

Immortal 851

Chapter 851: Gate of Immortality

“Westhound Tomb?” Zu An exclaimed, shocked. He couldn’t be more familiar with this name. Back then, the ruined soul of the Qin Emperor had told him to find Westhound Tomb as quickly as possible. However, he couldn’t find any clues no matter how he searched. Who could have thought that it would actually be right here?

He quickly realized something and said to Mi Li, “No wonder you were always a bit distracted recently. So it was because we’re revisiting an old haunt?”

A reminiscent expression flashed through Mi Li’s eyes. “I saw some familiar things and couldn’t help but remember some unpleasant memories.”

Zu An remembered that she had been sealed by the Qin Emperor back then. A major conflict had definitely happened between the two of them. On one hand, seeing a familiar place would make her recall the past fondly. However, once she remembered the Qin Emperor, she wouldn’t be able to help but produce negative emotions.

“Have you been here before? Doesn’t this mean that I’ll become unstoppable soon?” Zu An asked with a chuckle.

Mi Li rolled her eyes. “Keep dreaming. This is a place successive generations of Qin Kings built through great effort. Only Qin Kings can enter and leave this place; not even the empress or the crown prince can do so. I only know what I know because I was the empress, and I read some information about this place from the library, but it’s limited. The fact that we cracked the code to get on this floating continent is already a coincidence. We might not be so lucky going forward.”

Despite those words, she still felt a bit better. After being around each other for so long, how could she not know that Zu An was only saying so to cheer her up? She was quite moved, but she also felt that this kid really was a brat. Forget about his enemies, there were times when she even wanted to give him a beating herself.

“Having you as my guide will always be better than me blindly groping around, right?” Zu An chuckled. Then, he continued forward with Bi Linglong. Suddenly, he picked up an exotic fragrance and the two of them headed in the direction of the smell.

When they reached the edge of a cliff, the view suddenly opened up. A clear and crystalline lake stretched out before them. The lake surface was enchanting like a massive sapphire, the most beautiful blue color he had ever seen in his life.

Flowers were in full bloom around the lake. There were many fruit trees, most of them bearing peaches. Every single peach tree was filled with heavy white peaches that carried a pink blush. They were several times larger than normal juicy peaches, and their sweet aroma could be smelled even from far away.

“Are these the legendary Jade Lake and the Peaches of Immortality?” Bi Linglong’s heart pounded. She subconsciously walked forward. The emperor’s power that she’d used earlier had drained her life force, so it was hard for her to resist her body’s instinctive desire.

Zu An frowned. He felt that something wasn't quite right, but he couldn't really put his finger on it. Suddenly, a sinister laugh came from behind him. "Little bastard, I've finally caught you!"

Zu An immediately felt his fine hairs stand on end. Even Bi Linglong, who had been walking forward, trembled and quickly turned around. The fear she felt from that voice overwhelmed everything else.

Zhao Ruizhi was standing not too far from them with a sneer on his face. He hadn't ambushed them, because with his identity and status, something like that would be too lowly. What he wanted was to torment Zu An, to make him feel true fear and remorse. He wanted to see Zu An beg for forgiveness tearfully.

He Li followed behind Zhao Ruizhi, looking as if he were about to see something fun. This adulterous couple's public display of affection had already left everyone incredibly annoyed. He wanted to see how Zu An was going to be finished off in person.

Zu An stood in front of Bi Linglong to protect her. He asked with an overcast voice, "How did you all get up here?" The platforms around the floating islands moved differently, which was why he hadn't been worried about them copying him back then.

"It's just a trifling eight trigrams path; you can figure it out after adding a bit of speculation. How can something like that stop me?" Zhao Ruizhi exclaimed proudly.

Mi Li couldn't help but say with a sigh, "This damn emperor really is a crazy genius. No wonder he was able to become this world's number one."

She alone knew just how mysterious and complex the Book of Changes' eight trigrams were, and yet this man had been able to decipher them in such a short time, then even apply them to the floating path. Not even she had expected this.

Suddenly, King Qi Manor's deathsworn soldiers cried out. "Peaches of Immortality! It's the legendary peaches!"

They had clearly noticed the peach trees as well. When they connected the fruits with the legends, their eyes turned red. Greed completely took over, overwhelming their fear toward the emperor, and all of them rushed out towards the lake, picking peaches and shoving them into their mouths.

Zhao Ruizhi had also smelled the fragrance in the air, but he was currently preoccupied with his hatred and wrath toward Zu An. As such, he hadn't noticed the beautiful lake and the peach trees yet. But when he did notice them, his breathing sped up.

If it were anything else, he might not even give it a second look. However, the legendary Peaches of Immortality could grant one eternal life! He had some reservations too, but the more death encroached, the stronger the fear of death would become, eventually overtaking everything. He wouldn't let any chance for immortality go.

Zhao Ruizhi was a bit upset when he saw the deathsworn soldiers frantically eating those peaches. These were all his; how could he let others waste them?! He ignored Zu An for the time being. He thought to himself that they were all already on the island anyway, so killing him would be easy enough. It was better to focus on immortality first.

As such, he instantly appeared on the largest of the peach trees with a single step. This peach tree had a massive trunk and was clearly an extraordinary existence. He leapt to the top, picked the largest peach, and ate it.

“Hm...” As an emperor, he had enjoyed all sorts of exotic delicacies in the past. But at that moment, he felt as if every pore in his body were cheering with joy! This thing is just too delicious! Furthermore, there was a warm stream flowing through him that made him feel vigorous and full of life.

“It really can grant eternal life!” Zhao Ruizhi’s pupils narrowed. He felt incredibly moved. Just how many years had it been; how bitterly had he searched? He had sent so many experts to explore the mountains and seas, yet none of them had come back with anything significant. However, he had never given up. Today, he had finally found the method of immortality!

When he saw all of them go mad over the peaches, Zu An grabbed Bi Linglong and ran. “We’re leaving!” He used Grandgale to rush out of the area and run away.

Their movements didn’t escape Zhao Ruizhi’s detection, but he was completely focused on immortality just then and didn’t care about anything else. As long as he could achieve immortality, forget about a mere woman, he didn’t care if he had to give away all of his wives and concubines.

Zu An continued to run, choosing to run toward the forest so it would be easier to conceal their whereabouts. After running for a long time and seeing that Zhao Ruizhi didn’t chase after them, he sighed in relief.

Bi Linglong couldn’t help but say, “Looks like those really were the legendary Peaches of Immortality, and they could grant eternal life. Otherwise, there’s no way he would’ve let us leave just like that.”

Zu An laughed and replied, “Who cares if those are the Peaches of Immortality or whatever? Our survival is the most important.”

“I guess you’re right.” Bi Linglong chuckled. If there really were a way to gain eternal life, but they were killed right when they found out, that would really be too depressing. But even so, she was still a bit confused. “Ah Zu, I really am starting to admire you. Even the emperor couldn’t help but become tempted when faced with immortality, but you didn’t care at all. I don’t think there are many in this world who could make that kind of choice.”

“I’m different from normal people.” Zu An didn’t know how to explain himself. He cultivated the Primordial Origin Sutra, which not only made his body tough, but also immune to diseases and illnesses. Qiao Xueying had even shared half of her elven lifespan with him. Together with the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, he could obtain immortality once he fully cultivated it anyway. That was why he wasn’t all that tempted by such immortality.

However, he quickly realized that even though he didn’t need it, he still had so many sweethearts, so he should have picked some for them. He felt a bit of regret when he realized that

Mi Li sneered. “Do you really think those are the rumored Peaches of Immortality?”

Zu An was stunned. “Are they not?”

“Of course not.” Mi Li harrumphed. “Not even the Qin Emperor was able to obtain immortality despite searching for it his entire life. If he found the so-called Jade Lake and Peaches of Immortality, he would definitely still be alive. If that were the case, I would already be done for.”

Zu An realized that as well. The Qin Emperor was already dead, so that meant that he hadn’t found any immortal medicine. Then, what were those immortal peaches?

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Meanwhile, by the lakeside Zu An had just left, after Zhao Ruizhi ate three of the largest peaches in succession, he felt that there were three flowers slowly blossoming on his head. He was delighted. Was this the legendary Three Flower Congregation Crown? Three flowers above one’s head was the mark of a daoist immortal.

Heavenly music emerged from the sky just then. Waves of magnificent light flickered in the clouds above as a grand immortal gate slowly opened. Countless immortal ladies and children waved toward him. A mysterious voice told him that as long as he entered the gate, then he would formally join the ranks of immortals. He would then never die; he would become a true immortal!

Zhao Ruizhi gulped. He subconsciously walked toward the immortal gate. Whenever he took a step, a floating cloud would appear beneath his feet, as if the immortal gate were guiding him towards it. He continued up the cloud stairs, arriving in front of the immortal gate soon afterward. He was just about to cross over, but suddenly, he froze up.

Chapter 852: Strange Temple

Zhao Ruizhi thought to himself that if he crossed through the immortal gate, wouldn’t it be his son’s body that obtained immortality? What he wanted the most was to achieve immortality with his original body. Even if it were his own son, he still didn’t want him to obtain that chance instead. However, he quickly realized that the opportunity was fleeting. There might not be a chance for his original self to achieve immortality if he waited.

He decided to grant this body immortality first. He’d see if he could make his main body immortal with some peaches after he left the dungeon. When he thought of that, he suddenly lowered his head to look at the deathsworn soldiers. What right do these ants have to achieve immortality with me?! Even filth like them?

When he thought about how there were many who had eaten the peaches before him, he was worried that they might achieve immortality first. If he didn’t stop them, it would be too late. As such, he decided to postpone crossing through the gate of immortality and instead turned around to kill them first.

But when he turned around, everything before his eyes changed. The beautiful scene filled with fragrant fruits vanished. The surroundings suddenly darkened, and King Qi Manor’s deathsworn soldiers weren’t carrying large and pretty peaches, but rather strange fruits that resembled skeletons.

