careless just now. I ended up being affected by his corpse poison without even realizing it."

Zu An recalled the methods of the yin-yang man. He said with a sigh, "His attacks are difficult to prepare against, so you can't be blamed. By the way, where are you staying? Let me bring you back first." Yun Yuqing was still weak right now, so he didn't feel confident in leaving her alone.

Yun Yuqing didn't refuse him and said, "Let's return to the capital."

"The capital?" Zu An exclaimed, shocked. In his opinion, she should have been hiding somewhere on the city outskirts. However, she actually lived in the capital! After all, according to the Great Zhou Dynasty's laws, kings who didn't have an official position there couldn't casually enter the capital or bring their families to live there, or it would be a grave crime.

Yun Yuqing undid her veil, exposing her stunning face. She had a faint smile as she said, "We discovered a white deer auspicious sign in North Order Commandery, so I came to offer it to his and her majesty. Naturally, I'll be residing in the capital during this time."

Zu An sighed in amazement. This woman really was smart! After all, the emperor was already undefeated in this world and wanted for nothing. What he lacked the most was longevity. Meanwhile, the white deer was a sign of longevity. The emperor might scoff disdainfully at other auspicious signs, but he would definitely be pleased at the sound of this one.

"We can't enter the capital like this," Yun Yuqing removed her black clothes. Beneath them, she was dressed in ordinary clothing. She drew a rune, and the black outfit was burned to ashes.

Zu An couldn't help but exclaim, "But your simple outfit still can't hide your stunning beauty! You'll only draw more suspicion when you arrive at the city gate."

"I just need to wear a mask." Yun Yuqing smiled. She fished out a thin mask and covered her face with it. Her stunning appearance became that of an ordinary woman.

Zu An felt relieved. This woman was a glorious king's wife, and she was also a Rune Master. How could she not have something like this?

Yun Yuqing asked Zu An, "Are you not going to use a mask?"

Zu An shook his head. "There's no need. I can just enter the capital like this."

"But I'm scared that this will bring you more trouble..." Yun Yuqing said, feeling a bit apologetic. She was a bit weak and needed to lean against Zu An. If someone saw them, there would definitely be curious people wondering what was going on.

Zu An thought for a bit. In the end, he decided that he couldn't tarnish his reputation. It was one thing if he was seen with other girls, but Yun Yuqing's current appearance was too ordinary. If someone saw this, wouldn't they think he had no taste? As such, he still accepted the mask she offered him. Then, he picked up Yun Yuqing's soft body and hurried to the city gate.

Along the way, Yun Yuqing lay in his embrace. Even though her expression remained neutral, her eyes became misty as she asked, "You were really even willing to face the emperor for my sake?"

Zu An smiled and replied, "Didn't you save my life several times as well? How could I just watch you suffer without doing anything?"

"You did all that just because I saved you?" Yun Yuqing's small mouth opened, as if she were a bit disappointed.

"Of course not. I had to save you because you were in danger!" Zu An immediately realized what he had done wrong. Sweet talk was the basic skill of a playboy.

Sure enough, Yun Yuqing immediately beamed when she heard him, saying, "Ah Zu, you're so great."

The two chatted happily along the way. They quickly entered the capital, and Yun Yuqing guided them to an imposing manor inside the city. Zu An was stunned when he saw the large words 'King Wu Manor' on the main gate's placard.

Yun Yuqing said with a smile, "Every king has a residence in the capital; it's just that we rarely have a chance to stay here. Now that I'm here in the capital, of course I would live here." Then, she said with a frown, "I left secretly today to avoid prying eyes. That's why you need to sneak back in with me."

Zu An felt some misgivings and remarked, "But the security in this king manor is strict..." After all, even his residence in Brightmoon Academy had a defensive formation. This was a king manor here! How could it lack defensive formations and restrictions?

Yun Yuqing dangled a token in her hand and said, "Don't worry, we won't set off any of the security with this tile."

Zu An couldn't help but laugh. The security of a prison was nothing before a traitor after all. With Yun Yuqing leading the way, as well as her warning him ahead of time, he didn't activate any of the manor's security. At the same time, he avoided the patrolling guards.

Of course, in the end, it was still only possible because this was a king manor that had remained empty for a long time, so there weren't many guards. Otherwise, even if they made it past the outer security, he would still have easily been discovered inside.

