

Read Keyboard Immortal - Chapter 1711: Exposed

Chapter 1711: Exposed

Zu An coldly said, "Please rethink this, Sir Zhao. There are some things that are better left unknown for your sake."

Zhao Yuan's expression changed a bit. As someone who worked in the Imperial Palace, he naturally knew that the imperial family had many secrets that couldn't be known by outsiders. He knew that what Zu An said wasn't a joke.

However, when he looked at Zu An, after some hesitation, he felt that it was most likely a bluff. As such, he said with a smile, "Sir Zu speaks too seriously. I am merely doing my job. Furthermore, I have not received any orders regarding anyone carrying something with them to carry out a mission."

Zu An's expression became unpleasant. He replied, "Are you suggesting that I am lying to you?"

Zhao Yuan smiled and said, "What is Sir Zu saying? You are also a general who manages the Armed Escort Division. You should know about the responsibilities of Imperial Guard leaders. It will be better for everyone if we do the checks properly."

Zu An looked at him coldly. Actually, Concubine Bai was wearing Nanny Ping's clothes, so she'd look just like her for the time being. As such, he didn't actually fear an investigation. Still, explaining Nanny Ping's corpse would be another huge headache. If things stalled, Pin Ru's Wardrobe could lose its effects.

Furthermore, Zhao Yuan was clearly troubling him, and there were so many soldiers watching. If he backed down here, then the Armed Escort Division wouldn't have any pride left. It would become more difficult for him to operate in the palace too.

"Then what if I refuse?" Zu An scowled and replied bluntly.

Zhao Yuan's expression turned cold as he said, "Then don't blame me for taking action."

Afterward, the soldiers all drew their blades and surrounded Zu An. A battle seemed to be on the verge of erupting.

Still, what kinds of dangerous situations had Zu An experienced? He naturally didn't treat these people as a big deal. Once he released Concubine Bai, there wouldn't be any proof left. He could just come up with any old excuse to deal with the emperor after.

Suddenly, a sharp and thin voice coughed and asked, "May I ask what is going on here?"

"So it was Eunuch Wen," Zhao Yuan said. His expression also became a bit more respectful when he saw the eunuch. He said, "This general was conducting a routine investigation, but Sir Zu refused. That is why my comrades acted out of suspicion..." He described what happened, but exaggerated the situation. Anyone who heard his explanation would feel that there was something wrong with Zu An.

Eunuch Wen gave Zu An a look, and his gaze landed on the chest in his hands. Zu An keenly sensed a wave of energy locking onto the chest and thought, Thank goodness I fed Concubine Bai that Fake Death Pill.

Eunuch Wen clearly believed that it was Nanny Ping's corpse and thought that this kid had acted pretty quickly. Still, the conflict with Zhao Yuan had almost caused a disaster. He cleared his throat, then said casually, "His majesty indeed sent Sir Zu to carry out a task. It is this one who forgot to let General Zhao know."

Zhao Yuan's expression changed. He immediately put on a smile and said, "So there were arrangements from his majesty! Why didn't you tell me earlier, Sir Zu? It's a misunderstanding, definitely a misunderstanding."

Zu An watched him put on an act before retorting coldly, "I said it earlier, but wasn't it you who didn't believe me and kept arguing noisily?"

Zhao Yuan's smile immediately froze. He thought, I said that so everyone would have a way out of this situation! Little bastard, why aren't you acting like how a normal person would?!

Zu An ignored him. He exchanged a few more sentences with Eunuch Wen, then left.

As he watched Zu An leave, Zhao Yuan scowled.

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Meanwhile, Zu An took Concubine Bai several hundred li away before stopping. He found a secluded forest to release her.

Inside the chest, she was still curled up into a ball. Perhaps because of the Fake Death Pill, her fair face was now even more deathly pale. And yet, it only made her seem even more lovely.

Zu An was suddenly a bit stunned. He remembered that when Ji Xiaoxi had given him the Fake Death Pill, she hadn't told him how to use it. He didn't even know how long it would take for her to wake up again. What if it took a few days? He didn't have that much time to watch over her!

Still, his cultivation was very high and his knowledge had developed greatly as well. He roughly understood the principles of the Fake Death Pill. As such, he helped improve Concubine Bai's blood circulation to stimulate her body into waking up earlier.

He was worried that she would feel really uncomfortable and considered laying her body flat first. But after trying several times, he discovered that her arms and legs were tightly bound around each other. If he used too little strength, nothing would happen, but if he used more strength, he could hurt her. As such, he didn't try anymore and tried to just wake her up first.

Just like that, under the powerful circulation of his ki, a bit of color gradually returned to Concubine Bai's face. Then, her seemingly stopped heartbeat began again, albeit weakly. After a while, she started breathing lightly too.

Concubine Bai gradually woke up with a groan, batting her eyelids gently.

Zu An sighed in relief, asking, "You're awake?"

Perhaps because Concubine Bai was in a near-death state, her mind was still a bit blank. She stared at the man in front of her in a daze, her thoughts unclear. She was briefly stupefied. Zu An was startled. He quickly waved his hand in front of her face, for fear that the pill had turned her into a human vegetable.

Concubine Bai finally snapped out of it. She said in embarrassment, "I'm fine. I was just a bit muddle-headed after waking up again."

She wanted to get up, but she was shocked to discover that she was still curled up in her special stance. She pleaded, "Can you help me a bit? I can't undo it right now."

If she were in her usual state, there would naturally be no problem. But right now, she was still sealed by the emperor, and she had been in the fake death state for so long. Her body had become much stiffer.

When he saw her troubled condition, Zu An couldn't help but laugh. He wondered what he would have to do to get her to teach this technique to his other sweethearts. Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei surely wouldn't be too difficult to convince since they all came from the Devil Sect, but with Yun Jianyue's nature, she wouldn't necessarily be willing to learn it. Meanwhile, Yan Xuehen's side would be even harder...

When she recovered, Concubine Bai got up and sorted out her clothes. Then, she bowed and said, "Young master has saved my life. This humble one..." She trailed off as she suddenly remembered the joke he had told her before. At that moment, she didn't even know what to say.

Zu An clearly realized that as well. He coughed awkwardly and said, "You're treating me like a stranger with our relationship. I believe that if I were in your situation, you would help me too."

Concubine Bai felt warm inside when she saw him try to console her. At the same time, she became a bit mischievous, saying, "That's hard to say though. Even though we were friends, I wouldn't necessarily have taken such a huge risk to save you."

When she saw Zu An's expression stiffen, she giggled and said, "But after this, forget about saving the young master, as long as you need anything, you only need to give the word. I'll be willing."

Zu An had a strange expression as he thought, Is she hinting at something, or did she say that unintentionally? The Devil Sect's women all seem to be really good at saying things that toy with others' feelings.

He quickly gathered his thoughts and asked, "What kind of plans do you have next? Return to the Devil Sect?"

Concubine Bai shook her head. She said dejectedly, "That place merely treats me as a tool too. What's the point in returning..." She realized that the statement was inappropriate midway through her sentence and stopped. Instead, she said, "I plan to make a trip to the capital. I want to see my child."

Zu An said with a frown, "It's too dangerous to go back with your current identity. Furthermore, you still have a seal on your body..."

Concubine Bai said with a smile, "Young master, don't worry. I know what I'm doing. I won't expose myself and put the young master in danger. As for the restriction, it'll gradually undo itself after some time. I am from the Devil Sect, after all, and with the pill I took before, I have the ability to protect myself."

Seeing as she had already made up her mind, Zu An couldn't say much else. As a mother, Concubine Bai's love for her child seemed to surpass all worries of danger.

After giving her some things to protect herself with, Zu An returned to the emperor's procession. After all, if he didn't come back, that would be suspicious. He planned to show himself before returning to Violet Mountain. Being around big sis Yan and Yun was much more fun than being near the moody emperor.

However, when he arrived at the giant army again, he discovered that everyone with some importance in the court was present. When they saw him arrive, all of them had extremely inscrutable expressions.

Zu An wondered what they were doing. They all had weird looks on their faces. He planned to just blend in with the crowd after greeting the emperor respectfully, but to his surprise, Zhao Han suddenly said with a sneer, "You've really pulled the wool over my eyes, Fiend Races' Regent!"

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Chapter 1712: Dispute

Unlike the carriages of the period shows Zu An had watched in his previous world, it was hard to even call what Zhao Han was riding on a carriage. There were four beasts pulling the cart, and the carriage itself was so big it resembled a miniature palace. The entire carriage flickered with light blue

runes that represented formations in charge of the carriage's stability, wind resistance, and other such things designed to grant as much comfort to those inside as much as possible. They wouldn't even feel any movement.

Almost all of the court's important officials were present, as if it were an imperial assembly. After Zhao Han spoke, they all looked at Zu An with different expressions. Some were full of shock, while others were delighted to see him suffer. Some were worried, while others were just watching because they wanted to see something interesting...

Zu An's expression changed several times as well. At first, he had thought that his rescue of Concubine Bai had been exposed or something, and wondered how to explain himself. He hadn't expected it to be because of this. He had known that his identity as the Regent would be exposed sooner or later, but he hadn't thought it would be this quick. Thus, he was caught off guard.

However, he didn't choose to argue against it as that would be meaningless. The human emperor's judgment wasn't like the law in his previous world, which would need some kind of proof. He even felt the urge to run. Even though Zhao Han was extremely strong, with Zu An's current level of cultivation and confidence, it wasn't as if there was no chance of escaping at all.

Suddenly, Zu An heard a familiar voice at his side. "There's no need to be so alarmed. Even though the Regent identity will bring you some trouble, it can also serve as your very own protective talisman."

Zu An was briefly stunned. Then, he exclaimed happily, "Big sis empress, you woke up?"

Ever since Mi Li had gone to sleep that time, she had gone in and out of dormancy. Zu An had already gotten used to life without her.

"Call me master!" Mi Li corrected him in annoyance.

"Big sis master..." Zu An called out happily. For some reason, he always felt much calmer whenever she appeared. I really am a natural-born moocher after all!

"Quit it with your slick tongue! Deal with your current predicament first," Mi Li warned him.

Zu An nodded. He had already regained his composure, so he bowed to Zhao Han and said, "This matter is a long story. Previously, I had many misgivings, so I didn't immediately report to your majesty. I hope for your majesty's forgiveness."

Zhao Han was stunned. He had thought that with Zu An's personality, he would definitely at least argue a bit. Then, after such a shameful performance, he could simply be completely crushed and subdued. He hadn't expected Zu An to admit to it in such a straightforward manner.

The elders in the court had all kinds of exaggerated expressions. Some of those who were close to Zu An had hoped that the accusation wasn't true, and had wondered if they could speak up for him. And yet, judging from the looks of things, all of that would have been completely useless.

Bi Ziang was present as well, but with all of the court present here, his usual proud and arrogant nature had to take a backseat. In front of so many bigwigs, he was as insignificant as an ant. At the moment, however, his jaw was about to fall off. He had previously held absolute confidence in front of Zu An, and he hadn't treated it as that big of a deal no matter how the other man acted. He had seen Zu An as nothing more than his little sister's pet. No matter how formidable the other man was, he was nothing more than the Bi clan's dog.

But now that he had learned that Zu An was actually the Fiend races' Regent, everything changed! The Fiend races were known for being vicious savages who were addicted to killing, and their powerful clans made them the human race's greatest enemy. What kind of concept was 'Regent of the Fiend races'? Forget about Bi Ziang, even those on his father's level would be a bit inferior in status!

Just who was the dog here?

King Qi, who was standing at the forefront of the gathered subjects, raised his brows. He had thought that this brat was nothing more than a frolicking little clown who frequently ruined his plans. But now, he couldn't help but reevaluate Zu An again.

Chief Attendant Pei Zheng stepped forward and said, "Your majesty, this youngster has committed the crime of deceiving our ruler. Furthermore, he has colluded with the Fiend races to hide such a high position; he truly has ravenous designs. I hope that your majesty will execute this youngster for his

crimes and investigate the Fiend races' defeated remnants!" His voice was incredibly impassioned, as if full of anger, and yet also full of extreme excitement.

His reaction wasn't that surprising. A year or two prior, King Qi had been incredibly powerful, making others confident that he would become the next emperor. And yet, ever since this brat Zu An came to the capital, everything had changed. Several low to mid-level officials of King Qi's faction had been stripped of their positions; after some time, even the core forces of King Qi's faction, such as Secretariat Assistant Director Yu Nan and Imperial Secretariat's Left Confidential Assistant Yu Xuanchong, had been overthrown one after another. Decades of plans in Cloudcenter Commandery had been completely ruined. Right now, the King Qi faction's forces had already deteriorated to the extreme.

That all had something to do with Zu An. Pei Zheng had only been able to watch his meteoric rise without being able to do a thing. Now, he had finally found a chance to retaliate, so how could he not become excited?

Zu An thought to himself, Big Manman's grandfather really is a letdown. If this man knew about his relationship with his granddaughter, would he still attack so ruthlessly?

Guard General Liu Yao also stepped forward and said, "Indeed. Our dynasty punishes those who have secretly colluded with the Fiend races with three generations of executions. This Zu has committed a deliberate violation. He has received benevolence from your majesty, and yet he actually served as the Fiend races' Regent! This is another tremendous crime!"

Many people's expressions became a bit strange. King Qi and the emperor's faction were usually awfully busy arguing over every little thing. And yet today, they actually both stood on the same front against Zu An.

The emperor nodded slightly and said, "What you say carries some reason."

Just then, Bi Qi, who rarely expressed his opinion, surprisingly said, "Your majesty, this humble subject feels that this is inappropriate. We were previously suspicious as to why the conditions for the Fiend races' armistice were so favorable for us, and we were worried that they could be plotting something. Now, it is clear that it must have been because of Sir Zu's influence. As such, if we look at it from this perspective, Sir Zu was actually

acting in the human race's interests. Not only has he not done anything wrong, he actually carries merit."

Bi Ziang was stunned. He hadn't expected his father to actually speak up for Zu An at such a critical moment!

That Zu bastard might be a trusted aide little sis raised up, but he's already the Fiend races' Regent! There's no way he'd be willing to let the Bi clan order him around! Even little sis herself might not be able to control him now.

Father has never been one to act on impulse, so there's no way he doesn't understand that. Why would he take such a huge risk here?

Pei Zheng sneered and retorted, "Then according to what Sir Bi is saying, this Mister Zu should not be punished for colluding with the Fiend races, but should instead be rewarded? Then what purpose would the law of our empire serve? In the future, everyone would be able to act like him and collude with the Fiend races. Would we even be a country anymore?"

Bi Qi was a leading figure of the crown prince's faction, so the two sides often clashed with each other. Pei Zheng found Bi Qi's personality completely unbearable, so that was why he immediately fired back. Soon after, those who were on good terms with Bi Qi and Pei Zheng argued with each other. The place became extremely noisy at once.

Zhao Han frowned when he saw the familiar scene. These two sides were always arguing. Just looking at it made him angry.

This time, however, the different sides unexpectedly broke up into two new factions. Some of them approved of Bi Qi's opinion, while others demanded Zu An's execution with Pei Zheng. It was quite a novel sight.

As such, Zhao Han looked at Jiang Boyang and said, "Boyang, you are the Commandant of Justice, someone who is in charge of the court's laws. What do you think about this matter?"

Jiang Boyang bowed and said, "This subject believes that colluding with the Fiend races is the most severe offense. Because of that, Sir Zu deserves execution for his crimes.

"However, he has helped the human race receive great benefits in the negotiations this time. If we deny him of this contribution, we may receive

criticism. Furthermore, he is the Fiend races' Regent, so if something happens to him, would the Fiend races really just leave the matter at that? Perhaps the peace talks we have just begun will once again return to the flames of war. That is not something that would bring the common people happiness.

"This is not something that can strictly be decided through law, so this subject does not dare to make a decision. I can only hope that your majesty's wise and brilliant self can come to a righteous judgment."

All of the other subjects cursed him for being an old fox, not offending either side and being so cunning.

Zu An thought to himself, It's still Principal Jiang's pops who cares more about me. Pei Zheng, why don't you learn a bit from him?

Zhao Han declined to comment and looked at Zhao Jing, asking, "King Qi, what do you think?"

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Chapter 1713: Olive Branch

Now, people's gazes all fell on King Qi. Many of them knew just how badly Zu An had screwed King Qi over the past few years. If his majesty wanted him to speak, that meant Zu An was done for.

At the same time, the King Qi faction's people frowned slightly. His majesty really is crafty. He clearly wants to execute Zu An, and yet he didn't say it and instead had King Qi speak. Doesn't this mean he wants King Qi to take responsibility?

Even though Zu An was an orphan, he had befriended quite a few clans. Otherwise, there wouldn't have been so many people speaking up for him. Furthermore, his identity as the Regent was troublesome. If the Fiend races learned that King Qi had caused his death, they could very well try to settle the debt with their king.

King Qi smiled and said, "Sir Zu has indeed made a mistake, but it is as Sir Jiang said; he has brought back contributions for our human race. As such, dealing with him so quickly would only make the hearts of our people grow

cold. Furthermore, having a human as the Regent is better than the Fiend races putting one of their own in that position, no?”

Those present were all shocked, especially those from King Qi’s faction. They hadn’t expected him to actually speak up for Zu An. They understood clearly just how much King Qi hated that Zu bastard. Could it be that King Qi was taking a step back to advance even more quickly? Was it that he knew that the emperor wouldn’t agree with him, so he deliberately spoke this way? Was he actually hoping for the emperor to deal with Zu An himself?

Our king really is brilliant!

The emperor was a bit surprised, clearly not expecting King Qi’s answer. He replied, “Then according to what King Qi is saying, we should not punish him for colluding with the Fiend races?”

King Qi nodded and said, “Not only should we not punish him, we should reward him greatly. After all, he has brought back an incredible achievement. Furthermore, his identity as the Regent is very favorable for us. It will become much easier to accomplish our interests in the Fiend races’ territory through him in the future.”

A commotion erupted when the others heard those words. Even though Pei Zheng had been arguing for Zu An’s execution, he couldn’t say anything anymore out of respect for King Qi.

However, the emperor’s faction didn’t have such misgivings. They all began to ridicule the other side, with one person even saying with a sneer, “He has already become the Fiend races’ Regent. King Qi, who do you really think he will help more, the Fiend races or the human race?”

King Qi didn’t seem to agree and replied, “That is but a simple matter. Just make Sir Zu a king as well. If he is a king on both sides, I trust that as a human himself, he will definitely care more about our side.”

King Qi’s faction stared at him, their jaws hanging open. They had thought that King Qi was just backing off so the emperor would end up doing what he wanted, but now, it seemed that King Qi was serious!

Bi Ziang was full of jealousy as he looked at Zu An. Previously, the noble rank of count had already made him incredibly envious, and now, Zu An could even become a king? Just how old was he? Furthermore, granting someone

outside of the royal family the title of king was exceedingly rare even throughout previous dynasties!

He was getting angrier and angrier. In that instant, he had discovered that he now had to look up to the person he had previously seen as a slave. He found it hard to calm his emotions for a long time.

Zu An was also surprised to hear that King Qi would speak up for him. However, Mi Li's voice said in his mind, "What is there to be surprised about here? That's just how the world works. Good people or bad people? Only the immature would care about those things. For most people, they only care about whether the other person is useful or not.

"A useful person, no matter how bad one's relationship with them is, is naturally shown much higher tolerance. On the contrary, no one pays a useless person any attention no matter how kind they are.

"This is precisely the value of networking. Now, with your new identity, King Qi has a higher evaluation of you. The way he treats you is naturally different."

Zu An frowned. He felt that her wording was a bit too extreme somehow, and yet he didn't exactly know how to argue against it.

Zhao Han coughed and said, "What King Qi says has some justification. However, bestowing the title of king is still too shocking. This needs to be discussed carefully later."

It was clear that he didn't want to pursue Zu An's responsibility in this matter any further. The other subjects weren't stupid. Even though some people were a bit unhappy, they wouldn't go against the emperor and King Qi's intentions publicly. Thus, they quickly began to discuss how Zu An would be dealt with. He wasn't to be punished or rewarded for now, but he wouldn't be allowed to leave for the time being, either.

Zu An felt a huge headache. He had been about to reunite with his beautiful sisters in Violet Mountain, and yet now, he had been tied down here.

Still, he knew that this matter was an important one. The fact that they hadn't decided to pursue it in an extreme manner was already quite good for him. He had already been mentally prepared to fight for his life.

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After the court assembly ended and Zu An left, he was suddenly startled and looked to his left. He only saw an Embroidered Envoy standing there. The patterns on his clothes were completely different from those of any other Embroidered Envoy. It was none other than the Chief Commander Zhuxie Chixin, who had been missing for a long time already.

Zu An took the initiative to greet him, saying, "Chief Commander, long time no see."

The other important ministers gave him a look full of disgust. It was clear that they all avoided Zhuxie Chixin, as they viewed him as nothing but trouble to interact with. However, that was precisely what the two wanted anyway, as they didn't want others to listen in on their conversation.

Zhuxie Chixin voiced his acknowledgment. "It seems you've experienced quite the meteoric success as of late. It really makes one unable to help but develop a whole new level of respect."

Zu An was surprised when he sensed the envy in Zhuxie Chixin's tone. He suddenly understood why Zhao Han knew about his Regent identity. It was likely this person who had brought the information back from the front lines.

"Chief Commander speaks too seriously; it was nothing more than a fluke. Aren't I still Chief Commander's subordinate?" Zu An replied without batting an eye.

Zhuxie Chixin's expression finally eased up a bit. He said, "Do not be impatient. If you do well working for his majesty, you will be properly rewarded."

Zu An sneered inwardly. This guy and Zhao Han are really good at bullshitting. They're only good at giving empty promises.

However, he didn't show it as he asked, "Where has Chief Commander been? Many things have happened in the Embroidered Envoy system as of late."

"I carried out a secret mission. You should know our rules; don't ask about what you're not supposed to," Zhuxie Chixin responded coldly.

Zu An sneered inwardly when he sensed the strong bloody aura on Zhuxie Chixin's body. I know what kind of atrocities you committed without you having to say it, anyway.

“Chief Commander seems to have already broken through the door of the grandmaster rank,” he remarked. Even though Zhuxie Chixin didn’t deliberately show it off, he could keenly sense the changes to the other man’s aura.

Zhuxie Chixin was stunned. He hadn’t expected to be seen through like that. But now that he had finally made progress in his long-cherished wish, he couldn’t help but become a bit proud. He said, “I suddenly obtained an opportunity and was able to have a successful breakthrough.”

“Congratulations, congratulations!” Zu An replied, although he felt extremely cold inside. The so-called opportunity was probably from that massacre, right?

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The two separated soon after, and Zhuxie Chixin returned to his troops. Zu An secretly asked Mi Li, “Master empress, when did you wake up, by the way?”

“I can’t remember.” Mi Li said with a grin. “A certain someone seemed to be pursuing both the master and disciple. I may have already been awake then.”

Zu An was speechless. He asked, “Are you a pervert? Do you have a hobby of peeping on others or something?”

Mi Li’s expression grew cold as she snapped, “What did you say?”

“Nothing,” Zu An muttered. “I just feel as if you never even fell asleep in the first place.”

Because Mi Li’s inner ki had suffered great damage, he hadn’t suspected anything the first time she fell asleep. However, he had always found it a bit weird when she slept on subsequent occasions.

“If you hadn’t done anything shameful, there wouldn’t have been anything to worry about regardless of whether I slept or not,” Mi Li said with a snort.

Zu An thought to himself, Who would want everything they did to be completely exposed to someone else?

Suddenly, he was startled. He turned around and saw a middle-aged man dressed in official robes and a jade belt walking over. It was none other than

King Qi. Zu An hadn't expected him to approach directly, and asked, "Does the respected king have any wisdom to share with me?"

"Sir Zu is too polite. Ah, no, I should call you Regent now," King Qi said with a smile.

Zu An looked at him with suspicion. He couldn't figure out what King Qi's intention was.

"Weren't you quite surprised just now?" King Qi continued, getting straight to the point.

"I was indeed," Zu An said with a chuckle.

"Brother emperor seems to have wished for you to be punished. There are quite a few of his ministers who share his intentions," King Qi said with a sigh.

"Aren't there many followers of the king who are the same?" Zu An added calmly.

"That's different," King Qi said, shaking his head. "Sir Zu has been faithful and true to brother emperor these years, and yet in the end, you were nothing more than a lone official. Sir Zu is quite intelligent, so you should understand that an official all on his own won't have a good end."

Zu An paused for a moment before saying, "Respected king, after what's happened between the two of us, what you've just said seems a bit meaningless."

King Qi nodded and said, "Indeed. This king did hate you for ruining my plans, but that's already a thing of the past. Today is a different day, and we need to look forward."

"Because of my identity as the regent?" Zu An laughed mockingly.

"I won't deny that's a factor," King Qi said. "But in the end, there are no eternal enemies, only eternal interests. I've been watching coldly as a bystander as of late. Brother emperor doesn't seem to have truly taken you in, but rather, is preparing to throw you away. You should have also sensed this."

"What does respected king really wish to say?" Zu An asked seriously.

“Do you still remember the agreement of cooperation we made in the past? Why don’t we have another alliance?” King Qi offered, not hiding his intentions at all.

Zu An chuckled and said, “Respected king, even if I agree, you might not trust me, and there is no way I’ll trust you. Is there any meaning in such cooperation?”

“That problem did exist in the past,” King Qi said with a nod. His expression suddenly became mysterious before he continued, “But what if we become one family?”

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Chapter 1714: Love in the Air

Zu An was stunned, saying, “The king must be telling jokes. Your respected self is an important part of the imperial family, while I’m just a commoner. No matter how great our relationship is, it isn’t to the point that we can be considered one family, right?”

He wondered whether King Qi had lost his mind a bit from urgency. It’s one thing to try to rope me in, but this kind of messed-up excuse really is going a bit too far...

Even if the two of them became allies, they would definitely each have their own ulterior motives. They couldn't even be said to have a good relationship then, let alone becoming one family.

King Qi remained unfazed. He said with a smile, “This king has a beloved daughter named Xiaodie. She’s always been pretty since she was little and is quite adorable. When she was older, I sent her to the classical daoist sect, the Heavenly Sorrow Sect, to cultivate. Her cultivation talent is outstanding too. It isn’t that I am flattering her on purpose; she really is talented and good-looking.”

He paused for a moment, and suddenly thought of something. He said with a smile, “Sir Zu has spent quite a bit of time on Violet Mountain as of late. I’m sure you’ve already met her.”

Zu An reflexively nodded and said, "I have. Your esteemed daughter is indeed beautiful."

But her personality is a bit strange. She seems to lean toward M... he thought. Of course, there was no way he would dare to say that out loud to King Qi. Otherwise, if he found out that Zu An had previously whipped his precious daughter, he could immediately become hostile.

King Qi had a proud father's expression when he heard Zu An's praise. He said, "She is of age now, too. According to what I've heard, Sir Zu is unmarried. I believe the two of you would make a great pair, a match made in heaven..."

Zu An was stunned when he heard that. He had never expected King Qi to make such a suggestion.

Mi Li laughed in his mind and remarked, "Not bad, not bad! It seems your livelihood is getting better and better! Even that king wants you as a son-in-law."

Zu An replied in annoyance, "Stop making fun of me already and help me figure out what King Qi is really thinking."

Their souls were tied together, so speaking mentally was much easier. They could have an entire conversation without even a second passing in the real world.

"What else? He's trying to rope you in," Mi Li said casually. "You are the Fiend races' Regent now, and you have extraordinary status. After weighing his interests, he's decided that roping you in is much better than making you his enemy."

"But isn't he investing a bit too much? His eagerness is definitely abnormal," Zu An said doubtfully. "The two of us have had our share of interactions, and because of our previous conflicts, we share quite the grudge..."

"There's no need for you to worry about that," Mi Li explained. "He doesn't have many ulterior motives right now, and he wouldn't offer his daughter if he weren't serious. He likely keenly sensed that there's actually a rift between you and Zhao Han. He knows that you're someone he can fight for, so he went as far as to seek you out."

“Furthermore, judging from his urgency and how he’s proposing such generous conditions, it doesn’t seem to only be because of your identity as the Regent. He probably has another huge plan against the emperor in motion and needs your support. As such, all the rest doesn’t matter.”

Zu An was startled. Could it be something on Violet Mountain?

Even though he knew that King Qi carried some sincerity this time, he still said apologetically, “Thank you for your generous intentions, but I already have a wife. Furthermore, I already have many sweethearts too...”