Some of King Qi Manor’s soldiers began to walk toward the lake with strange smiles on their faces. That lake that had originally appeared sapphire blue was no longer the same, but rather pitch-black. Ghost faces floated across the water surface.

The robust body of the first soldier who entered the lake first began to shrivel up, but he seemed to be completely unaware of that. There was an infatuated smile on his face, making the whole place seem stranger and stranger...

“What the hell is this?!” Zhao Ruizhi broke out into a cold sweat. He realized that something was off right away. When he turned around, he didn’t see any immortal gate. He had almost walked to the edge of the lake himself.

He ignited all of his ki to its peak. Then, a powerful aura spread out, instantly scattering the surrounding illusion. Suddenly, he sensed that something was off with his body. There was a black hole within him that was crazily absorbing his energy.

He frowned. He quickly used his powerful cultivation to stop the absorption process, and then he examined his own body. He discovered that three ugly flowers had grown in his stomach, every single flower like a skull that crazily sucked at his internal ki. Countless roots extended toward his internal organs. Every single root was secreting some kind of liquid. It seemed as if it was precisely that substance that had numbed his mind and brought him the illusion of immortality he desired.

“Damn it all!” Zhao Ruizhi harrumphed. He unleashed his power and every inch of his skin surged with golden light. The three skull-like flowers screamed miserably, and the roots twisted about frantically. They released black energy to fight back. However, what kind of cultivation did the emperor have? They only managed to persist for a few seconds before they were burned away by the golden light.

Then, Zhao Ruizhi beckoned toward the deathsworn soldiers, dragging them out from the lake. He used true speech and commanded, “Wake up!” These guys still had their use in a strange dungeon like this. At the very least, he could use them to test things out first.

The soldiers trembled all over, feeling as if there were a huge bell ringing in their ears. The trembling in their souls made their entire bodies shiver, as all of them woke up one after another.

“What happened?”

“I think I was about to achieve immortality just now!”

“Huh? Why did the lake turn black?”

“What the hell is this thing?”

Many people saw that they were holding skull-shaped fruits, and tossed them away in fright. What was scarier than holding a skull-shaped fruit, however? Holding half of one...

He Li saw that the remaining half of the skeleton fruit in his hands had many familiar teeth marks. His stomach churned and he quickly began to vomit. Unfortunately, what could he even throw up at that point?

Zhao Ruizhi spoke. “We were trapped in an illusion earlier. The lake and peach trees were all fake. I’ve already woken you up, so you’re fine now.”

“Thank you, your majesty!” The warriors all shed tears of gratitude. At the same time, they cursed the illusions.

But He Li was gloomy instead. With his cultivation, he had already examined his condition. He saw that there was an ugly skull-like flower inside of him, and its growth was only temporarily stopped by a streak of golden light.

That golden light was probably because of what the emperor had just done, but he knew that such suppression was only temporary. Once the time limit was up, the golden light would weaken. The skull flower would then grow crazily within him.

He tried to force the flower out on his own, but he failed no matter what he tried. This flower seemed to have already merged with his very flesh and blood. Unless he discarded this body, there would be no way of eliminating this flower. He Li quickly understood the emperor's plans, yet he didn't dare expose him. He could only look at his excited companions sullenly. Sometimes, ignorance really was bliss.

Zhao Ruizhi walked over to the lake. He pressed his palm downward emotionlessly and a golden palm appeared in the skies. The lake water instantly boiled, and soon afterward, it evaporated into steam and revealed what was at the lake bottom.

It was full of withered bones, some human, some belonging to all sorts of beasts. Some of the skeletons had strange smiles of both satisfaction and suffering, similar to what King Qi Manor's soldiers had had on their faces before.

Chills ran down their backs; even Zhao Ruizhi was no exception. If not because he had just happened to turn around, by the time he reacted to what was going on, those strange flowers might have already finished maturing in his body. Eliminating them then would be even more difficult.

He quickly spread out his divine awareness, and his brows immediately furrowed. Normally, his divine senses could surround the entire capital whenever he wished, but now, it only reached a few dozen zhang out. He was clearly being suppressed by this world's special laws.

"We'll advance and continue with our search!" Zhao Ruizhi didn't sense the existence of any mysterious creatures nearby, so he gave up on searching the place. The top priority right now was the highest sacred mountain. There was a grand palace that was obviously the centerpiece of these three sacred mountains. If there were any secret treasures, that was most likely where they would be.

But after experiencing everything that had happened here, his previous high spirits were now shrouded in sullen gloom. It seemed this place might not have any medicines of immortality. If he'd known that this would be the case, he would have gotten rid of that little bastard Zu An first!

He was enraged. It was all these strange peach trees' fault. With a brush of his sleeves, a strand of golden light flew out. The strange peach trees immediately began to burn fiercely, and all manner of strange ghost faces screamed miserably. The others turned pale with fright as they watched.

The peach forest looked dense, but for Zhao Ruizhi, destroying it was extremely easy. The entire place was burned to ashes in just a few seconds. He harrumphed, then turned around to walk in the direction Zu An had fled toward. King Qi Manor's people quickly followed behind him.

But they stopped soon afterward. The flourishing scenery was nowhere to be seen, having been replaced with a desert that stretched out endlessly.

"Could it be another illusion?" He Li asked with a gulp.

Zhao Ruizhi shook his head. "I sensed some intense ki vibrations in the air just now. The space here has just undergone a transformation, so what's in front of us isn't an illusion, but a real desert." He frowned inwardly. If this really were the case, the place Zu An had gone to might not even be the same space he had entered. Hunting down that kid was going to be troublesome.

"Let's head toward that palace at the very top first." Zhao Ruizhi quickly made his decision. They were all on an island anyway, so Zu An had no way of escaping. Once he finished investigating this dungeon and obtained its inheritance, he would then slowly find that little bastard.

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"Achoo!" Zu An rubbed his nose. "I'm sure a beauty is missing me to death."

Mi Li rolled her eyes. "Wishing you were dead sounds more accurate."

Zu An smiled in embarrassment. He had to admit that really might be a possibility. After all, he still received Rage points from the emperor from time to time.

"Huh? There seems to be some weird temple up ahead," Bi Linglong said.

Zu An raised his head and saw a giant temple a hundred zhang out. But the temple was rather strange in architecture. It wasn't like any other temple he had ever seen. It lacked the slightest trace of holiness and solemnity, but instead looked like a resting monster.

Chapter 853: Mountains in Gloom

"This temple looks like a weird fish." After looking at it for a while, Bi Linglong couldn't help but ask, "But are there really fish that big in this world?"

"There are, like great whales." Zu An looked at the strange temple. He felt it was larger than even the blue whales of his old world.

"Huh? Could it be..." Mi Li trailed off, puzzled.

Zu An quickly asked, "Master empress, when did you get into the habit of stopping halfway through your sentence? What is this thing?"

Mi Li shook her head. "Let's take a look around first. I want to make sure it really is what I suspect it to be."

Zu An wanted to ask her for more information, but Bi Linglong suddenly cried out in alarm. A zombie-like arm had shot out of the ground and gripped her ankle!

However, Bi Linglong did have six levels of cultivation. She quickly sliced it off after her initial alarm. At almost the same time, more hands reached out to grab at her feet. Furthermore, the ground around them became viscous like a swamp. Her center of gravity became unsteady and she began to fall. Fortunately, Zu An's reactions were fast. He picked her up and chopped off the hands around her feet before leaping back to solid ground.

"What in the world was that?" Bi Linglong's heart was still pounding as she stared at where they had just been.

The ground had become incredibly muddy. It turned out not to be solid ground at all, but rather a swamp! Countless arms reached out from the swamp and grabbed frantically toward the air, as if they wanted to drag anything living into the abyss. Her complexion paled when she saw the scene. Girls had a natural rejection toward such creepy things.

"I don't know; they look like moving corpses," Zu An said with a grim look.

Bi Linglong was about to say something else when she suddenly frowned. She bent down and clutched her calf, breaking out into a cold sweat. Zu An squatted down next to her. He raised her dress slightly and saw that her smooth and fair calf had several scorched black handprints on them. At first, Bi Linglong was embarrassed when a man raised her skirt, but she was startled when she saw the black handprints.

"These were caused by the evil ki of the world. This evil ki devours living things. Even just a touch can cause great harm." Zu An passed on what Mi Li told him.

"Ah! Then how are we going to cross over?" Bi Linglong was alarmed. This swamp would have been hard to cross to begin with. How were they going to get to the other side with so many vengeful spirits there?

She wasn't too worried about the marks that were on her body, because the harm wasn't too great and she could hold on. But right now, they couldn't proceed, and yet they couldn't go back either. If the emperor caught up, the only thing waiting for the two of them would be death.

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Bi Linglong had no idea that Zhao Ruizhi's group had already taken an entirely different path, and that just then, they were also in quite the predicament.

There was a huge desert in front of them. However, Zhao Ruizhi didn't hesitate at all and led their group inside. This huge desert might be off-limits for a normal person, but it wasn't a big deal for cultivators like them.

But once they reached the desert's depths, several problems manifested. There were rustling sounds all around them. They happened on and off at first, so the group didn't pay too much attention to them. But eventually, the sound grew louder and louder. Furthermore, a lot of the sounds came from underneath their feet.

He Li was already incredibly vexed because he had that skull flower inside him. When he saw that, he decided to just slam his palm into the ground. The sounds immediately became softer. Some deathsworn soldiers dug out some sand and discovered many black scorpions that had died from the impact. They all felt admiration toward the power of He Li's palm.

But Zhao Ruizhi frowned, staring at the scorpions. These scorpions were different from any known scorpions. They were three to four times larger, and they were entirely a strange, shiny black color.

A few moments later, the black scorpion corpses disappeared into black smoke. King Qi Manor's warriors were all stunned. What was going on?

“Be careful!” Zhao Ruizhi’s expression suddenly changed, because more rustling noises surrounded them. Furthermore, they were even louder than before. The surrounding sand began to churn, as if there were something wriggling around inside.

