

I Am Immortal In The Cultivation World Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Northern Frontier City

In the dense forest. Countless mountain bandits hid secretly and stared coldly at the prisoner carriage below.

Woo-chirp

A rather rhythmic bird cry sounded. The bandit's eyes flashed with bloodlust as he darted out from behind the rocks, underbrush, and trees.

"Brother, lend me some clothes."

A voice sounded behind a mountain bandit. Before he could turn around, he fell silent.

Zhou Yi changed his clothes and circulated his Dharmic powers to use the Bone Changing Technique. After changing his face shape, he used a disguise technique and looked 70-80% similar to the dead mountain bandit.

At this moment

The imperial guards on the mountain path had already noticed something strange.

When the commander of the imperial guards, Yang Shou, saw the birds in the mountains flying away in shock, he waved his hand to signal for the army to stop and ordered the scouts to scout the mountains.

After waiting for a long time without seeing any scouts return, he had determined that there was an ambush in the mountains.

"Form up and face the enemy!"

Yang Shou led the elite imperial guards and quickly gathered the prisoner carriages, setting up a circular formation to await orders.

"Hahaha! Heavens above! I am the protector of the Heavenly King. Today, I will kill all of Butcher Li's clansmen and sacrifice them to the Heavenly King!"

Deafening laughter rang out. Then dozens of boulders flew from the mountain and rained down on the army.

"A catapult!" Yang Shou exclaimed. Before he could evacuate the army, the huge rock had already fallen on his head.

The boulders that were thrown down from the mountain were so powerful that no one could withstand them. They smashed into the crowd and screams rang out. After three or four consecutive rounds of boulders, the imperial guards' formation was broken up.

“Kill! Kill...”

On both sides of the mountain, there were at least thousands of people.

Yang Shou shouted, “Line up, line up!”

The imperial guards barely managed to regroup. Arrows rained down on them as they suffered heavy casualties.

“Kill the enemy!”

Despair flashed across Yang Shou's eyes. He was not afraid of the number of enemies, but he had other guesses. There were at least a dozen catapults and organized archers. How could mountain bandits or rebels afford to raise them? The other party was clearly using their background as a pretext.

The moment the imperial guards and the mountain bandits clashed, they sensed something amiss. The elite imperial guards trained every day, but their strength was no match for the bandits.

After Yang Shou killed a few bandits with his spear, he could see even more clearly on the horse that the imperial guards were already retreating

“I can't die like this!”

The commander had already thought of retreating. How could his soldiers fight to the death? It was unknown if they were doing it on purpose or if they had forgotten, but there were no bandits blocking the way. Therefore, after Yang Shou took the lead to escape, the imperial guards fled in all directions.

The bandits' target was the prisoner carriages. They did not chase after the imperial guards and slaughtered the prisoners with their weapons.

The Li family members in the prisoner carriages were shackled and could not resist at all. They could only watch helplessly as they were slaughtered.

In the forest.

Zhou Yi carried the young Li Hong and stood on a branch.

“Time to go. We'll check the corpses later. Maybe we'll find something unusual.”

While the imperial guards were fighting with the bandits, Zhou Yi took advantage of the chaos to rescue Li Hong and left a bandit with a similar figure and a broken face on the prison cart.

“Senior, wait a moment. I want to see my clansmen die with my own eyes so that I can remember this hatred even deeper!”

Li Hong did not cry or grieve. He listened to his mother, brothers, and loved ones scream and die under the knives of the bandits.

A moment later.

The clansmen of the Li family were all dead. The bandits opened the prison carriages and displayed the corpses one by one.

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A few bandits in long robes walked out and did a headcount. Among them, there were a few corpses whose faces were badly mutilated. They also carefully identified their figures and dressing.

“The ones who attacked were the Jiangnan aristocratic families.” Zhou Yi heard the conversation and said, “They didn’t suspect you. They just thought that you were seriously injured in the scuffle.”

“Those are Uncle Li Chi, Cousin Li Yi, and Cousin Li Liang. They’re only one or two years older than me, and their sizes are similar. Big Brother is meticulous. He’s afraid that I’ll be hunted down by the Uniformed Guards, so he sent people to destroy their faces.”

Li Hong’s voice was calm, but his eyes were bloodshot.

“To be honest, I think more highly of your brother. Whether it’s the disfigurement or the perpetrator, they probably don’t know the purpose of your brother doing this!”

Zhou Yi grabbed Li Hong’s collar and disappeared into the forest.

Northern Frontier. Barren City.

He could tell by the name that it was a bitter cold place. The prisoners of Fengyang Country were all here. They would dig the iron mine nearby until death or amnesty.

The clatter of hooves woke the guards on duty.

“Stop!” The soldiers drew their swords and stopped the two horses that were galloping toward them. “What are you doing in Barren City?”

“Visiting an old friend.” Zhou Yi fell from his horse and dropped two silver ingots. “Eh? Brother, you dropped your silver!”

“Huh?”

The city gate officer seemed to have never met such a shameless person. Even the most shameless official would secretly hand over silver. Disgusting, can't you cover your face too?