“You are talking about the Qin clan’s granddaughter, right?” King Qi replied, seemingly unbothered. “From what I know, you’ve already divorced and she isn’t actually your wife. If it’s just sweethearts, what’s the big deal for a great man to have many concubines? Xiaodie is from the imperial clan and isn’t someone who would easily get jealous. She won’t stop you from having your sweethearts then.”

Zu An was speechless.

Mi Li said, “Agree to it. If you refuse this condition, you’ll have thoroughly offended him. At that point, if both Zhao Han and King Qi want to get rid of you, do you really think you’re so awesome that you can fight both of them off?”

Zu An shivered. Taking both of those parties as enemies really wasn’t a wise choice. However, he wasn’t willing to give up on his marriage for that. Thus, he said, “I wish to say thanks for the king’s good intentions. The young lady and I have encountered each other on Violet Mountain and experienced some interesting events.”

“Oh? There was something like that?” King Qi replied in surprise. He hadn’t expected his precious daughter to actually have a good relationship with Zu An. He thought to himself, How is this kid that good at getting the attention of pretty girls?

Zu An nodded and said, “It’s because I am familiar with the young lady that I can’t hurt her feelings through a transactional relationship. It would be better if things happened naturally.” He didn’t agree, nor did he refuse. Instead, he provided an ambiguous reply.

“Hm...” King Qi muttered with a frown. He was a bit dissatisfied with the result.

Zu An said, “King, there’s no harm in telling the truth. In the past, it wasn’t that I intentionally wanted to make you my enemy, but rather that it was just the result of fate. There’s no clash of interests between us that can’t be overlooked. Furthermore, considering my friendship with the princess, we can naturally grow our relationship from here. I hope that the king doesn’t still harbor former hatred.”

King Qi’s worry turned to happiness as he said, “Haha, but of course.”

...

When King Qi left, Zu An sighed deeply and said, “Big sis master, I feel as if something really big has happened! Even though I can vaguely sense it, I don’t know exactly what happened. I can’t help but feel a bit uneasy somehow.”

“What is there to worry about?” Mi Li replied, sounding relaxed. “Either way, even if the worst happens, you’ll have someone above you as a shield. You should actually be grateful that there’s someone like King Qi to draw Zhao Han’s attention away from you. Otherwise, he would have already found out and destroyed all of those plans of yours.”

Zu An chuckled in embarrassment and asked, “It’s not that serious, right? He doesn’t know many of the things I’ve done.”

“You haven’t experienced the imperial family’s education and don’t know how they think,” Mi Li said, shaking her head, “For example, the emperor doesn’t like you, so you won’t come to a good end. It’s just that you still have a bit of use left for him.

“Furthermore, after he lost his split soul in the Westhound Tomb Secret Dungeon, though he doesn’t know what happened inside, it was just your group that emerged. For the emperor, he would rather kill you than leave even a chance for the perpetrator to escape. Once he deals with King Qi, you’ll be next.”

“So that’s why you told me to agree to King Qi’s arranged marriage,” Zu An said with a sigh.

“Aren’t you usually a huge pervert? Is there something wrong with you today? I’ve seen that Zhao Xiaodie before. Even though she isn’t as good as that Chu

girl, she's still an incredible beauty in her own right. It's not as if you're losing out," Mi Li said, a bit annoyed at Zu An's behavior in this situation.

"That woman is a bit weird... And I don't have to sell my body, do I?" Zu An grumbled unhappily.

Mi Li laughed. She reached out a slender finger and hooked it around his chin, saying, "Tsk tsk tsk, I didn't expect you to have a bit of a backbone!"

Zu An suddenly realized something and asked, "You saw Zhao Xiaodie before? Then doesn't that mean you were awake a long time ago?"

"Yup, or else I would have missed a spectacular sight," Mi Li said with a sigh. "Kid, you really are quite the charmer! You actually even got together with their masters. Even though those two women are both extremely beautiful, who knows how much older they are than you. It seems you have quite the unique taste..."

Her expression suddenly changed when she said that. She snapped, "Brat, you don't have such thoughts about me too, do you?"

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Chapter 1715: Foot of the Mountain

Zu An rolled his eyes and replied, "Am I someone who would abuse my master and ancestors?"

Mi Li figured that made sense. She had just said it in passing, anyway.

The two spoke a bit more about various things that had happened as of late, and other matters related to cultivation.

"Big brother Zu~" a beautiful figure riding a vermillion horse called out as she rushed over. She had long legs and a slender waist, and rode atop a large and tall horse with tremendous mastery. She looked like a valiant and powerful female general.

"And there's another woman looking for you," Mi Li said, then rolled her eyes and disappeared.

“Little sis Qinghe, brothers Qin!” Zu An greeted them, cupping his hands. Apart from Murong Qinghe, the Qin clan brothers had also come.

The brothers both returned the greeting. The way they looked at him was extremely conflicted, however.

Murong Qinghe spoke her thoughts first. “Big brother Zu, I heard that you became the Fiend races’ Regent?”

Zu An was stunned. He replied, “Even you guys have heard about that?”

“It was true?” Murong Qinghe cried out in alarm. Her pretty face was full of shock.

It wasn’t just her; even the usually composed Qin Guangyuan was currently really shaken up. Meanwhile, the frivolous Qin Yongde was even more stupefied. He was so shocked he couldn’t even say a thing.

After all, the Qin clan was already practically one of the Great Zhou Dynasty’s greatest clans. With such a family background, they were already pretty much the most prestigious of young masters! They had previously viewed this ‘brother-in-law’ of theirs from a lofty position, and had even felt a bit of disdain toward him. And yet, Zu An had displayed shocking talent, so their opinions had subsequently improved for the better. Even so, there was no way they would look up to him or anything like that.

But now that they had learned that he was actually the Fiend races’ Regent, they truly felt inferior. When the difference in status was too great, sometimes, there wouldn’t even be any feelings of jealousy.

“It was nothing more than a coincidence. It’s not that big of a deal,” Zu An said humbly.

“What do you mean, it isn’t that big of a deal?!” Murong Qinghe cried. She immediately began to pester him about how he had become the Regent. Because of Chu Youzhao, her relationship with Zu An had also grown closer. Furthermore, Chu Youzhao wasn’t here, so she had already returned to her tomboy behavior. She almost put her arm around Zu An out of sheer enthusiasm.

The Qin clan brothers were also curious. They both asked about the subject as well. Helpless to do anything else, Zu An could only tell them about the events in the Fiend races' territory.

At the same time, he learned from them that a huge disturbance had happened in the capital not too long ago. Several important ministers had once again appealed to the emperor to send King Qi back to his own fiefdom instead of allowing him to stay in the capital. Previously, King Qi's faction and the emperor's faction had constantly entered a heated debate over that matter. Both sides had even started quoting the classics. But now that King Qi's side had weakened so greatly, they clearly didn't have as much influence as before.

Meanwhile, King Qi had also personally expressed that he would return to his fiefdom. After he attended the Fengshan Ceremony, he would return directly to his land and not the capital.

The Qin clan brothers sighed, saying regretfully that it was the end of an era. At the same time, they were full of worry regarding the future. After all, the Qin clan was part of King Qi's faction. Now that King Qi had left the capital, it signified his defeat. That meant the Qin clan would experience the consequences of following him not long after.

...

A few more days passed, and the emperor's group arrived at Yi Commandery. King Yan had already come out ahead of time with his men to welcome them. Thus, they entered the city.

The emperor privately criticized King Yan, as the uprising that had taken place was crossing the line a bit. King Yan appeared to be overcome with fear and trepidation, but he actually sighed inwardly in relief. After all, the fact that the emperor was willing to scold him meant that the matter was already a thing of the past.

Sure enough, the emperor merely applied a few punishments to King Yan Manor that were neither too severe or too light. At the same time, he shuffled around some of the people in Yi Commandery's officialdom. He didn't actually do that much to King Yan Manor. People all knew the emperor's intentions, so they didn't tactlessly say anything.

Zu An watched with the cool gaze of a bystander. He just felt that the atmosphere was a bit weird. Rarely would one get a chance to see King Qi and the emperor's faction on such good terms.

Mi Li said in his mind, "This isn't that strange. Right now, both King Qi and the emperor want to get rid of each other, and they're about to reveal their cards. In such a critical moment, they naturally don't want to take the risk of offending any major powers on the other side. Otherwise, what if they end up supporting the other side?"

Zu An nodded inwardly. As expected, the stronger you were, the more people would want you on their side no matter where you went.

Just then, an official suddenly arrived to report on an important military matter. It turned out that Yi Commandery had discovered the main force of a rebel army nearby. The leader was none other than Lu Sanyuan. There were many branches of the rebel army in the world, but Lu Sanyuan was their leader. It was rumored that he and the Devil Sect were closely linked. Not only was his cultivation high, he was also good at using weaponry. The official armies had suffered quite badly at his hands.

Zhao Han promptly ordered King Yan to put down the chaos. King Yan said, sounding troubled, "Your majesty, from what I know, it doesn't seem to be Lu Sanyuan's rebel army alone! The mountain and forest bandits have all gathered nearby, as if some kind of incredible treasure had appeared here or something. Previously, Zhang Jie's rebellion caused our King Yan Manor to suffer quite considerable damage. Right now, my manor's strength alone might not be able to deal with just that demon Lu Sanyuan, let alone so many rebel armies!"

Zu An recalled what happened when he had rescued Xie Daoyun. He knew that what King Yan said was indeed the case. Bandits and rebels from all over had been gathering in this region. They all wondered who could be spreading such a rumor to draw them over.

Zhao Han asked the corresponding officials for some intelligence and realized that what King Yan said was true. As such, he ordered the Left Guard General Lu He to lead the capital's six main armies to coordinate with King Yan. In truth, he was also aware of what King Yan really wanted, to use the chance to take Yi Commandery's troops under his command. However, how could he possibly allow King Yan to grasp two entire armies in his hand at the same time?

King Qi spoke up in opposition and said, “Brother emperor, the six main camps are to ensure your majesty’s safety. If the main forces are transferred away, wouldn’t that be rather unsuitable?”

Zhao Han smiled and said, “Thank you for your worries, King Qi, but even without the six main armies, we still have the Right Guard General Guo Zhi and Supervisor of Attendants Murong Tong’s troops. Furthermore, with this emperor’s cultivation, is there a need for such protection?”

King Qi bowed and said, “What brother emperor says is indeed the case. It was I who was worried for nothing.”

The brothers Liu Yao and Liu Guang both offered to help shoulder the burden, saying that they were going to put down the revolt together. They figured that dealing with the rebels with the six armies would be a breeze. There was no better chance for them to rack up military achievements. Furthermore, their official ranks just happened to make them the six main armies’ direct superiors. That was why assuming such a role was also reasonable.

Zhao Han remained quiet for a moment, then agreed.

Only King Yan and Lu He both frowned. These two idiots always managed to screw things up somehow. They were worried that the two could become a hindrance. However, because of their pride in their high positions, they didn’t continue to argue.

...

Just like that, the Liu clan brothers took half of the main army and left, while the rest of the procession continued the march to Violet Mountain. A few days later, they finally arrived at the foot of Violet Mountain.

Zu An looked worriedly at the golden peak hidden within the clouds. He wondered if Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei were still there. If they bumped into Zhao Han, there really wouldn’t be anywhere to run. There were also Chuyan, Manman, and the others. He wondered if they had left the daoist secret dungeon yet.

On top of that, big sis Yan was also there...

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Chapter 1716: Offering Ceremony

Soon after, Wang Wuxie led a group of disciples out to welcome the imperial procession.

Zu An carefully observed what was happening. He saw that apart from Wang Wuxie, the Righteous Sun Sect's peak masters had all come too, clearly afraid of showing even the slightest bit of disrespect. However, the daoist sects' other eight sect leaders weren't there; whether it was because they had already left, or some other reason, was unclear. With so many people watching, Zu An couldn't really ask about that either.

When he saw Wang Wuxie, Zhao Han acted extremely amicably. After all, Wang Wuxie was the State Teacher and someone from the daoist sects. The two of them had shared a friendship for several years.

Soon after, Wang Wuxie brought the group to Guidance Palace, located halfway up the mountain. Then, he informed the emperor that the altar had already been properly arranged on Golden Peak.

Zhao Han nodded in satisfaction. Then, he ordered the others to wait at Guidance Palace while he went on to conduct the offering to the heavens.

The offering to the heavens was a process of connecting with the heavens. In theory, only the emperor and empress had that right. The presence of other subjects would only 'defile' the divinity of the ceremony.

Of course, the main reason was that he didn't want King Qi to have any part of that divinity, lest the people thought King Qi also had the right to the mandate of heaven or something like that.

However, Bi Qi immediately expressed his concern. "Your majesty, won't this be a bit dangerous?"

Zhao Han said with a laugh, "There are civil and military officials on the mountain and below the mountain. What kinds of hidden dangers could there be? Furthermore, I will even have the State Teacher with me."

Now, the Armed Escort Army's Zhang Zijiang and Wang Bolin also wanted some credit. They reported, "This general has already investigated the areas of Golden Peak. Everything is normal!"

The others then looked at Wang Wuxie. This man was still rather deferential to the court, and he was a famous expert, so they couldn't really say too much.

Shortly after, Zhao Han followed Wang Wuxie to Golden Peak. Of course, even though there weren't any important ministers with him, he still had Eunuch Wen and Zhuxie Chixin, as well as a group of Embroidered Envoys and personal Imperial Guards.

...

When they left, Zu An finally found Xie Daoyun in a corner. He secretly approached her to ask about what had happened since he left.

Xie Daoyun clearly sighed in relief when she saw him return safely. She knew what he wanted to ask about and quietly replied, "I don't know what's going on, but the secret dungeon hasn't opened up again according to the set time. Meanwhile, his majesty's arrival date was also moved up. The daoist sects were worried that they would be suspected of ulterior motives if they remained on Violet Mountain, so they left first. Now, only the Righteous Sun Sect's people are left on Violet Mountain."

Zu An asked in surprise, "The daoist sects' secret dungeon still hasn't opened?"

Normally, time flowed quite differently inside a secret dungeon compared to the outside world. It was typically much faster. In some of them, many years could pass inside, despite only a few months passing outside. Chu Chuyan and the others had also been inside the dungeon for many days already, and were supposed to have emerged already.

"Don't worry, big brother Zu. Miss Chu and Miss Pei both have high cultivation and they have always been extremely intelligent. They'll definitely be fine," Xie Daoyun said to comfort him.

Zu An forced a smile, but he was still full of worry.

...

Meanwhile, Zhao Han followed Wang Wuxie up to Golden Peak. The two chatted with each other along the way, but the emperor couldn't help but sigh when he saw that Wang Wuxie was simply being a yes-man. He remarked, "Haven't you become a lot more taciturn recently? The two of us fought side by side in the past, yet now, it feels like we've become a bit estranged."

Wang Wuxie replied, "The ruler is the ruler, while a subject is a subject. Your majesty will definitely be above everyone else alone."

Zhao Han seemed to be a bit shaken by those words. After a sigh, he didn't say anything else.

Soon after, they arrived at Golden Peak. A tall platform had been built there, with everything needed for the offering to the heavens prepared beforehand.

Zhuxie Chixin swept his gaze over the area and saw that Golden Peak had already practically been cleared out. Apart from a few Righteous Sun Sect disciples who were in charge of the ceremony, there weren't any other random people. He sighed in relief. However, he still stationed some Imperial Guards and Embroidered Envoys at various key points around Golden Peak, protecting the emperor at the center.

Then, Wang Wuxie led Zhao Han to a giant furnace. Zhao Han tossed a torch inside to ignite it. Placed inside were all sorts of precious ki stones, medicinal ingredients, ores, and other such things.

Strands of smoke carrying a rich fragrance slowly rose and condensed in one area in the sky. This was how the sincerity of the human world was to be conveyed to the heavens.

Then, Zhao Han bowed in front of various memorial tablets of the deities to express his respect. Even though he was already unmatched, he was still full of reverence toward such matters related to the heavens. After all, there had always been legends of immortals throughout history. Even though no one had seen any true immortals for thousands of years, he still carried that longing. He hoped that one day, he would also be able to ascend to the immortal realm.

Once he began to kneel, no one on Golden Peak dared to remain standing. All of them also kneeled down in respect.

Then, some Righteous Sun Sect disciples carried over a jade plate with clear mountain spring water inside. After Zhan Han used the water to freshen up, he wiped away the remaining water and received some incense from the side. He bowed to an ancestral tablet on the altar three times. Then, he took some jade silk and other precious articles that Wang Wuxie had prepared and walked up the stage step by step. During the whole process, he was full of respect toward the ancestral tablet.

The platform was incredibly holy and divine. In the entire world, only he alone had the right to be there. Everyone else remained where they were, far away.

Zhuxie Chixin looked all around him. For some reason, he just felt a bit nervous somehow, and yet he couldn't exactly pinpoint why either. He could only silently pray that nothing bad would happen.

Sometimes, however, one's worst fears were precisely what came true. Suddenly, there was a deafening explosion. The entire platform was engulfed in fiery light as a huge mushroom cloud rose. Several explosions rang out all across Golden Peak. The Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards were all caught off guard and suffered severe casualties.

"Your majesty!" Zhuxie Chixin cried in horror. The center of the explosion was none other than the elevated stage the emperor was on! In that instant, the emperor was devoured by flames, and Zhuxie Chixin couldn't sense the slightest trace of his aura anymore.

Even though his majesty's cultivation is high, how can it be certain that nothing happened if he's at the very center of the explosion?

...

Meanwhile, halfway up the mountain, the other subjects remained respectfully. But since the emperor wasn't there anymore, they had begun slacking off a bit and secretly chatting with each other through ki.

Suddenly, the world trembled, and even the tiles of Guidance Palace began to tumble down piece by piece. Smoke and dust flew everywhere. Many people instinctively cried out. Zu An struck aside a few pieces of falling tile to protect Xie Daoyun, who was next to him.

A while later, they all finally managed to get away from Guidance Palace. They looked in the direction of the explosion. They saw flames rush into the

heavens where Golden Peak had been. Smoke surged and covered everything. Their expressions all changed.

“Your majesty!” Bi Qi cried as he took the lead in rushing to the mountaintop, and others followed him.

Zu An observed the scene that was taking place on Golden Peak. He suddenly thought of something. Yun Jianyue had mentioned that Golden Token Seven noticed a batch of gunpowder disappearing near Violet Mountain, and that it might have very well been stored away by a certain Righteous Sun Sect individual. So this was what they had been planning to use it for!

The previously happy and excited Zhang Zijiang and Wang Bolin’s faces turned deathly pale. They muttered to themselves, “We’re done for, we’re done for!”

They had been in charge of eliminating any potential dangers on Violet Mountain, and yet this huge oversight had occurred. Their entire families would be executed for this!

Furious rebukes suddenly filled the air nearby. As it turned out, Bi Qi and the other ministers had been stopped by a formation barring their way. They had begun berating the Righteous Sun Sect disciples and asking them what they were doing.

However, the Righteous Sun Sect disciples didn’t say anything in response. They disappeared after activating the formation.

Xie Daoyun cried out in alarm. She said with great frustration, “Huh? This is the Righteous Sun Sect’s great formation that protects the entire mountain. I did notice it before, but I didn’t think it would be used like this...”

Zu An patted her shoulder to make her feel better. This wasn’t her fault. Who would be able to imagine that the renowned Righteous Sun Sect would use their greatest defense formation to separate the emperor from his officials?

He looked in Golden Peak’s direction and thought, No wonder Wang Wuxie seemed so strange. So he planned to face the emperor here.

But no matter how daring he was and how high his cultivation was, Wang Wuxie was facing Zhao Han as his opponent. Zu An wondered who else was

involved in this matter. There was also the huge amount of gunpowder to consider. Would it be enough to blast that old bastard Zhao Han to death?

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Chapter 1717: Ambush

The area halfway up the mountain was engulfed in chaos, but Golden Peak was even more so.

Zhuxie Chixin and the others didn't have time to focus on their own injuries and sprinted toward the spot at the center of the stage, calling out, "Your majesty! Your majesty!"

Wang Wuxie's expression also changed, and he followed them over too.

Smoke and waves of heat filled the air in all directions. Those present felt their hair and beards being instantly scorched. If not for the ki armor protecting them, they could already have been burned to death from the extreme temperature.

The Embroidered Envoys and guards who were fortunate enough to survive all rushed over to save the emperor. Unfortunately, they were blown back several times by the heat.

When Wang Wuxie saw that, he waved his sleeves. A wave of powerful ki immediately scattered the smoke. The others were left in admiration when they saw that, thinking, As expected of the State Teacher. His level of cultivation really was admirable.

The smoke gradually scattered, leaving them surprised to discover that the altar had already disappeared, having been replaced by a deep crater. It was easy to imagine just how great the power of the explosives was. Their expressions darkened. If even the altar had ended up like this, everything boded ill for his majesty...

Wang Wuxie continued to wave his sleeves. The smoke became fainter and fainter, revealing what was within. Those present noticed a golden sphere of light inside, with a figure in its center.

“Your majesty!” Zhuxie Chixin and Eunuch Wen exclaimed, overjoyed. Who else could it be but Zhao Han?

He walked out with an ashen expression and called out, “What is going on here?”

The crown he wore had already fallen off, and his hair was disheveled. There were scorched black marks and signs of damage on his dragon robes. It was clear that the terrifying explosion had affected him. In all these years, when had he ever been left in such a sorry state? He was absolutely furious. At that moment, the only thought in his mind was that he wanted to kill.

Zhuxie Chixin and Eunuch Wen exchanged a look. Who knew how many heads would tumble because of this...

That guy Zu An and the Armed Escort Army had been sent out ahead of time to clear out any potential dangers; what the hell were they doing? Could it be that he really had colluded with the Fiend races and wanted to get rid of his majesty together with them?

Wang Wuxie kneeled straight down and said while trembling, “Your majesty, please forgive me. It was because this poor daoist was incompetent that there were traitors among my sect’s leadership. That was why so much gunpowder was delivered to Golden Peak.”

When they saw the usually arrogant State Teacher shaking, Eunuch Wen and Zhuxie Chixin could understand how he was feeling. After all, now that something so huge had happened, there was no way his Righteous Sun Sect could get away scot-free.

However, they didn’t suspect Wang Wuxie. After all, he was the State Teacher, someone who was already incredibly respected. Furthermore, he had stood at the emperor’s side when he was at his lowest point. The emperor even viewed him as a friend. How could someone like that possibly betray the emperor?

Zhao Han didn’t suspect him and quickly supported him, saying, “Wuxie, there is no need for you to be like this. This isn’t your fault.”

He would only falsely pretend to support them if it were anyone else, but he really did treat Wang Wuxie differently. He personally supported the man to express how much he cared.

Suddenly, something unexpected happened. A strange expression flashed through Wang Wuxie's eyes. Then, while the emperor was supporting him, his hands suddenly slammed into the emperor's chest.

As the number one of the daoist sects, how powerful was his cultivation? As he displayed the powerful skills he had cultivated for so many years, violet ki appeared in his hands. He was so fast that Zhao Han, who was right next to him, couldn't react. He was struck firmly by those palms.

However, he reacted quickly as well. His entire body erupted with golden light that instantly devoured the violet ki. Then, his palm hacked straight through Wang Wuxie's defenses and struck his body.

Wang Wuxie's daoist robes exploded fiercely, and his chest caved in by a few inches. His body slammed heavily into the ground like a broken sack. He vomited a mouthful of blood that carried fragments of dark red innards. It was clear that he wouldn't survive.

Zhuxie Chixin and Eunuch Wen were alarmed. They instinctively rushed at Wang Wuxie to attack. When he saw that the man was about to be ripped apart, however, Zhao Han called out, "Stop!"

A hint of unnatural redness had appeared on his face. It was clear that Wang Wuxie's attack had dealt him considerable damage. However, his gaze was as sharp as lightning as he stared at Wang Wuxie and asked, "Why?"

That was what he couldn't figure out. Between their friendship and his current standing in the Righteous Sun Sect, there was no reason for Wang Wuxie to betray him.

Wang Wuxie's strange expression faded. Perhaps because of a last dying flash, the murkiness in his eyes also scattered. He recovered a bit of clarity, gasping in a tone full of anger and helplessness, "Shamans!"

"The shamans' possession arts?" Zhao Han muttered with a frown.

He had only instinctively retaliated against Wang Wuxie's move just then. However, just how powerful would such a reaction be? Only someone with cultivation as profound as Wang Wuxie could barely keep his body intact. He was already at his deathbed and couldn't hear what Zhao Han was saying at all.

Wang Wuxie felt endless frustration and regret. His aptitude was outstanding, and his cultivation had been growing by the day. He had even seen the door to the earth immortal stage recently, and yet who could have thought that he would be plotted against in the name of love and fall in such a wretched manner?

“Xuehen, you’ve come...” he murmured as he raised his hand to a certain place in the sky, seemingly struggling to grasp something.

He seemed to have seen a goddess who resided in the clouds, walking toward him with a look of pity and tenderness. She even reached out her hand, as if to save him.

And yet, no matter how he reached out his hand, in the end, their hands never touched. In the end, he departed this life with deep regrets.

“Your majesty, how do you feel right now?” Eunuch Wen and Zhuxie Chixin asked with concern, surrounding Zhao Han.

However, Zhao Han suddenly looked up, his gaze resembling that of a ferocious tiger ready to devour everything. Both of them were so frightened their entire bodies quivered. They didn’t dare to take even half a step closer. Both of them realized that after Wang Wuxie’s betrayal, Zhao Han no longer trusted anyone, not even them.

Suddenly, there was a ripple in the distance and runes appeared. There were clearly people being transported into the area.

The Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards all drew their weapons to surround the emperor. The arrival of trespassers at this point in time was definitely bad news.

“Haha, as expected of your majesty! You actually managed to kill the number one of the daoist sects despite his ambush, and you even look perfectly fine,” a good-looking middle-aged man with a neatly trimmed beard said as he strutted out. The guards tried to stop him, but they were all blown back with just a wave of his hand, sustaining serious injuries.

Zhuxie Chixin’s eyes narrowed. This aura was clearly that of a grandmaster! Furthermore, it didn’t seem as if the other man had just entered that level either; rather, he was an experienced veteran.

Zhao Han frowned, clearly recognizing him. He called out, "Guan Chouhai?"

"I didn't expect your majesty to still remember me," Guan Chouhai said with a sign. "I didn't expect to make your majesty my enemy today either."

"Even someone like you?" Zhao Han remarked, laughing in contempt. "You're not qualified."

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Chapter 1718: Pure Yang Art of Youth

As the Heavenly Sorrow Sect Master, Guan Chouhai's presence was definitely notable no matter where he went. He was normally extremely prideful and arrogant. If it were anyone else saying those words, he would already have erupted into a violent rage. However, when it was Zhao Han saying it, his expression remained completely natural. He slowly said, "Your majesty is correct. I am obviously not worthy of making your majesty my enemy, and my task today is nothing more than dealing with some nobodies on the sidelines. As for your majesty, there will naturally be someone to face you."

Zhao Han's eyes narrowed slightly. He naturally knew that there was someone backing Guan Chouhai, but he still wasn't sure exactly who it was.

Zhuxie Chixin suddenly asked furiously, "What are you staring at me for?"

Guan Chouhai smiled and said, "I have long heard that the Embroidered Envoy's Chief Commander is his majesty's most loyal dog, ruthless in his deeds and powerful in cultivation. All who hear your name shiver in fear. I came here to experience your prowess today."

Zhuxie Chixin reflexively glanced at Zhao Han. Seeing as he wasn't given the signal to stop, he knew that the emperor wanted him to give it a try. As such, he turned to Guan Chouhai with a cold gaze and called out, "Guan Chouhai, you actually dare to rebel against the empire? This official will make sure to dismember your body into ten thousand pieces today!"

A long iron chain suddenly lashed out from his hands as soon as he spoke. There was a sickle vaguely visible on the end of the chain. This was the

weapon Zhuxie Chixin had used for many years to take the lives of countless people. Their appearance always left terror in their wake, as courtiers often said; many people were terrified of the weapon.

However, Guan Chouhai didn't feel any fear. He raised his hands, and two streaks of golden light fired out from his wrists. The Twin Vajra Armbands knocked the reaper's sickle away.

Both of their bodies trembled from the impact. Zhuxie Chixin sighed. As expected of the Heavenly Sorrow Sect Master, who had already been famous for many years! His cultivation was profound and exceptional.

Guan Chouhai was also shocked. According to his intelligence, even though Zhuxie Chixin's cultivation was high, he was only supposed to be a pseudo-grandmaster who hadn't truly entered the grandmaster rank. As such, he had thought that it would be easy enough to deal with the man. And yet, when they clashed, Zhuxie Chixin's strength left him quite shocked.