Those from King Qi Manor drew their weapons. They were all frightened badly by the unknown danger. Sand suddenly flew into the air around them, quickly piling up. Then, with a muffled noise, countless black scorpions crawled out and frantically swarmed at the group.

Those from King Qi Manor were alarmed. They brandished their weapons in defense, and all sorts of elemental skills flew out. For cultivators like them, dealing with a swarm of scorpions shouldn’t have been difficult at all, but these scorpions were way too strange. They seemed to possess an immunity against many elemental attacks. With their numbers, they soon managed to sting a cultivator. That person immediately screamed miserably and began to roll on the ground in pain.

These were all elite deathsworn soldiers. Normally, they wouldn’t even frown from their injuries, and yet the soldier was screaming so bitterly. It was easy to imagine just how painful the stings were.

Zhao Ruizhi harrumphed. A wave of golden light rippled out from his spot at the center of the group. The black scorpions instantly vanished into black smoke the instant they made contact with the light. The numerous black scorpions all around them were actually wiped clean in an instant!

He Li widened his eyes. He thought to himself, The emperor’s power is great enough to even surprise me again and again. If I were a woman, I might just fall in love with him. What in the world is wrong with that crown princess? She actually followed that pretty boy instead?

Zhao Ruizhi said indifferently, “Treat his injuries. We’re continuing.” His first impulse was to just throw that person away to avoid being tied down. However, as a leader, he knew that once he lost the soldiers’ morale, it would be meaningless to bring any of them along.

They had already been wavering a bit when many of them died from the floating platforms experiment. If such a thing happened again, they would definitely become resentful. That was why he had to use some methods of appeasement at suitable times.

He Li immediately snapped out of his daze when he heard those words. As a ninth ranked expert, he obviously had some great medicines. He normally wouldn’t be willing to use them on others at all, but since the emperor had spoken up, he could only treat the injured person while feeling aggrieved inside. Hmph, I take back my words. That guy is so stingy; he only knows how to squeeze every last drop out of us. No wonder his woman left him for another man!

Their group continued into the desert. On several occasions, the emperor had to intervene to get rid of the scorpions. The scorpions were becoming progressively more numerous, and they seemed to be getting stronger and stronger as well. Even he was starting to feel the pressure.

“I believe these black scorpions were created from evil ki. They rely on this world for their existence. Unless we completely destroy this world, they’ll never completely disappear.” Zhao Ruizhi’s brows furrowed deeply. But soon afterward, he felt much better. “Hmph, if even I’m experiencing such a headache, that bastard Zu An will inevitably die if he faces a similar disaster.”

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“Achoo!” Zu An couldn’t help but sneeze again. “Just who is thinking about me?”

“What’s up with you? Did you get sick?” Bi Linglong was a bit worried. Normally speaking, after reaching a certain level, cultivators wouldn’t get sick. If they did get sick, it meant that things were really serious.

“I’m fine.” Zu An shook his head. Then, he reached down toward her ankle. The feeling of her skin was smooth and soft, as expected of someone who has been pampered as a crown princess for many years.

Bi Linglong blushed when she felt his hand’s warmth. Why is he touching me right now? Should I reject him or pretend that I didn’t feel anything... She was feeling conflicted when suddenly, a warm current brushed past her ankle. The stinging pain instantly disappeared, and even the black handprint was gone.

“How did you do that?” Bi Linglong was shocked and happy. Only now did she realize that she had been overthinking things.

Zu An chuckled and didn’t answer her question. “Let’s hurry and keep moving.” After saying so, he brought her toward the marsh.

Bi Linglong was frightened. “There are vengeful spirits...” But she froze up midway through her sentence. She was shocked to discover that the vengeful spirits’ arms wanted to reach toward the two of them, yet for some reason, they suddenly shrank back in fear and stayed far away. It was almost as if they were the ones who had seen a ghost and were frightened instead...

Whenever Zu An took a step, all of the mushy swamp land within a few meters of him was covered in a layer of ice, making it as if they were walking on solid ground.

“This is the Snowflake Sword? But I never heard that the Snowflake Sword had evil warding effects!” Bi Linglong was quite puzzled.

Zu An had a relaxed smile on his face. How many times had he entered such dungeons already? He was already a master of dealing with these departed spirits. Once he had cultivated the Primordial Origin Sutra to the second layer, he had gained the ability to oppress all sinister deceased existences. He had already completed the third level now. The vengeful spirits underneath felt an instinctive threat, so they naturally wanted to stay as far away as possible.

Soon afterward, the two of them crossed that swamp and arrived in front of the strange temple. It was already quite worn down. There were no signboards, and even one of the double doors was missing. The one that remained had been pushed slightly inward, its surface covered in cobwebs. It looked as if it might fall apart at a moment’s notice.

There were two vague lines carved on the sides of the door. Mi Li read out, “‘The mountains are in gloom, the monster unseen in its dwelling’... Sigh, it was him after all.”

Chapter 854: Ten Thousand Year Turtle for the Supreme Sovereign

“Who are you talking about?” Zu An was stunned. “Is it about a man or woman?”

For some reason, he couldn’t help but feel a bit unhappy when he saw Mi Li mention someone else. He wouldn’t care if it were another girl, but if it were a man, then...

Mi Li didn't know what he was thinking, or else she might have grabbed the closest object and started whacking him with it. She asked, "Have you heard of Xu Fu?"

"You mean the Xu Fu who searched the seas with three thousand men to find the medicine of immortality?" Zu An chuckled. "It'd be pretty hard to not know about him."

"Indeed, that's him." Mi Li gave the two rows of words a look. "These two lines are talking about Xu Fu. I already had my suspicions when I saw the shape of this temple. Now, they've been confirmed."

"After Ying Zheng unified the world, he no longer had any rivals left to face. He was a man with great ambitions, flaunting himself as even greater than the three sovereigns and five emperors. He obviously didn't want to ultimately return to the soil like those other rulers, so he began to pursue the path of immortality."

"Many outstanding individuals stepped forward when news of this got out; the most famous ones among them were Lu Sheng, Han Zhong, Xu Fu, and Hou Sheng. The most well known out of them was naturally Xu Fu."

"Twenty-eight years after the empire was established, Xu Fu claimed that there were three sacred mountains in the sea where immortals resided: Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou. As such, Ying Zheng sent him out with several thousand men, as well as three years of rations, clothing, medicines, and tools to reach those places, investing a lot of resources there. However, Xu Fu was never able to reach the sacred mountains even after setting out to sea for several years. Thirty-seven years after the empire was established, Ying Zheng asked the reason for their failure, and Xu Fu said that there was a strange, giant fish obstructing them from advancing and he needed help to defeat it. Ying Zheng permitted this, dispatching powerful individuals from the palace and killing that fish."

Mi Li paused at that point. She gave the temple in front of her a look. "If my suspicions aren't mistaken, this temple was made using that weird fish's bones."

Zu An cried out in alarm. "This massive temple was actually made out of a fish? Just how big was that fish?!"

Mi Li rolled her eyes. "Do you think any random fish would've been enough to convince Ying Zheng that it was the reason behind Xu Fu's obstruction, and furthermore to make him dispatch all those powerful individuals to take it down? If I were to make a rough guess, that fish was around this world's grandmaster rank."

"Grandmaster..." Zu An gulped. If there had been a giant fish at the grandmaster rank, then it had definitely been the overlord of a region in the sea. Who was even disturbing whom here?

"It interfered with Ying Zheng's path to immortality, so that weird fish corpse was hauled out. Ying Zheng even examined it himself. However, there are no more recordings about the matter after that. I didn't expect these bones to have been left here!" Mi Li exclaimed.

"Then what about after that? Did Xu Fu find that immortal medicine?" Zu An couldn't help but ask. Even though he had already heard the story before, the history of this world wasn't the exact same as his other world, but rather an exaggerated fairytale version. That was why he wasn't confident if what happened afterward matched his memories.

“Once that strange, powerful fish was killed, Xu Fu crossed the seas again. However, I don’t know what happened afterward, because I was sealed up soon afterward.” Mi Li laughed in self-ridicule. “But I reckon he failed; otherwise, how could the Qin Dynasty have been destroyed?”

Zu An frowned. “Something’s not right. You said earlier that twenty-eight years after the empire’s founding, Xu Fu offered up the petition, and then it was thirty-seven years after that this powerful fish was killed. You were there for all of that. But the first emperor had already sat on the throne for thirty-seven years, so he should have at least been in his fifties, and you were Ying Zheng’s empress... How old were you then?”

He remembered that the moment he had undone Mi Li’s seal, she clearly looked like a young lady. Even though cultivators could hide their age, there weren’t any traces of age. It was hard for him to associate her with an old woman at all.

Mi Li harrumphed. “Asking a girl for her age isn’t polite.”

Zu An chuckled in embarrassment. “Come on, we’re so close already. What can’t we talk about with each other?”

“I wasn’t even his original partner...” Mi Li became annoyed halfway through her sentence. “Regardless of whether I was eighteen or eighty, I’m already past eight thousand, eight hundred and eighty now! That’s more than enough to be your ancestor, hmph!”

Zu An was speechless. Girls were at their prime in their third year of college. What about someone who was eight thousand, eight hundred and eighty then?

He could only continuously comfort himself. Things in a world of cultivation couldn’t be viewed through his previous concept of age. Those immortal goddesses of the legends easily reached tens of thousands of years. If he used that as a comparison, wasn’t Mi Li still young?

Bi Linglong suddenly asked, “Ah Zu, what are you muttering about to yourself?”

Zu An snapped out of his daze. “No... Nothing.” Communication through the soul was extremely fast. Even though he and Mi Li had already exchanged a lot of words, not much time had passed in the real world at all.

“Hurry and come over to look! What are these sculptures?” Bi Linglong trembled as she looked at two rows of dark sculptures. The place was extremely strange.

The lighting in the temple was too dark, so Zu An used his Flame Blade to light some nearby torches and candles. Surprisingly, they lit up even after so much time had passed. The temple brightened up. The two of them could finally see the interior clearly. There were eight sculptures in total on either side. Their appearances were all strange and sinister.