The gate guard despised him, but he moved quickly. He picked up the silver, wiped it, and stuffed it into his pocket. “Who are you looking for, sir?”

Zhou Yi said, “I only know that his surname is Wei and he's from Yuzhou. He's been here for about 36 years.”

The city guard dragged his voice out. “Over thirty years. Who knows if he's still alive? It won't be easy!”

Zhou Yi's sleeve trembled and two silver ingots fell.

The city gate guard said helplessly, “Go to the city to look for Liu San. He's in charge of the miners from Yuzhou. As long as they're still alive, he'll definitely be able to find them.”

Zhou Yi took out two ingots of silver from his pocket. “Is there a way to meet and arrange some easy work?”

The city gate official felt that the silver was burning his hands. “Then you have to go to the government office to find the manager. You can go to the government office to do odd jobs after spending money.”

Zhou Yi continued to hand over the silver. “Is there anything else I need to pay attention to?”

“Master, how generous!” The city guard patted his chest. “When I'm bringing you along, not to mention finding someone, I can even bring someone out of Barren City.”

Zhou Yi said in surprise, “You can take them away?”

“You don't understand. If they can't be taken away, how can those people in the mine die every year?”

The city gate officer instructed his soldiers to stand guard and not let the thieves enter the city. Then, he brought Zhou Yi and his companion into the city.

The city was in ruins, and the streets were overgrown with weeds. There was no one to be seen. The shops on both sides were empty. The broken windows and doors creaked like ghosts when the wind blew.

“This was originally the border army’s camp. It was quite prosperous back then. Now that the border army has gone to Yizhou, there’s only an empty city left...”

The city guard seemed to feel guilty for accepting the money and took the initiative to be a tour guide, telling the history of Barren City.

“Look at the General Assembly Stage. The Duke used to beat drums here...”

“This tavern has fine wine from the Divine Capital. Every time the Duke returns from a victory battle, he comes to drink...”

What the city guard said was most likely related to the Duke. Only when they reached the northern border did they know how famous Li Wu was and how far-reaching his influence was.

Li Hong followed what the gate officer said. He seemed to see his father, in charge of the soldiers at the General Assembly Stage, and drinking freely at the tavern.

Zhou Yi patted Li Hong’s shoulder and said via voice transmission, “Remember your brother’s instructions!”

Li Hong nodded slightly and restrained his emotions. “Sir, don’t worry. Before I advance to the Connate Realm, I will change my surname to Zhou.”

Silver was more useful in Barren City than Zhou Yi had expected. After being introduced by the city guard, Manager Sun was very reasonable and directly offered a price.

“One thousand taels for the living, and an additional two hundred taels for the registered residence. I’m honest!”

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Chapter 32 Descendant of an Old Friend

County office. The department.

Manager Sun and Zhou Yi were talking about buying and selling prisoners in front of the scholars. Clearly, this was an open secret in Barren City.

They depended on whatever there was to eat.

The government office in Barren City relied on selling criminals for a living.

1,200 taels of silver would be used to fake the death of the exiled prisoners at the mine. They would change their surnames and enter Barren City. After a few years, they would be able to use some connections to move to another state capital and completely become a good citizen.

“Mr. Zhou, don’t think it’s expensive. This silver didn’t fall on us.” Manager Sun pointed upward. “Master has been a scholar for twelve years. Do you understand?”

“So you’re Prime Minister Zhang’s student!” Zhou Yi looked respectful and said in a low voice, “That year’s Palace Examination was not too peaceful. Everyone was looking at the rankings. Prime Minister Zhang took the opportunity to...” As he spoke, he made a grabbing gesture. His gaze swept across the people in the county government office and said, “Do you know why?”

Manager Sun cupped his hands and said, “Please enlighten me, sir!”

The scholars in the household pricked up their ears and noted down the secrets of the country. When they returned to drink with their colleagues, it would be the top topic of discussion. It was as enjoyable as discussing international politics at a barbecue stall.

“That year, the Duke won a great victory in the northern border and took the opportunity to attack Great Yong. His reputation was flourishing!”

Zhou Yi said slowly, “At that time, the Minister of War was a general in the army. He had once worked with the Duke to destroy the traitors in Jiangnan. The two of them, one inside and one outside, were invincible in the imperial court.”

“Prime Minister Zhang took this opportunity to take it down, break the customs of the country, and become the Minister of War as a civil official...”

“Hiss!”

Manager Sun no longer suspected that Mr. Zhou must be from the Divine Capital. He said respectfully, “Sir, please take a seat. I’ll go and urge those lazy fellows to do their work!”

“Please, Manager.”

Zhou Yi’s actions were polite. He was elegant and imposing, but not superior to others. He made people feel like they were bathing in a spring breeze.

Within moments, he was chatting happily with the officials.

He casually mentioned some secrets of the Divine Capital, such as a certain high official who returned to his hometown and actually went to Spring Breeze Tower without settling the bill. He owed tens of thousands of taels of silver, but in the end, the lady told the Censor through pillow talk. After more than ten complaints, a certain official lost all his reputation and could only retire.