What pseudo-grandmaster? This is clearly a proper grandmaster!

Even so, he was still someone who had already been famous for many years. Although he was surprised, he didn't let it affect the fight. He immediately continued the assault on Zhuxie Chixin. After all, The Soul Reaping Chains were a long-range weapon. Fighting in close quarters was unavoidably their weakness.

However, Zhuxie Chixin didn't feel alarmed at all. With a flick of his wrist, the Soul Reaping Chains rapidly withdrew and turned into a scythe. He slashed diagonally with it, and then even the space in front of him itself seemed to be sliced apart.

Guan Chouhai blocked with both arms in front of him, and a stone wall faintly appeared in midair. However, despite its exceptional defensive strength, the wall was actually sliced in half by Zhuxie Chixin's scythe! Then, the sickle blade smashed into the Twin Vajra Armbands, causing blinding light to erupt.

The two were blown back a dozen or so meters from the tremendous impact. Guan Chouhai shivered. Why did Zhuxie Chixin have such a strong aura of death lingering around him? Even though it was rumored that many officials had died under his hands, it wouldn't be enough to produce such a thick aura of death energy, right?

“Interesting!” Guan Chouhai roared, laughing. With a shake of his hands, the Twin Vajra Armbands turned into countless copies, then attacked from all sorts of different directions.

Zhuxie Chixin brandished the scythe in his hands, blocking the incoming armband attacks one by one. However, his face paled a bit whenever he blocked one of them. It was known that Guan Chouhai was a powerful earth element cultivator, and today, Zhuxie Chixin saw that it was indeed the case. The armbands looked small, but it felt as if there were a mountain behind each strike. If he hadn’t recently entered the grandmaster rank, perhaps he would have already collapsed after just two strikes. Even so, he could do nothing but defend against the Vajra Armbands that covered the sky. There was no chance for him to retaliate.

Many loyal Embroidered Envoys launched their Soul Reaping Chains at Guan Chouhai when they saw what was happening. They were soldiers who would give up their lives for the emperor and had been personally promoted by Zhuxie Chixin, so they naturally didn’t care as much about honor as the martial world’s warriors.

Guan Chouhai’s expression changed a bit. At any other time, even though the Embroidered Envoys were tricky by the standards of normal cultivators, he wouldn’t treat them as a big deal at all. However, he and Zhuxie Chixin were facing off intensely. If these Embroidered Envoy elites joined in and activated a formation centered on Zhuxie Chixin, things would become much more difficult.

Just then, eight flying swords flew over, each charged with electricity. They instantly passed through the very center of the group of Embroidered Envoys. The Envoys didn’t even have a chance to assemble into an array before exploding into a bloody mist.

As he watched his own trusted aides being murdered, Zhuxie Chixin felt as if his eyes were splitting apart. However, he was completely preoccupied with his opponent and could only endure his anger as he fended off Guan Chouhai’s attacks.

“Xuan Bajing?” Zhao Han muttered. He had been watching the fight, silent and expressionless. The death of such low-ranking guards wasn’t enough to make him feel the slightest emotion. He was curious about just who else was involved in the scheme.

A streak of lightning flickered and the Kunlun Void Sect Master appeared out of thin air. Eight sword cases fanned out behind him like a peacock's tail. He cupped his hands toward Zhao Han and said, "I greet your majesty."

Zhao Han's expression was ice-cold as he said, "Seeing as you have all rebelled, you must be quite dissatisfied with how your statuses have fallen over the years."

Xuan Bajing smiled and said, "We naturally cherish our past days more. Even though we are unworthy, we do not wish for our daoist sects to ultimately fall in another hundred or so years under our management."

If the current trend continued, then among the daoist sects, perhaps only the Righteous Sun Sect would remain. Meanwhile, the other great sects would only decline day after day until nothing remained.

Zhao Han looked at him coldly and said, "Perhaps your sects would have fallen in another century if you all did nothing. But now that you've done something so disgraceful today, there is a greater chance that your sects might vanish into smoke this very day."

Xuan Bajing sighed and said, "If we are fated to be destroyed, we might as well give it our best shot while we still have some strength."

Zhao Han frowned and remarked, "Just the two of you alone wouldn't even have enough strength to struggle."

Xuan Bajing smiled and replied, "Your majesty is supremely clever, as expected. You will naturally know the truth soon."

Eunuch Wen said in a rather dark manner, "I have long heard of the wonders of Sect Master Xuan's eight swords. This humble one wishes to experience them for myself."

He had just witnessed his majesty injured by explosives, followed by Wang Wuxie's ambush. Even though the emperor looked fine on the surface, that wasn't necessarily the case in reality. As such, Eunuch Wen wanted to buy some time for him to recover.

Zhao Hao didn't stop Eunuch Wen. He stood there with his hands behind his back, calmly watching everything that was happening.

Xuan Bajing said, "In earlier years, before the emperor made such breakthroughs in his cultivation, assassins often infiltrated the palace. However, they were all killed by an expert in the palace. Now that I think about it, Eunuch Wen was most likely that protector. I really must experience your skills for myself today."

After he spoke, eight flying swords swiftly rushed at Eunuch Wen. They suddenly disappeared mid-flight, and only the electricity left in the air proved that they were still there.

Eunuch Wen roared, and his arms spread out. A blue barrier of light immediately appeared around him. In that instant, eight swords attacked his vitals from eight different directions, but all of them were blocked by the barrier.

Xuan Bajing exclaimed in shock, "Pure Yang Art of Youth? So there was actually someone who cultivated that technique!"

The power of the Pure Yang Art of Youth was tremendous, but extremely few people were able to cultivate it. The main reason for that was the strict condition it required. One had to cultivate the method from their youth, and if they ever lost their purity, no matter how accomplished in the method they were, it would become worthless.

Who would want to remain a virgin their entire life, even if it meant having unmatched martial prowess?

Even the temple monks who never took wives could run into instances in which they inadvertently lost their yang origin. To lose all those years of cultivation because of a single night... That really would be a tragedy.

In the end, it seemed only someone such as Eunuch Wen was suited to the skill.

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Chapter 1719: Revenge

Xuan Bajing was startled. He didn't dare to treat his opponent lightly anymore, and began to treat Eunuch Wen as an opponent of the same level. His

expression became grave. With a gesture from his hand, the eight flying swords returned and circled around him.

Mechanical cracking noises filled the air, and the eight flying swords actually combined together to form one giant sword. Xuan Bajing roared, then brandished that sword at Eunuch Wen. As it swung, an even larger sword arrived almost instantly in front of Eunuch Wen's head. It smashed directly against the blue barrier around Eunuch Wen.

A huge explosion erupted. Even with Eunuch Wen's Pure Yang Art of Youth, he couldn't block such great force. The blue barrier shattered on the spot. He immediately used a movement skill to evade, managing to barely avoid the giant sword.

Lightning flashed in the skies. Xuan Bajing instantly disappeared from his original location, and reappeared at Eunuch Wen's side. He brandished his palm at his opponent. At the same time, the giant sword turned into eight flying swords again and moved with him. They attacked with shocking speed from all sorts of tricky angles.

Eunuch Wen harrumphed. Two bursts of blue light appeared in his hands, and he blocked Xuan Bajing's attacks with his fists. At the same time, the ki armor around his entire body prevented the eight flying swords from hurting him.

Zhao Han stopped watching them when he saw that they were evenly matched. He looked at a certain point on Golden Peak and coldly said, "Zhao Jing, I know you're here. Why are you hiding in the back while sending this useless cannon fodder one after another?"

Guan Chouhai and Xuan Bajing's faces reddened. Who would ever call them useless cannon fodder, normally? They were powerful figures from the daoist sects, and yet they couldn't exactly retort against Zhao Han. Even though they were grandmasters, they were still pretty far from the earth immortal rank. They really couldn't refute what he said.

A figure slowly walked out from an alley. His movements were lofty, and there was an aura of nobility coming from his every move. Who else could it be but King Qi, Zhao Jing?

The other officials were all trapped midway up the mountain. No one knew how he had even gotten there.

“Brother emperor has excellent insight, as expected. There is nothing that can fool you,” King Qi said with a sigh. There was a confident smile on his face, as if another one of his plans had now come to fruition.

Zhao Han calmly looked at him and said, “You have fought against this emperor for so many years, but it seems that in the end, you still could not help but take a risk out of desperation.”

King Qi replied with an indifferent laugh, “Aren't brother emperor's words a bit hypocritical? Even if I didn't act here, I would have been dealt with by brother emperor sooner or later. Did you not force all of this?”

Zhao Han shook his head and said, “Our battle is just an internal struggle between brothers. But now that you've colluded with outsiders, you might very well destroy my Great Zhou Empire.”

King Qi's expression darkened. He retorted with a hint of anger, “Brother? Have you ever even treated me as a brother?! According to the law, the throne should have been mine to begin with, and yet you would rather pass it on to that idiotic son of yours than me. Did you really view me as your brother?!”

Zhao Han said calmly, “The throne has always been inherited by the eldest son since ancient times. You have only grown so frustrated because of your own delusions.”

King Qi laughed loudly and said, “You refuse to even admit to the agreement made between the Great Ancestor and the second emperor. Even calling you someone who recounts history but omits your ancestors wouldn't be going overboard.”

“You scoundrel!” Zhao Han exclaimed, his expression cold. “I am still the emperor. Is your disgraceful behavior respecting the ancestors, then?”

“With things as they are, what is the point in pretending to be so high-minded? There are no ignorant common people here, so what meaning is there left in you acting all high and mighty?” King Qi looked at him in disdain. He didn't want any of this act.

“Are you finally showing your true colors?” Zhao Han asked, sweeping his gaze across area. “There is no way you would be so daring as to do something like this if it were just you alone. Who are your other helpers? All of

you should come at me together. If I am not mistaken, there should be some shamans, right? The only one who could use puppetry arts on Wang Wuxie would be Great Elder Wu Wuyan, I believe.”

“It is this old one’s glory to be remembered by your majesty,” a voice said with a sinister cackle. The hunched-over Wu Wuyan walked over from another direction. Her walking stick tapped against the ground with a mysterious rhythm, as if it resonated with some dao of the world. Even Zhao Han had to give her a second look.

“I had not expected your cultivation to make another breakthrough in recent years. No wonder Wang Wuxie fell to your schemes,” Zhao Han said with a sneer.

“I have always respected Sect Master Wang’s demeanor and character, but unfortunately, we stood on opposing sides. Even irises and orchids in the way need to be removed,” Wu Wuyan said, giving Wang Wuxie’s corpse a look. She had something of a grieving expression as she continued, “It is a bit of a pity for someone so exceptional to die just like that.”

Several people’s expressions grew strange. Judging from her tone, could it be that she even had some other feelings for him...?

“Look at this cat weeping crocodile tears over a dead mouse,” Zhao Han said with a harrumph. “You shamans have always played by any means fair or foul, so there is nothing surprising there. However, there is another certain someone who acts like some kind and generous master; and yet, after doing this kind of thing, what kind of buddha are you still cultivating?!”

“Amitabha buddha!” Tranquility Temple’s Master Jian Huang replied as he slowly walked out from another direction. “Your majesty’s cultivation is amazing indeed. This old one thought that he had hidden himself quite well, but I had not expected to still be discovered.” Then, he said to the others nearby, “The rest should all come out now too. His majesty already noticed your presence a long time ago.”

Afterward, Feng Wuchang, the little monk Jie Se, and the other daoist sects’ trusted aides emerged one after another. King Qi, Wu Wuyan, and Master Jian Huang formed a three-pointed triangle around Zhao Han. Meanwhile, Feng Wuchang and the others faced the remaining Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards on Golden Peak.

Zhao Han's attention shifted to Feng Wuchang as he said, "This emperor was wondering how someone with Wang Wuxie's cultivation would end up suffering like this. So there was a traitor like you working from the inside." Even though he hadn't seen the entire process, he instantly understood everything the moment Feng Wuchang appeared.

Feng Wuchang grimaced inwardly. He hadn't wanted to come to Golden Peak while the superhumans were fighting it out. He would die from any random accident, but the others wouldn't let him leave! They had insisted on him coming. He had really gambled a bit too much this time. No one trusted anyone else, so they wouldn't give anyone the chance to stay out of the fight.

Fortunately, those individuals had promised to deal with Zhao Han. He only had to deal with the Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards, so he felt a bit of relief. Even though he was vastly inferior to the emperor, he was still one of Righteous Sun Sect's peak masters. Some Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards were still no big deal. Besides, Master Jian Huang had even brought his precious disciple. At the very least, as a senior figure, he couldn't fall behind a little monk, right?

He chuckled in embarrassment and said, "Apologies, your majesty. I didn't have much of a choice either."

The others secretly cursed him. This guy really was shameless in his acting! He was still acting all servile in front of the emperor, even now.

Zhao Han harrumphed. He had already gotten used to seeing these kinds of games being played during his career as a ruler. He naturally understood Feng Wuchang's intentions, but he didn't want to waste any more time with him. He said, "Wuxie and I have experienced a lot together, so I'll help him get some revenge first." He lunged at Feng Wuchang immediately after finishing his sentence.

Feng Wuchang's eyes narrowed. He instinctively wanted to run. With his master rank cultivation, he was capable of moving extremely quickly. However, he discovered that he couldn't move at all! It was as if he had been locked onto by a predatory beast!

Immediately after, a bright yellow hand arrived in front of him. It grabbed him, then gently closed.

Boom!

A scalp-numbing, muffled noise filled the air. Feng Wuchang's entire body was instantly crushed into a clump of bloody mush.

From start to finish, Zhao Han hadn't moved even half a step from his original location.

Those on King Qi's side all felt cold sweat run down their temples. After all, King Qi, Wu Wuyan, and Master Jian Huang had already surrounded Zhao Han and were about to attack him at a moment's notice. And yet, a powerful companion of theirs had been instantly destroyed during the time it took for sparks to fly off a flint. The three of them actually hadn't been able to move in time.

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Chapter 1720: Proof

Meanwhile, at the halfway point of the mountain, those present were panicking due to the activity going on above them. Even the emperor had personally gotten involved! It was easy to imagine just how terrible the situation on Golden Peak had become.

They all tried many different things to deal with the barrier, but how could the Righteous Sun Sect's mountain defense barrier be that easy to break through? As such, they gathered back at Guidance Palace to discuss what to do.

These important ministers could take up the whole day without achieving anything under normal circumstances, let alone now that something so major had happened. Certain members of King Qi's faction in particular had clearly received some instructions to be a hindrance, making it even more difficult for them to come to a conclusion.

Zu An didn't even feel like wasting time with them. Instead, he moved over to the window and looked at Golden Peak with a pensive expression.

Suddenly, the Central Secretariat Assistant Director Pei Lian asked loudly, "Zu An, didn't you bring people here to Violet Mountain to get rid of the potential dangers? Why was such a big problem overlooked?"

He was Chief Attendant Pei Zheng's second son, and he had taken the daughter of War Chariot General Liu Guang as his wife. That meant he was pretty much as diehard a fan of King Qi as could be.

The noisy palace quickly fell silent. The other officials all looked in his direction, their expressions somewhat unhappy.

Zu An was stunned. He replied, "Previously, there was nothing wrong at all during my inspection. Afterward, however, I was always at his majesty's side, which you all know about, and couldn't pay attention to what happened here anymore. That was probably when all of this happened."

Pei Lian sneered and retorted, "Who knows if you did that on purpose or not? You are the Fiend races' Regent. It's entirely possible that you colluded with some bastards to go against his majesty."

Many people nodded when they heard what he said. Whether it was King Qi's faction or the emperor's faction, they all felt his explanation was likely.

Xie Daoyun was completely stupefied. Fiend races' Regent?! Just how many days has it been? Did I somehow miss out on something here?

Pei Lian said to Murong Tong, "Sir Murong, you are the Supervisor of Attendants in charge of his majesty's safety. What do you think about this?"

The Supervisor of Attendants was one of the nine ministers, and he was indeed in charge of the emperor's safety. However, his actual authority had gradually been stripped away over the years, so his was nothing but a useless 'high' position. And yet today, the emperor's other personal guards had all followed him onto Golden Peak, so as the Supervisor of Attendants, he had surprisingly become the one most suited to deal with the situation.

Murong Tong frowned, but he was still biased in favor of Zu An. He said, "Sir Zu, today's matter really is significant. I will keep you imprisoned for now, and we will go through the entire sequence of events in our investigation after. If you turn out to have been wrongly accused, I will naturally release you. I will even offer you my sincere apologies then."

The others nodded. Murong Tong was already showing extreme benevolence here. With his age and status, as well as his promise to apologize, he was already showing a lot of sincerity.

Murong Qinghe had previously been quite troubled at first. When she heard that her grandfather was being quite partial, she sighed in relief. This was probably the most suitable plan.

The officials' attention all shifted to Zu An. However, he frowned and said, "Forgive me, but I can't agree to that."

For starters, he had grudges against many people present, and would be no different than meat on a chopping block if he agreed. If something really happened, it would be way too late for regrets then.

Furthermore, something incredibly important was happening on Golden Peak. He was more concerned with how to get involved in a way that tipped the final result in his favor. If he was imprisoned here, all those plans would go to shit!

Whether Zhao Han won and came back, or another power did, both outcomes wouldn't be all that great for him.

An uproar broke out when the officials heard his refusal. Many people who didn't like him voiced rebukes as if he were the criminal mastermind behind the whole event, calling for him to be executed on the spot.

Bi Ziang watched the scene unfold as a bystander, thinking, This Zu An's background is still too shallow in the end. He climbed so far up the ladder, but he's nothing more than a pavilion in the air. How can he compare to distinguished heirs such as us?

The brothers Qin Guangyuan and Qin Yongde asked loudly, "Brother Zu, are you worried that your safety will not be guaranteed? You do not need to worry about that. With our friendship, the Qin clan will definitely ensure your safety. Anyone who dares to act against you will become our Qin clan's enemy."

Zu An looked around the area. At the moment, the Qin clan's two leaders were both fighting on the front lines. These two brothers had always been quite reliable, and it was well-known that they would be the future successors. When they made such a promise, no one doubted whether they could represent the Qin clan in that regard.

Unfortunately, Zu An still refused the olive branch they offered, saying, "Thank you for your good intentions, Qin brothers, but I have something I need to do. I can't allow myself to be imprisoned right now."

Many officials immediately sneered and retorted, "What do you still have to do? Could it be to scheme against his majesty on Golden Peak?"

It wasn't just King Qi's faction who spoke up. Even many people from the emperor's faction voiced that suspicion. They had already begun to surround Zu An while speaking. If one person took the initiative, a fight would immediately break out. In such a situation, even the officials who were normally on good terms with Zu An couldn't really speak up for him.

Suddenly, Xie Daoyun stood in front of Zu An and stretched out her arms, blocking their way and saying, "I can speak up for big brother Zu's sake, proving that he definitely wasn't involved in the conspiracy against his majesty."

"Who are you?" many important ministers asked doubtfully. They were confused as to who this nobody was, for them to speak such words.

Xie Daoyun was both beautiful and sharp. She keenly picked up on their doubts and removed her mask, as well as her hair tie. Her long hair fell down, and her stunning features were revealed.

"Lady Xie?" many people exclaimed in recognition.

Xie Daoyun's father was a city lord. Even though he was a big shot in his region, he wasn't worth much attention in front of major court officials such as them. However, she had another identity; she was the disciple of the academy's Master Yan, whom no one could look down on. After all, many of the talismans and formations of the court and the great clans came from Master Yan himself.

"Miss Xie, why are you here?" Pei Zheng asked with a frown.

"My master gave me a mission to see whether there were killing formations or anything of the sort set up here, but I never expected that the Righteous Sun Sect's great defense formation would be used to block our path," Xie Daoyun said, her voice full of frustration because she had clearly failed her mission this time.

Just then, Bi Qi asked, "Miss Xie, why do you say that Zu An did not participate in today's events?" He could tell that she seemed to want to speak up for Zu An, so he gave her an opportunity to answer.

Xie Daoyun's face reddened. After some hesitation, she raised her head and said, "Because he was always with me while he was on Violet Mountain."

"He was with you?" many people repeated with a frown. Things would indeed become a bit troublesome if Xie Daoyun served as his alibi.

Another official said with a sneer, "It is not that we are suspecting you, Miss Xie, but rather that Violet Mountain is so big. There is no way the two of you were always together, so there is still a chance that he did some things behind your back."

Xie Daoyun took a deep breath, then said in a shaking voice, "That's impossible, because... because we were under the same roof at night." Her face became entirely red before she even finished her sentence.

Zu An also looked at her with shock. He had never expected her to sacrifice her reputation for his sake.

An uproar broke out all across Guidance Palace, as was only natural for those who loved drama. They all looked at Zu An and Xie Daoyun with strange expressions, because that news was just too shocking.

Bi Ziang even started to feel a bit jealous. After all, this Miss Xie, whether in terms of her figure or her background, was an excellent choice, and yet she had ended up being taken by this brat.

On top of that, when they thought about how the incredible beauty Chu Chuyan had also belonged to this man at one point in time, many people felt hatred born of envy.

The Qin clan's brothers were a bit unhappy too. This brat is clearly Chuyan's husband, and yet he's always playing around all day. How are Chuyan and the Qin clan supposed to even deal with this?

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Read Keyboard Immortal - Chapter 1721: Reunion

Chapter 1721: Reunion

Murong Qinghe blinked, her expression blank.

Big brother Zu really is amazing; he has so many beauties at his side! Also, they're each more beautiful than the next!

Alright, I can't let big brother Chu hang around him too much, or else he'll imitate this playboy behavior!

The Qin clan brothers were quite unhappy. Their brother-in-law was living with another woman! Even though he had already divorced their little sister, they still felt as if it were a slap to their faces somehow.

Mi Li sighed, remarking, "Kid, you really are a master at picking up women! This little lady is clearly a virgin, and yet she's willing to sacrifice her own reputation to save you. Just what did you feed her?"

"Can you quit it with the sarcastic remarks?" Zu An snapped, too annoyed to respond properly. He was both moved and worried for Xie Daoyun.

...

After the initial shock, those in Guidance Palace gradually snapped out of their daze.

Pei Zheng said, "Even if you were in the same room as him, there is no way you could have been together every waking second. He is the Fiend races' Regent and has a great deal of ability. You would never have known it even if he secretly did some things."

"Exactly! Miss Xie, please don't be deceived by this guy."

"Colluding with the Fiend races is a crime that can get your entire clan executed! Furthermore, this involves an assassination attempt on his majesty, so please reconsider, Miss Xie!"

The officials all began to speak, one after another. Xie Daoyun's face paled. She wasn't only responsible for herself; she had her parents and brother to worry about, as well as the entire Xie clan.

Zu An walked over and patted her shoulder, saying, "Miss Xie, there's no need for you to speak like this for my sake." He couldn't call her by her

nickname in front of everyone, so he deliberately spoke up to take the responsibility away from her.

Xie Daoyun shook her head. Despite usually being quiet and gentle, she insisted stubbornly, "Big brother Zu, I know you're being wrongly accused here, so of course I need to speak up for you!"

Mi Li had just been watching the whole scene with amusement, but now, she couldn't help but frown. Being fed such a public display of affection really didn't taste that good...

King Liang harrumphed and said, "Whether or not you were wronged, we can just slowly figure it out later. This matter today is extremely important, so we cannot let him move as he pleases. Restrain him first; otherwise, who knows what could happen."

Even though King Liang was actually looked down on a bit in terms of both ability and character, his status was pretty high among the gathered officials. Now that he had spoken up, the others all voiced their agreement.

Quite a few people looked around. Only then did they realize that King Qi had also disappeared at some point. The expressions of Bi Qi, Pei Zheng, and some others changed a bit. They could roughly guess what was happening. However, the matter was extremely important, so no one dared to say anything. They could only detain Zu An first for the time being.

With King Liang taking the lead, the others all rushed at Zu An. Pei Zheng had the most authority among those gathered, so he didn't personally interfere. However, his subordinates didn't hold back.

Those officials who could follow the emperor in his procession all had high ranks and decent cultivation. If they all surrounded someone, their victim would have a hard time even with three heads and six arms.

The moment Zu An was about to be captured, a horrifying roar erupted, causing all of Guidance Palace to tremble. If not for a special formation, it would likely have collapsed then and there.

As for the officials who had begun to charge, their faces turned deathly pale and they clutched their ears in pain. Those with weaker cultivations even began to bleed from their ears and noses.

“Is that the Fiend races’ Lion’s Roar Skill?” Pei Zheng and some others exclaimed, their expression changing. Even they felt awful after hearing the sound. Zu An’s cultivation was much higher than they imagined!

Another person cried, “You’re still saying you aren’t colluding with the Fiend races? You even learned a king race’s secret skill!”

Zu An had no other choice, however. So many people had attacked him, but he didn’t want to create any blood feuds. In the end, only the Lion’s Roar skill qualified as a suitable area of effect skill.

Those with lower cultivations collapsed, as expected. Guidance Palace quickly became much less active.

Even the bigwigs couldn’t just still still anymore. They were about to act when Xie Daoyun suddenly tossed out a talisman. Then, a formation flickered around Zu An’s feet. She quickly called out, “Big brother Zu, you should hurry and run!”

Zu An was stunned, asking, “What about you?”

“Don’t worry, I won’t be in danger because of my identity,” Xie Daoyun said. She was an important disciple of Master Yan, making her extremely special. Furthermore, Zu An’s crime was still unproven, so she had room to plead innocent too.

Zu An frowned. He grabbed her hand and jumped into the formation. Blue light flickered, and both of them quickly disappeared. At the same time, the formation also gradually scattered. The officials were all left with ugly expressions. They had let Zu An get away even with so many people present!

Pei Zheng and his subordinates quickly surrounded the place where the two had just been. He said coldly, “This place is locked down by the Righteous Sun Sect’s mountain defense formation, so this transport formation can’t have taken them that far. Everyone, hurry and look for them. You have to catch that wicked bastard!”

Many people rushed out to carry out his order. However, Meng Yi, Bi Qi, and some others exchanged a look. They didn’t chase after Zu An. At present, they were more worried about the situation on Golden Peak. The only thing that was worth being thankful for was that the emperor was the most powerful

man in the world. Even in the event of some sinister plot, he would likely be able to survive it just fine.

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Meanwhile, in a secluded area of the forest several hundred meters away from Guidance Palace, blue runes slowly materialized, followed by two figures. They were none other than Zu An and Xie Daoyun. Their first reaction was to look all around them. When they saw that no one was paying attention to the area, they sighed in relief.

Only then did they realize that their hands were tightly held together. Xie Daoyun pulled her hand back as if she had been zapped by electricity. She said with a red face, "Big brother Zu, you actually could have left me alone. They wouldn't have done anything to me..."

Zu An shook his head and replied, "You saved me, so how could I leave you and run away alone?"

Suddenly, someone remarked with a sneer, "Tsk tsk tsk, what a sappy pair of lovebirds we have here. Did I perhaps come at a bad time?"

Xie Daoyun jumped in fright. She quickly turned around and saw two beauties walking over. One had long hair that stretched all the way down her back, while the other one was cute and seductive. They were none other than Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei, who had just caused a huge disturbance on Golden Peak not too long ago. When she remembered their identities, especially that of the infamous demoness Yun Jianyue, Xie Daoyun's face paled.

Zu An exclaimed in happiness and surprise, "You two didn't leave?!"

Qiu Honglei sighed deeply and said, "We asked you for help earlier, and yet you never came back after all this time, so how could we leave? We were waiting for news from you, and yet it turns out you were flirting with some other woman."

Xie Daoyun said in annoyance, "Miss Qiu, for better or for worse, we're fellow townsfolk from Brightmoon City. Do you really have to pretend to not know me?"

Qiu Honglei suddenly put on an 'aha!' expression and replied, "Oh my, so it was Miss Xie! I'm so sorry. I must have been so worked up that I ended up saying some unpleasant things."

Xie Daoyun was speechless.

Mi Li mused, "Haha, interesting. Watching these women fight is pretty amusing. Brat, do you think a harem is so easily enjoyed?"

Zu An was stunned. He asked, "Master empress, can you offer me any good tips? What should I do in this kind of situation?"

"Maybe you should just ignore it," Mi Li replied, seemingly having a great time. "Oh, and another one is coming."

Zu An was startled. He looked in a certain direction and saw a white figure slowly floating over.

"Stone cold woman, you really are like a haunting spirit... Why are you always there wherever I go?" Yun Jianyue remarked in annoyance. Why was this woman always at Ah Zu's side?