Yun Yuqing finally sighed in relief when she entered her inner chamber. The entire room seemed to become a bit brighter when she removed her mask and returned to her original appearance. She walked over to an empty pool nearby and gently twisted the valve. Clear, hot water poured out from the mouth of a few sculptures.

Zu An was stupefied. "A water heater?" he asked.

"Water heater?" Yun Yuqing replied, stunned. "A rune formation takes in water from a nearby hot spring. The surrounding nobles all have similar pools."

Zu An sighed in amazement. These people really understood how to enjoy themselves. He had already seen many ways in which rune formations were used to raise their quality of life.

"By the way... You were actually a Rune Master!? Where did you learn all this stuff?" Zu An asked curiously. After all, Rune Master was an occupation exclusive to the human race, and this woman was of the demon race. How had she learned these secrets of the human race?

Yun Yuqing looked apologetic as she replied, "Sorry, I promised my master that I wouldn't divulge who he was."

"It's fine, I was too hasty," Zu An didn't really mind. He added, "By the way, you should hurry and get rid of the poison. Otherwise, it'll be really bad if the corpse poison seeps in deeply."

Yun Yuqing voiced a response. But just as she was about to undo her collar, she blushed. She opened her mouth, but fell silent for a moment.

Eventually, she asked, "Ah Zu, can you help me keep watch?" Then, her beautiful fingers gently flew about. Piece by piece, articles of clothing slid to the ground, exposing her perfect, shining white body.

Chapter 759: Breakthrough

Zu An removed his mask as well. He said with an ambiguous smile, "Did madam forget that there was someone else here?"

Yun Yuqing tapped her foot against the ground, and then her body slowly entered the hot spring. Only her clear and smooth shoulders, as well as her beautiful collarbone, were exposed. She said, "You're different from other people."

"I'm no King Wu though." Zu An sighed. A true playboy should never let feelings get involved, but he had discovered that he couldn't hold himself back when it was just the two of them. Sigh, isn't being on this side of NTR just fine? Why am I playing around with feelings? I'm really going to get sucked in at this rate.

Yun Yuqing wanted to say something, but she stopped. In the end, she didn't explain anything and only sighed deeply. An awkward silence filled the room.

Zu An was the first one to speak up. "You should take care of your poison first. We can't delay that."

"Okay," Yun Yuqing replied. Then, she closed her eyes, and her hands formed complex seals. Nine runes gradually appeared in midair, and then gently descended onto the water's surface. The runes covered the water surface in a thin layer of gold.

Then, Yun Yuqing sat down in the water with her legs crossed and began to focus on eliminating the poison. Moments later, Zu An noticed threads of black energy leave her body and dissolve into the water. The golden runes then flickered around, and the black energy was gradually refined, eventually vanishing from the pool of water.

Zu An was shocked. The legendary Demon Race was portrayed as sinister and vicious, yet Yun Yuqing was the complete opposite. It was to the extent where she had even used a formation to clean up the remaining poison, for fear that the poison would harm innocent civilians if she just let it drain away.

After some time passed, Yun Yuqing opened her eyes again. Her fair, blushing cheeks looked incredibly lovely within the rising steam. She said, "Ah Zu, I've already eliminated all of the corpse poison."

Zu An sighed in relief and replied, "Looks like those two didn't deceive us the way I expected."

Yun Yuqing smiled and said, "They're both important figures from the southern border. It should be of great help to you in the future if you get along with them."

Zu An was surprised. He actually had many questions he wanted to ask her, but he was worried that their relationship would never go back to what it had been again if he asked them.

Yun Yuqing swam over to the pool's side and said, "Ah Zu, crouch down over here."

Zu An didn't know why she would say such a thing. Yun Yuqing gently caressed his chest and removed the clothing he had worn to get past the gate inspection. When she saw that most of his body was soaked in blood, her fingers trembled slightly as she asked, "Does it hurt?"

"It didn't hurt before, but now that your small hand has touched it, maybe it does hurt a little," Zu An said with a smile.

Yun Yuqing was momentarily distracted. This was what he had said the last time he was in North Order Commandery's King Wu Manor. She gave him an annoyed look and shot back, "Look at the situation! Despite that, you're still making jokes."

Zu An said, "Don't worry, I've already reached the seventh rank, so I can already recover pretty quickly. I won't die."