“This temple seems to worship many evil gods.” Bi Linglong felt a chill run down her back. She subconsciously leaned toward Zu An. Regardless of whether it was the outer appearance of this temple, what they’d experienced on the way here, or these malicious looking sculptures, they all pointed at bad signs.

Mi Li sneered. "Ignorant. These are General Thunder, Mother Lightning, Wind Deity, Rain Deity, Yaksha, and other such beings. What evil gods?"

Zu An was confused. "Then why did they consecrate these images here?"

"I reckon that since Xu Fu and the others were heading out to sea for a long time, they built these statues to wish for safety against storms and other natural disasters," explained Mi Li.

Zu An nodded. The cultivators of this world might have been stronger than the ordinary people of his previous world, but similarly, the disasters and power of the world were also much greater than the natural disasters of his previous world. There were many times where not even powerful cultivators could defy them. They could only construct temples and pray for safety.

"Then the one that's being worshipped at the highest position should be the Ocean Deity." Mi Li floated forward as she spoke. She saw that there was a sculpture up ahead, but her expression immediately went blank when she saw it up close.

Zu An took the chance to console Bi Linglong a bit. He brought her up to where Mi Li was. He saw a sculpture that was double the size of the others, seated on a giant rock turtle. Compared to General Thunder, Yaksha, and the other statues, this one looked much kinder. He looked human, and even a bit handsome.

But Zu An couldn't help but frown. He just felt that there was something strange about the statue. How could he describe it? Those with strong and powerful bodies usually looked fierce, right? Then why did this man give off an entirely different kind of feeling? These two different styles didn't match at all.

"Hm? There seem to be words carved into the base." Bi Linglong frowned. She was quite well-read, but she didn't recognize any of these characters.

Zu An recognized them as lesser seals, a form of Chinese characters standardized by the Qin Dynasty. After experiencing several dungeons, he had already learned most of their characters. He wiped off the dust and read out, "A thousand year fish for the beams, a ten thousand year turtle for the supreme sovereign..."

Mi Li snorted coldly. "Utterly arrogant!" Zu An was startled and looked at her. He didn't know why she would suddenly become upset. Mi Li pointed at the statue and asked, "Do you know who he is?"

"Isn't that the Ocean Deity?" Zu An was stunned.

"It should be the Ocean Deity, but the portrait sculpted is another man." Mi Li paused for a moment. Her voice became somewhat cold. "Xu Fu, you dare claim yourself to be a supreme sovereign?!"

Chapter 855: Receive Eternal Life

As Mi Li's voice lowered, sobbing noises suddenly emerged all around them, as if something were crying.

Zu An's expression changed. He quickly rushed over to the window to look outside. He saw overgrown weeds everywhere, and the wind was blowing so hard their giant leaves were swaying violently. Some of the wooden planks covering the dilapidated windows were rattling with noise.

"Ah Zu, I feel a bit cold." Bi Linglong's face was a bit too white. She subconsciously grabbed his hand. Her hand was ice-cold.

Zu An consoled her, "Don't worry, it should just be the wind. This temple's construction is pretty special too, with holes everywhere, so there's bound to be such ghost whimpering voices when there's wind." Bi Linglong voiced her agreement, leaning against him and falling silent.

Zu An said to Mi Li, "Master empress, this doesn't make any sense. Shouldn't the creator of this place be the Qin Emperor? With how arrogant and dominant his personality is, how could he possibly create a statue for Xu Fu, let alone let him inscribe those characters? Don't tell me that it was Xu Fu who made this temple?"

Mi Li frowned. "You're right, it wouldn't be too likely for Ying Zheng to make a statue like this for someone else. As for Xu Fu... This place has been the resting place of successive generations of Qin Emperors, so how could he possibly have a chance to build something here?"

"What you're saying makes sense." Zu An nodded. "But that only makes it even stranger. Since there is no way it can be the Qin Emperor, nor was it Xu Fu who made this place, then who in the world was it?" The two of them began to think to themselves.

Bi Linglong suddenly cried out in fright. "No!"

Zu An jumped in fright. He then noticed that Bi Linglong had actually fallen asleep while leaning against him. She was probably just too tired. She had suffered such a severe loss of ki, and her mind had always been tense all this time.

Zu An didn't wake her up and let her sleep soundly. He carried her over to a rock and sat down, gently patting her to comfort her. Her body trembled from time to time, as she seemingly had an unknown nightmare.

He was about to continue his discussion with Mi Li when Bi Linglong suddenly spoke again. "It hurts..." It wasn't her usual proud and competent tone, but rather a weak and helpless one.

Zu An called out to her a few times, but she didn't show any signs of waking up. He could only gently press his palm against her back and send a warm flow of ki into her, nourishing her body that way. He hoped the warmth could help ease her nightmares.

But soon afterward, Bi Linglong suddenly exclaimed while sobbing, "It hurts! Please be gentler, Ah Zu..."

Zu An was speechless. Mi Li also turned around when she heard those words. She said with a smirk, "That woman is dreaming that you're doing something to her."

Before Zu An could reply, Bi Linglong slowly opened her eyes. When she first looked at Zu An, her expression was blank, then tears seemed about to come out of her beautiful eyes. She continued to twist around in Zu An's arms. Her fair white hands gently caressed Zu An's face, and then continued down. They passed along his neck, then his chest...

"Is this woman in heat?" Mi Li harrumphed. She turned around and appeared to be focusing on this temple's strangeness. She wasn't in the mood to pay attention to their random drama.

Zu An felt his throat go dry from the shocking feeling in his arms. He quickly shifted his attention and asked, "You're awake?"

Bi Linglong voiced her agreement. Her voice was incredibly tender. "You did all that to me in my dreams. You have the nerve to ask me that right now?"

Zu An was speechless. What the hell do your dreams have to do with me?!

He had to admit that women were natural seductresses. Even someone who was always earnest like Bi Linglong had ended up being so powerful when she tempted him. Those large, misty eyes, her incredibly soft and wonderful body, her gentle voice... Every single part served as a deadly invitation.

Zu An had just tempered his body three times over with the Primordial Origin Sutra, so his yang energy was already at its peak. He immediately became hard when he was tempted that way.

When she felt his suffocating pressure, Bi Linglong blushed. She said softly, "Ah Zu, I've already thought things through. The emperor wants us dead. We might be able to get away for now, but we'll be caught eventually. Rather than running in fright day and night without rest just to eventually die, we should instead choose to seize happiness every day."

Zu An gulped with difficulty. "What are you trying to say?"

Bi Linglong looked at him with her beautiful eyes, and Zu An felt as if his soul had been gripped. She continued, "Do you think I don't know what you've been thinking? You even used me to anger him on purpose earlier. Those words were your real thoughts too, right?"

Being exposed made Zu An unable to help but feel embarrassed. Bi Linglong's moist red lips moved closer. "Even though we can't beat him, we can get revenge, right?"

...

Meanwhile, in the desert, Zhao Ruizhi sneezed. Then, he looked upward and asked, "He Li, do you see a hint of green up there?"

Their group had continued into the desert while fighting against the evil black scorpion spirits, and they had accidentally fallen into a quicksand whirlpool.

With Zhao Ruizhi's cultivation, he obviously wouldn't be caught by some trifling sand. However, while King Qi Manor's soldiers were struggling, they ended up exposing some city walls in the sand. That made him realize there were ancient city remains buried under the sand.

The endless sand had finally become a bit different. He had a feeling that this place had what he needed. He thus brought everyone into the underground city's remains.

However, they encountered trouble as soon as they entered. A sea of flames rushed out when the scouts opened the city gates. Fortunately, Zhao Ruizhi quickly extinguished the flames, but the two scouts had already been burned to ashes.

Afterward, the survivors raised their vigilance to a hundred and twenty percent.

They encountered all sorts of traps and mechanisms in the ruins afterward. However, these people had been well trained soldiers to begin with. Together with Zhao Ruizhi overseeing things, they were able to pass by more frightened than hurt.

Their group ultimately entered a spacious hall and found some things, but those things were useless to Zhao Ruizhi. When he realized they had failed to find any clues related to immortality, he became vexed. He raised his head and saw some green above him. For some reason, he suddenly felt a wave of annoyance.

Even though He Li said he didn't see any green, Zhao Ruizhi still didn't feel relieved. As such, he sent out a palm strike above him. It blasted a shining green stone slab to pieces, and sand rushed into the room. The group quickly moved out of the way.

Just then, someone suddenly shouted, "Come quick, there's a stele here!"

Zhao Ruizhi also noticed that a massive stele had fallen together with the quicksand. His figure flickered, and he appeared right next to the stele. The quicksand falling above him was blocked by a wave of invisible ki. He gave He Li a look, saying, "Go plug up that hole." The entire palace could be flooded by sand if nothing were done about it.

He Li sulked. You were the one who made that hole, but you want me to fix it. Why am I so unlucky... But he didn't dare voice any complaints and quickly flew up, pressing his back against the hole. He grabbed the sides of the ceiling with his arms, using his body to block the quicksand.

Endless sand poured down. The tremendous pressure was difficult to withstand even for a peak stage ninth rank cultivator like him. He could only hope that the emperor would finish up quickly, then bring everyone out of here.

Zhao Ruizhi looked at the stele in front of him. He didn't recognize its material. It was entirely green in color. Many of the characters on it were already illegible, and only a few sentences were left.

The characters were extremely strange. However, Zhao Ruizhi was incredibly well-studied. He had seen similar characters from some ancient records. He slowly read to himself, "Above chaos rests dark clouds; the Heavenly Gate opens wide. The great sun returns to the Golden Palace; the Southern Star moves around the Alioth. The Imperial Canopy lies in purple; elegant music enters Zheng. Those who understand shall receive eternal life..."

"Eternal life!" His breathing quickly became hurried when he read the last two words.

Chapter 856: All Will Die

Zhao Ruizhi had been starting to lose hope after what had happened with the fake peach trees. However, now that he saw another path, he immediately felt energetic again.