Such rumors could not be taken seriously. How could ordinary people know the real reason for his retirement? However, people preferred to hear such gossip.

Manager Sun said in surprise, "What kind of place is Spring Breeze Tower? It can actually persuade the Censor to submit a memorial?"

"When ordinary people go to the Divine Capital, they only know that the Musical House Division is a good place, but it's actually not. Only minor officials go to the Musical House Division. The real money squandering den in the Divine Capital is the Spring Breeze Tower..."

As soon as Zhou Yi said this, everyone perked up.

Initially, he was just chatting with the scholars in the office. In the end, Zhou Yi pointed out three to five courtesans and the other students from the other offices came over.

There were three realms in the Divine Capital, and Zhou Yi was the most familiar with them. Home, Sky Prison, Spring Breeze Tower.

Zhou Yi, who had visited the Spring Breeze Tower for twenty years, had a deep relationship with the 20-odd Flower Queens selected during this period. His comments were clear and logical. Among a group of men, sex was the best way to get closer. It has been like this since ancient times!

Zhou Yi sighed and said, "The Flower Queen Su Xiaoxiao who was chosen two years ago could be considered the best in the past ten years. Unfortunately, Duke Wei took a fancy to her before she could be groomed. He spent money to buy her into the Duke's Mansion and let her become his concubine."

"Even a prostitute can enter the Duke's Mansion?"

"Duke Wei is a big shot!"

"He's really lucky!"

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Everyone discussed among themselves. The Flower Queens in front did not have a good ending. Those who retired quickly married merchants and became concubines. Most of them became ordinary prostitutes after they aged.

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“You’re wrong. Su Xiaoxiao is the unlucky one!” Zhou Yi’s tone changed, making everyone’s hearts itch. He slowly took a sip of tea. “That Duke is also afraid of his wife. Su Xiaoxiao died not long after she entered the residence.”

“Ah...”

“What a pity!”

“The best in the past ten years. Not fated to meet!”

“Heaven is jealous of her!”

“I knew it. How could a mere whore have such a good life?”

No one condemned the Duke’s wife for killing her, and they even despised Su Xiaoxiao for it. It was her own fault for trying to climb up the ranks of the Duke’s Mansion. The lecherous Duke Wei, on the other hand, made everyone like him because he was afraid of his wife. If even a grand duke was afraid of his wife, and I was afraid of my wife, wouldn’t I be equivalent to a duke?

That was the way of the world. No one could change it.

They were still talking when they heard footsteps. The bailiff came through the door with seven prisoners.

The mine was more than ten kilometers away from Barren City, and they had to search and verify their identification. After at least ten hours, when the sky was about to turn dark, the bailiff finally returned.

There were more than a hundred people exiled in the Wei family. After more than twenty years, only seven remained.

Zhou Yi swept his gaze across the prisoners and asked the oldest-looking man, “Are you the descendant of Sir Wei?”

“Sir, I am Wei Jun, the third son of my father, Wei Chang.”

On the way, Wei Jun had already heard from the guard that this gentleman was an old friend of the Wei family. He had come to Barren City to spend money to save his life.

After Zhou Yi saved Li Hong, he changed his appearance. He was 45 years old and a little old.

If he deliberately used this appearance to do things and exposed that he had received Wei Chang's kindness back then, it could explain the origin of his internal energy. He would not be in much trouble even if others knew about this. Instead, they would admire Zhou Yi for being grateful.

Zhou Yi asked, "I owe Sir Wei a favor back then. Today, it's to pay back for that. Think about it carefully. Do you want to return to your hometown or stay on the northern border?"

"Benefactor, we've already discussed it on the way, so we won't return to Yuzhou. We'll stay on the northern border to earn a living." Wei Jun replied, "After a few decades, we'll go back and offer incense to our ancestors."

It had only been more than 20 years since the Wei Chang case. There were many enemies of the Wei family in Yuzhou. Even if they changed their names, once they were recognized and reported, the Imperial Court would send someone to investigate.

"Okay." Zhou Yi agreed and took out a stack of banknotes from his sleeve. "I'll have to trouble Manager Sun. I see that there are many empty houses in Barren City. Can you buy one for the Wei family to stay in?"

"Sir, you must be joking. There's no need to buy a dilapidated house. You can just choose a place to transfer the deed over."

Manager Sun took the banknotes. There were at least fifteen or sixteen of them. He said with a smile, "If the Wei family is willing to stay in the city, I can arrange for them to work in the houses. They can guard the granary on a daily basis. There will definitely be food and drink."

When Wei Jun saw Zhou Yi looking over, he hurriedly agreed. "Thank you, Benefactor. Thank you, Manager Sun!"

The Wei family was extremely grateful to Zhou Yi. After their family was destroyed did they know the true connections. Back then, the Wei family was quite famous in Yuzhou. The Flying Rainbow Swordsman had many friends, but in the end, no one helped them.

Most of the people in the martial world were good friends. Occasionally, one or two heroes would become popular stories. It was not wise to think that all of them were the same.

"Old Sun, the Sturdy Team is short of people. Why don't they come on duty here? The mine patrol is more carefree."