Yun Yuqing shook her head. "Even though cultivators at the peak of the seventh rank have powerful regenerative abilities, a normal person might have exploded on the spot from being hit by a siege crossbow. Even though you survived through a fluke, it would take at least half a year for you to recover from this type of injury, and there might even be hidden damage. Even though you've already stopped bleeding, the injuries inside won't heal so easily. Hurry and get in, I'll help you with the treatment." Regardless of whether it was her status as a Rune Master or as a Demon Race individual, she had corresponding healing methods.

Zu An asked with a strange expression, "Madam, aren't you just asking for trouble here?"

Yun Yuqing looked irritated as she replied, "With our relationship, what are you worried about?"

Zu An chuckled. "Looks like I was the one being unreasonable." Then, he took off his clothes and jumped in.

Yun Yuqing swam over and gently helped him clean the wound. At the same time, her other hand flickered with light to help him recover. She said, "It's all my fault for coming late. That was why you ended up being injured so badly." Her eyes began to redden, and tears glistened by the edges of her lashes.

Zu An shook his head. "If it weren't for the fact that you had hurried over in time, I might've already been finished then and there." Yun Yuqing bit her lip and didn't say anything as she focused on treating him.

Zu An closed his eyes. Even though the Primordial Origin Sutra had already begun to repair his body, after having fought for so long, it still couldn't compare to proactive treatment at all. He wasn't sure if it was because Yun Yuqing was helping him, but the primordial ki's powers seemed far stronger than usual.

He didn't waste this chance. He gathered the primordial ki toward his wounds, and then the originally badly mangled cavity began to sizzle and heal up at a visible rate.

Suddenly, Zu An heard a 'Ding!' in his head. It was as if he had suddenly become enlightened with wisdom. He could clearly feel that the air around him had become more fragrant and sweet. If his primordial ki had felt as if it were flowing through a muddy countryside before, then now, it was as if it were traveling on a level county road. It flowed much, much faster.

"What is this?" Zu An exclaimed, happy and surprised.

Mi Li's voice said in his head, "I didn't expect a brat like you to break into the Primordial Origin Sutra's third layer so quickly. Tsk, tsk, what kind of damn luck is this?" Her red-clothed self floated next to the Tai'e Sword in a semi-transparent state, and she didn't manifest completely.

Zu An was pleasantly surprised and exclaimed, "You finally came out, big sis empress! You didn't even wake up when I almost died earlier."

Mi Li harrumphed. "I already said that you need to become someone truly strong, so you can't think about relying on me. Furthermore, if even some low level nobodies like them could take your life, then I might as well just die too."

Zu An was speechless. Sigh, big sis empress is still just as frank. Whatever, I'll just treat her as a strict teacher who wants her students to do well.

"By the way, what kinds of benefits are there now that the Primordial Origin Sutra has reached the third layer?" Zu An recalled that the first layer had brought him a powerful regeneration ability, and the second had contained the ability to purge evil spirits. What did this new layer bring?

"It can make you impervious to all poisons," Mi Li said with an ambiguous smile. "At the very least, you won't be schemed against like the last time, when you fainted alongside the crown princess."

Zu An blushed and said, "I was way too careless last time."

At the same time, he was quite shaken. Being immune to poison was amazing! Even though the cultivators of this world were strong and their bodies were tough, which had eliminated many of the illnesses of his past world, the poisons of this world had instead become even stronger. Even high level cultivators might be done in by their power. He had already suffered many times himself. This poison immunity would save him a lot of worries.

"You shouldn't feel happy too soon." Mi Li's expression changed as she said, "You can never use the excuse of being affected by an aphrodisiac to harass other girls again."

Zu An immediately said in an upright manner, "Am I that type of person? I have always lived an incorruptible and upstanding life! I have always used my own charisma and charm..."

Mi Li immediately cut him off. "Hah!" Her eyes shifted to Yun Yuqing, who was next to her. "Tsk ts, this is that Madam Wu you mentioned, right? She is a beauty after all; I really feel pity..."

Suddenly, a hint of shock flashed through her eyes. She suddenly gave Zu An an angry look and exclaimed, "What the hell is up with you!? How in the world do you have so many beautiful women at your side?"

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +33 +33 +33...

Zu An raised his chin proudly and said, "It's obviously because of my incomparable charm."

Mi Li's eyelids twitched. "Don't make me beat you up."

Yun Yuqing said in surprise, "Your injuries recover so quickly. All of the internal organs inside of such a huge cavity have actually already regenerated!" She had been helping him all this time, so she could feel how his body was recovering.

"Haha, it's not as if you don't know how tough my body is," Zu An subconsciously replied. Then, he gave Mi Li a guilty look.