He quickly reviewed what he had just read. 'Above chaos rests dark clouds; the Heavenly Gate opens wide' probably meant that a large gate had opened within the dark clouds. He recalled the scene of the world itself being destroyed, how heaven and earth had flipped. There had been dark clouds that flickered with lightning, then three sacred mountains appeared. These words were most likely referring to that scene.

But what in the world did 'The great sun returns to the Golden Palace; the Southern Star moves around the Alioth. The Imperial Canopy lies in purple; elegant music enters Zheng. Those who understand shall receive eternal life' mean?

He vaguely recalled an ancient record mentioning the term 'Alioth'; it seemed to be the name of a star. Even though he didn't really understand what was going on, he could tell that a certain astronomical phenomenon was being described. Did certain celestial patterns have to align for him to obtain eternal life?

Zhao Ruizhi's expression changed several times. He had believed that he was unmatched in this world, that there was nothing too hard for him. He had remained calm even when the world itself was being destroyed previously. But now, he really was starting to feel a bit of despair.

If a certain celestial pattern was needed, how was he supposed to influence the stars above? According to what he knew, many of these celestial patterns only happened once in a long time. The shortest intervals took a few decades, while the longer ones took thousands or even tens of thousands of years. They were definitely not things human strength could control.

He Li felt a wave of berserk energy ripple out while blocking that hole in the ceiling. The emperor's mood had clearly become a bit unstable. He was alarmed, but his mind moved quickly and he said, "Congratulations, your majesty!"

Zhao Ruizhi gave him a cold look. "There's nothing worth celebrating."

When Zhao Ruizhi's eyes passed over He Li, He Li felt as if his entire body had frozen over. He didn't doubt for a second that if he couldn't show his value, the other party would immediately eliminate him.

He gulped, and then quickly said, "This dungeon in the academy's rear mountain hasn't changed at all in so many years, and yet the entire world flipped when your majesty entered and a new dungeon appeared. It's clearly because your majesty is the one this new dungeon is destined for! Isn't 'Dark clouds surround my weary self, a gate of heaven opens wide' describing what we just experienced? Since the preceding words have already been confirmed, the celestial phenomena will most likely be confirmed soon as well. Your majesty, you came at the perfect time; this dao of eternal life was waiting for you!"

He heard what Zhao Ruizhi had read earlier. As someone at the peak of the ninth rank, he wasn't stupid. He could deduce the rough meanings of the characters after a simple analysis. Even though he couldn't completely decipher those words, it was more than enough for flattery.

Zhao Ruizhi became happy when he heard what He Li said. He roared with laughter. "Indeed, indeed! The astrological signs these characters describe are most likely talking about the present! Ha ha ha..."

He Li, who was still up on the ceiling, smiled as well. But inside, he was cold and ruthless. Even though the celestial pattern has been confirmed, it's hard to say who's going to receive this opportunity! After all, many of us came into this dungeon together...

Zhao Ruizhi became excited. "Since we've already explored all of the secrets of this place, we're moving on!" They left the ancient city's remains afterward, returning to the desert. He wondered what Zu An

and Bi Linglong were doing right now. Hmph, they were probably done in by those vengeful spirits or traps. They should be grateful that they were able to die so painlessly.

...

Zu An had no idea whether he should do it or not. Bi Linglong was like a little kitten in heat. She continued to kiss him on both cheeks. Zu An's entire body felt as if it were about to explode when he smelled her fragrance.

But he wasn't an inexperienced kid anymore. Even though his body's reaction was there, he felt hesitation. He gave Mi Li a pleading look. "Master empress, can you help me check if there's something wrong with her?"

Mi Li, who had been pretending to look for clues but was actually eavesdropping on them, grinned. However, she quickly covered her expression up and remarked, "Tsk tsk, you only realized that something was off with her now?"

"What's going on?" Zu An pushed the beauty in his arms away while looking at Mi Li. However, the amazing feeling in his arms almost made his rationality collapse several times.

Mi Li shook her head. "I don't know, but judging from her condition, she's probably been poisoned. You're only fine because you've cultivated the Primordial Origin Sutra and you have poison immunity."

"Poison?" Zu An reviewed everything that had happened after entering this temple. There didn't seem to be any toxins, so why would she get poisoned?

Wait! He suddenly realized something and looked up toward the torches and candles. He saw faint wisps of smoke coming from the burning candlesticks.

It was too dark inside, so he had used his Flame Blade skill to light these candles. Back then, he was surprised that such a ruined temple had candles that could still be lit. But now, he realized that they were probably the source of the main issue. As such, he quickly took Bi Linglong into the air, breaking open a hole in the roof and flying out. Horrifying sounds of ghostly weeping surrounded them again.

"Who's trying to play the ghost here? Show yourself!" Zu An roared as he scanned his surroundings. Unfortunately, apart from the violently swaying grass, he didn't see any people.

Zu An frowned. He used the jade badge's ability, planning to search the surroundings with the help of some small creatures. But he was shocked to discover that there weren't any small creatures to control! Forget about birds or mice, there weren't even any insects.

His expression became grave. It was to be expected that a lake full of vengeful spirits wouldn't have any living creatures, but this was a place where plant life flourished! However, there still wasn't a single living being apart from the two of them. This was way too strange.

"Why are we outside?" After breathing in the fresh air and hearing Zu An's ferocious roar, Bi Linglong trembled. A bit of confusion appeared in her eyes.

Zu An took the chance to feed her a Heart Calming Pill and help her digest it. "You were poisoned inside that temple."

As the medicine's effects spread through her body, Bi Linglong's eyes became clear again. "Poisoned?" Her small face was already red from all of her previous movements. Now that she had become clear-headed again, it burned up even more.

Even though she was poisoned, she hadn't forgotten what happened. When she recalled how she had been seducing him a moment ago, she was so embarrassed that she wanted to run away and hide forever.

Do I have no shame? What in the world is wrong with me?! She was going crazy. She really wanted to scratch her hair in frustration, but her rationality stopped her. She took a deep breath and pretended to be calm. "What happened after I was poisoned? I... didn't do anything, right?"

Zu An knew what she was like. He knew she would be way too embarrassed if he told her what happened, so how could he bring himself to tell her the truth? "Nothing much. I brought you out here when I realized that you were poisoned."

Mi Li rolled her eyes as she watched the drama as a bystander. "This woman really knows how to act."

"What do you mean?" Zu An asked, confused.

Mi Li said with a smile, "If she really didn't know what happened just now, her first reaction should have been asking if you did anything to her, and yet she asked if she did anything to you. How interesting."

Zu An was speechless. The prettier the girl, the better they are at lying! Furthermore, those who understand pretty women best are naturally other pretty women.

The ghostly whimpering became louder and louder. They could even vaguely make out human voices.

"Dead... They're all dead... Too cruel, cruel, cruel, cruel..." The voice was rough and crude, as if it had been many years since it had last spoken to anyone. Its pronunciation was also a bit strange. If not for Zu An's quick reactions, he wouldn't have been able to understand it at all.

When the voice spoke, the weeds on the ground grew even taller. They had only been as tall as a person before, and yet they reached the top of the temple in just a few moments. They reached toward Zu An and Bi Linglong like countless tentacles.

Chapter 857: Manifestation

"What the hell?" Zu An exclaimed, startled. Even though he occasionally 'partook' in the tentacle play category, it wasn't so fun when he became the target instead.

He kicked outward, quickly bringing Bi Linglong aside to evade the round of tentacles... Wait, no, crazily growing weeds. But there were weeds everywhere, and the weeds were still growing. The two of them had nowhere to escape to at all.

Bi Linglong drew her sword and slashed at the weeds as well. A sword fit for a crown princess was naturally exceptionally sharp, quickly chopping through the many weeds. However, it didn't stop their growth at all. They were growing way too fast, so fast that they were outpacing the rate at which they were being cut!

Bi Linglong's attacks became slower and slower as she faced the endless weeds. Eventually, two weeds from one side wrapped around her wrist. She slowed down further, and during that delay, her other arm and both legs were bound by more weeds.

She cried out in alarm, having already lost her center of gravity. The weeds swung her into the air, spreading her limbs out into a humiliating spread-eagled position. Even more weeds rushed over, wriggling up her legs and quickly reaching her thighs. Still others wound around her arms up to her neck. They were already about to reach her face.

The strange weeds wrapped around her body tightly. She normally wore reserved clothing, so they revealed a strangely seductive side of her. When had Bi Linglong ever experienced such a thing? She was embarrassed and scared, and her head went blank.

Zu An was furious when he saw what was happening. Even if we're going to do this, I have to be the one doing it to her!

A Flame Blade slashed outward, severing the weeds that wrapped around Bi Linglong. The flames continued to eat at the weeds, instantly burning away all of the weeds tangled around her body.

These weeds weren't actually living things and shouldn't have feared flames, but his flames had been created with the Fire Phoenix' powers. How could they possibly withstand the power of pure phoenix flames?

Miserable screams filled the air, as if the weeds were in scorching pain. Their crazy growth paused for a moment, then they quickly withdrew into the ground.

Bi Linglong dropped from above. Zu An kicked off the ground and flew over to catch her. "Are you okay?"

"I'm... okay." Bi Linglong felt as if she had been embarrassed more times that day than in her entire life up to that point. Being played with by those despicable weeds was just too humiliating. She couldn't even face Zu An.

Zu An consoled her. "It's fine; it was actually pretty nice to look at."

Bi Linglong wanted to bite him when she heard that. But thinking back, he had already seen everything anyway, so hanging up there like that didn't seem to be that big of a deal...

Zu An had already turned around to look in a different direction. "I'll deal with those monsters that bullied you in revenge!"

A giant flame blade appeared in his palm and cleaved outward as he finished speaking. He had already noticed that the weeds were shrinking back in a single direction. With a loud explosion, the massive flame blade blasted open a huge groove in the ground! A dark figure leaped out from underneath, patting away the embers on its body.

"An elf? A dryad?" Zu An exclaimed, shocked. He saw that the creature resembled a human.