Yan Xuehen gave her an indifferent look and said, "My disciple hasn't come out from the secret dungeon all this time. I only came here out of worry for her. What does that have to do with you?"

Yun Jianyue put an arm around Qiu Honglei proudly and said, "Sorry, my good disciple is right here."

Yan Xuehen was stunned. She snapped, "Witch, I'm not in the mood to argue with you today."

"But I'm all ready to go!" Yun Jianyue replied.

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Mi Li couldn't help but laugh when she saw the two bicker. She said, "The sixth sense of a woman really is just too accurate. Even though they don't know about each other's relationship with you, they subconsciously dislike each other." She sighed and added, "I've really enjoyed myself this time! I was about to go crazy from sleeping all the time. It seems I might have something fun to watch every day in the future."

Zu An had a weird expression. This woman knew everything about him, as expected! She had clearly been sleeping, and yet she even knew about all of those things.

He coughed lightly and said, “We don’t have time to fight right now. I want to take a look around Golden Peak. Do either of you have a way for us to get there?”

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Chapter 1722: Death

Yan Xuehen’s beautiful brows furrowed slightly. She said, “The Righteous Sun Sect has always been number one among the daoist sects, and their mountain defense formation is unquestionably formidable. The only way I could find a way to break through would be if we could find a weak point. But the Righteous Sun Sun Sect’s mountain defense formation has never been activated before, and no one has seen it either. Finding some weaknesses might be...”

She had spent the whole time nearby, waiting for Chu Chuyan and the others to come out. Initially, upon hearing that the emperor was coming, she hadn’t really wished to interact with him, so she had decided to just stay far away. However, when she sensed the tremendous explosion and the battle that had taken place, she naturally decided to head over to see what was going on.

Yun Jianyue harrumphed. “Why even bother? If we attack it together, I refuse to believe that we can’t blast open a path.”

Yan Xuehen rolled her eyes and muttered, “An impulsive and reckless woman with too much muscle and not enough brain.”

“What did you say?!” Yun Jianyue exclaimed, erupting into a rage.

Zu An felt a huge headache. These two really just naturally didn’t get along... They always started fighting as soon as they met.

Mi Li remarked with amusement, “These two can be considered powerful and famous individuals in the world of warriors, and yet they’re like two little girls when they’re jealous.”

Zu An could only say, "It's not that they're jealous, but rather that their natural dispositions are just a bad match."

"Hm... I want to see what kind of reaction they'll have if they find out what kind of relationship the other has with you. Would they start fighting with each other even in bed?" Mi Li wondered with a smile.

"A master should act the part, right? Isn't your behavior a bit too over the top?" Zu An remarked in annoyance.

"I'm worrying for your sake here! By the way, which of these girls do you actually like?" Mi Li asked with great interest.

Zu An was stunned. After a while, he replied, "I refuse to answer that question."

"Heh, men," Mi Li retorted with a sneer. "Isn't it just that you want them all? But for someone like you who's always sneaking around, you might just lose them all if you're exposed."

Zu An was dumbstruck. He asked, "Why is this what you're concerned about? Isn't Zhao Han still fighting up there?"

"What does his fight have to do with me?" Mi Li harrumphed. "It's these women of yours who all have to pour me tea respectfully in the future. Of course I have to keep my eyes on them."

Zu An asked in surprise, "They'll serve you tea?"

"I'm your master, so isn't that only natural?" Mi Li replied, before suddenly realizing what he was thinking. She couldn't help but snap in annoyance, "Damn kid, what kind of nonsense are you thinking right now?!"

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +333 +333 +333...

Xie Daoyun suddenly said weakly, "I might actually have a way."

"Huh?"

The others all looked at her with strange expressions.

After all, even these grandmasters couldn't do anything. Furthermore, Yan Xuehen was a runemaster herself. And yet, this junior actually had a solution?

Now that so many eyes were on her, Xie Daoyun was a bit embarrassed. She said, "Actually, the reason I came to investigate Violet Mountain was to see if there are any killing formations. Because I had to examine many places, I set up some transport formations to make it easier for me to move around. I just happened to leave one by Golden Peak too. I was going to secretly destroy it before, but I didn't expect something like this to happen today."

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but voice her puzzlement. "But now that the mountain defense formation is activated, it should restrict all transport formations. Your transport formation should also have become useless, right?"

Yan Xuehen said seriously, "I think I have an idea of what Miss Xie is saying. This mountain defense formation should not have any weaknesses, or at the very least, it should be impenetrable in the short term. But with this formation she has created, we will have an opening to exploit. If we modify it a bit, we should have a way of getting through." She was also knowledgeable about formations, so she quickly followed Xie Daoyun's line of reasoning.

Xie Daoyun hurriedly nodded. Her expression suggested she had found someone who truly understood her.

Yun Jianyue's face heated up, but she quickly changed the topic. "Then let's get moving already. What are we wasting time here for?"

Yan Xuehen paid her no mind. After asking Xie Daoyun a few questions about where she had set up the transport formations, she then discussed how they would get through the mountain defense formation.

...

Meanwhile, on Golden Peak, the atmosphere was very tense because Zhao Han had suddenly killed Feng Wuchang.

When he saw that his side's morale was dropping, Zhao Jing harrumphed and no longer held himself back. A tremendous aura erupted. Divine splendor surged behind him and rushed into the heavens.

The civil and military officials at Guidance Palace, halfway up the mountain, all trembled. There was actually another aura at the earth immortal rank!

The emperor had been publicly acknowledged as an earth immortal over the years, so everyone knew about his aura. However, this new aura was entirely different from the one they were familiar with. It was actually a newly ascended earth immortal!

At first, Bi Qi and the others hadn't been all that worried about the emperor's safety. But now, they immediately lost confidence.

On Golden Peak, Zhao Han looked at Zhao Jing and said, "You've ascended to earth immortal rank, as expected. You have hidden it quite well these years."

Zhao Jing said indifferently, "In terms of talent, I am no worse than you. You relied on your advantage of age to seize the throne, and afterward, you had the entire empire's resources to aid your cultivation. That was how you became the first one to break through into the earth immortal rank. With enough resources and time, catching up to you was not too difficult."

"Catch up to me?" Zhao Han repeated, laughing mockingly. He looked amused, as if he didn't really feel like arguing.

Zhao Jing was annoyed, but his brother's many years of accumulated prestige still remained. He still didn't dare to act rashly. However, because his earth immortal rank power spread out and countered some of Zhao Han's pressure, the others had clearly become more confident too.

A splendid and magnificent palace suddenly appeared in midair. It targeted Zhuxie Chixin and Eunuch Wen, who were fighting intensely.

"Immortal Sword?" Zhao Han muttered with a frown. Just then, however, Zhao Jing took a step toward him, as if to stop him from rescuing them.

A figure with an aloof and transcendent bearing suddenly appeared out of thin air. A longsword that resembled a lunar palace thrust out.

Eunuch Wen had been using all of his power to face Xuan Bajing's attacks. How could he have anticipated that someone else would suddenly appear behind him? By the time he reacted to what was happening, it was already too late. He could only hurriedly use the Pure Yang Art of Youth to shield his back. He thought to himself that as long as he evaded the attack, the emperor would be able to bail him out.

However, the immortal sword calmly thrust forward, and the faint barrier behind Eunuch Wen was instantly sliced apart. Then, the longsword sliced right through with irresistible force, sending sword ki straight into his heart.

Eunuch Wen roared. The Pure Yang Art of Youth he had cultivated his entire life fiercely exploded. He only had a single thought in his mind, which was to at least drag one opponent down with him even if he had to die to do it.

Unfortunately, the one behind him backed off immediately after approaching and wasn't injured at all. He appeared next to Zhuxie Chixin a second later.

Zhuxie Chixin was shocked. Fortunately, Eunuch Wen had been there to at least buy him a bit of reaction time. The death energy around him surged ferociously. It was so dense that even the Imperial Guards that were farther away paled, then fell; their life force had been seized by the death energy.

When it approached his body, the spotlessly white longsword instantly turned ash gray, as if it were losing its spiritual nature. Even Li Changsheng groaned, clearly not having expected Zhuxie Chixin to possess such concentrated death energy.

Even so, he was a grandmaster who was famous for many years. He suddenly erupted with dazzling splendor. In a moment of imminent peril, he recalled his sword and blocked the reaper's scythe.

Zhuxie Chixin was about to launch another attack when his expression changed. When he looked down toward his chest, he saw a golden armband there. It was rapidly spinning and vibrating after blasting straight through from behind him!

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Chapter 1723: Weaken

Zhuxie Chixin's opponent was Guan Chouhai, a grandmaster who had already been famous for many years. Meanwhile, he had just advanced to the grandmaster rank himself. Even though he was able to go toe to toe with Guan Chouhai because of the death energy around him, as time dragged on, he would still end up at a disadvantage.

Just now, he had dealt with Li Changsheng for the time being, and thought he would have enough time to deal with Guan Chouhai after. However, he had actually underestimated the power of a daoist sect master.

Guan Chouhai didn't let go of the fleeting opportunity that appeared and used the Twin Vajra Armbands to deliver a lethal strike.

A wave of terrifying death energy suddenly erupted. Even cultivators as powerful as Li Changsheng and Guan Chouhai had to quickly dodge backward to evade. All of the plants and trees within a range of over a hundred meters instantly withered away. Meanwhile, Zhuxie Chixin was at the center of the destruction, on his knees. He inhaled more than he exhaled; it was obvious that he was going to die.

The others' expressions changed. Li Changsheng's expression was grave as he remarked, "For this much death energy to have gathered around you... Just how many people have died at your hands?"

Even though Zhuxie Chixin was the Chief Commander of the Embroidered Envoy and had killed many officials, there was still no way he could have produced so much death energy that way. It wouldn't be enough even if he slaughtered every official in the court.

Zhuxie Chixin naturally knew what was happening, but he didn't have the strength to reply. Instead, he turned to the distant emperor with a look of confusion.

"Amitabha buddha. Those whose entire existence is enveloped in murder will receive their due punishment," Master Jian Huang said, bringing his hands together. As a Buddhist sect member, he usually preached benevolence and even spoke some words of pity for great evildoers. But when he sensed the death energy around Zhuxie Chixin, surprisingly, he expressed that the man deserved death.

King Qi stared at Zhao Han, his gaze also carrying confusion. He said, "You clearly had the chance to save them. Why did you just watch them fall with folded arms?"

Zhao Han said indifferently, "With Wang Wuxie's cultivation, he still ended up in that state. That means he was betrayed by his own people, and it had to be those he trusted the most, no less. With that prior mistake to learn from, how

could I make the same error? This is the only way I can tell who is actually loyal and who is a traitor.”

The others now understood that Zhao Han had been worried that Zhuxie Chixin or Eunuch Wen would betray him, which was why he hadn’t moved.

When he heard that reply, Zhuxie Chixin’s expression was full of shock and anger; he seemed to be thinking ‘I should have known’. Then, he could no longer hold on, and his head lolled to one side.

Wu Wuyan couldn't help but say with a sigh, “You are cold and ruthless after all. You had no reaction even after seeing those most devoted and loyal to you die. I have always heard that there are three types of people: Men, women, and the emperor. Today, I finally understand what that means.”

King Qi said, “Great Elder is mistaken. It is only Zhao Han who is especially merciless. If I were the emperor, I definitely would not be so callous.” He still needed all of their cooperation, so he didn’t want anyone to carry ill feelings.

Meanwhile, the Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards were facing off intensely against the daoists led by Elder Xuan Dou and the little monk Jie Se far away. They clearly understood that this place was a battlefield far above their level, and that just the traces of a blast wave would erase them from existence. As such, they didn’t pay too much attention to what was happening. Otherwise, morale would only plummet.

Zhao Han said with a sneer, “You really know how to talk. If you were in my position, you would naturally do the same thing. The position of emperor is a lonely existence.”

“I will prove that I am different from you,” King Qi replied coldly. Then, he looked at Wu Wuyan and said, “Great Elder, if you would.”

Wu Wuyan nodded. She formed a hand seal, then chanted some cryptic words. A translucent straw doll appeared in front of her.

Zhao Han sneered. “You’re actually going to use curse arts against this emperor? Wu Wuyan, have you gone mad?”

Wu Wuyan didn’t reply. Her hand produced seven needles of light, and she stabbed them straight into that straw doll. A visible ripple spread out.

Zhao Han had just been expecting to watch her make a fool of herself, but his expression suddenly changed. At the same time, his body trembled. Several rings of black light appeared around him, and black runes visibly stabbed into his body. His calm demeanor finally broke as he exclaimed, "Why is this effective against me?"

Wu Wuyan had a proud expression as she said, "As long as I know your astrological information and have things such as your skin and hair, my curse arts will be effective. This is how our skills work."

Zhao Han asked gravely, "How did you obtain these things from me?"

With Zhao Jing present, his astrological information was easy enough to share. However, as for things like skin and hair, he was always careful about them. There was no chance King Qi could get his hands on one of those.

"Doesn't your majesty always have precautions around such things? Then why are you asking me?" Wu Wuyan replied with a smile.

Zhao Han scowled as he looked at the dying Eunuch Wen. That dog of a servant betrayed this emperor after all!

It was always Eunuch Wen who took care of his basic needs. If anyone could have a chance of obtaining such things, no one else was more suspicious. He was even starting to regret feeling somewhat bad over his choice to not save Eunuch Wen. Otherwise, perhaps he would have been tricked right there and then.

King Qi, Master Jian Huang, Li Changsheng, and the others all looked at Wu Wuyan with shock. They hadn't held much faith that such a plan would succeed, and yet the effects were far greater than they expected.

Were the shamans' curse arts really formidable to such a degree? Previously, they had been able to take down Wang Wuxie by working together, so even though they had been a bit surprised, it wasn't to this extent. But now, the unmatched emperor was actually suffering from these curse arts? They couldn't help but feel nervous themselves. After all, how would they defend themselves if Wu Wuyan used such skills against them?

Wang Wuxie had instantly been enslaved because of a similar skill. The skill Wu Wuyan had just used was clearly at an even higher level. Then, what

would happen to the emperor? Would he be killed right there and then, or would he be turned into a slave just like Wang Wuxie?

When he saw the others looking at him, Zhao Han sneered and said, "Do you really think such sorcery can work against this emperor?" His entire body erupted with golden light, and the black rings around him were immediately shattered.

Wu Wuyan's previously proud expression changed tremendously. She immediately vomited a mouthful of blood, and she looked a bit dispirited and listless. She was as pale as a corpse, and she couldn't even stand up straight anymore. Her body fell weakly to the ground.

King Qi and the others were horrified. They hadn't even seen Zhao Han do anything, and yet the powerful Shaman Great Elder had lost her fighting strength just like that?

Wu Wuyan quickly said, "My secret technique didn't work as intended, but he didn't get through this completely unscathed either. He's had his cultivation weakened by at least twenty percent and might not be able to recover for a short time. The rest will be up to you."

Zhao Jing was overjoyed to hear the news. He had actually been a bit doubtful when he saw Zhao Han being affected by the curse arts. His invincible brother emperor couldn't possibly be done in so easily! On the contrary, he had even wondered whether Zhao Han was playing tricks on them.

However, this situation was much more reasonable. Even though Wu Wuyan had lost her fighting strength, Zhao Han had also lost twenty percent of his fighting prowess. That was already an incredible achievement. Previously, he hadn't had much confidence in facing the unrivaled Zhao Han. But now, he had much more confidence than ever before.

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Chapter 1724: Primordial Spirit Appearance

Zhao Han's expression was ice-cold. When he raised his hand, streaks of black runes were faintly visible on it. He said, "These shamans' strange skills

do have something to them after all. It seems I underestimated you. However, if you really believe that this is enough to deal with this emperor, you are far too naive.” As soon as he spoke, two streaks of golden light suddenly fired from his eyes. They were so fast that the others couldn't even react at all.

Wu Wuyan was engulfed by the golden light and shrieked in pain. Her body began to burn at a visible rate. Her flesh and blood were almost instantly burned up, leaving behind only a skeleton. Then, in a gust of wind, her corpse turned to ashes and blew away without a trace.

The conspirators on Golden Peak shivered. In contrast, the Right Guard General Guo Zhi's Imperial Guards and the remaining Embroidered Envoys got a morale boost. Earlier, Eunuch Wen and Zhuxie Chixin's deaths had made them lose all confidence. It was to the extent that they had even begun to doubt their invincible emperor for the first time. But in that instant, they all knew that his majesty was still his majesty. No one could rival his might. As long as they followed him, they would inevitably achieve the ultimate victory.

Elder Xuan Dou and the other daoist experts immediately felt a lot more pressure. Even though their individual strength exceeded that of the Imperial Guards and Embroidered Envoys, their opponents were good at coordinated attacks using ingenious formations, resulting in the two sides being evenly matched. Now that the other side's morale had increased, their own side was at a disadvantage.

“Amitabha buddha!” Master Jian Huang exclaimed in shock and anger. He created a giant 卐 symbol and sent it at Zhao Han. In truth, he had begun preparing his move when Zhao Han attacked Wu Wuyan, but he was still a bit too slow. That was why it seemed as if he had started reacting afterward.

The 卐 symbol grew larger and larger, eventually weighing down on Zhao Han like a mountain. Even the officials at Guidance Palace stopped and looked at Golden Peak. Even though they were blocked by the mountain defense formation and couldn't see what was happening up there, they could sense a terrifying pressure. It was as if all of Violet Mountain would be crushed beneath it.

Zhao Han snorted. Suddenly, a golden figure flew out from behind his head. It looked exactly like him, except it was much larger. It rapidly grew in size, almost instantly becoming as large as the 卐 symbol. With a mere wave of its hand, the terrifying symbol was smashed apart.

“He separated his primordial spirit from his body!” Master Jian Huang cried as he coughed out blood, dyeing his white beard red.

Just then, the giant golden figure sent a palm pressing down that seemed to cover everything. Master Jian Huang could no longer see anything else; there was only that giant palm left. It was as if everything in the world had disappeared. As the leader of a Buddhist sect, he naturally had exceptional cultivation and skills. But in that moment, he was shocked to discover that he couldn't retaliate in the slightest! He could only watch as the golden palm crashed down on him.

He realized something. A battle at the primordial spirit level could completely break through the various domains and principles of the world, unless he also cultivated a primordial spirit. Otherwise, he wouldn't even have the qualifications to resist. He felt incredibly sullen. He had several trump cards and had thought he was only a hair behind the emperor in terms of strength. However, that hair was actually as wide as a heavenly moat. He couldn't use any of his trump cards and was facing death.

Just then, King Qi shouted. Then, a golden figure also flew out from the top of his head. A magnified version of King Qi brandished his fist at Zhao Han. Zhao Han's primordial spirit frowned; he could only turn around and block.

A terrifying ripple spread outward. Even the nearby Pure Yang Palace was submerged within its power and was directly blown to ashes.

This Pure Yang Palace was the most sacred place of the Righteous Sun Sect, a symbol of the sect. The most powerful of defense formations had definitely been set up there. Furthermore, it was also the place where Wang Wuxie had usually cultivated in seclusion. This was where he had absorbed the essence of the sun and moon and bathed in the benefits of violet ki. As such, the daoists had always considered it unlikely to ever be destroyed. And yet, before the blast waves of two earth immortal experts, it couldn't even hold on for a moment.

Li Changsheng and the other grandmasters' expressions changed. They all took out their magical weapons to protect themselves. However, they were too close and didn't have much confidence in stopping the power of a battle between earth immortals.

Just then, the long, drawn-out sound of a bell filled the air. Then, a giant bronze bell descended from above, covering all those on Golden Peak. When

the terrifying energy made contact with the giant bell, it vibrated intensely and rang in tremendous waves.

Violet Mountain began to quake and rumble. Countless birds in the forest flew away in alarm. The officials stuck halfway up the mountain paled in fright. Those with higher cultivation ranks only felt their stomachs churn, while those with lower cultivations vomited blood and fainted on the spot. Guidance Palace also began making strange noises, with tiles and beams falling. No one dared to remain inside.

...

Meanwhile, Zu An and the women were researching how to pass through the mountain defense formation. When they saw what was happening, their expressions all changed.

Xie Daoyun had the lowest cultivation among them. Her face turned pale and her body rocked back and forth, and she seemed about to fall. However, Zu An quickly held her hand and infused a large amount of ki. Only that way could he protect her from any injuries.

A while later, the ringing that could make one's blood vessels directly explode finally eased up a bit. Zu An's expression was incredibly serious as he wondered, "What kind of a bell is that? Why is it so formidable?"

However, who could have thought that before he could even receive an answer, he felt a wave of faint killing intent? Zu An instinctively looked up and discovered that the other women were all glaring at him holding Xie Daoyun's hand.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +111 +111 +111...

You have successfully trolled Yun Jianyue for +111 +111 +111...

You have successfully trolled Qiu Honglei for +111 +111 +111...

Xie Daoyun suddenly realized something and quickly pulled her hand back. Her pretty face was a bright pink. However, it only left Zu An in an even more awkward position.

Mi Li almost burst into laughter. She exclaimed, "This is great, this is great! How can the happy fate of a man with several partners be so easily enjoyed?"

Fortunately, Yan Xuehen spoke up to ease his awkwardness, saying, "That is most likely Tranquility Palace's deity-grade weapon, the Tranquility Bell. It seems this scheme against the emperor runs quite deep, to the point that they will have to suffer terrifying consequences after being exposed. The fact that they brought out the Tranquility Bell means they already have no choice left."

Yun Jianyue looked in the direction of Golden Palace and said, "It felt as if there were two earth immortal rank individuals fighting. That battle should already be nearing its climax."

Qiu Honglei said weakly, "I'm a bit worried about whether this is a suitable time to go there... We might just end up getting in trouble..."

No one made fun of her, because what she said was indeed the truth.

Yun Jianyue asked seriously, "Stone cold woman, how much longer will it take for you to crack that formation?"

"It is unlikely that this great mountain defense formation can be completely undone in a short amount of time. However, if it is just to make a small door for us to pass through, then around an incense stick's amount of time should be enough," Yan Xuehen replied. She couldn't help but give Xie Daoyun a look. This girl really was a formation genius. Without her help, such a thing likely wouldn't have been so easy.

Zu An said, "Let's do that first then. We'll see if there's a suitable opportunity to cross over afterward."

The women nodded, agreeing with his plan. After all, if there was a good opportunity up there and they missed out on it because they didn't do anything, perhaps such a thing would never appear again.

On Golden Peak, a small and exquisite bell in Master Jian Huang's hand spun frantically. The massive bell in the air was none other than its projection. With the protection of the bell, all those present on Golden Peak at least managed to keep their lives. Even the Imperial Guards and Embroidered Envoys were included. That couldn't be helped, because the daoists were tangled up with them and wouldn't separate for some time, so he had to save them all.

King Qi staggered a bit. He was clearly not Zhao Han's match.

When Master Jian Huang saw that, he chanted several Buddhist sutras. Then, a giant buddha suddenly appeared behind him, rushing into the clouds to fight against Zhao Han.

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Chapter 1725: Besiege

Li Changsheng and the others were extremely shocked. They hadn't expected Master Jian Huang to keep this secret so well.

Was he actually also an earth immortal?

They quickly gave up on that thought, because they didn't sense the pressure unique to an earth immortal. They were all sect masters, so they quickly understood the natural laws behind the skill. This was probably a secret method of Master Jian Huang's sect, or perhaps he was borrowing the power of a divine weapon that allowed him to temporarily produce a buddha projection similar to a primordial spirit. It could temporarily fight at the level of an earth immortal.

However, when they saw Master Jian Huang's deathly pale expression, they realized that the skill definitely came with serious consequences. Furthermore, it only meant he had the right to join the fight; the projection's real power still wasn't comparable to that of a true earth immortal.

Sure enough, the buddha projection was powerful compared to them, but when it clashed with Zhao Han's primordial spirit, it staggered just from a single exchange. It trembled all over and almost broke down on the spot.

Fortunately, King Qi rushed in promptly as the main force to stop Zhao Han. Then, he was barely able to stabilize the situation a bit with the help of the buddha projection. The two sides turned out to be evenly matched above the clouds. It was hard to say which side would win.

Below, Li Changsheng and the others were startled. They all looked toward Zhao Han's flesh body at the center. Even though they weren't earth immortals, they were still daoist sect masters with a lot of powerful skills and resources. They knew that the body was extremely weak once the primordial spirit left. If the flesh body was destroyed, as long as one wasn't a true

immortal, the primordial spirit would also dissipate no matter how powerful it was.

Of course, normally, an earth immortal wouldn't fear such a thing. After all, once the primordial spirit appeared, it would be unstoppable. Their enemies wouldn't even have a chance to approach their body.

However, things were different now. Zhao Han's primordial spirit was fighting in the clouds above and was held up by both King Qi and Master Jian Huang. The Imperial Guards and Embroidered Envoys were preoccupied. Zhuxie Chixin and Eunuch Wen had both died too, so no one was protecting his body.

When he realized that, Li Changsheng couldn't hold himself back anymore. He turned into a streak of light and rushed straight at Zhao Han's body. The Immortal Sword in his hands produced countless sword shadows, almost instantly arriving next to Zhao Han. The body of an earth immortal was sturdy, but he had confidence that without the primordial spirit, no matter how sturdy it was, it wouldn't be able to stop his Immortal Sword.

When his sword was about to pierce through the center of Zhao Han's forehead, however, Zhao Han's closed eyes suddenly opened. He stared at Li Changsheng with a sharp gaze.

Li Changsheng shivered. He didn't have time to think about why Zhao Han still had consciousness even though his primordial spirit was fighting above. His first reaction was to quickly evade while using his most powerful skill. Defensive formations appeared one after another before him.

However, it was still too late. Zhao Han raised his fingers and accurately stopped him, clamping down on the real sword's body. Then, his other hand pressed forward gently. The defense formations were like tofu as they broke down layer by layer. In the end, his finger struck Li Changsheng's chest.

Li Changsheng immediately felt as if he had been struck by lightning. His body flew out into the distance in an arc, before crashing to the ground a dozen or so meters away.

Xuan Bajing and Guan Chouhai, who had had a similar idea, immediately stopped moving. Then, they quickly pulled back, cold sweat running down their backs. If they had been the ones at the forefront, they would have ended up just like Li Changsheng. When they thought of the emperor's power, the

two grandmasters, who were normally arrogant and self-important, felt a wave of despair. They couldn't help but continue to withdraw. They even had thoughts of retreating and giving up. After all, while Zhao Han was being held off by King Qi and Master Jian Huang, they could run away first. Then, at least they'd be able to keep their lives.

Just then, Li Changsheng supported himself with both hands and propped up his upper body while trembling. There was a strand of blood at the corner of his lips. He was deathly pale, but he didn't have the luxury of worrying about that. He roared with all of his might, "His body is only being controlled by a yin soul right now, it doesn't have his original strength! Don't be scared, everyone!"

The master rank was divided into five stages: The hero, essence, core, power, and air mortal forms. Above that was the wisdom form; upon attaining that level, one would become a grandmaster. The next cultivation realm after that was the ascension form. At that stage, one would produce a yin soul. This yin soul was still rather weak and can only leave the body for a short while. Furthermore, it feared the sun.

Once one cultivated the first of the three immortal souls, the life soul, the yin soul would become powerful and no longer fear the sun. It could attach itself to an object, making it so that one could use a flying sword to behead someone a thousand miles away. However, the yin soul didn't have a real form, nor could it interact with the physical world. It needed to borrow another person or object to interact with the world.

Eventually, once one cultivated the earth soul, one would produce a yang soul that was entirely different from a yin soul. The yang soul had a physical form, and it was not much different from a real person.

Above that came the cultivation of the heaven soul. Higher even than that was the primordial spirit. Just now, Zhao Han had revealed none other his primordial spirit.

Meanwhile, these grandmasters were all top-tier figures with their own pride in the world of warriors. They naturally all cultivated a yin soul. If Zhao Han only had a yin soul in his body, they wouldn't fear it at all.

Guan Chouhai and Xuan Bajing were stunned when they heard that. If it was just the yin soul, even though the emperor could rely on his earth immortal

body and inner ki, making him much stronger than normal yin soul grandmasters, it wasn't to the point that it was impossible to win.

However, they didn't easily trust those words. They were worried that Li Changsheng was only saying so because he was scared that he wouldn't be able to get away after being seriously injured, and couldn't bear to see them run away. He could only be saying such a thing to deceive them into vainly throwing their lives away.

When Li Changsheng saw their gazes wander around, he immediately guessed what they were thinking. He yelled, "Come on! Think with your damn heads! If he had been at his full strength, how could I still be alive after taking a hit from him?"