"The armory is also short-staffed. There's a lot of benefits on duty at the city gate."

“It’s not as easy as my ceremonial department. There’s no need for a roll call every day. After all, there’s not even a scholar in the city!”

The stewards of the different departments spoke up one after another. Firstly, they saw that Zhou Yi had an extraordinary background, and secondly, it was for the sake of those silver.

Zhou Yi cupped his hands and smiled.

“Thank you, everyone. Please take care of the Wei family in the future. When you go to the Divine Capital, I might not be able to help with the matters of the Spring Breeze Tower’s courtesans, but I can arrange anything else!”

There was a sudden roar of laughter.

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Chapter 33 Tattered Soldiers and Defeated Generals

The government office of Barren City followed the rules very well. After receiving the money, they immediately got to work.

The eight members of the Wei family registered on the spot and got their identification documents. The dossier recorded that the Wei family had been doing business in Barren City for generations.

Wei changed his surname to Wei, and his name was also given the same pronunciation. (The first Wei is the same word as State of Wei in the Three Kingdoms, the second Wei has the same word as the guard, Wei.)

Zhou Yi wondered, “Will there be any slip-ups?” “Mr. Zhou, don’t worry. The northern border is too barren, so it’s very easy for things like this to happen.”

Manager Sun explained, “These dossiers are burned clean every year, so no one will be able to find anything. Besides, who would dare to investigate the people who came to apply for household registration?”

Zhou Yi nodded slightly. This method was somewhat similar to the Sky Prison.

There were also methods to secretly change the people in the Sky Prison, but they were extremely secretive and careful, unlike here where they did things without restraint. Even the imperial power did not infiltrate the countryside, let alone the remote Barren City.

Barren City did not even have a restaurant. The government office's kitchen hosted a banquet. There were more wild game than vegetables. They drank the unique hard liquor of the northern border and bragged about various truths and lies. The atmosphere was quite lively.

The county magistrate also appeared during the meal. After all, there were only a few orders a year for a big business that cost more than ten thousand taels of silver.

The county magistrate's surname was Zhao and his name was Tai. He was fat and greasy and did not look like a scholar.

No matter how poor he was, he could not be a poor official. Zhao Tai was from Jiangnan. He built a small bridge in the back office and bought many beautiful servants. He ate, drank, and was carefree every day.

The government office was really no different from the palace!

Zhao Tai recalled the past in the Divine Capital and couldn't help but sigh. "I still remember when I went to the capital to take the exam. I won first place in reciting poems and painting at the Spring Breeze Tower. I told Miss Ruirui about my feelings. I wonder how she is now?"

"Married to a wealthy businessman in Jiangnan. Rumor has it that Miss Ruirui wants to see if the Jiangnan scenery is as good as described in the painting."

Zhou Yi raised his eyebrows. He did not expect to see the real person.

Miss Ruirui was the Flower Queen back then and had once been famous in the Divine Capital. She might be able to enter any unofficial history in the future.

She was most famous for being obsessed with the man surnamed Zhao. She even rejected the heir of the Marquis's Residence because of this. Some said that he was a member of the royal family, while others said that he was a young master of an aristocratic family. She waited in the Divine Capital for two years before finally going to Jiangnan to marry with a cold heart.

Unexpectedly, the heartless man was actually a fat man. When he smiled, his eyes were only

slits!

Zhao Tai sighed at the change in fate. After drinking a few cups of strong wine, he returned to the back office to vent his worries.

They enjoyed their meal.

After the banquet.

Manager Sun ordered his men to look for a courtyard with Zhou Yi and the Wei family.

“Mr. Zhou, there are a few large mansions in the east of the city.” The officer touched the silver in his hand. As expected of a wealthy guest from the Divine Capital, he was really generous.

The Wei family quickly chose a residence not far from the county office.

Most of the words on the door plaque had fallen. Judging from the word “bow”, it should have once been the Zhang residence. Most of the houses in the courtyard were still intact, but the houses were empty without any furniture.

It was already late, and they were all rough men, so they casually tidied up a few rooms for tonight.

Zhou Yi activated the Dust Cleaner Talisman, and the room instantly became tidy. He sent a voice transmission to Wei Jun to ask him questions.

Wei Jun bowed and said, “Benefactor, what can I do for you?”

Zhou Yi asked, “Do you know which cultivation technique Sir Wei relied on to dominate Yuzhou back then?”

Wei Jun’s gaze froze. He subconsciously thought that Zhou Yi might have saved the Wei family for his father’s cultivation technique inheritance, but he still answered obediently. “My father relied on an unknown incantation and a Flying Rainbow Sword Technique.”

No matter how important cultivation techniques were, they could not compare to the lives of family members. After a few more years of digging iron ore, the Wei Clan would be extinct.

Zhou Yi nodded and said, “Looks like you’re really the descendant of Sir Wei.”

“Do you want that chant?” Wei Jun recited word by word, “Men of Heaven and Earth, give birth to Yin and Yang, transform into all things...”

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After confirming that it was true, Zhou Yi waved his hand and interrupted Wei Jun’s recitation. He asked again, “Have you ever thought of revenge?”