Back then, Snow could grow vines from her head as well. The two skills resembled each other. But Snow was so pretty; who was this ugly fellow in front of him? It was hard to call it a humanoid creature. Its entire body was covered in green fur, and he could only barely make out a torso and four limbs.

“Huff huff huff...” After it put out the flames on its body, it gave Zu An a look of resentment.

You have successfully trolled Han Zhong for +111 +111 +111...

“Han Zhong?” Zu An was startled when he saw the name. It really was a person!

“What? Did you just call him Han Zhong?” Mi Li knew Zu An’s system could collect the soul force created from anger, and that it would never make a mistake.

“Yeah. What’s wrong?” Zu An’s expression became strange when he saw how startled Mi Li was. He asked, “Don’t tell me you recognize this monster too?”

Mi Li had a conflicted expression as she replied, “Did you forget that I told you that all kinds of formidable individuals responded to the call when Ying Zheng declared that he was pursuing immortality? There were four who were the most outstanding among them. Apart from Xu Fu, there was also Lu Sheng, Hou Sheng, and... Han Zhong.”

Zu An was speechless. He really was surprised this time. Why was Han Zhong here? And how had he survived until now?

“Was Han Zhong a fiend race individual, or some other type of weird creature?” Zu An really found it hard to associate the monster in front of him with a human.

“No,” Mi Li shook her head, “He’s human. But Han Zhong’s behavior back then was quite strange. I heard that he ingested sweet sedge for thirty years, and then grew green hair all over his body. After that, he obtained a highly retentive memory and became invulnerable against fire and water.”

“Even if he grew green hair all over his body, it shouldn’t be able to grow that long, right?” Zu An recalled the weeds everywhere. He had already burned up so much of them with his phoenix fire, yet there was still so much covering Han Zhong. Just how ridiculous was that?

“It wasn’t this long back then. It’s probably because a lot of time has passed since then.” Mi Li gave the long-haired monster a look. Her expression was extremely conflicted.

Zu An was horrified. You grew green hair all over your body?

Mi Li said, “I know what kind of poison that girl was poisoned by. Han Zhong always ate sweet sedge, and that plant is toxic. There’s a lot of sweet sedge among these weeds. If you were to get poisoned, you would experience powerful hallucinations. But, it doesn’t actually have aphrodisiac properties. If that girl ended up like that just because of some hallucinations, it looks like that’s really what she believes inside. It was just magnified by the illusion.”

Zu An couldn’t help but give Bi Linglong a look. He hadn’t been able to tell at all! She usually looked cold and arrogant. She actually lusted after my body deep down?

“Why are you looking at me like that?” Bi Linglong’s female intuition immediately made her realize that something was off.

“It’s nothing.” Zu An chuckled. “It’s just that if you ever miss me, just tell me. You don’t have to hide it like that.”

Bi Linglong was speechless.

Han Zhong rushed over with a roar. He swung his palm with power not inferior to that of a master rank cultivator. Zu An's expression changed. He reached out his hand and blocked the attack. With a loud noise, he was forced back by one zhang. Han Zhong also tumbled backward.

Zu An was shocked when he sensed the numbness in his arm. This guy really wasn't going to be easy to deal with. It would be really bad if their fight drew the emperor's attention. As such, he shouted, "Han Zhong! Why don't we have a chat first?"

The other person crawled to his feet and prepared to pounce again. However, he instantly froze when he heard his name. "Han... Zhong..." he began. His speech was quite inept, as if it had been far too long since he had last spoken, making him forget how to speak.

He grabbed his head in pain. "Han... Zhong, who is that? Who am I? Ahhhh..." He shook his head from side to side madly, hitting it with his fist. His head was soon covered in blood. Then, he looked up. "Eternal life... No, all dead, all will die..." After speaking those words, he charged furiously.

Zu An became sullen. They still had to fight in the end! Since the other party clearly had the wood attribute, he used his Flame Blade. Sure enough, he had a natural advantage.

After the fight went on for a bit, Mi Li voiced her surprise. "Something's not right. It seems he only has his battle instincts left and isn't using any battle skills or anything of the sort. Otherwise, there's no way you would be able to fight him if he had cultivated all this time."

Zu An had also realized as much. Han Zhong was fighting like a wild beast, perhaps even beneath the level of a beast. At least beasts had their innate skills.

Mi Li suddenly floated over. Her fair finger reached out, striking the monster in the lower rib acupoint. Han Zhong roared in unwillingness. Then, he collapsed to the ground.

Zu An looked at Mi Li in shock, exclaiming, "You actually helped me!"

"I didn't do this to help you, but rather because I had some things to ask him," Mi Li said. Then, she appeared in front of Han Zhong and asked "Han Zhong, do you recognize who I am?"

Bi Linglong was confused about why that monster had suddenly fallen, but then, a ridiculously beautiful red-clothed woman appeared out of thin air. Her eyes widened in shock.

Chapter 858: No One Will Survive

Originally, with Han Zhong's strength, it wouldn't have been that easy for Mi Li to restrain him at all. But she was in soul form, so Han Zhong hadn't been aware of her existence at all. Furthermore, all of his attention had been on Zu An.

When she saw Mi Li's sudden appearance, Bi Linglong was shocked. Her first reaction was that there was a female ghost residing in the area. But were there any ghosts that were so pretty?

Furthermore, the woman exuded a feeling of elegance and pride with every action, leaving her in complete admiration. That was what she had strived for ever since she was young. She'd thought that

she had already reached that level, but after encountering all sorts of things in this dungeon, her unstable mental state proved that she was still far off.

She subconsciously leaned closer to Zu An. "Ah Zu, be careful. I'd heard that red clothed ghosts are the most powerful and the most vicious."

Mi Li turned around. "Damn brat, trust me when I say I might just turn you into a ghost myself!"

"Huh?" Bi Linglong jumped in fright. She hadn't expected the ghost to be capable of speech! From what she knew, ghosts like these often possessed incredible cultivations. This place was full of vengeful spirits, and it even had that long-haired monster. Now, there was even a powerful ghost. She felt goosebumps all over.

Zu An couldn't help but chuckle. He said in consolation, "Don't worry, she's one of us."

"One of us?" Bi Linglong's eyes widened. "You've even slept with a ghost before?"

Her impression of Zu An was that of a total womanizer. He had so many pretty girls at his side! When she heard him call the ridiculously beautiful red-clothed ghost one of his own people, she instinctively thought they had 'that' type of relationship.

"Ahem..." Zu An quickly covered her mouth with his hands. He 'saw' black smoke come out of Mi Li and told Bi Linglong, "Watch what you say, she's just my good friend..." He quickly changed his tone when he sensed Mi Li's vicious glare. "Uh... Actually, she can be considered my master."

Mi Li harrumphed. "A master is a master; what do you mean 'considered'?"

"Master?" Bi Linglong realized that she had misunderstood and felt embarrassed. As such, she bowed guiltily. "Greetings, master. I offended you earlier; I hope master can look past it."

Mi Li rolled her eyes. "You're not even married yet; don't copy whatever he does."

Bi Linglong stood there blankly. She was overwhelmed by embarrassment. Why the heck had she called the ghost master too? Ahhhhh, this is way too embarrassing!

Zu An chuckled, taking Bi Linglong's hand to calm her down. Bi Linglong wanted to pull her hand back. She didn't even know if it was because of her personality or if she was just embarrassed.

Mi Li had already turned back around to look at Han Zhong. When she saw his muddled eyes, she frowned. "Speak!"

Han Zhong raised his head to look at her. He didn't have much of a reaction at first, but he seemed to have remembered something soon afterward. His expression became one of horror. "A ghost! A ghost!" If not because his key acupoint had been sealed, he might have already run for his life.

Mi Li was speechless. What the hell is going on today? Why the hell is everyone treating me like a ghost today?! Even though her current form was a bit like a ghost, it wasn't nice at all to treat others this way!

She squatted down and moved her face closer to him. "You already recognize me, right?"

"You're the empress... Wait, the empress has already died, you aren't... Ah... Everyone is going to die... Ahhhhh..." Han Zhong looked as if he had gone mad and clutched his head in pain.

“Empress?” Bi Linglong was surprised when she heard those words. She quietly moved closer to Zu An and asked, “Your master is an empress?”

“Yeah,” Zu An replied.

“Which country’s empress is she? What kind of country has an empress with her level of grace?”

“Uh... This is a bit hard to explain. It’s not one of the countries you know about.”

“Then why would she suddenly appear here?”

“She’s actually always been by my side; it’s just that she usually doesn’t like to meet strangers. That’s why she didn’t show herself.”

“Always been by your side? Then doesn’t that mean she saw everything between us?!” Bi Linglong was horrified. She’d thought that what had happened was just their secret, but now that she knew that someone had been watching the entire time, the overwhelming shame made her want to disappear forever.

“Oh, just shut up already. It’s not like you two really slept together, so what are you being all shy about?” Mi Li turned around to shoot the two of them a look, seemingly annoyed that she had been distracted. Then, she turned back around to continue questioning Han Zhong. Unfortunately, he only mumbled indistinctly and couldn’t offer any meaningful replies.

Bi Linglong was speechless. She really wanted to retort, but she felt that what Mi Li had said actually made sense. She actually couldn’t respond. Just then, Zu An moved close and asked, “Then should we just do it so she has nothing to say anymore?”

“Get lost!” Bi Linglong harrumphed. She knew that Zu An was saying those things to help her out, but why did she really want to hit him right now?

Zu An realized that there were more important things going on. He moved to Mi Li’s side and said, “He’s already lost his rationality. I don’t think you’ll be able to get much out of him.”

Mi Li frowned. Her hands quickly formed a complex but beautiful seal. Then, a complicated and profound rune appeared, sticking to Han Zhong’s head. It entered his skin and disappeared.

“A rune master?” Bi Linglong was shocked. After all, even though there were quite a few cultivators in the Great Zhou Dynasty, rune masters were quite rare. That was especially the case with high level rune masters, and every single one of them was considered a national treasure.

The speed at which the woman produced a rune, as well as the intricacy and profundity of that rune, seemed to be superior to any rune master she had ever seen before! Bi Linglong didn’t even know if the head researchers at the academy could compare to the woman...