Guan Chouhai and Xuan Bajing exchanged a look. They both agreed with that reasoning. After all, at this point, there was no way Zhao Han would hold back.

But Xuan Bajing still had his misgivings. He said, "But... He still has a yang soul."

The symbol of an earth immortal was the cultivation of a yang soul. Furthermore, what had leaped into the skies earlier was clearly an even more powerful primordial spirit. If there was still a yang soul inside Zhao Han that hadn't left, they would really just be throwing their lives away for nothing.

Li Changsheng frowned and said, "For some reason, just now, I couldn't feel the existence of his yang soul. It's probably because King Qi and Master Jian Huang are keeping it preoccupied, so it can't tend to two duties."

If Zu An were present, he would have immediately realized that in Westhound Tomb, he had killed that very yang soul. These people didn't know the whole story and could only suspect that King Qi and the others were holding it up. After all, King Qi was also an earth immortal. Now that he was fighting at full strength, Zhao Han couldn't even keep a yang soul inside his flesh body. Furthermore, together with that buddha projection Master Jian Huang had created, Zhao Han's attention had to all be focused there.

Li Changsheng continued, "I was in too much of a hurry and didn't understand those things yet. I didn't have enough confidence. If I had clashed against him directly, I wouldn't have lost so quickly. You all still have a chance!"

When he saw that they were still hesitating, he continued furiously, "What kind of situation are we already in?! And yet all of you are still acting afraid of the slightest thing? If we lose, you'll all die miserably, so why not just go all out?!"

Guan Chouhai and Xuan Bajing were both outstanding individuals from their generation. After their initial alarm, they recovered their reason. They knew that there was a chance to escape, but that meant they would end up constantly fleeing from the court like rats. Whether it was the Heavenly Sorrow Sect or Kunlun Void Sect, they would definitely be finished for sure. Both grandmasters would end up being condemned by their sects for all of history.

This was their only chance to defeat Zhao Han!

As such, they exchanged a look, and both of them attacked Zhao Han. Guan Chouhai released countless armbands from his hands, aiming straight at Zhao Han's head. Xuan Bajing sent out his eight swords to strike at Zhao Han's various vitals.

Zhao Han's expression grew cold. He produced two figures to face both attacks.

Guan Chouhai and Xuan Bajing's eyes suddenly narrowed, because they discovered that the two figures were identical clones of themselves! What was even more shocking was that these figures actually carried similar weapons. One had a set of vajra armbands, while the other had eight swords flying around it.

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Chapter 1726: I'm So Stupid

When the daoists rushed at Zhao Han, the Right Guard General Guo Zhi roared and tried to bring his Imperial Guard subordinates with him to provide help. He naturally knew that the body would be extremely weak once the primordial spirit left. It had to remain in an absolutely safe place.

But how could the daoists let him do as he wished? Elder Xuan Dou and little monk Jie Se's group did everything they could to stop their retaliation, giving them no way of providing Zhao Han with aid.

At the same time, both sides watched the situation around Zhao Han's body carefully. Just then, they noticed that two more people had suddenly appeared there. One was a handsome middle-aged man with an eye-catching beard and a voluminous robe. He had a charming smirk that gave off something of a slick and sleazy air. The other one had a completely gloomy expression, and lightning flickered all around him. Behind him was a sword case shaped a bit like a tortoiseshell. Eight swords flew all around him.

Guan Chouhai was shocked. He had been trying to think of ways to deal with Zhao Han, and had never thought that such a situation would appear. This person looked exactly like him, with the same appearance and even the same temperament. Even the decorations on his clothes and his weapons were the same. Forget about other people, not even he himself or his women would be able to tell the difference!

Also, where did Zhao Han go? Could all of this just be an illusion?

Suddenly, the 'Guan Chouhai' on the other side brandished his hands, sending countless vajra armbands at him. They clashed straight against his own Twin Vajra Armbands.

Clang, clang, clang!

A concentrated burst of loud and clear noises rang out as the armbands filled the air.

Guan Chouhai felt sullen as he realized that the other side wasn't an illusion, but rather a tangible presence. But he just couldn't figure out how that could be! The Twin Vajra Armbands were Heavenly Sorrow Sect's treasure, which was passed down from generation to generation. Why did the clone have an exact copy of it? Could it be that the Twin Vajra Armbands weren't actually a pair, but rather four copies? If he could seize those two as well, wouldn't his own strength skyrocket?

However, before he could think any more about that, the 'Guan Chouhai' on the other side spun his entire body rapidly. Then, he rushed straight through the midst of the armbands, arriving in front of the real Guan Chouhai near-instantly.

"Spiral of the Venom Dragon?" Guan Chouhai exclaimed, immediately recognizing his unique secret art. However, the clone's attack had already

arrived, hands spinning like a drill bit. He didn't have time to think and could only face it head-on.

Since he had created the move, he naturally understood its weaknesses. He quickly cut between the clone's hands and pried them apart. At the same time, he pulled back and stomped against the ground, channeling the power of the earth to use his Constellation Reversal. Not only did he send all of his opponent's power right back, it also carried his own strength. If even Xuan Bajing faced this skill, he would most likely be seriously injured.

But to his surprise, the clone flipped his body and stomped the ground, causing his body to tremble all over as the tremendous force was then transmitted back through his hands!

"Constellation Reversal?!" Guan Chouhai exclaimed in horror. This was a secret skill that was kept within Heavenly Sorrow Sect. Why did the clone know it too?! He used the Constellation Reversal skill again on instinct, sending the power back again.

Boom!

With a powerful explosion, both of them were sent flying by the tremendous force. Blood filled Guan Chouhai's throat and trickled out from his mouth. Using that much power in such a hurry was something not even he could endure. The only saving grace was that a bit of blood came out of his opponent's mouth as well. The clone's injuries weren't light either.

Meanwhile, Xuan Bajing was similarly dumbstruck. Guan Chouhai had wondered whether there was another pair of Twin Vajra Armbands, but apart from the few swords that Kunlun Void's ancestors had passed down to Xuan Bajing, most of the eight swords were things he had spent much time and effort to collect over the years. How could the other side have eight identical swords? This definitely had to be an illusion!

However, a flying sword quickly cut through his sleeves and sent a streak of blood flying through the air.

Xuan Bajing was stunned. Even though he had deduced that this was very likely to be an illusion, he didn't dare to let the enemy attack him. What if the blade passed through his head, but it wasn't an illusion? He wouldn't even have a chance to cry then. Helpless to do anything else, he could only defend himself with his own flying swords.

Sixteen flying swords clashed against each other. Xuan Bajing was known for his flying swords, already having reached a superb level of prowess with his eight swords. And yet, no matter how high his sword skill was, no matter what kind of tricks he used, the enemy's swords were always able to swiftly retaliate.

In the past, he had really enjoyed seeing his opponents' frustration against his flying swords. Now, it was his turn to experience the same thing. He felt incredibly sullen. It was as if he were fighting against himself. It was completely impossible to decide victory.

However, he was still a sect master. He quickly calmed down. It didn't make sense at all for him to lose to a fake.

You can imitate my face and my sword, but don't tell me even your way of thinking is identical?

As such, he suddenly recalled his eight swords and merged them together to form a giant sword. Then, he thrust it forward. His opponent's swords were instantly knocked flying when they made contact with the giant sword.

The other 'Xuan Bajing' quickly reached out his hand. The eight flying swords returned, also formed a giant sword.

The two giant swords clashed. The powerful clash was completely real, and could only result in serious injuries or even death. If their cultivations were really the same, they would both lose.

Suddenly, a strange smile appeared on Xuan Bajing's lips. The next second, lightning radiance flickered and he was gone. In an instant, his giant sword also scattered into thin air.

Without its target, the clone's full-powered attack missed. The surging ki and blood within him seemed to leave him feeling extremely uncomfortable.

In that moment of weakness, a streak of lightning appeared at his side. Xuan Bajing instantly materialized.

Thunder Flash Art!

The sword in his hand stabbed straight into his opponent's ribs like a streak of lightning.

The clone's entire body flickered with electricity. He instinctively tried to dodge, but he was still a bit too late and was hit. Xuan Bajing smirked in self-satisfaction. He didn't know where this fake came from, but a fake could only be a fake; how could it be his match?

The clone looked down at his injury, but there was no alarm on his face. Instead, he raised his head with a strange smile.

Xuan Bajing frowned when he saw that smile. He couldn't figure out why the clone would have such an expression.

Suddenly, his expression changed. He looked down at his own ribs, and saw that there was actually a drip of blood on his clothes. Then, the blood quickly spread out, dyeing that side of his clothes red. He felt a wave of intense pain. He could no longer stand stably and knelt down on one knee. He had to stab his sword into the ground to prevent himself from falling.

"How?!" he exclaimed in shock. He didn't understand this at all. The attack that should have defeated his opponent had clearly landed, so why had the injury landed on himself? Even if it was an illusion, there was no way he would attack himself! With his many years of cultivation and experience, he couldn't understand how such a thing had been achieved at all. Earth immortals really were unfathomable...

...

Guan Chouhai shivered when he saw Xuan Bajing collapse. He didn't even vainly think of injuring Zhao Han anymore. He only had a single thought in his mind: Run!

Unfortunately, even though that was what he wanted to do, the 'Guan Chouhai' on the other side wouldn't allow that to happen. The Twin Vajra Armbands covered the skies and wrapped around his legs. Helpless to flee, he could only deal with the counterfeit first. But when he thought about how Xuan Bajing had clearly won against the fake, and yet had lost first, he felt despair.

The two of them exchanged more than ten blows before he suddenly thought of something. If Xuan Bajing hurt himself when he hurt the fake, what if I do the exact opposite? Would I be able to hurt this counterfeit instead?

Victory is often grasped from the jaws of defeat!

There were similar principles in the daoist sects. When he thought of that, he immediately moved and slammed his fist heavily against his own chest. He didn't dare to strike his own head for fear of killing himself, but he still didn't hold back. He had to strike while the enemy was unprepared.

"Pfft!" A mouthful of blood gushed out and he felt his ki and blood surge. His entire body's meridians were filled with incomparable pain. However, he wasn't concerned with his own injuries, and instead looked at the other side expectantly.

And yet, to his shock, the other 'Guan Chouhai' was completely unharmed. There was a mocking smile on his face.

"Motherf*cker! I was too rash! I'm so stupid, so..." Guan Chouhai muttered, feeling so angry that he fainted on the spot.

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Chapter 1727: Painstaking Efforts

The whole sequence of events happened too quickly, leaving Li Changsheng completely stupefied.

Previously, he had even had the extravagant hope that they could hurt Zhao Han's physical body a bit, potentially having a decisive impact on the overall situation. But who would have thought that these two would be defeated so quickly?

Xuan Bajing's loss was still excusable, since his move was quite brilliant. Despite that, he had been the one who was injured.

As for Guan Chouhai's loss, that was nothing more than a joke. Xuan Bajing had managed to test out the enemy's special ability for him, and yet he had ended up knocking himself out!

Li Changsheng had thought that Guan Chouhai was pretty sharp. Why had his brain gone to shit today?

The two clones charged at Li Changsheng, Xuan Bajing, and Guan Chouhai just then, planning to take the chance to completely eliminate them.

Guan Chouhai fainting was one thing, but Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing were filled with despair. They were seriously injured and didn't have any strength to fight back. They could only watch as inevitable death encroached.

Just then, Elder Xuan Dou and little monk Jie Se, who had previously been watching the situation together with some daoists, quickly rushed over to rescue their own sect elders. Unfortunately, even though their cultivation ranks were high, these were the attacks of a grandmaster who had cultivated a yin soul. Miserable screams filled the air one after another. They suffered a huge amount of casualties almost immediately.

When he saw Elder Xuan Dou, whom he had just been fighting with, getting killed so easily, Jie Se was so frightened his face turned deathly pale. He thought, It's not as if these guys are even from Tranquility Temple; it's daoists dying and not monks! He turned and ran for his life.

But how could those two figures let him go? They immediately gave chase, their weapons still dripping blood.

Jie Se began screaming for his life. "I'm going to die, I'm going to freaking die! Master, save me!"

The buddha projection in the air suddenly raised its hand and struck toward 'Guan Chouhai' and 'Xuan Bajing'. A hand appeared amid the clouds, and a moment later, it crashed down on them like Mt. Tai. Even though the two were formidable, they were no match for the buddha projection that was comparable to an earth immortal's primordial spirit. They quickly dodged backward.

With a cold snort, Zhao Han's primordial spirit also interfered, striking aside the buddha's hand. Seemingly having noticed Master Jian Huang's weakness, he took the chance to aim his finger at Jie Se. His seemingly ordinary finger looked as if it were crushing an ant. It was so overwhelmingly powerful that Jie Se couldn't resist in the slightest, and could only watch as that finger pressed down.

Master Jian Huang naturally wouldn't just let that happen without doing anything. The buddha projection quickly rushed over to save him. However, Zhao Han's primordial spirit had a strange smile as it took the chance to attack the buddha projection.

Previously, with King Qi as the main force and Master Jian Huang as the support, both sides had maintained excellent teamwork and managed to briefly hold Zhao Han off. And yet now, with the disciple as bait, Master Jian Huang took the initiative to attack. That produced a crack in their coordination.

For Zhao Han, there was no way he would let such an opportunity go. A fist, a palm, and a finger struck the buddha projection. It flickered continuously, and in the end, it could no longer hold on, dissipating into the air.

Below, the seated Master Jian Huang didn't vomit blood, but no one would think he was completely fine. His skin began to crack all over, as if he were made of broken glass. A cold wind blew across Golden Peak, and a chunk of skin fell from his face, revealing a pitch-black void behind it. Then, his entire body could no longer hold on, fully breaking apart piece by piece. With a gust of wind, he dissolved into ashes.

When he saw Master Jian Huang try to help his disciple, King Qi immediately realized that the situation was bad. He quickly rushed over, but he was still too late. The buddha statue was already broken. Even someone with his level of mental strength felt a brief moment of alarm when he saw Master Jian Huang turn into ashes. After all, without the monk's support, he was definitely not Zhao Han's match.

Zhao Han seemed to have foreseen that. After killing Master Jian Huang, he used the momentum to continue his assault.

King Qi defended himself in a panic. Unfortunately, Zhao Han had been number one in this world for too long and was full of experience, not giving him any opportunities. Soon after, King Qi's defenses broke down bit by bit. In the end, a fist imprint slammed into his chest, causing his massive figure to collapse. He could no longer hold on and returned to his body once more.

Zhao Han exhaled in relief. Taking down two powerful opponents in succession so quickly was difficult even for someone of his cultivation. He practically hadn't held back at all. All of his cultivation had erupted in the shortest possible amount of time.

It was one thing to deal with Master Jian Huang, but in the end, King Qi was an earth immortal too. Zhao Han had needed to exhaust himself quite a bit in order to seriously injure him. Now, however, he had already dealt with the most troublesome pair. With his earth immortal power, he could return to his

strongest state in just a few seconds. Everyone else was nothing more than an ant before him.

And yet, something completely unpredictable suddenly happened. A sacred Buddhist sound filled the air, and lotus flowers fell from the skies. The little monk was now completely calm, his previous alarm gone. Rings of light appeared behind his bald head. His entire figure also became incredibly holy and dignified.

Zhao Han's expression changed greatly. He quickly evaded backward, but unfortunately, he had just defeated two great enemies. He had just spent his strength and wasn't able to recover yet.

At the same time, Jie Se's hands suddenly began to move around, instantly applying several magical seals to Zhao Han's body.

Zhao Han's primordial spirit returned to his body. His tall and mighty figure staggered a bit, and he sat down on the ground. He had always viewed others from an invincible standpoint; when had he ever shown such a sorry state to others before?

Guo Zhi and the other Imperial Guards were horrified when they saw that. They rushed over to help him. However, Jie Se's hands joined together and a red light swept outward. The remaining Imperial Guards and Embroidered Envoy swere instantly lit ablaze, turning into ashes in the blink of an eye.

The civil and military officials halfway up the mountain were shocked. Why was there another earth immortal's aura now? The successive appearances of earth immortals made even the calmest ones, Meng Yi and Bi Qi, sit up straight. Even though his majesty was formidable, things were going to turn dangerous if this continued! As such, they gave the order for the army waiting below to bring up the Rune Siege Cannons. They had decided to blast through the Righteous Sun Sect's mountain defense formation.

Zhao Han's face was dark red. He stared at the nearby Jie Se with hatred in his eyes and spat, "You aren't the little monk. Who exactly are you?"

Jie Se brought his hands together, saying, "This poor monk is naturally Jie Se. However, this monk also had another name in the past, Ruhua. I believe your majesty knows that name."

"So it was you!" Zhao Han exclaimed, his eyes narrowing.

King Qi was gasping for breath too, but he was filled with even more shock. He also knew that name. Ruhua had been the abbot of a generation in Tranquility Temple, as well as the master of the current abbot, Master Jian Huang. He was rumored to have been the most outstanding genius in Tranquility Temple in the past thousand years, as well as the one who had had the highest chance of breaking through into the earth immortal rank.

Unfortunately, Zhao Han had risen up and suppressed an entire generation. Ruhua had known that he could not surpass Zhao Han, and due to his age, he had passed away with great regret.

But who would have thought that he actually hadn't died, and had even become Master Jian Huang's disciple?!

"No, something's not right. The way you interacted with Master Jian Huang before couldn't have been fake. If you were his master, how could you have put on such a perfect appearance?" Zhao Han asked gravely. He clearly had his own informants on Violet Mountain and knew about such details clearly.

"Without this method, how could we have hidden from your majesty?" Monk Ruhua replied with a smile. "Actually, not even Jian Huang knew about this. In order to deceive the entire world, I sealed my sea of consciousness. Normally, I really was just Jie Se. Only in that instant did I recall everything and learn of my own plans."

Zhao Han said with a sneer, "It was an excellent scheme, as expected. But you Buddhists always preach about a heart of compassion, and yet in the end, you even deceived your own disciple, sacrificing his life to scheme against me. What buddha are you even cultivating at this point, what dao?!"

King Qi's entire body turned ice-cold. Hadn't he also been used like a tool in this scheme? If Ruhua had informed him of his real identity beforehand, then together with Master Jian Huang and the others, they could have had a chance of winning against Zhao Han. But this man just had to have chosen the most treacherous method. Now, so many people had died so miserably, while he and Zhao Han were both in terrible states. Only Ruhua was still in his strongest state.

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Chapter 1728: To Rope Him In

“Amitabha buddha, if I do not go to hell, who will?” Ruhua replied as he put his hands together. He had a solemn expression as he said, “If I can eliminate you, the enemy of the buddha, some sacrifices must be made.”

The Buddhist sect had thrived during the previous dynasty, but in the past century, Zhao Han had oppressed them greatly. Now, they were already struggling while at death’s door. That was why calling him the enemy of the buddha wasn’t too surprising.

Zhao Han sneered and retorted, “Some sacrifices must be made? But doesn’t it seem as if you’re only sacrificing other people?”

Ruhua shook his head and said, “If this poor monk’s sacrifice had been enough to defeat you, I would already have honorably committed to it.” His expression was steady and without any shame or guilt. These were clearly his true thoughts.

Zhao Han could sense Ruhua’s resolve, so he didn’t waste time bickering anymore. Instead, he asked curiously, “Just how did you become that little monk? Was it through that rumored Reincarnation Technique of your Buddhist sect?”

If rebirth really existed, why would there even be a need to painstakingly pursue immortality?

Ruhua nodded slightly and said, “Apart from our Buddhist sect’s secret technique, we also used the daoist sects’ One Breath Threefold Clarity as reference. When this poor monk realized that the situation was already against me, I separated my yang soul. Then, through a secret technique, I became an infant and cultivated once more. This was an extremely risky endeavor, but fortunately, I succeeded in the end.”

Zhao Han nodded. It was similar to how he had attached his own yang soul to the Crown Prince Zhao Ruizhi’s body. However, that kind of possession was only done as a last resort, and was full of unwanted side effects. The most severe restriction was that it would be impossible to surpass his original body’s cultivation, and he couldn’t do it more than three times. That was related to the natural heavenly dao of the universe. Otherwise, wouldn’t all earth immortals just be able to continue on and on like that?

In contrast, Monk Ruhua's decision was a bit more brilliant. Was it able to go against the principles of heavenly dao?

He wanted to ask more, but Monk Ruhua didn't wish to continue the conversation and said, "Your majesty's cultivation is brilliant, and your ability to regenerate is naturally shocking as well. You are likely stalling for time to recover as much as possible, no?"

Zhao Han sneered. "My flesh injuries are one thing, but why don't you try and recover from damage to the primordial spirit that quickly?"

Ruhua was quite confused when he heard that. He asked, "But why is it that this poor monk doesn't feel even a bit of fear from your majesty, as if everything is still in the palm of your hand?"

"Because this emperor still has more people on my side," Zhao Han said with a smile. While his opponents were confused, he looked in a certain direction and called out, "Marquis, why don't you come out now?"

Afterward, a group of people slowly appeared. The one in the lead was quite handsome, but his expression was a bit conflicted as he said, "It seems we've come at the wrong time."

Zu An was in quite an awkward position. Previously, they had managed to open up a path in the formation with the help of Yan Xuehen and Xie Daoyun. He had thought that once the two sides fought to a certain point, he would then come out to collect the spoils. Who could have expected that he would end up in such a situation?

Almost everyone on Golden Peak had been wiped out. Zhuxie Chixin, Eunuch Wen, and Guo Zhi, as well as those Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards, had all died. Many of those were people he had even interacted with and had some friendship with. It was quite a sight for them to end up in such a state. Zhao Han's current condition wasn't too great either.

Meanwhile, that fat little monk was actually a hidden earth immortal? Zu An couldn't help but give Ruhua a second look, thinking, This guy really hid his schemes well! He was always getting hit in the head by Master Jian Huang, and yet he was actually the master?

While Zu An was looking at Ruhua, the remaining people on Golden Peak were also looking at his group.

Zu An was quickly overlooked because both sides were more than familiar with him. It was the people at his side who drew more attention: The aloof and indifferent Yan Xuehen, the domineering and stunning Yun Jianyue, the endlessly charming Qiu Honglei, the graceful and elegant Xie Daoyun...

Why are there so many damn beauties at his side? Was he on vacation with his women or something?

After the earlier battle, Golden Peak had been left in tatters. Now that these beauties had appeared, many people suddenly felt as if they were a bit out of place. Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue in particular were known arch-enemies. Why were they now standing next to each other like sisters?

The women were likewise sizing up the situation. They were shocked by the scene on Golden Peak. The buildings on Golden Peak had already been completely destroyed, and the ground seemed to have been plowed through several times. It even felt as if Golden Peak had sunk a bit lower than when they first arrived. That was clearly the result of the great battle.

Yan Xuehen shivered inwardly when she saw Li Changsheng. It was already obvious that he had participated in the ambush against Zhao Han. When she recalled how much he had distanced himself from her recently, it was likely because of that. Her heart plummeted. A single mistake in this situation could end up in the complete destruction of the White Jade Sect.

Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei both had huge smiles, in contrast. After all, for them, the daoists and the emperor were both their enemies. What more could they ask for if the two sides took each other out? The only regrettable thing was that the monk had an absolute advantage right now. For the Devil Sect, he was also a great enemy.

Xie Daoyun's feelings were in turmoil. As someone who came from an official's clan, she had received a patriotic upbringing. When she saw the emperor in his current state, she felt her heart rush into her throat.

Not good, not good! I didn't notice a thing even though something so big happened! If something happens to the emperor, will he blame me? Will it end up involving the Xie clan?

Teacher is definitely really disappointed in me. At this point, I might not have the shamelessness to remain in the academy...

Zhao Han's eyes narrowed slightly when he saw Yun Jianyue. This brat was actually with the Devil Sect Master? As expected, he already had bad intentions. He suddenly recalled that during her invasion of the palace, Zu An had been there too. The reason why she had been able to successfully escape could very well have been his help.

However, he quickly set those thoughts aside and instead said gently, "No, you have come at just the right time."

Zu An cursed inwardly. This bastard usually always bosses me around, and yet he's calling me marquis and kindly asking me for help now!

Sure enough, Zhao Han said, "Marquis, these people have started a rebellion. Hurry and execute them here."

Zu An replied with a hint of bashfulness, "Your majesty, that might be a bit unsuitable, right? I still have some crimes on my name right now, you know?"

Zhao Han knew that he was talking about the matter of being the Fiend races' Regent. As such, he said, "Don't worry, this emperor will pardon you. Furthermore, you will have established great contributions. This emperor will consider making you a king. Then, those rotten scholars of the court will stop worrying about you colluding with the Fiend races."

The human race was at its peak, and the Great Zhou Dynasty was flourishing. Life as a king on this side was naturally more comfortable than life on the Fiend races' side. He believed that any normal person would think that way.

But this kid is actually threatening me in this kind of situation? Hateful!

You have successfully trolled Zhao Han for +100 +100 +100...

Just then, King Qi shouted, "Don't believe him! The wishes of our deceased ancestors state that those who are not of the Zhao surname cannot be kings! He is just deceiving you!" He didn't have any choice at present. If he let Zhao Han overturn the situation here, everything would really be completely over.

Zhao Han said with a sneer, "Rules are made by people. After establishing such contributions, why would he be denied the privilege of becoming a king?"

King Qi asked through clenched teeth, "Zu An, do you still remember what I said to you? I believe that you also know just how superficial Zhao Han's

words are. If he completely recovers, he will definitely settle things properly! Rather than gilding the lily, providing help in one's hour of need is much better. If you help me ascend to the throne, I can definitely give you far more than Zhao Han! Apart from the status of a king, there is also the matter I talked with you about last time. I can give you Xiaodie. That way, we can be one family, and you won't have to worry about betrayals!"

The four women, Yan, Yun, Qiu, and Xie, all looked at Zu An when they heard that. So this little bastard already had secret talks of marriage with King Qi Manor's princess!

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +110 +110 +110...

You have successfully trolled Yun Jianyue for +110 +110 +110...

You have successfully trolled Qiu Honglei for +110 +110 +110...

You have successfully trolled Xie Daoyun for +110 +110 +110...

Zu An felt a chill run down his back when he felt their murderous intent. He thought, Did this King Qi bastard lose his mind? How can you say something like that in front of all these people?!

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Chapter 1729: You Didn't Expect That, Did You?

Chapter 1729: You Didn't Expect That, Did You?

Zu An released a light cough and said, "King Qi, things such as feelings need both parties to be each other's sunshine. Interfering like that would make a relationship cease to be pure."

He didn't have much of a relationship with Zhao Xiaodie to begin with, let alone speaking of marriage. But if he refused King Qi outright when the latter was betrothing his daughter in front of everyone, that would really be too much of a blow to his pride. As such, Zu An wanted to refuse in a more tactful manner.

But who would have thought that the women next to him would immediately raise their ears?

Be each other's sunshine?

You have trolled the women around you for +111 +111 +111...

Zu An's entire body started growing numb when he saw the increasing Rage points.

Fortunately, Zhao Han spoke up, helping him out of his awkwardness. "Zu An, you know just how much Zhao Jing has suffered over the years because of you. His prestige has taken a huge blow. Otherwise, he wouldn't be taking such desperate actions today like a cornered dog. After forcing him into such a position, do you really think he will actually tolerate you?"

"Even if we take a thousand steps back and he barely manages to overlook it, would all those people who follow him accept you? A few days ago, you saw for yourself how they were itching to get rid of you."

Zu An nodded slightly and said, "What your majesty is saying makes a bit of sense."

King Qi immediately panicked when he saw Zu An's changing attitude. He continued, "Don't tell me you've already forgotten that a bunch of the same people who wanted you executed were among his own trusted aides? I've lost quite a few men over the years and just happen to need people. On the contrary, he isn't lacking people at all. How could they possibly allow a latecomer like you to climb above them?"

Zu An nodded again and said, "What King Qi said makes a bit of sense."

Zhao Han and Zhao Jing were both speechless. The two of them realized that this brat was actually waiting for the best offer, and that he wasn't about to make a quick decision at all.

Zhao Han gave the brooding Yan Xuehen a look, saying, "Sect Master Yan, I believe that Li Changsheng's actions were all of his own accord. You have always maintained an unsullied and pure character. There is no need for you to follow his bad example. As long as you help this emperor, I will just let White Jade Sect's matter pass."

Yan Xuehen's eyes moved a bit. She had indeed been worried that this matter would endanger the White Jade Sect.