Wei Jun first shook his head and nodded. “When Father was being chased by the Uniformed Guards, he returned home and told us that there was no need to avenge

him. However, the Wei family has more than a hundred blood feuds. How can we forget them so easily!”

“If the Wei family wants revenge, don’t forget this mantra.” Zhou Yi instructed, “If the descendants of the Wei family can cultivate this technique, they will definitely be able to prosper again. If they can cultivate it to the Greater Mastery realm, there will be hope for revenge.”

“I’ll remember your advice.” Wei Jun hesitated for a moment before saying, “Benefactor, you might not know this, but I took in a foster son from the mine and he cultivated the Nameless Mantra.”

After Wei Jun’s explanation, Zhou Yi understood the reason.

The Wei family had a martial arts foundation and was much stronger than the other prisoners. They were quite famous among the mine prisoners. In order not to be bullied, some solitary prisoners joined the Wei family and gradually formed a small group. “Take this silver and redeem that adopted son in a few days.”

Zhou Yi took out the last two banknotes. “That Nameless Mantra has a mysterious origin. Since he’s already cultivated it, he shouldn’t be a slave. Remember to use your sincerity, only then will it last long.”

These words were enough to repay Wei Chang for his kindness back then!

With tears in his eyes, Wei Jun respectfully took the banknotes and kowtowed. “Thank you, benefactor. The Wei family will never forget your great kindness. In the future, if we were to forget that, the Wei family will be punished!”

The next day, Zhou Yi came to the General Assembly Stage.

Li Hong sat cross-legged on it for a day and a night, both to cultivate and to reminisce.

“It’s time to leave.” Zhou Yi said via voice transmission, “Find a blessed place on a spiritual mountain and cultivate the Origin Returning Mantra in seclusion. Your progress will be much faster.”

“Senior, I’ve decided to stay here.” Li Hong stood up and said, “Back then, Father dominated the northern border, and the younger generation should follow suit. The first step of this is to restore the prosperity of Barren City.”

Zhou Yi reminded him, “A person’s energy is limited. Don’t delay your cultivation!”

“Senior, don’t worry. I gained some enlightenment yesterday and have already refined the first wisp of magic power.”

Li Hong's fingertips flickered with spiritual light. Even though it was almost invisible, it was a true fluctuation of dharmic powers.

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Zhou Yi was instantly speechless. The quality and grade of his dharmic powers were equivalent to Connate True Essence. Now, Li Hong could be said to have stepped into the Connate realm, but he could not fight.

As they spoke, the ground shook faintly. There was a faint hubbub.

Li Hong stood on the General Assembly Stage and looked into the distance. There were chaotic figures approaching from the north.

"Senior, there seems to be an army coming to Barren City!"

The army marched very quickly, or rather, fled very quickly. When they approached the city gate, they saw that there were hundreds or thousands of defeated soldiers. All of them had disheveled hair and abandoned their armor. Only half of their military flags remained.

The commander shouted, "Open the gate! Open the gate!"

The gate officer asked, "Where are you soldiers from?"

The commander replied, "I'm Liang Ying, a commander under General Chai. Half a month ago, Great Yong fought an undeclared war. More than half of Yizhou has fallen and is about to attack!"

"Don't try to deceive me."

The city gate guard berated, "The 300,000-strong army in the northern border is good at fighting. Five years ago, they swept through Great Yong. Could it be that some bandits are trying to trick us into opening the city gate to plunder?"

"Bullsh*t! There's nothing in Barren City. The bandits can't even be bothered to snatch it."

Liang Ying shouted, "There are no 300,000 troops on the northern border. We can't even gather 150,000 troops. We can't stop Great Yong's million-strong army from marching south!"

When the other soldiers saw that the city gate was not opening, they immediately started shouting "Masters from the Divine Capital only know how to make money and drink the blood of soldiers..."

“Those nobles don’t understand military affairs. They make us plant land and transport goods to build houses every day...”

“I heard that the Great Yong soldiers disguised themselves as caravans and easily infiltrated Zhenbei Pass. They broke through in a day...” “Open the door now, or we’ll attack!”

When the city guard heard this, he was so frightened that he repeatedly comforted them. He ordered the bailiff to quickly report to the county magistrate.

“The Northern routed troops...”

Zhou Yi muttered to himself. Looking at Li Hong on the General Assembly Stage, he felt that there would be a change when the two of them met.

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Chapter 34 Killing and Robbing

Barren City quickly became lively. The defeat of Liang Ying’s troops was only the beginning. More than ten groups came after that.

There were at least three to five hundred people and at most one to two thousand. After finding a courtyard in the city to stay in, he ordered the county magistrate to gather provisions.

“There aren’t even any ghosts in Barren City. How can we gather food?”

When Zhao Tai met the civil officials, he could bring out his backing. Facing this group of starving troops, he could not reason with them and did not dare to say anything. He could only transport the food from the mine to distribute.

There were thousands of people in the city, so they could at most eat for three to five days.

The generals and commanders also knew that there was no food in Barren City, so they communicated with each other in private.

After declaring to the public that they would fight Great Yong, they began to plunder the surrounding villages and towns of Barren City.