Mi Li harrumphed. "What are you looking at me for? She's already staying with you in this hot spring. If you still don't do anything, can you even be called a man anymore?" She had always been tough by nature. When she saw Yun Yuqing's gentle and meek appearance, she had really gotten a strong urge to bully her.

Chapter 760: Resolved to Pursue His Dao

Unfortunately, she couldn't do much in this type of spiritual state, so she could only borrow Zu An's hand to bully Yun Yuqing.

Zu An didn't know what Mi Li was really thinking. He said rather bashfully, "But it's a bit embarrassing with you watching right next to me..."

Mi Li harrumphed. "Who wants to watch you do such dirty things?" Her red figure flashed as soon as she finished speaking, and she disappeared in a puff of smoke.

Zu An sighed in relief. The pressure Mi Li gave him was a bit too much. Furthermore, whispering sweet things to a woman in front of another woman just felt like courting death.

Beside him, Yun Yuqing said playfully, "You're so bad..."

Zu An couldn't hold himself back, and he gently held Yun Yuqing's waist when he heard what she said. Her skin really was smooth and slippery in this hot spring.

Yun Yuqing didn't reject him, and gently leaned into his embrace. Their two young bodies quickly became hotter as they pressed against each other. She said, "Ah Zu..."

"Hm?" Zu An answered.

Yun Yuqing didn't say anything else, and instead got on her tiptoes to kiss Zu An. She had already felt incredibly touched when she heard that Zu An was willing to sacrifice the entire world for her.

Her soft lips were like the bugle horn that sounded the start of a war. How could Zu An still hold himself back? Water began to splash everywhere. The water surface rippled more and more intensely, as if it were a representation of Yun Yuqing's soul...

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A long time passed. Yun Yuqing's entire body was as soft as cotton as she nestled into Zu An's embrace. Her fair, snowy skin was covered in a beautiful pink blush, making her look more and more lovely. Her figure was misty and indistinct within the mist, as if she were a goddess in a heavenly temple.

"Ah Zu!" Yun Yuqing pressed her cheek tightly against his chest. At the same time, her large, watery eyes looked at the man that had completely subdued her, both in body and spirit.

Zu An embraced her soft body, feeling thoroughly refreshed. The entire process had been filled with bliss. Furthermore, he discovered that the intense battle had carried him through his bottleneck. Not only had he advanced a layer in the Primordial Origin Sutra, his cultivation had even broken through to the eighth rank.

He had already been at the peak of the seventh rank. After the siege crossbow penetrated his body, the injury that would have instantly taken out a similar level cultivator was something he had needed to rely on the Primordial Origin Sutra's tempering to survive.

An injury this serious was already enough to push Zu An past the eighth rank's threshold. However, for ordinary cultivators, it was as if there were a huge pit resting between the seventh and eighth rank. They needed to seek their own dao in order to enter the eighth rank.

The difficulty was that one couldn't just randomly choose their dao. This dao had to align with the origin of the world, and it also had to match one's own nature. If they made an incorrect choice, then their future prospects might be ruined. That was why countless people had been trapped on that threshold for a long time; some who had been geniuses in their youth were trapped there forever, surpassed by many whose aptitudes were worse than theirs.

Even though it wasn't as difficult for Zu An to break through into the eighth rank as it was for other people because he cultivated the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, he still had to seek the dao. It was just easier for him, as he didn't have to carry out the endless process of condensing true ki.

Even though Zu An had had some ambitions before, it had never been all that clear. But in that instant, when he experienced the soft and gentle body of Madam Wu, and remembered the empress he had toyed with in the Palace of Peace a few days ago, he recalled that domineering feeling where he had their very lives in his hands. He suddenly realized that a man among men had to train his horse with a raised horsewhip, and needed the domineering aura of a tiger. He wanted to become the most powerful man in the entire world!

He subconsciously looked in the direction of the imperial palace. Even though he'd had thoughts of surpassing the emperor before, the emperor's terror and power had left him with a deep impression that reached all the way to his subconscious.

It was thanks to Jia Sili's illusion that he had finally gathered the courage to draw his sword, and then even defeat the emperor head-on. Even though all of that had been fake, Zu An still managed to defeat his inner demons.

All of these elements added together resulted in Zu An breaking through to the eighth rank.

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Meanwhile, in the imperial palace, the emperor was cultivating. He suddenly opened his eyes and looked toward the horizon with a pensive expression. He was a bit puzzled. Why had he suddenly felt a strange sense of alarm just now? How long had it been since he last felt such an annoying feeling?