King Qi shouted, "Fairy Yan, Li Changsheng and many White Jade Sect disciples were involved in this matter. With Zhao Han's breadth of mind, how could he possibly pretend that this kind of thing never happened? After the matter, he will definitely settle things for good! Rather than live with that worry, why not just get rid of that possibility and side with Li Changsheng? You could even establish tremendous achievements! Has the White Jade Sect not been oppressed enough by that man over the years? If I rise to the throne, I will definitely reverse the limitations he imposed. On the contrary, I will greatly support your daoist sects!"

Yan Xuehen's pretty brows furrowed. She didn't have much interest in achievements, but she knew that what he was saying was the truth. Would Zhao Han really let things go after Li Changsheng had participated in this rebellion?

Seeing as she still didn't reply, King Qi then looked at Yun Jianyue and said, "Sect Master Yun, the Holy Sect's Marshal Lu is also a part of this affair. We are actually natural allies. Once the matter passes, I will inform the world about everything and restore your reputation, as well as cancel your arrest warrants. Your Holy Sect will be able to stand proudly before the world."

Zu An was full of admiration as he listened. He had to admit that this man really was good at adapting to situations and making the most of them. No wonder he had been able to gain such prestige and become a publicly revered great sage.

Yun Jianyue frowned when she heard that. She was the sect master, and yet she actually hadn't known about Lu Sanyuan's participation in this affair. Over the years, Lu Sanyuan had fought in one place after another with his volunteer army. His reputation had grown greater and greater with each battle, his prestige climbing higher and higher. She had almost started to feel as if she couldn't control him anymore.

After all, the Devil Sect wasn't one united community. Just as the daoists were divided into nine major sects, the Devil Sect had many factions as well. Yun Jianyue and Lu Sanyuan were leaders of different factions. In the past, when the court's influence was too great, they had had the same powerful enemy, and hadn't minded putting aside their differences. But over the years, more and more rifts had grown in their relationship.

Now, it turned out he had even kept something so major from her! He had unknowingly put the entire Holy Sect at such a huge risk! Yun Jianyue felt irritation brew within her as soon as she thought of that.

Zhao Han couldn't help but curse and say, "Zhao Jing, you really have no respect for your ancestors at all! They went through so much effort to get to where we are today, and yet you've now completely sold yourself out!"

It wasn't unreasonable for him to be upset. A hundred years prior, the Buddhist and daoist sects had been shockingly powerful. The world had only known those powers and not cared about the court. The Zhou Dynasty had used the war against the Fiend races and several generations of effort as an opportunity to finally subdue the Buddhists, daoists, and even the Devil Sect. And yet now, Zhao Jing was actually tossing all that effort straight down the drain!

Zhao Jing didn't give an inch either, retorting, "Hmph, you only oppressed them out of your own selfish desires. Only by allowing the arts free expression can we improve together."

Both sides were growing more and more red-faced when Ruhua coughed lightly and asked, "Could it be that you have all forgotten about this poor daoist?"

The place suddenly fell silent.

Right! He's the one with the strongest cultivation here! If we were going to rope in someone, it should be him!

Zu An said with a respectful expression, "Your majesty, King Qi, it's not that I don't want to help, but rather that an earth immortal isn't someone I can defeat. I really am unable to help as I would like to."

Zhao Han said, "Even though he succeeded in his plot against me, he was also injured by me. He isn't even close to his strongest condition right now. If you all work together, you can defeat him."

Zu An and the other women exchanged a look. In the end, they didn't move.

Ruhua revealed a smile and said, "Your majesty, please don't trouble them anymore. Zu An is a smart person and naturally doesn't wish to get involved in

these dirty waters. This is something between the two of us, so let's not trouble others anymore."

Afterward, he walked toward the emperor slowly, each step slow and heavy. It was clear that with Zhao Han's prestige, even though the emperor was injured, he still had to act carefully.

Zhao Han's expression remained calm as he asked, "Ruhua, aren't you curious as to why I'm not alarmed in the slightest even now?"

Ruhua suddenly paused and said, "I am indeed a bit curious."

Zhao Han had said that it was because of Zu An's group, but it seemed as if that group didn't want to help. They couldn't be his trump card.

Zhao Han looked at King Qi. A mocking smile appeared on his lips as he asked, "Zhao Jing, aren't you feeling quite proud of yourself now that you've managed to injure me?"

"What can I say? I do feel a bit proud." King Qi harrumphed. "You've flaunted yourself as invincible, but in the end, this was it."

Zhao Han said calmly, "The only thing I didn't anticipate was Ruhua's century-long scheme. However, all of your plans were nothing more than a joke to me."

King Qi roared with laughter and exclaimed, "Look around you! Your old friend, your trusted aides, and even those Embroidered Envoys and Imperial Guards who were absolutely loyal to you have all died. Even you yourself have fallen like this. Don't you find your words a bit laughable?"

"Ignorant," Zhao Han said with a sneer. "The Phoenix Nirvana Sutra you obtained before... You must have thought that it was the will of the heavens for you to receive it, right? I regret to inform you that what you cultivated was just something I forged. I actually have to thank Zu An over here for that."

Zu An narrowed his eyes slightly. Zhao Han mentioning such a thing now was clearly to drive a wedge between him and King Qi's relationship, to destroy any chance of them becoming allies.

However, King Qi remained calm. He gave Zu An a glance, then said calmly, "Brother emperor, I know you far too well. How could you possibly let me have

any chance of getting my hands on such a skill? I never believed it was real from the beginning. My efforts to obtain it were nothing more than a cover to numb you. You didn't expect that, did you? Don't you feel quite disappointed right now?"

He grinned as he spoke, looking satisfied that he had seen through the scheme. Zhao Han, you bastard, you think too highly of yourself! All of your scheming is nothing more than the tricks of a clown before me.

Zu An was a bit surprised. These two brothers weren't easy to deal with after all! The fact that King Qi had been able to face the emperor for so many years was proof in itself of his skill.

However, Zhao Han wasn't shocked at all. He replied, "Oh? It seems you're not as stupid as I thought... but not as smart, either. Do you really think the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra was the only thing I fed you over the years?"

"Are you not curious as to why, even though you were wandering at the life soul grandmaster rank for all that time, you were suddenly able to break through into the earth immortal rank? Do you really think it was because of your luck?"

No one knew what King Qi was thinking, but his expression changed greatly.

Zhao Han suddenly reached out his hand and grabbed toward him. A soul projection was sucked straight out of King Qi's flesh, entering his palm.

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Chapter 1730: Wedding Clothes for Another

Just then, Zhao Han had appeared to be at the end of his rope, even going so far as to haggle with King Qi over Zu An's group. But who could have expected the situation to suddenly be reversed like this?

Before Zu An had time to react, Ruhua moved even more quickly. With a roar, he shot toward Zhao Han like an artillery shell. He had been most worried about what other methods Zhao Han could be hiding, but he hadn't expected it to be something like this at all! How could he still just watch without doing anything?!

Just then, Zhao Han waved his sleeve. A meticulously crafted jade ruler's seal, carved with nine dragons, flew out. A second later, those dragons seemed to come alive as they surrounded the seal! A powerful imperial aura spread out, making those present feel an intense urge to worship it.

"A deity-grade weapon!"

"The Human Emperor's Seal!"

Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen's expressions changed. They both recognized the object.

Zhao Han was the most powerful cultivator in this world, and he was also the ruler of an empire. He had endless riches at his disposal, which naturally included divine weapons. However, he was really just too strong. He could subdue the world's powerful beings with just a turn of his hand, and didn't need to use a divine weapon at all. Over time, the people of the world had already forgotten about the existence of the Human Emperor's Seal.

The Human Emperor's Seal turned toward Ruhua and attacked him by unleashing a vast and profound aura. Even Zu An's group, which wasn't its real target, felt its earth-shattering power. In that instant, it was as if the heavens itself were going to collapse.

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue both took measures to protect the people around them. After all, Qiu Honglei and Xie Daoyun had weaker cultivations, so only then did they feel a bit better.

Ruhua didn't dare to face the Human Emperor's Seal head-on. Instead, he chanted an incantation, and an intricate brass bell appeared above his head. It was filled with Buddhist light, and mysterious voices chanting Buddhist scriptures emanated from it. As the flickering light and sacred scriptures surrounded him, a giant bell projection formed. It blocked the incoming Human Emperor's Seal.

Dooooooooong!

The bell rang with a long and drawn-out noise. All of Golden Peak seemed as if it had been swept through by a hurricane. Not a single blade of grass remained wherever the force passed.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing raised their respective sect treasures to protect themselves. However,, their bodies trembled and they fainted on the spot. They had been secretly adjusting their internal energy and finally managed to recover a bit of strength, and yet in that instant, their efforts were all for naught.

Guan Chouhai had just managed to regain a bit of consciousness, and yet he was immediately met with the terrifying noise. He raised the Twin Vajra Armbands in a hurry, but the powerful shockwave sent his armbands straight into his forehead. With a loud clang, he fainted once more while foaming at the mouth. His hands and feet twitched a few times.

The Human Emperor's Seal clashed with the Tranquility Bell in a trial of strength. At that moment, Ruhua couldn't move at all and could only focus on controlling his weapon to defend against the Human Emperor's Seal as much as possible.

Zhao Han had King Qi's yang spirit detained. A malicious smile appeared on his face as he said, "My foolish little brother, I know that you have never been satisfied being under me, and that you would have just as easily replaced me in a different situation. Unfortunately, you have never been anything more than a little clown in my eyes. Everything was within my grasp all this time."

King Qi's yang spirit had a warped and malicious expression, as if he wanted to say something, and yet couldn't at all.

Zhao Han could roughly guess his thoughts. He said with a smile, "You must be thinking that this is strange. Why is it that even though you are clearly already an earth immortal, you cannot resist in the slightest?"

He paused before continuing, "You thought that your talent was unparalleled, and yet you could not break through into the earth immortal rank after remaining at the grandmaster level for so long. That was why I arranged a 'miraculous encounter' for you and allowed you to receive a certain cultivation method. As soon as you cultivated it, you felt that you could break through into the earth immortal rank, so you studied it more and more.

"Unfortunately, you never could have expected that I was the one who prepared all those things. That cultivation method's true name is 'Wedding Clothes for Another'. As the name implies, all of your cultivation is just for another. This skill allows the strong to devour the weak. That is why even

though I might not be able to win easily against other earth immortals, against you, you cannot muster any strength to resist as long as I will it!"

While he was speaking, endless rays of light gathered toward the forehead of King Qi's yang spirit. Then, it flowed into Zhao Han's body through his hand, causing his aura to grow more and more powerful. His strength was gradually restored to its peak.

Perhaps due to the damage to his yang spirit, King Qi's flesh also shriveled up. His tall and stalwart body now looked like a withered corpse. At last, he understood everything. He knew that he had already been utterly crushed.

A hint of despair flashed through his eyes. However, he was still a hero of his generation. Knowing that he was definitely going to die in this situation, his yang spirit suddenly erupted with dazzling brilliance. He chose to detonate his own yang spirit!

After all, he was one of this world's strongest beings and owned countless secret texts. Now that he had chosen self-destruction, not even Zhao Han could stop him.

Boom!

How powerful was the explosion of an earth immortal's primordial spirit? Zhao Han's expression changed a bit. He quickly brought back the Human Emperor's Seal to protect himself.

No one knew what motives he had, but Ruhua surrounded the others present within the Tranquility Bell as well; only then were Guan Chouhai and the other unconscious experts saved from the fate of dying while unconscious.

...

Halfway up the mountain, the officials all looked at the mountaintop in horror. Just what kind of explosion could produce such power?

The officials of King Qi's faction couldn't help but remark, "Wouldn't we be throwing our lives away too if we went up and got ourselves involved?"

Many people agreed, adding, "That's right, an earth immortal rank battle isn't something we mortals can participate in."

Murong Tong exclaimed furiously, "What kind of nonsense are you saying? The court has taken care of you so well for so many years; when it really needs our help, how can we get cold feet?!"

Murong Qinghe said in agreement, "Exactly, exactly! Even if we can't join the fight, with so many of us together, we're not a force to look down on either! Furthermore, the armies below will arrive soon. With the support of military formations, even if we face an earth immortal, so what?!"

She knew why her grandfather had to voice his opinion so firmly. If something really happened to the emperor, the other officials could turn out fine, but not her grandfather. He was the Supervisor of Attendants and had the duty of ensuring the emperor's safety to begin with. There was no way he would avoid responsibility! His punishment would be dismissal at best, and at worst, it could even be an execution of the entire clan down to the third generation! Furthermore, with the Murong clan's conviction, now wasn't the time to cower either.

When he heard that, Meng Yi nodded and said, "Indeed. His Majesty is in danger, so we absolutely need to help him!"

At the same time, he secretly conversed with Bi Qi and the other core forces serving the emperor. Now that King Qi had gone missing, they all suspected that he was on Golden Peak. As such, they secretly wanted to detain King Qi's faction.

Currently, King Qi's faction was far from its previous prestige. The Fengshan Ceremony was a clear display of the dominance of the emperor's faction.

The officials of King Qi's faction also had similar suspicions. All of them had heavy moods. Something so important could only have been told to a few participating people, so most of the faction hadn't known what would happen beforehand. They were all extremely alarmed.

Soon after, the officials agreed on a decision. They quickly rushed out to help the emperor. Additionally, they decided to retrieve the siege cannons that had been waiting beneath the mountain. Murong Tong took Murong Qinghe with him to personally handle them, intending to blast open the formation as quickly as possible.

...

Meanwhile, on Golden Peak, all of the light and smoke dispersed. A giant pit that was several dozen meters wide had appeared, the result of King Qi's self-destruction. It was easy to imagine just how devastating the power of an earth immortal's suicide was.

Nine shining dragons swirled around the Human Emperor's Seal as Zhao Han reappeared with the item in hand. Apart from the scorched black traces on his clothes, however, he hadn't really suffered any damage from the explosion. He looked at the deep crater in the ground. He had a hint of a forlorn expression as he said, "He at least had a resolute character. It is no wonder that he was able to fight against this emperor for all these years."

Ruhua knew that there was already no way to reverse the result, so he wasn't in a rush to attack. Instead, he looked at Zhao Han with a hint of puzzlement and asked, "If your majesty already had a way to restrain King Qi, why didn't you use that 'wedding clothes' or whatever skill on him from the start?"

Zhao Han sneered and replied, "If I hadn't acted like this, how could I have drawn out someone like you who was hiding so well?" He paused, then looked at Zu An and continued, "As well as some individuals who seem to have some ulterior motives?"

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Read Keyboard Immortal - Chapter 1731: Plea

Chapter 1731: Plea

Zhao Han no longer concealed his own aura while speaking. He released his earth immortal might, making it difficult for the others present to even breathe. His body swirled with brilliance. Previously, there had been some faint black runes binding him, but now, none of them could be seen anymore. The curse Wu Wuyan had sacrificed her entire life to apply had clearly lost its effects.

Zu An felt a bit down. He had planned to come in to reap all the benefits after the two sides killed each other, but why was he now facing Zhao Han at his strongest?

King Qi, didn't you fight against the emperor for so many years? And yet now, you've already had your body and soul destroyed. Not only was the damage

you inflicted negligible, you even helped him recover to his peak! How useless...

Still, he knew that wasn't King Qi's fault. Zhao Han, that cunning bastard, had already thought of many ways to give King Qi a fake skill over the past few decades, and yet he had acted as if it all hinged on Zu An giving King Qi the fake 'Phoenix Nirvana Sutra'. Even Zu An had been fooled, so it wasn't surprising that King Qi had fallen for Zhao Han's trap.

Ruhua immediately turned tail to run the moment he saw what was happening. He knew that with how things stood, their plans had already gone down the drain. For the sake of seriously injuring Zhao Han, he had sustained quite intense injuries himself. He was definitely not a match for Zhao Han in his current condition. Of course, even at his strongest, he still wouldn't be a match.

"You want to run?" Zhao Han remarked with a sneer. Ruhua had made him suffer so much. If he let the monk get away, his name wouldn't be Zhao Han. Thus, he vanished from his original location. A second later, many Zhao Han clones appeared around Ruhua.

Zu An had witnessed the dark elves' space-leaping methods, and he had seen Xuan Bajing's lightning skills. But compared to Zhao Han, all of them seemed like mere child's play. He had been watching the whole situation closely, and yet he hadn't noticed any traces of Zhao Han flying at all. It was as if the emperor had directly warped through space! He had heard that as the world's strongest, Zhao Han had already comprehended the laws of space. Now, he saw that it was true.

Ruhua's expression was grave. His monk robes fluttered as he did his best to defend himself. The two earth immortals seemed to have left the bounds of spatial laws. The onlookers only saw afterimages several seconds old, while their real bodies couldn't be sensed at all.

Zu An sighed in pity. For some reason, Zhao Han didn't send out his primordial spirit, and instead fought against Monk Ruhua with his physical body.

Xie Daoyun was bewildered. She tugged on Zu An's clothes and asked him through ki transmission, "Big brother Zu, should we help his majesty or not?"

Her instincts told her to help the emperor, but when she saw King Qi's miserable end and remembered how her father seemed to have been really close to King Qi, she realized that if the emperor won, he would get his revenge. The Xie clan would probably be in trouble then.

Zu An remained quiet. Qiu Honglei suddenly said, "Ah Zu, it's far too dangerous here. We should use this chance while that monk is holding up the emperor to run."

The Devil Sect viewed the emperor as their enemy. She knew that once the battle was decided, there was no way he would let the Devil Sect's people go. Furthermore, the emperor appeared to have the advantage right now. It wasn't something their participation could affect at all.

However, Yun Jianyue seemed eager to pick a fight, saying, "Brat, this emperor is probably not as strong as he's making himself out to be. He was definitely at least a bit affected by the earlier battles. Why don't we just use that earth immortal rank monk as our main force and go for broke? What was that thing you said before? Try to turn a bike into a motorcycle or something?"

Unlike her disciple Qiu Honglei, she had fought a great battle against an earth immortal in the Fiend Races' secret dungeon. Together with how much their cultivation ranks had increased, earth immortals were no longer completely invincible beings to her.

Zu An couldn't help but laugh. This woman really did love her risks. In the past, she had dared to assault the palace. Even after all this time, her nature hadn't changed in the slightest! Still, he wasn't sure if that was a good idea. After all, Ruhua would certainly be defeated, while he couldn't see any openings left by Zhao Han. Even if he took out the Sun Slaying Bow, he didn't have any way of targeting Zhao Han, which made it completely meaningless. It would only alert Zhao Han to the existence of that trump card.

However, if he retreated here, he would really feel that giving up this opportunity was a huge waste. After today, perhaps he would never have such a good chance to bring down Zhao Han. On top of that, after the day's events, there was no way Zhao Han would tolerate his existence in this world.

While he was feeling conflicted, Yan Xuehen's voice manifested in his ear, saying, "No matter what choice you make, I will always stand by your side."

Zu An was shocked and happy to hear that. He had never expected Yan Xuehen to say such a thing! After all, she had always been cool and indifferent, and she had never publicly stated her love. Even now, he wasn't sure about their relationship.

Those words were more convincing than anything else, however. If there hadn't been other people around, Zu An would almost certainly have been unable to resist taking her hand.

When she sensed his excitement, Yan Xuehen became a bit embarrassed. She looked away on purpose, avoiding eye contact.

Of course, her feelings weren't the only reason for her decision. Li Changsheng was her senior brother and had considerable status in the White Jade Sect. Now that he had joined in on the plot, the White Jade Sect had already been placed at the crossroads of danger. There was no way Zhao Han wouldn't try to get revenge on the sect after the fact!

And yet, the way she had lived for so many made her unable to decide on something like rebellion. As such, she decided to just give the power of choice to Zu An, and she would just follow him.

...

At that moment, however, victory was already decided. Zhao Han passed through Ruhua's body like a streak of light.

However, it was surprising that there were no holes left in Ruhua's body. Normally, after all, such a large person passing through an opponent's body would definitely leave a large wound.

Upon closer inspection, though, there were many fine injuries on Ruhua instead. Every wound was rather peculiar. There were no traces of blood, and they seemed to have been left by some kind of destructive power.

Normally, once cultivators passed the seventh rank, they gained powerful regenerative abilities. For earth immortals, both the strength of their flesh or their regeneration ability were at a terrifying level. They could usually recover quickly from such small wounds.

And yet, those wounds remained, completely covering Ruhua. The flesh around them was trying to heal, but was stopped by some kind of invisible

force that made it collapse and break apart. Such a sight was incredibly uncomfortable to see.

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue had grave expressions. They both explained at the same time, "This is the result of Zhao Han using his spatial abilities, causing those wounds to remain in that state. Without removing his aura from one's body, the wounds would only grow larger and eventually devour the whole person."

Zu An frowned. This ability seemed to counter his own regenerative abilities that he was quite proud of. Back when he was in Westhound Tomb, he had faced Zhao Han, but that was just a split soul. It was still quite far from the real body. Furthermore, he had taken advantage of the situation in that fight. There wouldn't necessarily be such a good opportunity this time.

Zhao Han didn't continue attacking, and stood with his hands behind his back. He said proudly, "You've lost!"

Ruhua's once bright eyes were now a bit dim. He said, "You're right. I've lost. All those bitter decades of effort, and yet fate supersedes our efforts..." His voice was full of regret and disappointment. Afterward, his head slumped, and no signs of life remained.

Zhao Han then looked at Zu An and said, "It should be your turn now. Should I call you the Fiend races' Regent or Zu An?"

In that instant, Zu An felt as if he were being stared at by a massive primordial beast. All the fine hairs on his body stood on end. Earlier, this man had been calling him marquis in such an intimate manner, and yet now, it was just a chilly 'Zu An'.

Xie Daoyun said in a trembling voice, "Your majesty, Sir Zu has cautiously and conscientiously eliminated all kinds of dangers on Violet Mountain, but this is an earth immortal level battle, so it is pardonable that he could not uncover anything. I hope that your majesty can be lenient out of thought for his hard work."

Most of the people present had all sorts of ulterior motives; only Xie Daoyun was on the purer side. Furthermore, she had always been a proper citizen and was an academy student, one who didn't have any thoughts of going against the emperor. The only thing she was worried about was her big brother Zu's safety.

She had the lowest cultivation rank out of those present. She was clearly frightened out of her mind and even her voice was shaking, but she summoned her courage and pleaded with the demon king-like emperor.

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Chapter 1732: You Shouldn't Have Come

When they saw Xie Daoyun's delicate figure shaking in the cold wind, the other beautiful women had strange expressions on their faces.

This woman really is good at acting innocent! She's still acting like this despite our current situation?

But if even such a weak person was willing to speak up for Zu An in this kind of situation, it just went to show just how great her courage was. After all, several grandmasters had been crushed by Zhao Han just like that. If he got angry at this point, just a single look would be enough to completely erase her from existence.

Just what kind of crazy superpower did this brat Zu An have to make her so dead set on him? She would even dare to protect him in such a situation?

This kid's ability to pick up women really is on an entirely different level...

You have successfully trolled Yun Jianyue for +111 +111 +111...

You have successfully trolled Qiu Honglei for +111 +111 +111...

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +111 +111 +111...

Zu An felt his scalp become a bit numb when he saw the Rage points, but overall, he still felt more moved. He really hadn't expected Xie Daoyun to take such a risk to plead for him. After all, as long as she was determined to be involved with him, she wouldn't be able to escape the consequences. It could even end up affecting her clan.

"All of his hard work?" Zhao Han repeated. Even he was a bit surprised. This little lady looked pretty smart, but why does she seem a bit slow now?

“Was this kid really getting rid of hidden dangers, or was he the one planting trouble for me?” he wondered as he looked at the sacrificial altar that had already vanished without a trace. “He investigated for so long, and yet he couldn’t even detect all of that gunpowder hidden here?”

Even though Xie Daoyun’s body was still shaking, her voice was quite a bit calmer than before as she continued, “Your majesty, when Sir Zu was investigating, Golden Peak’s stage hadn’t been built yet. Later, he was transferred away and always remained at his majesty’s side. This matter might not be his fault...”

Zhao Han almost laughed. He replied, “It’s not his fault? Then is it this emperor’s?”

“That kid already had thoughts of disloyalty for a long time. He was even trying to gain some benefits out of this earlier. If this emperor continues to feign ignorance, how will I unite and lead the people in the future?!”

When she felt his awe-inspiring voice, Xie Daoyun’s face paled. She wanted to say something else, but Zu An stopped her, saying, “Little sister Ling’er, there is no need to continue.”

Little sister Ling’er?

The three other women immediately perked up their ears.

They even shared nicknames? They really are acting close!

Even though this wasn’t the time to act jealous, they still couldn’t hold themselves back.

You have successfully trolled Yun Jianyue, Qiu Honglei, and Yan Xuehen for +66 +66 +66...

Zu An had a helpless expression, but he still prepared for battle. Even though Zhao Han was powerful, just waiting to be captured without doing a thing wasn’t his style.

However, Zhao Han seemed to completely overlook him, and instead looked at Xie Daoyun. He had an appreciative expression as he asked, “Who is this young lady? This emperor seems to sense the academy’s aura.”

Xie Daoyun bowed slightly and revealed her identity to him.

“So it was Brightmoon City Lord Xie Yi’s daughter. As expected, valiant fathers do not bear useless daughters. Now, you have even become Yan Xiang’s disciple; your future accomplishments will not be beneath those of your father,” Zhao Han said. The more he looked at her, the more he appreciated her. This girl was educated and well-balanced. She looked weak on the surface, but she had exceptional insight and bravery deep down.

After so many years, he had only sensed something similar from Bi Linglong. If the crown princess had not already been there, Xie Daoyun would be completely fit to wed the crown prince.

When he thought of Bi Linglong, he suddenly frowned. He looked at Zu An and asked, “Just what exactly happened in that secret dungeon the crown prince went into? What are you and the crown princess still hiding from me?”

Even though both Zu An and Bi Linglong had already explained things seamlessly, he didn’t actually believe them. After all, his yang spirit had been attached to the crown prince, so how could it possibly be destroyed so easily?

Judging from the emperor’s tone, it seems like the brat might even have a thing with the Crown Princess?!

Yun Jianyue, Yan Xuehen, and Qiu Honglei all looked at Zu An. They didn’t even feel any anger at this point, and instead felt a bit of respect. Just how many things were there that they didn’t know about?

When he heard Zhao Han mention that, Zu An knew clearly that the emperor had abandoned all thoughts of feigning civility. No doubt there would be a reckoning today. He secretly warned the three women to prepare for battle while pretending not to understand what the emperor was saying. He replied, “I have already explained everything that happened to your majesty. Why would you ask about that now?”

Zhao Han harrumphed. He was about to say something when he suddenly thought of something else. He turned around and looked at Xie Daoyun, asking, “Why did you come to Violet Mountain?”

Xie Daoyun was stunned at first, but she still explained her mission properly.

“Yan Xiang sent you to examine Violet Mountain’s formations?” Zhao Han asked. His expression changed a bit when he heard the explanation, as if he had realized something.

Zu An suddenly realized something as well. He figured out many things that had previously left him puzzled. As such, he called out, “Since you’ve already been here for so long, why didn’t you show yourself and say hello?”

The women all looked at him in confusion. They didn’t understand who he was talking to. In contrast, Zhao Han appeared as if he were facing a great enemy. He looked in a certain direction with a grave expression.

A rift suddenly opened up in midair and a figure slowly walked out. This person had silver hair, but even though he was on the older side, it was clear that he had been incredibly handsome in his youth.

Most importantly, there was a sort of transcendent air to his presence, and yet he wasn’t as threatening as Zhao Han. However, no one dared to look down on him, because there was a mysterious and profound feeling emanating from him.

“The libationer?” Xie Daoyun exclaimed, stupefied. She had never expected to see such a person in this situation.

It wasn’t just her; even Yan Xuehen was a bit absent-minded. As the spokesperson of the White Jade Sect, she had also met the libationer several times. It could even be said that they shared a level of friendship. However, she hadn’t expected to see him here.

Yun Jianyue had a nervous expression. She said secretly through ki, “Ah Zu, the situation doesn’t look too good. You should take Honglei with you and get away, I’ll protect you two. We should try to save as many of our group as possible.”

She was usually a fearless person, so now that she had spoken such discouraging words, it meant she didn’t even have a shred of confidence.

If it were just Zhao Han alone, perhaps they would have a small chance by working together. But if the libationer joined in, even that last shred of hope would disappear. Even a single person getting away was something to be incredibly happy about.

Unlike Yan Xuehen, her Devil Sect background made her an enemy of the libationer. She naturally assumed he was her enemy.

Zu An said in consolation, "Things might not be as bad as you think."

Yun Jianyue was stunned. Before she could grasp the meaning of Zu An's response, however, the libationer looked at Zu An in confusion and said, "Not even his majesty was aware of my presence. Why were you able to see through it?"