Han Zhong ceased his wild beast-like roars, and his expression gradually became clear. He raised his head to look at Mi Li, saying weakly, “Thank you, your highness the empress.”

“There’s no need to thank me. This rune is called a Dying Flash Rune. Your life will quickly reach its end,” Mi Li said indifferently.

Zu An was alarmed. Tsk, big sis empress, you really are fierce and decisive! But I don't really mind that part about you...

Han Zhong slowly shook his head. "Continuing on in that half-ghost, half-human state can't be considered truly living either. I thank your highness for setting me free as well."

Mi Li voiced her acknowledgment. She clearly didn't care too much about such things, as there was a more pressing matter. She asked, "Why were you able to stay alive for so long?"

"Our group was searching for immortal medicine for his majesty. After searching for many years, I found a holy medicine from the legendary elf race that had been refined into a pill. Unfortunately, his majesty was suspicious and had me take it first. It was alright at first, but soon afterward, green hair grew all over my body, and my mind began to deteriorate. No matter what I tried, I couldn't slow down the process. In the end, I turned into that freakish creature and completely lost my mind, becoming a monster..." Han Zhong's tone was extremely calm, as if he were narrating something that didn't have anything to do with him. It was clear that after experiencing the endless passage of time, he didn't care much about life and death any longer.

Zu An noticed that Han Zhong had mentioned the elf race. He hadn't expected elves to have existed even back then! It seemed this world really wasn't the one he came from.

In reality, Han Zhong's decision to find the elf race hadn't been incorrect. Qiao Xueying had given Zu An half of her lifespan, so if the first emperor had found a group of elves to share their lifespans with him, he could at least have lived for a few more millennia.

But Zu An quickly changed his mind. The ability to share half their lifespan was the elves' greatest secret. There weren't many elves who had used the ability throughout history, and those outside the clan didn't even know they could do such a thing. Otherwise, the entire clan would be finished.

He felt warm inside when he thought of that. Snow really did care about him. To be honest, it had been so long that he really was starting to miss her.

Mi Li continued to ask, "Then why are you here?"

"I don't know; I've already lost many of my memories..." Han Zhong shook his head helplessly.

"Then what about Ying Zheng? Did he end up finding the panacea of immortality?" Mi Li asked.

"I don't know, but at the very least, he shouldn't have before I lost my mind." Han Zhong sighed deeply. "How can there be eternal life in this world? My method was already extremely close, yet the end result was just a monster that lost all rationality. Even if you could live that way, how could that be considered immortality..."

His expression suddenly changed as he spoke. His eyes filled with horror when he looked at Mi Li. "Your highness, why did you..."

Mi Li cut him off. "I'm the one asking you questions right now, not the other way around. Right, this empress noticed that the statue consecrated in the master position inside that whale bone temple was actually Xu Fu. Why would he be there? Furthermore, why does the stele call him the supreme sovereign?"

“Xu Fu? Xu Fu!” Han Zhong had a blank look on his face, but then he suddenly clutched his head in pain. “I don’t know, I don’t know... Ha ha ha! All of you are going to die... You’ll all die... No one will survive...”

Mi Li’s expression changed. She was just about to ask more questions when the other party’s voice came to a screeching halt. When she examined him up close, she saw that he had already taken his last breath. A look of fear had frozen on his face before he died, as if he had faced something extremely terrifying.

Chapter 859: 4,560 Years

With Han Zhong’s death, the surrounding lush green grassland instantly withered up. Only a pile of dry yellow dust remained. Even though none of those present were strangers to death, it was still a bleak sight.

Zu An couldn’t hold himself back. “That Han Zhong really is a good-for-nothing. All he did was scare us with all of his blabbering; he didn’t even give us any useful information.”

Mi Li also frowned. Han Zhong’s words had left her completely confused as well.

Bi Linglong took the chance to examine Mi Li. She was just too curious about the mysterious woman who had suddenly appeared. She had endless things to ask Zu An, but she just couldn’t bring herself to do it right in front of her face.

Right at that moment, rumbling sounds of collapse suddenly came from the temple. The group quickly went inside to take a look and saw that many of the sculptures had been knocked over, and the master position where the biggest statue should have been now had a huge hole in its place. The statue had fallen straight through.

“Han Zhong’s sweet sedge weeds already grew all over, even digging beneath this temple’s foundation. Now that he’s dead, his strange weeds have all withered away, so they could no longer support the statue’s weight. That’s why everything collapsed,” Mi Li said, analyzing the situation.

“Huh? There’s something shiny below.” Bi Linglong had sharp eyes. She pointed at the hole below in alarm.

The group looked in that direction. The statue had already broken into two pieces. The head lay off to the side, as if it were staring at them coldly. It was quite frightening. But that wasn’t what anyone was paying attention to at the moment. They instead looked toward the shining spot.

The giant turtle mount had also fallen down, and its shell had cracked open. A ring of light shone from the sides of the turtle shell.

Mi Li gave Zu An a look and said, “Go and take a look.”

Zu An was stunned. “Can’t you easily split that rock turtle open with your cultivation?”

“The disciple should take care of the master’s needs!” Mi Li harrumphed. “Furthermore, your body has already become so tough. You should use some of that strength instead of lazing around and letting your mind wander.”

Zu An was speechless. Bi Linglong also blushed. Even though she had been poisoned, she hadn't lost her rationality. She still remembered his exaggerated reaction when she had teased him.

What could Zu An do? He could only head down and pry open the rock turtle shell. Even though the material was tough, his body was already at an entirely different level. He didn't even need to use ki. Just his strength alone was enough to break open the shell along the crack.

The shell's interior was lined with many smooth, round, luminescent pearls. Every single one was massive, and difficult to even hold with a single hand. Even though Bi Linglong was used to seeing treasures in the palace, she had never seen so many top-grade luminescent pearls together. Furthermore, she could feel a strange aura coming from them. They were clearly extraordinary goods.

Zu An picked one up and gave it a feel. "They don't have any ki inside, but rather a strange kind of energy. I have no idea what they can be used for."

"Hmph, how disappointing." Mi Li harrumphed. "Your master will teach you a lesson today. The dragon had nine sons, and one of them was the Tuolong[1]. Its skin was able to act like a drum's surface, sending its voice out over a hundred li. After living for ten thousand years, it shed its skin and became a dragon. This shell has eighty-one ribs, correlating to the 'nine nines return to one' pattern. Every single rib has a large pearl at the center.

"These pearls are extremely hard to produce. If the ribs hadn't fully matured, the molting wouldn't be possible and the Tuolong wouldn't be able to become a dragon. If it were captured and skinned, the ribs wouldn't produce any pearls either. Only if all eighty-one ribs completely developed and the pearls reached perfection could it shed everything and become a dragon.

"Those characters mentioned a ten thousand year old turtle's essence. I didn't expect it to be real."

Bi Linglong counted the pearls. Sure enough, there were eighty-one pearls there! She looked at Mi Li in amazement. She hadn't really liked the red-clothed woman at first, feeling that she was way too aggressive and that she wasn't all that nice. However, she had never heard of those legends Mi Li had spoken of just now. Furthermore, Bi Linglong suddenly felt great admiration for the confidence and composure Mi Li had when she spoke.

"Tuolong?" Zu An was rather surprised. This thing could live for ten thousand years? I don't even think the dragons of this world can live for that long... He asked, "What can these pearls be used for then? Are they some incredible natural treasure?"

"I don't know." Mi Li shook her head. "The Tuolong is only a legend after all; no one has truly seen it before. There's no way of knowing what these pearls are used for. Just store them away for now; perhaps there'll be a chance to use them in this dungeon later."

Zu An nodded. He collected the eighty-one pearls into his storage space. He thought to himself, She made these things sound amazing, but they're still far inferior to my Brilliant Glass Bead!

Suddenly, Bi Linglong cried out in alarm. "There's a stele over here!"

Zu An and Mi Li turned around. Sure enough, they saw a crooked stone stele in the corner. Some written characters could vaguely be made out on its surface.

“Look at this girl; you’re quite the lucky star, hm? You’re always the first to discover useful things.” Mi Li smiled in her direction. Then, she moved over to the stele.

Bi Linglong blushed. She really had no other choice. She had experienced so much in that time, to the point where her former pride had already been completely shattered. When she saw how formidable Mi Li was, she felt a mysterious sense of threat. That was why she wouldn’t give up any chance to display her worth.

Zu An also walked over to the stele, but many of the characters were impossible to read. He could only make out a single line: “...left, Azure Dragon First Monarch, 51st year; right, White Tiger War General, 21st year; up, Vermilion Bird Light of Tombs, 31st year; down, Black Tortoise Holder of Wisdom, first year; the noble lunar moon at the center...

“Huh? What does this mean?” He felt as if he had returned to the classroom in his old world when he had first been exposed to analog electronics and engineering. It went completely over his head.

Mi Li was surprised. “So that was it! I see, I see.”

“Explain it already...” Zu An gave her an annoyed look.

“Hmph, you should address your teacher properly first!” Mi Li exclaimed. However, she still explained, “The midnight of the first night of the 51st year is the winter solstice, as well as an eclipse. According to the solar and lunar cycle used by the Qin Dynasty, those of the calendar system department believed that to be a phenomenon that only occurred once every 4,560 years. No wonder this dungeon’s appearance was so sudden; it turns out we just happened to have hit that very date!”

“4,500 years...” Zu An gulped. “Holy moly... Isn’t our luck a bit too crazy, if it only happens once every 4,560 years?”

Bi Linglong’s face paled. “Are there any consequences if we can’t leave this dungeon in time?”

Mi Li gave her a look of praise. “You’re sharp. This dungeon won’t remain open for long. If we can’t leave before it closes, it will only reopen again after another 4,560 years.”

Zu An was completely speechless. What the hell? If Chuyan, Manman and the others were all here, I wouldn’t mind spending this time with them. But I definitely don’t want to be locked up here for 4,000 years like this.