Soldiers were like quails. It was legal and organized into robberies. The people’s homes were so empty that there was nothing left. They could only become refugees and flee south with their families.

Those who dared to resist were Great Yong's spies!

At the city gate.

Li Hong looked at the carts of food and goods being transported to the various commanders in the city and tried his best to suppress the anger in his heart.

"Sir, I've often heard Big Brother mention that back then, the million strong northern army did not dare to say that they did not commit any crimes against the commoners. At the very least, they were disciplined. How did they fall to such a state in just a few years?"

They were afraid of death in foreign wars and oppressed the people internally. The bandit soldiers were even more vicious than the rebels!

"It's human nature. It's difficult to become good. You have to follow all kinds of rules and keep taming and disciplining. But it's easy to become bad. Not to mention five years, you can turn from a strict army into a raider in a few months!"

Zhou Yi said slowly, "The war on the northern border is about to begin. The war is fierce and dangerous. A gentleman does not stand on a dangerous wall. Today, I will return to the capital. In the chaos, remember to prioritize your life."

After staying in Barren City for half a month, a series of news of defeat came from the northern border.

Yesterday, the defeated army in the city almost mutinied because the last intact army in the northern border was surrounded and defeated by the Great Yong Army.

The northern provinces, Yi and Su, had once been Great Yong's old lands. But they had been completely returned. It was unknown how many more territories of the Fengyang Kingdom would fall.

Li Hong said in surprise, "With your strength, you're even stronger than Father. Who in the world can make you stay?"

"You've never even left the Fengyang Kingdom. How dare you say that the world is big?"

Zhou Yi said solemnly, "Cultivators must remember not to be arrogant. This world is so big that mortals can't walk through it in their entire lives!"

Li Hong bowed. "Thank you for your teachings, sir."

In recent days, he had interacted with Zhou Yi and had many wild thoughts and imaginations, which broadened Li Hong's horizons. Some of his words seemed

unbelievable, but every time he thought about them carefully, they were really mysterious and extraordinary.

Li Hong understood many principles that were not written in books. Although he and Zhou Yi were not master and disciple in name, they were master and disciple.

“I’m leaving.”

Zhou Yi was not a procrastinator. He had a long and endless life and needed to get used to parting as soon as possible.

Li Hong bade him farewell with tears in his eyes. “Have a safe trip, sir.”

His parents and brothers were already dead. When he bid farewell to Zhou Yi today, he would truly be alone in the vast northern border.

Zhou Yi looked back and sent a voice transmission. “The chaos in the northern border is a huge and bad thing for the people, the soldiers, and the imperial court. It’s only good for you. If you want to imitate the Duke, spend money to buy a guerrilla general.”

With that, he mounted his horse and whipped it away.

He only needed tens of thousands of taels to buy a guerrilla general who had the power to lead troops. No matter how dilapidated the Duke’s Mansion was, Li Hong could still afford it.

He followed the official road south.

Three days later.

In the distance, he saw smoke rising from the chimney. In front of him was the Chen family’s valley.

The village chief, Old Man Chen, was a wonderful person. He had once roasted rabbit meat and brewed high-grade yellow wine for him. He was also knowledgeable.

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Zhou Yi chatted with him about the past and present, but he could not gain the upper hand at all. They chatted for an entire night before they were satisfied.

“A queer person in the wilderness!” Zhou Yi touched his shriveled pocket. “I don’t even have any silver left. With Old Brother Chen’s knowledge of astronomy and geography, he wouldn’t be reluctant to lend money, right?”

He was thrifty at home, but was amply provided for when he traveled. Zhou Yi had brought 5,000 taels of silver when he went out, and on the way, he had received a few thousand taels of silver from those “heroes”. Now, he had spent everything.

While Zhou Yi was thinking, he was already close to Chen family’s valley. When the wind blew, his expression suddenly changed!

“What a strong smell of blood.”

Zhou Yi leaped onto the horse’s back and covered the distance of a thousand feet in the blink of an eye.

There was indeed smoke in the village, but it was lit up by the farmers. Instead, two to three hundred soldiers were lighting fires at the village entrance.

The soldier on duty realized that someone was coming and shouted with his saber, “What are you looking at, old man? If you don’t want to die, get lost!”

“Where’s the people?”

Zhou Yi did not need to ask to guess that this group of soldiers had fresh blood on their bodies and sabers. The cooks were slaughtering pigs and sheep, and there were large and small bags of food piled up beside them.

The leader said, “Cut the crap. Just shoot him.”

At the command, the bowstrings twanged and a dozen arrows shot.

“I’ve never been fond of fighting in my life, but someone just had to court death!”

Zhou Yi’s figure swayed, and his speed was as fast as lightning. He had already exceeded the limit of an ordinary person’s reaction speed.

The commander only saw a faint shadow shuttling between the soldiers under his command. The soldiers could not even scream before they died. They fell to the ground in droves like mowing grass. “A ghost!” The commander screamed and ran toward the Chen family’s valley.

After slaughtering more than 200 soldiers, Zhou Yi chased after them in a few leaps. His cold voice sounded in the general’s ears.