Zu An smiled and replied, "I just made a blind guess. It might just be my usual good luck."

It naturally wasn't just a blind guess. Over the years, he had received all sorts of information, and yet he hadn't been able to connect it all together even after all this time. Only when Xie Daoyun mentioned that Academy Master Yan had sent her and Zhao Han's expression changed did he finally understand many things he had previously been clueless about.

Of course, his various hurried inferences weren't enough. It was to the extent that he hadn't even thought it through at all. But Zhao Han's pressure was imminent, so he had just given it a shot. He hadn't expected it to actually work!

Seeing that he wasn't willing to talk about it, the libationer didn't force the issue either. Instead, he looked at Zhao Han.

"You shouldn't have come here!" Zhao Han said, his eyes narrowing. His expression was much more serious than when he had faced King Qi.

"And yet here I am," the libationer said with a sigh. His expression was one of great sorrow, and yet it carried equally great resolve.

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Chapter 1733: Great Formation.com

All of the women were smart. They quickly realized that something was strange about the conversation. The libationer didn't seem to be here to help

the emperor, but rather... to go against him? The younger ones, Xie Daoyun and Qiu Honglei, were puzzled. Only Yan Xuehen had a pensive expression.

Zhao Han looked at the libationer and asked, "Is it still because of the last dynasty's affairs?"

Zu An was startled. As expected!

The libationer remained silent. Zhao Han couldn't help but say, "During the Meng Dynasty, you were beaten down and pushed aside. You were nothing more than a marginalized idle prince. You were never treated as well as you have been in this dynasty, and you now receive the admiration of countless people. Isn't your life far better than it was during the Meng Dynasty?"

Apart from a few of the women, the others all widened their eyes in disbelief. The libationer was actually a prince of the previous dynasty?! They had never heard such a thing before, and there were no records of it at all! The news caused a huge uproar.

The libationer shook his head slightly and replied, "Do you think I am doing this because I care about those people?"

"Then it seems you are still discontent that your Chen clan's world was replaced by our current dynasty," Zhao Han said with a sneer. "As expected of raising an ungrateful wretch. It is useless no matter how well you are treated.

"But I am quite curious. You are already so old, and you do not even have any descendants. Why would you take the risk to rebel like this? What are you really after?" Zhao Han asked. He just couldn't figure that out. He wasn't stupid; he knew how sensitive the libationer's identity was, and yet had still given him a respectable position.

Apart from his cultivation indeed being quite brilliant, however, the libationer had never taken a wife and didn't have any children. It was hard to remain on guard against someone like that.

The libationer's expression remained calm as he replied, "If it were just ruling this world, why would I care? But there is something you absolutely should not have done, which is harming her descendants."

"Her?" Zhao Han repeated, stunned. However, he quickly realized who the libationer was referring to. He couldn't help but roar with laughter, exclaiming,

"I had long heard of the rumors between the two of you. I didn't expect you to be the affectionate sort!"

"Affectionate sort?" The women couldn't help but give the libationer a look. They really couldn't associate such an elder of virtue and prestige with those two words.

Zu An was moved. He recalled that in the past, when he first arrived at the academy's rear mountain, he had seen a picture of a court lady in the libationer's room. Could it have been her?

"I ask, what is love in this world..." the libationer said with a long sigh, not refuting Zhao Han's statement. His expression was full of sorrow.

Zu An had a weird expression as he thought, Is this guy going to copy Li Mochou and follow that up with 'to make a solemn vow of life and death'...

"You make it sound beautiful," Zhao Han said with a sneer. "But unfortunately, the one you loved was your sister-in-law!"

The others' eyes widened when they heard the shocking news. Even though this wasn't the time to enjoy a good drama, the libationer was someone of extraordinary status! Any drama related to him was irresistible!

"Let one's actions be guided by emotions, but restrained by propriety. I do not believe that there was anything improper. I only regret that I met her a bit too late," the libationer replied. Perhaps because of his great age, or because so many years had passed, he had already accepted that reality. Zhao Han's words weren't able to stir up many emotions in him.

"You never even went to bed with her?" Zhao Han asked with a frown. He said with a mocking tone "If you like a woman, you naturally need to obtain her. Those are nothing more than words of jealousy you used to console yourself."

The libationer frowned slightly. He clearly found Zhao Han's words unpleasant. He retorted, "Someone like you naturally would not know what love really is."

Zhao Han gave him a look of disdain and said, "I think you are the one who doesn't know how to make love."

The libationer was speechless.[1]

Zu An almost burst out laughing, while the women's faces turned completely red. They had never expected the two individuals who had the greatest statuses in the world to argue against each other like hoodlums on the streets. But currently, it seemed as if the libationer was on the losing side.

The libationer took a deep breath and said, "It was one thing when your father and grandfather usurped the Chen clan's world, but you even used those venomous schemes to make the Chen clan's offspring die prematurely. Those young princes died one after another, At first, I thought that the Chen clan might have done some wrong and was being punished by the heavens, but later, I learned that it was all because of your Zhao clan.

"I have always been lazy in nature. In the past, I was already treated as a wastrel who ignored my responsibilities. But my surname is still Chen. Since I now know the truth, a debt still needs to be paid."

Zhao Han replied with a laugh, "In the end, wasn't it still only because things happened to that woman's children? But I just can't figure it out. Those weren't even your descendants, but rather the descendants of your enemy. You would even get revenge for them?"

"The grudge between me and my older brother is something of the previous generation. The children have no part in that," the libationer said, his mood shifting. Even though he had said that this was only for the sake of the one he loved in the past, in reality, how could he possibly tolerate letting an entire dynasty be overtaken by despicable means?

Zhao Han said mockingly, "You were a loser back then, and now, you are still destined to become a loser. I am standing right here! What can you even do to me?"

The libationer shook his head and said, "You are right. I did not expect that King Qi and the others would be unable to weaken you at all. In terms of cultivation, in a one-on-one battle, I am still a bit beneath you."

"In that case, why are you still forcing yourself?" Zhao Han asked. "So much time has already passed, and your status is revered in our Great Zhou Dynasty. That is something your previous Meng Dynasty cannot possibly compare to. It was our Great Zhou Dynasty that gave you the chance to show your talent, allowing you to gain so much. Why are you still letting yourself be affected by the past?"

“This emperor isn’t some small-minded being. I can pretend that nothing happened today. In the future, you will continue to be the Royal Academy’s libationer, the model that all cultivators of this world look up to. If you are still unwilling, I can even provide you with beautiful concubines and maidservants to continue your Chen clan. What do you think?”

Zu An was a bit surprised. When did Zhao Han become so agreeable?

However, he quickly realized that it was because the libationer was too strong. Even if he was a bit inferior to Zhao Han, it was probably not too great a difference. If a huge battle really did occur, Zhao Han would definitely have to pay an extremely great price. Furthermore, the emperor’s heaven and man deterioration was drawing near. If he indeed paid such a price, his death could end up drawing closer. That wasn’t a risk he wanted to take. Furthermore, the Royal Academy was too important to him. The court, armies, and even the local officials and common people needed the Royal Academy’s research and technologies.

The libationer sighed and said, “I have to admit that your conditions are tempting, and you are a formidable emperor as well. Unfortunately, we stand on different sides. That is not something that can be changed so easily.”

Zhao Han’s eyes narrowed. He knew that the libationer had already made up his mind and further persuasion was meaningless. As such, he gave up on those thoughts and said, “Then, I want to see just what ability you have to seek revenge for myself!”

He was a hero of a generation, after all. Even though he was worried that he would have to pay a considerable price if he fought against the libationer, in a situation where a battle was unavoidable, there was no way he would let himself be tied up in worries and show openings for the enemy to exploit.

The libationer smiled and said, “Then please assess me as you wish, your majesty.” His hands spread open as he spoke. His entire body suddenly floated into midair. An invisible aura spread out all around him.

Then, the entirety of Golden Peak suddenly flickered with a burst of azure light that carried the unique brilliance of runes. It wasn’t just Golden Peak; every other peak across the entire Violet Mountain Range surged with blue radiance as well. The ground rocked and rumbled, and natural laws swirled around. An aura of desolation filled the air.

If there were someone watching from above, they would notice that the entire Violet Mountain Range had formed a single giant formation. Compared to that formation, the Righteous Sun Sect's mountain defense formation was like an infant. It wasn't even worth mentioning.

The officials who had been trying to blast open the Righteous Sun Sect's defense formation with their siege cannons were horrified. Was the entire world experiencing an upheaval?

No wonder the Righteous Sun Sect is so powerful! The true formation appears when the mountain defense formation is attacked?

Zu An had studied 'One Drop of Heaven's Essence' and had a deep understanding of feng shui geomancy. He keenly sensed that the power of the entire Violet Mountain Range seemed to have been transferred by the mysterious formation. It seemed similar to the power of the mountain range he had exploited back in the secret dungeon, but upon closer analysis, it was also substantially different.

Yan Xuehen's eyes sparkled. She was an expert in formations and could sense how shockingly profound the formation was. So it turned out formations could even be designed this way! It really was spectacular. She had never thought of such a thing before.

There was a bit of confusion in Xie Daoyun's expression at first. Then, it changed as she murmured, "Why... Why does this feel similar to the things I arranged a few days ago?"

1. Both sides said the same thing, but the connotations are different. 📖

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Chapter 1734: Banishment

Xie Daoyun was a genius in formations, so she quickly sensed what was wrong.

Zu An was stunned when he heard her explanation. He asked, "What do you mean?"

Yan Xuehen and the other women also looked at her.

Xie Daoyun bit her lip. Then, she quickly explained, "Previously, I was investigating whether there were any special formations buried under Violet Mountain for my master, right? This was the State Teacher's territory, and master was worried that the State Teacher could have disloyal thoughts..."

Her expression paled halfway through her sentence, as if she had just realized something. However, she continued, "Because the State Teacher's cultivation was too high, I was worried that I wouldn't be able to meet master's expectations. So, master passed some formations to me and said I could use them to check if there were any killing formations. I didn't find anything strange during my rough inspection of the place, so I set up the formations my master taught me to check in more detail. Back then, everything was normal, and I was even about to celebrate the completion of the task..."

Yun Jianyue said with a sneer, "It looks like Yan Xiang supports the libationer after all, and he even secretly helped him set up this great formation. Violet Mountain is Wang Wuxie's domain, so it wouldn't have been too convenient for him to secretly come here and set up the formation. That was why he sent you instead.

"In order to not draw any suspicion at all, he even kept you in the dark. That way, while you thought you were removing hidden dangers, you were actually building a powerful killing formation."

Xie Daoyun's face turned completely pale. She couldn't imagine her most respected teacher exploiting her like that. She protested, "There's no way, there's no way!"

She suddenly thought of something and quickly argued, "Even though master's achievements in formations are far above mine, I've already spent a considerable amount of time in this field too. If there really had been a killing formation on a scale as large as this one, there's no way I wouldn't notice a single thing!"

Yun Jianyue frowned. Indeed, that didn't make sense.

Meanwhile, Yan Xuehen gave Xie Daoyun a sympathetic look and said, "If my suspicions are correct, the libationer and Master Yan already arranged the other parts of the formation many years ago. You only added the final pieces. Neither the portion they arranged before nor the key parts you built recently pose any threat on their own. That was why Wang Wuxie did not suspect you. The formation could then only be activated if all the pieces were put together and activated through a special method. At that point, there would no longer be any need to hide anything."

Xie Daoyun's face paled. She was smart enough to realize that that hypothesis was feasible. It seemed her master had indeed deceived her.

The libationer said just then, "Daoyun, do not blame your master. I was the one who planned all of this. He does not actually know of it."

Xie Daoyun pursed her lips. Her master had already reached such an incredible level in formations, and there were rumors that the disciple had already surpassed the master. How could the libationer's actions be hidden from him? He clearly had to be in the know as well.

Zhao Han harrumphed. "Look at you, still trying to cover things up for Yan Xiang. It seems you are quite worried about a possible defeat today, and that I will take my anger out on him."

The libationer smiled and replied, "Isn't your majesty a bit too confident? I might not necessarily be defeated today."

Zhao Han's expression changed as he said, "I want to see just what kind of formation can defeat me then."

As soon as he spoke, he vanished from his original location. After a moment, however, blue ripples suddenly spread in the air, as if something had slammed against them. Zhao Han reappeared near his original location. His expression turned a bit grave as he exclaimed, "Spatial restriction?"

Previously, the Righteous Sun Sect's mountain defense formation paired with some of the shamans' formations had achieved a similar restrictive effect. However, with Zhao Han's cultivation, those restrictions hadn't been able to display their full effects. The reason he had pretended to be affected was to see if he could draw out bigger fish.

However, this great formation the libationer had activated actually prevented him from leaving. At that instant, he had an ominous premonition.

Still, he calmed himself down and remarked, "By borrowing the power of the Violet Mountain Range, you have indeed created quite the shocking formation. But the fact that you used up so much of your energy on this spatial restriction means its offensive ability will have decreased correspondingly. I refuse to believe that you can still injure me."

Even though 'adults can have everything' was a principle, most other things had their own principles as well. Having everything wasn't so easy.

The formation was good at restricting spatial movements, but it was a bit weaker in other aspects. Its power could be enough to kill other powerful cultivators, but it would be a bit lacking against Zhao Han.

The libationer could personally enter the formation, but if he entered, Zhao Han was still confident that he could win a one-on-one fight. If the libationer didn't enter, however, Zhao Han just had to wait. Time was on his side. He knew that even someone of the libationer's ability couldn't maintain a formation of such a scale for that long. Once the formation weakened, that would provide a chance to kill the libationer.

And yet, the libationer seemed completely unsurprised. He replied, "Indeed, with your cultivation, trying to kill you through a great battle wouldn't be all that realistic. But who said this was an offensive formation?"

Zhao Han was stunned. Only then did he realize that even though the formation gave off great power, he didn't sense any offensive properties to it at all. He asked gravely, "What kind of formation is this?"

The libationer said calmly, "I've spent a long time researching how to defeat you. Even though I believed that with my cultivation, I could fight against you, I didn't have that much confidence in winning. That was why I began to think about the issue from other perspectives. In the end, heaven doesn't disappoint those who are determined, so I finally found a solution."

He paused for a moment before looking at Zhao Han and said, "Since I can't defeat you, I'll just banish you to a place of nothingness you'll never be able to return from. The result will be no different from killing you."

When he heard those words, Zhao Han's expression changed greatly.

At his cultivation realm, he naturally knew that this wasn't the only world in the universe. There were many other worlds. For example, the secret dungeons were smaller worlds in their own right. Of course, apart from secret dungeons, there were larger-scale worlds too.

However, between worlds, there was vast and endless spatial chaos. Even earth immortals wouldn't be able to endure such destructive astral winds forever. They could end up being completely destroyed by the chaos before they even arrived in another world.

That was why, since ancient times, those who stood at the very peak of cultivation wanted to become immortals. On one hand, they would gain endless longevity, while on the other, they could move freely through the chaos in search of legendary worlds.

The libationer's method was none other than to banish Zhao Han into a chaotic void stream. If the void stream was close enough to this world, perhaps he would be able to hold on and return. However, the libationer had schemed for so many years. How could he possibly make such a mistake?

When he thought of that, Zhao Han could no longer remain calm. With a roar, he turned into a giant golden statue. His giant fist seemed to carry world-destroying might as it smashed toward the void.

"Break!"

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Chapter 1735: Caught Up in Disaster

Zhao Han knew this was no small matter. If he were to be banished to an unknown place in the void, even someone of his cultivation rank would have no choice but to just wait for death. As such, he didn't hold back in his attacks at all. His entire body transformed into a giant golden-armored divine general. The giant buddha Master Jian Huang created had been imposing, but in comparison, it was like an infant.

Such a large manifestation was something not even the mountain defense formation could hide. The officials halfway up the mountain were all incredibly moved. They all kneeled down and loudly shouted 'Long live the emperor!'

In contrast, King Qi's officials all paled when they saw what was happening. Even though King Qi hadn't told them about the plan, the smarter ones were able to guess the truth. Now that the emperor had shown such power, didn't it signify King Qi's inevitable loss?

Even though they were far away, all the officials couldn't help but kneel while trembling all over, to say nothing of those who remained on Golden Peak.

Fortunately, the libationer's great formation was in place, so Yun Jianyue and the others were just about able to hold on. However, they couldn't help but feel their very souls trembling. They were just that insignificant, actually unable to bring forth even the slightest will to fight.

Zu An also felt some fear toward giants. He sensed that his dao conviction was beginning to waver. As such, he quickly looked down at the spot beneath his own waist. Only then did he manage to calm himself down.

...

When Zhao Han used all of his strength, just how powerful was he? When his fist smashed outward, it left the faint outline of a black opening in the azure sky. It was a sign that space itself had been blasted open by the force of his punch!

His fully-powered fist moved so quickly that it almost instantly smashed into the formation around him. The translucent formation surged with blue light, followed by a sound that resembled glass shattering. Where his fist made contact, it actually left a hole in the formation.

The libationer's expression changed. He rushed forth, turning into a white afterimage and stopping Zhao Han from breaking out. Then, he used his body to block the hole, using all of his power to repair the formation.

The publicly acknowledged number one expert in the world was Zhao Han, but if one were to talk about the one who had the most knowledge in the world, that title still belonged to the libationer.

That was apparent just from his numerous disciples, and how every disciple studied something entirely different. Some people even suspected that if the libationer hadn't been so distracted by so many different fields and focused on cultivation, his accomplishments could have been even higher than Zhao Han's. As such, by using everything he had learned, he forcibly maintained the formation.

In almost the same instant, shining runes appeared in the midst of the great formation. Immediately after, a vortex appeared. At first, it was quite small, but it grew larger and larger over time.

Then, the space within the formation began to crack. All of the buildings, trees, sand, and stones... They all fell into the vortex.

"Out of the way!" Zhao Han roared furiously as he tried to leave through the opening he had just created.

With his cultivation, the vortex shouldn't have been able to do anything to him. However, the libationer had schemed for many years, and on top of that, he had used the power of the entire Violet Mountain Range to support the formation. The entire space would soon be transported into an empty void. Thus, even Zhao Han couldn't help but become a bit nervous. He could no longer unleash another full-powered attack, so he could only hope to leave through the opening he had made.

Unfortunately, the libationer continued to remain there while using all his techniques, preventing Zhao Han from leaving through the hole. He tried to blast the libationer back, but although the libationer's cultivation was lower than his, it wasn't too much weaker. There was no way of deciding victory and defeat within a short amount of time.

Meanwhile, the great formation was activating extremely quickly. It had only been a few breaths of time from when the vortex first appeared, but space had already begun to collapse into a sphere, and it was going faster and faster. Even Zhao Han couldn't resist the force and began to be drawn inside.

"Stop!" Zhao Han yelled, no longer having time to think about fighting the libationer. Instead, he used all of his cultivation, his body erupting with golden brilliance. All kinds of strange mythical beasts' shadows appeared around him. They were clearly the embodiment of his various skills.

However, that still wasn't enough. He took out the Human Emperor's Seal and held it above his head. The divine weapon aura it emanated engulfed him, finally letting him stabilize his position.

Zhao Han roared with laughter and cried out, "Is that all this formation can do?!"

He felt much more confident now. As long as he could hold on, the vortex would naturally disappear. Then, he could slowly deal with the libationer.

Having felt the terrifying power of the vortex, Zu An had decided to bring the four women away. However, he was surprised by what was happening. He realized that as long as the Human Emperor's Seal was shot down, Zhao Han himself would have no chance of resisting the vortex.

Just as he took out the Tai'e Sword, though, he saw the libationer raise his hand. A painting scroll flew out from the libationer's sleeves and gradually unfurled, revealing the figure of an exceptional beauty within.

Zu An was surprised. That seemed to be the drawing that had hung in the libationer's bedroom! It looked completely ordinary, so he had thought that it was nothing more than a keepsake for the libationer to reminisce about his former love. Could it also be a deity-grade weapon?

The painting scroll unfolded and quickly wrapped itself around the Human Emperor's Seal. In an instant, the divine weapon's aura briefly vanished.

However, it was only for an instant. The painting scroll erupted into flames, and moments later, it crumbled into ash. It was clearly not a deity-grade weapon and couldn't stop the real deal's power.

The libationer had an expression of grief. When he looked at the ashes, he felt a moment of absent-mindedness.

And yet, the instant in which the Human Emperor's Seal aura was isolated was already enough. Without the protection of the Human Emperor's Seal, Zhao Han could no longer resist the absorption of the vortex and fell into it. The vortex's terrifying suction force was strong enough to have absorbed the entirety of Violet Mountain if not for the formation; thus, Zhao Han lost his balance and was unable to stop himself.

Just as he was about to be completely sucked into the vortex, however, he suddenly reached out and grabbed the libationer's shoulder. He had a sinister expression, even as he resembled a drowning man who had managed to grab onto a reed; it seemed he would never let go.

However, the libationer's footing was far more stable than a reed. With his cultivation, it wasn't too difficult for him to stop himself. If they persisted for a while longer and the vortex collapsed, everything would be alright.

And yet, just then, the libationer suddenly let out a deep sigh and said, "Your majesty has already fallen into this state. Did you think I would still cherish life?" Right after he finished speaking, he kicked off from the ground and rushed into the great formation.

"NOOOOOO!" Zhao Han screamed.

How could he possibly still hold on when the libationer slammed into him, after all? Both of them immediately fell into the vortex. Despite that, he still tried to struggle. To some extent, it showed just how profound his cultivation was, as he was still able to toss and turn inside the vortex.

In the end, though, he couldn't resist its pull and still disappeared within.

At the same time, when the libationer's protection disappeared, the great formation's opening was fully exposed. Its powerful suction force spilled out. Guan Chouhai, Xuan Bajing, Li Changsheng, and some of the corpses that remained were instantly sucked in.

Zu An's expression changed. He quickly grabbed the women and flew away, saying, "We need to leave!"

Everything had happened too fast. A moment before, he had been thinking about how to knock down the Human Emperor's Seal to get rid of Zhao Han, but then the situation changed rapidly.

The women also understood the severity of the situation. They all used their fastest movement skills to flee. Unfortunately, even Zhao Han couldn't stop the suction force of the spatial vortex, so how could they?

The weakest of them, Xie Daoyun, was the first one to fail. She screamed in alarm as she fell backward, pulled by the powerful vortex. Zu An felt his heart sink, but he rushed over using Grandgale without the slightest hesitation.

He was about to bring her back when he heard another scream of alarm. Qiu Honglei had also lost her footing and was being pulled back. Yun Jianyue's expression changed greatly and she tried to grab her disciple, but she only grabbed empty air.

Just as Qiu Honglei was about to be dragged past the edge of the vortex, Zu An quickly threw Xie Daoyun outward, using the recoil force to quickly arrive at the edge and grab Qiu Honglei's hand.

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Chapter 1736: Regardless of Perils

When she saw Zu An rushing to save her without any hesitation despite the danger, Qiu Honglei's eyes turned red as she cried, "Ah Zu!"

Zu An didn't have any time to reply. He immediately used Grandgale to move quickly. Unfortunately, perhaps because of the great formation, the distance he could move was greatly reduced, and he could only move within its range. Whenever he appeared again, he was pulled back by the vortex's terrifying suction force. Even using Grandgale several times only brought him a tiny distance away, and he couldn't cover any more distance than that.

The Grandgale skill had a cooldown period. With his cultivation, using it several times in succession like that was already his limit. Even though the interval between each use wasn't that long, the situation was extremely critical. That bit of time was already enough for him to be dragged back toward the vortex several times over.

Unfortunately, once he ran out of Grandgale uses, he was almost instantly pulled back. He didn't hesitate to use the 'Steps of Rising Lotus'. Lotuses appeared beneath his feet one after another. He slowly walked out, as if he were braving the most difficult of howling winds and torrential rains.

The Steps of Rising Lotus was an extremely mysterious technique, even capable of escaping some seals. Unfortunately, the formation was something the libationer had exhausted decades to create, and it even borrowed the nearly endless power of the Violet Mountain Range. The spatial collapse itself had already taken form. Even someone as powerful as Zhao Han and the

libationer had been sucked in, so using these Steps of Rising Lotus was nothing more than a futile struggle.

Zu An struggled to take many steps, but then he discovered that he couldn't advance anymore, and had even been dragged back a bit. He immediately felt dejected. In a hurry, he could only take out the Tai'e Sword and stab it into the ground. It was barely able to remain in place, but the two of them ended up like fluttering flags blowing in the wind.

Qiu Honglei began to weep, saying, "Ah Zu, I was the one who dragged you down. You shouldn't have saved me..."

Zu An held her waist tightly. He was at his wits' end now. When he heard that, he replied with a sigh, "How can I just watch as you fall into danger without doing anything?"

His expression turned resolute as he used all of his strength to fling her outward, yelling "Catch!"

With his full-powered throw, backed by his high cultivation, Qiu Honglei flew away from the vortex like an artillery shell. However, Zu An himself could no longer hold on because of the recoil. The ground the Tai'e Sword had been planted into completely collapsed, while he also began to spiral toward the depths.

Qiu Honglei screamed in alarm. How could she not understand that this was a situation of absolute despair and that he had chosen to save her instead? She didn't even have time to wipe her tears. With a fling of her wrist, a pink band shot out and wrapped around his waist. At the same time, a white silk band also wrapped around her hand.

As it turned out, Yan Xuehen hadn't let the opportunity slip past. She and Yun Jianyue had incredibly powerful cultivation, and they were already outside of the vortex's effects. Between that and the fact that the great formation was withdrawing further and further into the ground, the effects on the outside world were growing weaker and weaker, and the two had barely managed to stabilize themselves after saving Xie Daoyun. Afterward, they just happened to see Zu An save Qiu Honglei and fling her out.

"That brat doesn't even care about his life anymore when he's chasing after women!" Yan Xuehen remarked, but she didn't have time to complain too much as she instinctively threw out her waistband to catch Qiu Honglei.

A tremendous force passed through the silk band. Yan Xuehen lost her footing and began to stagger toward the great formation. Fortunately, Yun Jianyue moved quickly and grabbed her waist. The suction force was too terrifying. They no longer let their pride as grandmasters affect them and used everything they had.

Xie Daoyun, who had been sent even further away, quickly formed a hand seal. A pair of translucent hands stopped the two of them, barely keeping them in place. Despite that, the powerful suction still drew their group closer and closer to the vortex.

When he saw that, Zu An immediately shouted, "Hurry up and let go! Otherwise, you're all going to lose your lives!"

Qiu Honglei bit her lip and frantically shook her head. She reached out her hand and wrapped the band around her arm a few more times.

Yan Xuehen's expression remained unshaken, and she naturally didn't let go either. Instead, she used everything she had to try to haul the two of them out.

However, the sound of tearing cloth soon filled the air. The white band couldn't tolerate the weight and terrifying absorption force, and it snapped. Between the time it took for the first fibers to tear and the band tearing apart, there was almost no time to react at all.

Yan Xuehen was filled with regret. If she had known things would turn out like this, she wouldn't have given the Primal Skysilk to Chuyan. Still, she didn't hesitate and instinctively flew out, grabbing the other half of the torn band. As a result, she was pulled further toward the formation.

Yun Jianyue was shocked. She didn't have time to think and quickly grabbed Yan Xuehen's ankle.

Xie Daoyun's face was deathly pale. She didn't have time to think too much and leaped forward to grab Yun Jianyue, holding onto the ground with her other hand.

"Stone cold woman, you've actually gone so far to save my disciple! If we survive this, I'll definitely repay this favor," Yun Jianyue said. She was too embarrassed to thank her for saving Zu An, so she used Qiu Honglei as a shield.

Yan Xuehen was also too embarrassed to admit that she couldn't bear to see anything happen to Zu An. She bit her lip and said, "We might not have that chance."

The space within the formation rapidly collapsed at a speed several times greater than before, and its suction force also grew exponentially greater.

With Xie Daoyun's cultivation, how could she still hold on? The hands made of talismans shattered, and the entire group cried out in alarm as they were sucked into the vortex.

...

Jadefall Palace had taken up temporary residence in another part of Violet Mountain. Their disciples hadn't left yet, but the emperor had been holding his Fengshan Ceremony, so they couldn't remain at Golden Peak. As such, they had chosen a place to stay temporarily until the secret dungeon opened again. Then, they could welcome the disciples as they came out.

From the very start, Wan Tongtian and Elder Huo Ling had been paying attention to the changes happening on Violet Mountain. They were greatly shaken, as they could feel the terrifying power being unleashed on Golden Peak even from far away. Fortunately, they were far enough away to be unaffected; otherwise, they would have been as helpless as ants.