“Then what do the other parts say?” He became more focused and didn’t dare to waste any more time.

“Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Black Tortoise are the four aspects that represent the four stellar domains of the cosmos. The Azure Dragon is also known as the First Monarch, the White Tiger as the War General, the Vermilion Bird as the Light of Tombs, and the Black Tortoise the Holder of Wisdom. These sentences refer to the corresponding time and positions... Hm, but as for what they’re being paired up with, it’s too hard to say as the stele is lacking information. We don’t have enough information to make any deductions.”

Zu An said seriously, “Then we should keep moving to see if we can get more information from other places.”

“Alright. Let’s try to reach that highest sacred peak from earlier. I believe the palace hides a great secret, and the key to leaving this place should also be there.” Mi Li raised her head toward the faintly discernible, but majestic palace. The same strange expression appeared on her face again.

Zu An moved over and nudged her shoulder with his. “Is there something you’re too embarrassed to talk about? You shouldn’t keep that stuff bottled up; maybe I can help you out if you talk about it. I’m pretty amazing, you know?”

He had seen so many of those melodramatic dramas. He obviously wanted to remove as many bad flags as possible after seeing how Mi Li was acting.

. The Tuolong is an antagonist in the classic Chinese novel Journey to the West, published in 1592 by Wu Cheng’en. The Tuolong is the ninth son of the Dragon King of the Jing River, and was found in Black River in Hengyang Valley. ?

Chapter 860: F*** Up**

Mi Li rolled her eyes. “Why would I need a disciple’s help? Your master is someone who can dominate the entire world; why would I end up needing your help? Just take care of yourself.”

Zu An knew there was no point in asking any more if she didn’t want to talk about it. He could only say, “Regardless, you should understand that now, in any situation, you aren’t alone; I’m here too.”

Mi Li waved her hand dismissively. “I get it, I get it. When did you suddenly begin to nag like a granny?”

Bi Linglong watched their interactions with a weird expression. For some reason, she felt as if these two really weren’t like master and disciple, but more like... Forget it, how is that possible? I’m overthinking.

Their group continued onward. Bi Linglong looked behind her from time to time. “Ah Zu, I feel uneasy. Shouldn’t the emperor already have caught up after how much time we spent here?”

Mi Li responded, “They were trapped by that immortal peach illusion. They might even have already all died there. Of course they won’t catch up to us.”

“Immortal peach illusion?” Bi Linglong was confused. She had seen those large and juicy peaches herself back then, and all of them had smelled incredible. She’d thought that they were definitely precious fruits.

“The place we were in before, of course. Those ugly skull-like fruits, those blood-sucking things... Not only would you not be able to prolong your life if you ate them, you might be sucked dry on the spot,” Mi Li replied.

Bi Linglong was horrified. She had already been in total awe toward Mi Li’s knowledge because of their interactions over their short time together so far. She trusted Mi Li’s words. When she thought about how she had been completely infatuated by those peaches back then, if not because Zu An had brought her away, she might have already eaten those poisonous fruits.

She looked at Zu An in surprise after having those thoughts. This guy was incredibly greedy, and yet he had actually been able to retain his composure unlike everyone else. Which side of him was the real Zu An?

Zu An said, "I trust that with the emperor's cultivation and temperament, he would be able to break free even if he were temporarily trapped by those peaches. That's why we shouldn't place our hopes on the immortal peaches really having killed him."

Mi Li nodded in praise. "You're surprisingly cautious. Not bad, not bad. This will allow you to live longer." Then, she yawned and said, "I've already been outside for too long, so I'm going to sleep. Call me if there's anything." She disappeared into a wisp of smoke and entered the Tai'e Sword.

Bi Linglong stared, dazed. She looked at Zu An's sword and asked, "Your master is usually inside of that?"

"Mmhm." Zu An gently caressed the sword. "She's my master, but also my friend. She's probably one of the people I trust the most in the world."

It seemed that it was still extremely draining for Mi Li to be out for too long. He had to help her make another body. Speaking of, was the premonition she had mentioned about obtaining one of the materials talking about this dungeon?

"Brat, stop touching it randomly like that!" Mi Li's unhappy voice suddenly rang out from inside the Tai'e Sword.

Zu An pulled his fingers back from the sword guiltily. "I was touching the sword; it's not like I was touching you."

"Whatever; you're not allowed to do that. You're way too cunning, so who knows what you're actually thinking about?" Mi Li harrumphed.

Zu An was speechless. Bi Linglong couldn't help but laugh, commenting, "Your relationship really is quite special."

Zu An replied with a smile, "It's different from other master and disciple relationships."

Bi Linglong asked out of curiosity, "How did you two meet? Why is she inside your sword?"

What she really wanted to ask was if Mi Li knew about the things that had happened between her and Zu An, but she was too embarrassed to ask about that. As such, she could only ask in a roundabout way.

Zu An laughed and said, "That's a really long story..."

...

The two of them chatted for a while, and time passed quickly. Eventually, they stopped just before a cliff's edge before they realized it. They were already practically at the end of the first floating continent. The second floating continent was just a hundred zhang in front of them.

Zu An tried to see if he could move across. Jumping a short distance was fine, but any further and flight would obviously be restricted. He looked down from the edge of the cliff. There were no floating platforms like those they had taken on the way up.

"How do we get up there?" he mused, feeling a huge headache.

Just then, Bi Linglong spoke. "Ah Zu, hurry and come take a look over here."

Zu An walked over when he heard her. He saw Bi Linglong crouching, pulling at some weeds. He used the Fire Phoenix to burn away all of the weeds, exposing a large array of stone slabs.

"This place is..." Zu An was surprised. The stone slabs' material was extremely special, not suffering any damage even after coming into contact with his flames. They were made of a shiny, dark material that resembled black jade. A layer of light flickered across their surface. They were definitely something extraordinary.

Some of the stone slabs had some circular holes in them, but Zu An and Bi Linglong had no idea what they were supposed to be used for. Many of the smaller slabs had some fine lines on them, and it almost seemed as if there were some type of pattern to it all, but they couldn't really figure it out. Some slabs had designs on them, but they looked as if they had been scrambled up.

"A puzzle?" Zu An's eyes lit up.

"Oh? This seems to be a star atlas." Neither of them noticed that Mi Li had already come out of the Tai'e Sword. Bi Linglong jumped in fright, but Zu An was already used to her unpredictable appearances.

"Star atlas?" Zu An hurriedly asked.

"Do you still remember the words on that stele we found underneath that weird fish temple?" Mi Li said.

"...left, Azure Dragon First Monarch, 51st year; right, White Tiger War General, 21st year; up, Vermilion Bird Light of Tombs, 31st year; down, Black Tortoise Holder of Wisdom, first year; the noble lunar moon at the center..." Those words appeared in Zu An's head. His eyes widened in understanding when he looked at the stone slabs before him again. "I see!"

Just as Zu An was about to move the stone slabs, Mi Li frowned. "Careful, we have company." Even as she spoke, she had already turned invisible.

Zu An quickly turned around. If it were any normal person, Mi Li definitely wouldn't have been so apprehensive. She would just silence them if she had to. That meant there was only one possibility as to who it might be...

Sure enough, loud laughter echoed through the place as a voice exclaimed, "What a surprise! Sometimes, you can do your best to look for something and not find it, but it'll show up right in front of you when you stop looking!"

The nearby tree leaves rustled from the sounds of laughter. Bi Linglong's face paled. She grabbed Zu An's sleeve and said with a shaking voice, "Ah Zu, let's just jump if there's no other choice. We can at least pass on painlessly that way."

As a part of the royal family, she understood just how vicious the emperor could be. With everything that had happened between the two of them, there was no way they would have an easy death if they ended up in the emperor's hands.

Zu An gently patted her hand. "Don't worry, we're not at that point yet."

Bi Linglong was stunned. She really couldn't figure out why he could still remain calm in this situation, but his composed voice had a strange calming ability. Her pounding heart also gradually relaxed a bit.

A bright yellow figure vaguely appeared on the horizon. Then, with a flicker and a streak of afterimages, he instantly appeared in front of the two of them.

Zu An sighed inwardly. This level of speed was something the emperor had even after this world had suppressed him. His crazy cultivation really was enough to leave Zu An in despair...

"Didn't the two of you wish to die together as lovers? Too bad, that's no longer your decision." Zhao Ruizhi looked coldly at Bi Linglong's hand. Their conversation earlier hadn't escaped his ears. Now that he was close enough, the emperor believed that the lives of the pair were already in his grasp.

"Does your majesty plan to kill us?" Zu An sighed.

"Kill you?" Zhao Ruizhi sneered. "Letting you die just like that would be letting you off too easily. I'm going to castrate you and bring you back to the palace, then make you scrub the latrines day and night. Then, each year, I'll chop off a part of your body to make you fully experience the fear of death. Finally, when your four limbs and five sensory organs are gone, I'll throw you into the feces pit and keep you alive through medicine. Then, you can experience the palace eunuchs' urine day after day..."

Bi Linglong's knuckles turned white from how tight her fists were clenched. At several points, she wanted to throw up. She regretted not having decided to die earlier, because she couldn't even choose to die now.

Zu An was also speechless. This bastard really is something else. Is this type of punishment something a human can think up? With how things were, there was no point in trying to converse politely. He said coldly, "Unfortunately, not only can you not do that to me, you must beg me."

"Me? Beg you?" Zhao Ruizhi roared with laughter, as if he had heard the world's greatest joke.

He Li and the others finally caught up while gasping for breath. They all looked at Zu An sympathetically when they heard his laughable words. Was this guy scared so badly that he had already gone crazy?

Zhao Ruizhi's smile faded as he coldly said, "What an absurd joke. I'm going to castrate you right now. I want to see what you'll do about it."

Zu An had just been about to say something, but with just a clench of the emperor's hand, it was hard to even breathe, let alone speak.

"I know you're good at speaking, and you might actually have some strange idea to save your life, so I don't want to hear anything." Zhao Ruizhi snorted.

Zu An was speechless. Damn it all, I fucked up!