“If you want to see ghosts so badly, I’ll do as you wish!”

After saying that, he activated the House Suppression Talisman. Ghosts floated out of the houses in the village. Most of them had blurry faces, and a few of them had missing arms and legs. Their bodies were covered in wounds.

One of the vengeful spirits was the clearest. Its neck was broken, and there were two holes in its abdomen. Blood was flowing out.

Woo!

When the vengeful spirit saw its commander, its resentment soared and it let out an ear-piercing ghost roar.

The other ghosts and spirits with chaotic consciousness were guided by the call of that vengeful spirit and pounced over.

The commander had never seen such a terrifying scene before. This ghost was dragging half an intestine, and that ghost was holding his head. He was so frightened that his eyes rolled back and he fainted.

The group of ghosts pounced on the commander and was about to devour his Yang qi, blood, and essence when a murderous aura suddenly appeared to protect him.

The pain was like a knife cutting through their flesh. The ghost screamed and backed away, trembling as he didn't dare come forward.

The vengeful spirit's eyes widened as it spat out black fog that enveloped the commander.

Zhou Yi circulated his Dharmic powers and used the martial arts technique of the Lion Roar. "Brother Chen, leave him alive. I still have something to ask him."

His voice was like thunder. The vengeful spirit woke up from its ferocity and recognized Zhou Yi. Tears of blood seeped out of its eyes.

"Thank you, benefactor, for avenging the Chen family!"

"My condolences, Brother Chen."

Zhou Yi walked in front of the commander and used his dharmic powers to pierce through a few acupuncture points. The excruciating pain woke him up from his coma.

"Are you a defeated soldier from the Northern Frontier?"

The commander looked at the ghosts around him who stared at him with bloodshot eyes. A chill ran down his spine as he got up and kowtowed and begged.

"I don't have a choice either. Ever since the Northern Frontier was defeated and we fled, the Imperial Court has never issued any new military orders, nor has the army paid any rations!"

“I haven’t eaten for seven to eight days. In order not to starve to death, I can only plunder the commoners!”

I Am Immortal In The Cultivation World Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Change

In the eighteenth year of Hongchang.

Times changed.

May 23rd.

Dark clouds covered the moon and all was silent.

A carriage draped in black cloth stopped at the back door of Prince Qin’s Manor.

When the guard on duty saw the old man get out of the car, he did not dare to stop him at all and hurriedly went to the residence to report.

When Prince Qin, Zhao Yuan, heard that Zhang Zhengyang had come late at night, he guessed that something big had happened. He hurriedly invited him to the study room and ordered the guards to send away the servants around him. No one was allowed to approach!

Zhang Zhengyang was alone. The first thing he said after entering the study made Zhao Yuan’s face turn pale.

“His Majesty passed away, four hours ago!” “Ah! Father...” Zhao Yuan exclaimed and stood up. Then, he said dejectedly, “My father even hid the news of his death. He must have made some arrangements.”

“That’s right.” Zhang Zhengyang nodded and said, “The late emperor issued a will and appointed the four of us as ministers to assist the sixth prince in governing the country.”

“Then why are you here?”

Hope flashed in Zhao Yuan’s eyes. The bells of Shangyang Palace had yet to ring, and the news of Emperor Hongchang’s death had yet to spread. Things might turn around.

Zhang Zhengyang said, “Master, I suspect that the Sixth Prince is stubborn by nature and won’t be a good emperor!”

Zhao Yuan nodded slightly and waited quietly for the rest. The so-called not being like a good emperor was just an excuse. There must be other reasons that made Prime Minister Zhang take the risk to disobey the late emperor's will.

"The other three ministers, one is a eunuch, one is an ignorant woman, and one is a lowly noble!" Zhang Zhengyang said, "How can we let such a person make the decision on an important matter of the country? It was only because of the previous emperor's diligence that the country was able to prosper. I can't watch it be destroyed by that child!"

"Minister Zhang is right!"

Zhao Yuan could guess the identities of the other three and admired his father's arrangements. One of them was Eunuch Wang, the Minister of Internal Affairs, who was in charge of the secret memorial of the Uniformed Guards. The second would be Imperial Consort Sun, the one who gave birth to his sixth brother, where her father and brothers were in charge of the capital camp. The last one would be Duke Cheng, who was over 80 years old and had the highest prestige and seniority among the nobles.

Prime Minister Zhang had been in charge of the court for nearly twenty years, and his henchmen had spread throughout the imperial court and local state capitals of the Divine Capital.

Only these three powerful ministers who did not belong to the court could restrain each other and give the Sixth Prince enough time to grow and gain power.

Zhao Yuan was both respectful and jealous.

The current empress only had one son. After the crown prince rebelled and was deposed, Zhao Yuan was the eldest son.

So why should the throne fall to his sixth brother?

Zhao Yuan could understand his father's good intentions. He had set up a will to restrict Minister Zhang's power, but it did not mean that he would obey!

Zhang Zhengyang said, "Those three people are currently in the palace. The edict hasn't been issued yet. If Your Highness has any thoughts, I'm willing to assist you with all my might!"