He frowned and called in Eunuch Wen from outside. "Little Wen, help me check whether there have been any developments by the Eastern Palace."

Eunuch Wen hesitated a bit and asked, "How far does your majesty wish to check?" The Eastern Palace was a bit too large, after all. It was completely impractical to check everything.

The emperor gave him a cold look. He clearly enunciated the word, "Everything!"

"Understood!" Eunuch Wen was alarmed. It had been a long time since the emperor was last this serious. In that case, he obviously wouldn't spare any resources in his investigation.

...

Zu An, who was in King Wu Manor, obviously didn't know that his dao had ended up affecting the emperor, as well as the fates of many people in the Eastern Palace.

"Ah Zu, you broke through?" Yun Yuqing asked, shocked and overjoyed. The two of them were close together, so she was the most sensitive to his body's various changes. Her eyes were full of veneration. A woman naturally liked a strong man.

"Yeah." Zu An embraced her with a smile. "A lot of this was thanks to you."

"It was thanks to me?" Yun Yuqing looked a bit lost.

Zu An moved over to her ear and said something quietly. Yun Yuqing immediately blushed and said, "You're annoying..."

Zu An only felt a flame ignite within his lower body when he heard her playful voice. He lifted her up from behind; with his arms supporting her underarms, he raised her petite body up, and then lowered her back down.

When had Yun Yuqing ever experienced such a game? Her heart pounded like crazy, and her body completely melted.

Zu An could feel her body shaking in his arms. However, he didn't forget more important matters. He asked, "Why did Jia Sili say that you were the one who wouldn't want to be captured by the City Defense Army the most?"

Zu An had had too many misgivings before. He had worried that their relationship would never be the same again. But now that he had fully established his dao, he wasn't as overly cautious as before. He already had enough confidence in his ability to control the situation.

Yun Yuqing began to sob, "Why do you have to torment me now of all times... I knew you wanted to ask earlier. You're so annoying!"

Just as Yun Yuqing was about to say something, the two heard a maid say in a panicked voice, "King, madam is still bathing inside. Please wait outside for a moment."

Zu An was alarmed. King Wu had actually come to the capital in secret! It was unusual. After all, the one who had come to deliver the auspicious sign was Madam Wu. King Wu's status was rather sensitive, as he was a vassal state's king. Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't be allowed in the capital, yet he had secretly come here. What was he plotting?

King Wu said in a dissatisfied tone, "Hmph, why does this king need to wait if I wish to meet my own wife? Step aside."

The maid tried to stop King Wu. They were Yun Yuqing's personal maids, so they were from the demon race as well. Their loyalty to Yun Yuqing was unquestionable.

Yun Yuqing began to panic as she exclaimed, “Ah Zu, you need to hide!”

Zu An said unhappily, “Why do I need to do that?”

“Ah Zu!” Yun Yuqing pleaded, “Don’t you want to know what’s happening? You’ll know if you listen in on my conversation with him.”

Zu An’s heart softened when he saw her pitiful appearance. He harrumphed, and then moved behind the nearby screen. He used Mirror Mirage and his aura completely dissipated. Unless someone looked directly at him, they would have no idea he was there.

Yun Yuqing leaped out of the pond. Her body spun around like a celestial lady. Several runes flickered around her, and a white dress suddenly materialized around her.

Zu An’s eyes lit up. Was that a magical girl transformation? This girl really is a treasure trove! She’s full of mysteries and beauty.

The door slammed open not long after Yun Yuqing got dressed.

“King Wu, the madam...” A group of maids ran inside in alarm. They were clearly conflicted, since they had failed to complete their mission.

Yun Yuqing waved her hand and said, “You all can withdraw for now.”

“Understood!” The maids bowed and quickly withdrew, closing the door behind them.

Zu An spied through the gap in the curtains as a handsome man walked in. Who else could this be but King Wu?

Even though he wasn’t pleased to see him, Zu An had to admit that this guy was good looking. Everyone had thought that he was a perfect match for Madam Wu when they stood together in North Order Commandery.

Today, King Wu wasn’t dressed in his usual king’s gown, but rather wore well tailored green clothes. This was most likely because he didn’t want to draw too much attention in the capital. However, the clothes really did match him well, making him look quite outstanding.

King Wu was just about to say something when he noticed the water that had splashed everywhere. His eyes narrowed.