"Did Minister Zhang forget the urgent report from the Northern Frontier?"

Zhao Yuan changed the topic and reminded him, "If we fight for power now, we might delay in settling the war. Once the northern border is defeated..."

“So what if the Northern Frontier lost? It’s just giving up land and reparations. We can fight back in the future, but there’s only one throne. If we miss it, we won’t have another chance!”

Zhang Zhengyang had been an old fox for decades, so how could he not know that Zhao Yuan was already tempted? He added fuel to the fire. “It might not be a bad thing that the Northern Frontier had been defeated. After Your Highness ascends to the throne, you can use the war to divert the conflict in the imperial court and easily secure the throne.”

“Father ascended the throne as the Prince Qin back then. Now that I’m Prince Qin, I should be the successor!” Zhao Yuan finally stopped hiding his thoughts and promised, “After I ascend to the throne, Minister Zhang will still be in charge of the internal and external affairs of the court.”

Zhang Zhengyang bowed. “Thank you, Your Majesty!”

“There’s no need for formalities, Minister Zhang.”

Zhao Yuan hurriedly went forward to help him up. He was extremely vigilant. Zhang Zhengyang did not hesitate to betray his father for the sake of power. After he ascended the throne, the first thing he would do is to eliminate his henchmen.

“There’s no time to lose. We have to settle the situation before the edict is issued!” Zhang Zhengyang said, “I’ve already gathered all the servants in the residence and roped in Commander Lin, who is stationed at the east gate of the palace. I’ll fully support Your Highness, so you should quickly enter the palace to control the situation.”

“That’s good!”

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Zhao Yuan ordered the commander of the guards to gather his men and summoned the imperial residence’s chief official. He held his waist token and ordered the martial arts schools in the Divine Capital to quickly gather at the east gate of the palace.

These martial arts schools were all controlled by Zhao Yuan. Previously, when the crown prince was in power, they were only used to make money. Now, they have become a tool for power struggle.

Or it could be said that any prince would raise a potential force just in case!

There was no time to lose.

Less than an hour after Zhang Zhengyang entered the residence, Zhao Yuan had already arrived at the east gate of the palace with more than a thousand people.

They were dressed in armor and wielded swords and spears. They looked rather imposing

When Commander Lin saw Minister Zhang, he ordered the city gate to be opened.

“Your Highness, the ministers are still at Shangyang Palace!”

“Commander Lin has made a great contribution this time. After I ascend the throne, you will be conferred the title of marquis.”

Zhao Yuan was not stingy with his rewards, causing the men behind him to release their auras. They all thought that the outcome was decided after entering the palace.

He was

Shangyang Palace.

The lights were on.

The sixth prince lay on the bed, sobbing softly.

The royal family was not heartless. Moreover, a ten-year-old child was usually doted on by Emperor Hongchang.

Eunuch Wang, Duke Cheng, and Zhang Zhengyang stood by the bed and waited quietly, looking exhausted.

Imperial Consort Sun sat at the side and called the eunuch over to ask, “What time is it now?”

“Your Highness, it’s already quarter past midnight.”

The eunuch knew what Imperial Consort Sun wanted to ask and took the initiative to answer, “There’s less than an hour until the imperial court.”

Imperial Consort Sun glanced at the calm Prime Minister Zhang and heaved a sigh of relief. Perhaps this person did not care about the gains and losses of power. He was a truly loyal Prime Minister!

Not long ago.

Emperor Hongchang died late at night. Before he died, he issued an edict appointing four ministers to assist the Sixth Prince.

Imperial Consort Sun and the others immediately understood that Emperor Hongchang was dividing Zhang Zhengyang’s authority to prevent the instability of the dynasty.

Therefore, when Zhang Zhengyang was about to leave Shangyang Palace to read the edict, he was stopped by three ministers.

Zhang Zhengyang had been in charge of the government for nearly 20 years. It was unknown how many forces were hidden in the capital. If he took advantage of the darkness and plotted against them, the other three would be powerless to resist.

After a few rounds of sawing, the four of them set the rules.

No one was allowed to leave Shangyang Palace before dawn. For the time being, there would be no mourning until the imperial edict was read.

Imperial Consort Sun's trusted aide left the city to inform the capital camp. Eunuch Wang ordered the eunuchs to gather the Uniform Guards. After the imperial edict was announced in the morning, they would have enough strength to confront Zhang Zhengyang. Only Duke Cheng was calm, as if he did not care about the matters of the country.

Just then

There was a commotion outside the palace gates, followed by more screams.

Imperial Consort Sun hurriedly sent someone to check what was happening outside.

Duke Cheng glanced at Zhang Zhengyang and saw that he was still expressionless, as if he was not surprised by the changes outside.

The servant came back with a face full of fear. "Your Highness, Prince Qin and Minister Zhang barged in with their troops and killed anyone they saw..."

As he spoke, he suddenly froze and looked at Zhang Zhengyang with the others in the palace.

Zhang Zhengyang was silent. He slowly raised his hand and pulled the skin behind his ear, tearing off a layer of old skin to reveal his true appearance.