Suddenly, a disciple cried out, "The Wordless Edict, Wordless Edict!"

The two of them noticed the disturbance and quickly followed the source of the sound. They saw the Wordless Edict, which normally remained quiet and unmoving, suddenly beginning to shake intensely. At the same time, it gave off a special light.

The two of them were shocked. After all, the Wordless Edict was related to the daoist secret dungeon. If something happened to it, their most outstanding disciples would be stuck inside forever.

They were about to try and calm it down when it suddenly rushed into the air. It broke through the roof, then disappeared into the starry sky. The book opened and pointed at Golden Peak. The once empty pages filled with ancient and profound symbols that also seemed to resemble a series of moving pictures.

...

Meanwhile, on Golden Peak, the massive formation had turned into a black hole the size of a basketball. Then, the entirety of Golden Peak was sucked into it. Streaks of dark light emerged as the hole closed up, disappearing completely.

The officials who had been trying to blast open the mountain defense formation were all stupefied. The formation they hated so bitterly had just vanished. However, they couldn't bring themselves to feel happy; it wasn't just the formation, but rather the entire peak above Guidance Palace, that was now completely missing!

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Chapter 1737: Exploring

As they stared at the now-missing half of the mountain peak, the officials, who were normally used to seeing all kinds of shocking things, were completely dumbstruck.

A while later, some of them finally snapped out of their daze, wondering, "Where is his majesty?"

That question was like the first domino to fall in a line, causing a loud commotion to break out.

Right, where is his majesty?

King Qi's faction looked everywhere for King Qi. However, the entire peak was missing, to say nothing of any living people!

There were many people with powerful cultivations present. Their auras spread out, but they still didn't sense anything. It was as if everyone on the mountain had vanished into thin air.

The emperor's cultivation was just too shockingly powerful, and he was always as great as the sun itself wherever he went. Now, however, no one could sense even a bit of his aura. This was completely unprecedented.

“His majesty... Has his majesty died?” an official asked with a trembling voice.

“Silence! His majesty’s cultivation is unmatched. How could he possibly die?!” Meng Yi shot back, glowering at him.

“But...” the official began. He wanted to say something else, but Bi Yi interrupted him.

“There are no buts. I believe that his majesty has taken the fight to another place and just cannot come back for a short period of time,” Bi Qi said with a darkened expression.

His analysis received the support of most of those present. After all, the emperor’s power was deeply rooted in their minds. Even if there really were a few more earth immortals, it wouldn’t reach a point where there wouldn’t even be a single trace of him left. For better or for worse, there would be a few corpses, right?

The current situation seemed to point to the possibility that they had moved somewhere else. An earth immortal could cover incredible distances quickly. It wasn’t something people of their level could fathom. As such, it was more likely that their battle had ended up elsewhere. There would likely be news in a few days.

Bi Qi quickly added, “Set up a blockade a hundred miles wide around Violet Mountain. Furthermore, no one is allowed to speak of today’s incident. Otherwise, they will be punished for treason!”

With him serving as their pillar, the alarmed officials gradually calmed down and replied, “Understood!”

Pei Zheng and the others of King Qi’s faction exchanged a few looks. They were all deeply worried.

The other loyal officials, including Bi Ziang, began to think quickly. His eyes shone brightly. With the current situation as it stood, it would be wise to return to the capital as quickly as possible to turn the situation to their advantage.

Only Murong Qinghe and some of the juniors were worried about Zu An’s safety. They didn’t know whether he had ended up going to Golden Peak or not.

...

Meanwhile, Zu An was completely dejected as he sank into the vortex. Judging from what the libationer and Zhao Han had said, the chaotic void stream was something not even earth immortals could last a long time in. Didn't that mean someone with his cultivation was doomed to perish quickly?

He was filled with confusion. He would never see Chuyan, Big Manman, Yanluo, or any of those other people again...

They'll definitely be sad once they hear news of my death, right?

Besides, there's the child in Sang Qien's belly... They'll lose their father before even being born. I hope she can continue to stay with Dandan and that they can rely on each other...

Even though he was full of regrets, he didn't regret his choice at all. If he didn't try to save the woman he loved, even he wouldn't be able to help but look down on himself.

All sorts of thoughts rushed through his mind, but soon after, he fainted. In the last moments before he fell unconscious, he seemed to see Yan Xuehen and the others fall in after him. It was already too late for him to stop them as he lost consciousness.

...

After remaining unconscious for a long time, he gradually awakened. He looked around and saw that he was in a desolate border area. The distant skies were dusky, and it seemed to be evening. The trees around him made the place seem almost secluded and serene. From time to time, he heard some owl cries.

It clearly wasn't nighttime, and yet everything was dark. Furthermore, it was cold, but not because of the temperature; rather, the air carried a chill that could even unsettle one's soul.

Zu An was quite puzzled. What in the world is going on? This seemed completely different from the void that had been described previously!

Could it be that I wasn't sucked into the void, but was sent to a place near Violet Mountain instead?

He heard a groan next to him as a dainty woman gradually woke up.

“Honglei!” Zu An cried, feeling extremely happy when he saw her. He had thought that they were dead for sure, and hadn’t expected to end up together with her.

Qiu Honglei immediately blushed when she saw him. She choked back powerful emotions as she murmured, “I... am I dreaming?”

“You’re not dreaming. We’re still alive,” Zu An said. With his current cultivation, he was at the very least capable of knowing whether he was alive or not. That was especially true after he had experienced the illusory battle against the shamans, as he had taken some time afterward to study some methods to tell apart dreams and reality.

When she learned that both of them were still alive, Qiu Honglei could no longer hold on. She threw herself into his arms and began to cry passionately, saying, “Ah Zu, you’re not allowed to take such a huge risk to save me again! Compared to both of us dying, I would rather have you live on alone!”

The two of them realized that they were still holding hands tightly. When they thought back to how they had fallen into the vortex while clinging onto each other, they both felt a warm sensation. They reflexively held on even tighter, unwilling to let go for even a moment.

A gentle smile appeared on Zu An’s face. He used his other hand to gently caress Qiu Honglei as she said, “I also want you to continue living.”

Qiu Honglei leaned against him. When she felt the heat coming from his chest, she only felt as if she were the happiest person in this world. If her master saw that, she would definitely give her blessings...

Huh?

She suddenly sat up straight. Her face was a bit pale as she asked, “Master... Where is master? Master was pulled in together with Sect Master Yan and Miss Xie. Where did they go?”

Zu An was alarmed. Only then did he remember what had happened. He quickly looked around, but what he saw was only an endless expanse of weeds and sinister trees. There was no one else in sight.

Even after looking around, Qiu Honglei didn't find anything. She had a look of alarm as she asked, "Ah Zu, do you think master and the others were sent into that void?"

Zu An was also a bit nervous, but he still consoled her and said, "Don't worry, that shouldn't be the case. Since we weren't sent there, they probably weren't either. It's just like a secret dungeon. Even if the same people enter, they might be sent to different places. We can look around slowly, and we should be able to find them. They're not weak at all and should be able to take care of themselves."

He immediately spread his ki out to search the world. He sensed some natural laws that were considerably different from where they had been previously. That was something a cultivator at his level could sense. Clearly, they weren't near Violet Mountain, but rather in another world. After entering secret dungeons so many times, the situation wasn't too unfamiliar to him.

"I hope so," Qiu Honglei said, calming down a bit. She looked around and couldn't help but tremble. She wondered, "Where is this place? It's a bit gloomy and cold."

"I don't know. However, the yin energy here is a bit dense," Zu An said with a nod. "Let's look for a place to spend the night nearby first. It's already getting dark. I have a strange feeling that staying in the forest after nightfall isn't a good idea."

Qiu Honglei voiced her agreement. The two of them quickly began to search through the forest. The dense undergrowth of the forest wasn't too difficult for cultivators to navigate, and they quickly found a different area. They saw a small road that was covered by weeds.

"If there's a road, that means we're not too far from human habitation," Qiu Honglei said, sighing in relief.

Zu An's expression turned somewhat serious as he replied, "Have you noticed? From the start until now, we haven't even seen a single animal."

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Chapter 1738: An Old Friend Who Shouldn't Be Here

When Zu An first entered this world, not only had he released his divine sense, he had also immediately used his jade badge in an attempt to use the surrounding smaller creatures as a radar. However, there wasn't a single reaction.

At first, he had thought that maybe the region just happened to lack smaller creatures, but there weren't any even as he went further in. He soon realized that something was strange.

Qiu Honglei was startled and looked vigilantly around the area. She asked, "Could it be that these plants are poisonous?"

Zu An shook his head and said, "I know a bit about poisons. These are all just normal trees and don't have any poison."

"Then that makes things even weirder..." Qiu Honglei muttered, her brows furrowing as she thought to herself; she appeared to be struggling with something. Suddenly, she noticed that Zu An was staring at her absentmindedly. She asked in a panic, "What is it?"

Zu An said with a chuckle, "It's nothing. I just thought that you're really pretty even when you're frowning."

"You're so annoying..." Qiu Honglei protested playfully. If it were another man who had said something similar to her, she would only think he was being flirty. But when her lover said the same thing, she felt her heart beat rapidly.

Zu An held her soft hand and said, "Let's go. There seems to be light up ahead. Let's go over and take a look."

Qiu Honglei voiced her agreement. As the Saintess of the Devil Sect, she was normally quite decisive, and yet now that she was with Zu An, she didn't really want to think about things anymore. She felt really happy just being with him.

If Wan Guiyi were to see her now, perhaps his previous impression of a woman who ruthlessly overcame her challenges would completely collapse.

The two of them continued along the small path. Even though the source of light didn't seem that far, it still took them some time to get there. That was because it was an entirely unfamiliar environment. Both of them were vigilant and constantly looking for abnormalities around them, so they didn't move too

quickly. By the time they drew near to the light, the sky had already become completely dark.

Only then did they notice that the source of light came from a dilapidated temple. It wasn't particularly small, but it was extremely run-down. There were weeds growing all over the place, and all manner of vines climbed along the trees and walls; they were sinister and malicious-looking, as if they were giant snakes. There were broken slabs of stone and collapsed statues strewn all across the ground, covered by a thick layer of dirt and ashes. All of these things seemed to suggest that the temple had existed for a very long time.

The two of them exchanged a look. Judging from the state of the temple and the desolate wilderness around it, it had clearly been abandoned for a long time. How could there still be any chance that someone was inside?

"Could it be master and the others?" Qiu Honglei wondered expectantly.

"Unlikely. We need to be careful," Zu An replied seriously.

The two of them carefully approached the temple. Suddenly, they stepped on something hard. Zu An noticed that something was different and squatted down. It turned out to be a broken stone tablet that still vaguely carried traces of writing. Qiu Honglei brushed her hand across it and instantly cleared away the dirty layer covering the surface, reading the inscription on it: Ruo Lan Temple.

Zu An was stunned.

"Ah Zu, what's wrong?" Qiu Honglei asked nervously when she saw his strange expression.

"It's nothing. I just remembered some things from the past," Zu An replied as he thought to himself, Good thing it's not Lan Ruo Temple.[1]

The two of them continued into the temple. The doors were on the verge of collapse, as if the merest gust of wind would knock them over. Furthermore, strange creaks emanated from them from time to time. If a normal person tried to open them, the doors would definitely make ear-splitting noises. Fortunately, both of them were strong cultivators and didn't make any sound while moving.

...

They continued inside. There were thick spiderwebs everywhere, and yet not a single spider could be seen. The pair's gazes landed on a room inside the main temple. The light came from that place.

Suddenly, they heard a strange singing voice that resembled a duck's quacking, and wasn't all that pleasant to listen to at all. The voice sang, "I love simmer-fried chicken wings..."

Qiu Honglei clearly sighed in relief. The one inside was a person, and judging from the current situation, they didn't seem to be too dangerous.

Zu An had a strange expression. Why did the voice sound a bit familiar?

The two of them arrived in front of the door. There was nowhere to secretly observe the interior, because there were holes everywhere in the doors and windows. There was a bonfire in the center of the room. A wretched youngster was seated next to it, and there was a simple rack set up above the fire.

There was some food propped up on a wooden stick, being roasted. When she saw that it was a piece of bread, Qiu Honglei was completely confused. This world calls this stuff chicken wings?

Meanwhile, Zu An noticed the youngster's two large front teeth. He had a strange expression. Why was he seeing this guy here? At that moment, he began to question all of his previous speculations.

The two didn't hide themselves, so the one inside immediately noticed them. He drew his blade and slashed toward them, creating a wind that sent sparks from the fire flying everywhere. He cried, "Who's there?!"

Qiu Honglei frowned. Even though this fellow's cultivation wasn't bad, it was still far too lacking compared to the two of them. She was about to teach him a lesson when Zu An stopped her, leaving her a bit confused.

The bucktoothed youngster finally saw who they were. He voiced his surprise and quickly put his blade away, asking, "Boss, why are you here?"

Qiu Honglei asked in confusion, "Boss?"

Zu An quickly ran over to embrace the bucktoothed man, exclaiming, "I didn't expect to see you here either!"

It turned out to be none other than his seatmate Wei Suo from back in Brightmoon City. When he first arrived in this world, Wei Suo had been his source of a lot of information. He couldn't help but chuckle when he remembered how excitedly Wei Suo had introduced Brightmoon Academy's ten great beauties to him back then.

Wei Suo also saw Qiu Honglei. When he saw how stunning she was, his head clearly went blank. He couldn't help but pull Zu An aside, saying, "Boss really is boss, as expected; your women are each more beautiful than the next! The ten great beauties from the academy almost all fell to you alone, and yet you still have such an incredible woman on the outside! When are you going to pass on some flirting skills to me?"

Zu An was stunned, replying, "Is getting women that hard? Don't you just have to ask if they want to be with you?"

"That's it?" Wei Suo replied with a suspicious look. Don't try to trick me just because I don't have experience...

Zu An nodded confidently and said, "At least, I haven't experienced rejection after all these years."

When he saw Zu An's handsome and confident appearance, then thought about his own face, Wei Suo immediately became discouraged. He said, "Forget it. Pretend I never asked. But why does this woman look a bit familiar?"

Zu An chuckled and said, "You might have seen her before. She spent some time in Brightmoon City in the past, too." He vaguely introduced Qiu Honglei.

Wei Suo's eyes lit up. He turned around to look at Qiu Honglei and remarked, "So you were the courtesan queen of Brightmoon City back then! No wonder you're so beautiful."

He had seen Qiu Honglei before, but what kind of status did she have back then? She had been surrounded whenever she made an appearance, so Wei Suo had only been able to get a glance at her from far away. He was so stunned by her beauty that he couldn't remember what she looked like back then.

Zu An introduced him to Qiu Honglei. When she heard that he was from Brightmoon City and a former classmate of Zu An, her expression immediately became more pleasant as she said, "Hello."

"Hello, hello..." Wei Suo replied. The feeling of being able to talk to a goddess he had admired in the past up close was absolutely incredible. He suddenly felt at a loss to know what to do. He didn't even know where to look anymore.

Zu An was a bit speechless. This guy was able to talk about such beauties in such a skillful manner in private, acting so confident and full of knowledge, yet why did he become completely speechless when he really did meet a beauty in person?

He coughed lightly and asked, "Your cultivation seems to have improved a lot, no?"

That attack had shown that Wei Suo was at the seventh rank at the very least. It was unexpected, because Wei Suo was famous for being a terrible student. He had been at the very bottom of even the academy's lowest-level Huang class. Reaching the third rank in his lifetime would already have been something his ancestors would be more than satisfied with.

Wei Suo snapped out of his daze. His expression became a bit dim as he replied, "What could I do? I was forced to in order to survive. Back then, something big happened in our clan and I had no choice but to wander the wilderness. After struggling on the edge of life and death several times, I ended up obtaining some opportunities. That was how my cultivation improved a bit."

He suddenly had a big smile as he continued. He put his arm around Zu An and said, "Boss, I'm already quite strong now! Don't worry, I'll protect you in the future. No one will dare to bully you!"

1. Lan Ruo Temple is a temple that contains supernatural entities and mysterious occurrences, from "A Chinese Ghost Story". 📖

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Chapter 1739: Zither in the Wilderness

Zu An chuckled and said, "Sure, then I'll be relying on you from here on out."

Qiu Honglei had a strange expression. Both of their cultivations were far above his, so that was why Wei Suo couldn't tell. If he knew their real cultivation ranks, just what kind of expression would he have?

Zu An was a bit apologetic. The Wei clan's disaster potentially had something to do with him. Brightmoon City's Wei clan and the Imperial Palace's Wei Dan were relatives. Old Mi had ended up getting rid of their biggest backer, so without that, the Wei clan was doomed to fall. Still, perhaps it was a blessing in disguise. If not for that, Wei Suo wouldn't have obtained those miraculous encounters and reached his current state.

"Right, I heard that you were taken by the capital as a prisoner. Something happened to our Wei clan at the time too, so I couldn't do anything even if I wanted to help. Are you a court criminal now?" Wei Suo asked, sighing as he brought up past events.

Zu An thought about how he had been punished by Zhao Han because of his status as the Fiend races' Regent. He replied with a strange expression, "To a certain degree, I guess I am."

"Don't worry. After a bit more time, you should be pardoned and I think you'll be fine..." Wei Suo said in consolation. He suddenly realized that Zu An had such a beautiful woman at his side even while fleeing for his life. Meanwhile, he only had his own right and left hands to accompany him. Who was he even comforting here?

"Right, what kind of place is this?" Zu An finally asked about the thing he was the most curious about. Qiu Honglei also perked up her ears.

"This is Ruo Lan Temple," Wei Suo reflexively replied.

Zu An was speechless. He said, "I saw the stone tablet, so I know this is Ruo Lan Temple. I wanted to ask what was going on with this world."

"Oh, so that was what you were asking about," Wei Suo replied, coming to a sudden realization. He then replied, "I don't know."

Zu An and Qiu Honglei were stunned.

Wei Suo then explained, "I just came into a small secret dungeon to look for treasure, but a black hole suddenly appeared in the sky. That secret dungeon seemed to start breaking down. When I woke up, I had already arrived in this world."

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but ask, "Oh, when did you wake up?"

When he heard such a beauty ask him a question, Wei Suo immediately sat up straight. However, he still didn't dare to look her straight in the eye because of her beauty. He replied, "About three days ago, I think."

"Three days ago?" Zu An and Qiu Honglei both exclaimed, exchanging a look. They had clearly just entered this world, while Wei Suo had already been here for three days. Could it be that while they passed through the spatial vortex, the flow of time was distorted?

"Then did you find out anything in these three days?" Zu An asked.

"I woke up in a nearby town three days ago. Because I initially planned to get a proper meal once I left the dungeon, I didn't bring many supplies. I was tired and hungry, but the town's people didn't have any sympathy. Not only did they not give me any food, they wouldn't even lend me a place to stay," Wei Suo grumbled, his voice full of resentment. He was clearly quite unhappy with that experience.

"Fortunately, because of my resourcefulness, I found something to eat from the people who lived in the barren wilderness," Wei Suo continued proudly, sticking out his chest. "Of course, in return, I have to help them get rid of ghosts."

"Get rid of ghosts?" Zu An and Qiu Honglei asked in surprise. What was going on here?

"Those wilderness folk don't have much knowledge and experience, so they probably bought into some lie and began spreading it, saying that Ruo Lan Temple contains ghosts or something," Wei Suo said, waving his hand dismissively. "How can there be ghosts in this world? My guess is that it's probably just some thieves hiding here, and in order to avoid detection, they deliberately made up some supernatural rumors to scare those people away. I've encountered those kinds of things before."

Zu An had a pensive expression. He had thought that the forest was especially cold and gloomy. He hadn't known what was happening back then, but after he heard the explanation, he wondered if the place could be haunted. He had seen and experienced all kinds of things since he transmigrated to this world of cultivation. Since there were even daoist immortals, it wasn't all that strange for there to be ghosts.

However, the Fiend races outside and the 'fiends' he had envisioned weren't quite the same. On top of that, he had rarely encountered things resembling ghosts. They either turned out to be departed spirit skills used by evil cultivators, or certain refined souls. However, the souls of the deceased were often just an agglomeration of soul force and death energy, and didn't really have a consciousness.

The only ghost he had encountered with consciousness seemed to be the servant of the Peacock King race's Princess Kong Nanwu, Maid Nan Xun. However, she had used the Tiger race's innate skill to capture a ghost, and then added her own special skills to allow the ghost to live in the human world like a normal being. Maid Nan Xun had even ended up becoming a courtesan queen, so she was quite a bit different from the ghosts found in horror films.

"Then have you found any traces of ghosts so far?" Qiu Honglei asked curiously. As a high-level cultivator, she wasn't scared of people, but the idea of mysterious ghosts really made her feel a bit flustered.

"I just got here today. I looked around during the day, but I didn't find anything," Wei Suo said, coughing lightly. "Maybe those bad people got scared when they saw this awesome hero appear and scampered off."

Qiu Honglei looked amused as she secretly said, "Ah Zu, this classmate of yours is quite... interesting."

Zu An replied, "That's just how he is, pretty interesting."

Just then, Wei Suo suddenly cried out. He removed the stick from the bonfire, only to see that the bread was already charred black. He had a pained expression as he ripped off the charred surface to see if there was anything he could eat inside, but after being roasted for so long, it had already been completely burned black.

As such, he took out another small loaf from his bag and asked, "Did you two eat yet? I'll treat you. Those villagers gave me these, and they taste pretty good."

Zu An asked curiously, "Just now, it sounded like you were roasting chicken wings, though?"

Wei Suo's face reddened. He said, "Can we not talk about that... Where would you find chicken wings here? I was just thinking about that... Once I deal with this Ruo Lan Temple, I'll definitely seize those chickens raised in the mayor's courtyard!" He couldn't help but swallow his saliva after he spoke.

Zu An couldn't help but laugh. He then took out some precious bird and beast meats from his Brilliant Glass Bead, saying, "Throw these on the fire. I have quite a bit on me."

He had traveled extensively over the years, and on his travels, he always collected various meats and herbs. Either way, the Brilliant Glass Bead had more than enough space. Others couldn't enjoy such a privilege, though. Storage pouches were rare to begin with, and the amount that could be stored in them was even more limited; often, they were only able to contain some life-saving essentials. Rarely would they be used to keep food.

Wei Suo's eyes lit up. He immediately tossed the bread he had treated like treasure aside. He drooled as soon as he caught the meat, saying, "You should've told me sooner! Why would I eat bread when you have this stuff?"

He began to hurriedly roast them as he spoke. He swallowed his saliva before saying, "It's still boss who knows how to have a proper livelihood. Compared to you, I feel as if I've been in prison all this time."

Zu An couldn't help but chuckle. The three of them soon began to chat while having a meal.

...

Suddenly, they heard a beautiful and distant zither sound from outside. Zu An wasn't too good at music, but he could still tell that the one playing the instrument was quite skilled. He couldn't help but speak some praises.

Qiu Honglei harrumphed. "I guess it's not bad, but they're still far from me."

Zu An smiled. Only then did he remember that Qiu Honglei had been a queen among courtesan queens, publicly acknowledged to be unparalleled in both beauty and arts. She wasn't like the women from his previous world who only had pretty leather bags, but didn't have any skills and only knew how to jerk their bottoms around a bit, and yet got a ton of attention.

Zu An stood up. He was about to look around when Wei Suo quickly grabbed him, saying, "Boss, you just learn a bit from someone well-acquainted with the ways of the world like me. How can there possibly be a zither-playing beauty in this wilderness? It's clearly a trap."

Zu An said with a smile, "I'm aware of that. I just wanted to see who was causing a fuss."

"If they're doing this, they definitely have some motive. It will make no difference if we remain here, and we can at least avoid stepping into any traps they've prepared," Wei Suo said, sharing his knowledge gained from experience.

Zu An figured that made sense. They had just arrived in this world and didn't know anything. It was better to be careful and observe some more first.

Sure enough, after the zither played for a while, it suddenly stopped after seeing that no one emerged. A while later, someone knocked urgently on the door. A slender figure vaguely appeared, calling out, "Is there someone there? Help!"

The woman's voice was lovable and gentle. Even without seeing her, the three got the impression of a pitiful and lovely air.

Wei Suo's eyes immediately lit up when he heard the voice. He quickly stood up to welcome her.

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Chapter 1740: Ordeal

When he saw how much of a hurry Wei Suo was in, Zu An quickly stopped him, saying, "Be careful! It might be a trap!"

They were in the wilderness right now. Forget about people, he hadn't even seen a single animal. Why would there suddenly be zither music, and then a lovely lady asking for help? That didn't make any sense at all!

Wei Suo shook off his hand and said, "This is exactly why I'm here."

Zu An and Qiu Honglei were bewildered.

Wei Suo dashed forward a few steps, but then seemed to have suddenly remembered something. He quickly ran back and told Zu An, "You guys, don't move. I'll be the one to open the door later."

Zu An and Qiu Honglei exchanged a look. They weren't really sure what he was doing.

Wei Suo quickly took out a set of scholarly clothes from his bag. At the same time, he ran over to the back of the worn-out buddha statue and took out a scholarly bag. Only when he put them on did he nod in satisfaction.

Zu An had to admit that such an appearance really did make Wei Suo look refined in manner. Unfortunately, he still had buck teeth, and together with his wretched appearance, the outfit seemed a bit incompatible.

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but ask, "Why did you do all that?"

Wei Suo smiled proudly and replied, "Have you never heard of this? A scholar and a female ghost are a perfect match. I prepared this outfit when I heard that this place was haunted."

Qiu Honglei had a blank expression as she asked, "Who said that?"

"Have you never heard of 'A Chinese Ghost Story'?" Wei Suo replied in confusion.

"I heard that it was something a young master brimming with talent gave to a courtesan queen. The stories are extremely popular nowadays," Qiu Honglei said, shaking her head. For quite some time, she had been cultivating in preparation for the battle at Violet Mountain. She didn't know much about the details of the outside world.

She wondered which courtesan queen had been able to experience such a blessing. That young master hadn't given that person any material goods, but

rather a story, and he was even an elegant man. She had acted as a courtesan queen in the past too, and understood its details. There were local tyrants everywhere, but earnest and sincere scholars were one in a million. She sincerely wished the best for the two of them.

Zu An now had a strange expression, because ‘A Chinese Ghost Story’ was what he had given to Kong Nanwu in the past, after adapting it to Nan Xun’s situation. He hadn’t expected the story to have circulated around.

Mi Li said in his mind, “Tsk tsk, you actually wrote a story just for a female ghost. When are you going to write something for your master too?”

Zu An felt happy when he heard her voice. He replied, “It’s not as if you’re a female ghost.”

Mi Li harrumphed. “Wasn’t it because of you that I don’t have a body and only have a soul? What difference is there between what I am and those female ghosts?”

Zu An quickly replied apologetically, “Am I not working hard to find those materials needed to fix your body? I’ve already found more than half...”

“That’s more like it,” Mi Li said, nodding in satisfaction.

...

Meanwhile, Wei Suo ran over excitedly to open the door. Sure enough, there was a beautiful woman at the entrance. Her clothes were a bit damaged, clearly as a result of running away in a hurry and being scraped by the tree branches along the way.

When he saw the woman’s appearance, Wei Suo’s eyes widened. Even though she was a bit below Qiu Honglei, her looks were enough to make her a courtesan queen in most brothels. For Wei Suo, she was already completely unreachable. When he saw her exposed, snow-white skin, he immediately became stiff.

Qiu Honglei secretly said to Zu An, “Ah Zu, there seems to be something strange about this woman.”

Zu An nodded. With their current cultivation, he also keenly realized that there was something different about the woman’s aura. It seemed very vague and

illusory, as well as being cold and gloomy. Strangely, however, it wasn't like that of the skeleton soldiers he encountered before. This ghost didn't carry any death energy.

Zu An secretly asked, "Master empress, can you tell what is going on with this woman?"

Mi Li replied indifferently, "Isn't she just a ghost?"

Zu An was briefly speechless. He couldn't help but ask, "Why does she seem different from the other ghosts I've seen?"

There had been a large group of departed spirits in the dungeon where he met Mi Li, and he had encountered Zhang Han. Those were pretty much all the ghosts he knew.

Mi Li knew what he was thinking and replied, "What you met before were only low-level departed spirits. They didn't have any intelligence. These ghosts are different. Apart from being intrinsically different, their outer appearance and characteristics aren't too different from those of humans.

"As for that Zhang Han you encountered before, strictly speaking, he wasn't really a departed spirit, but rather a creature who, due to a special formation applying a curse, became neither living nor dead. He couldn't return to the cycle of reincarnation until you released him again."

Zu An asked in surprise, "There really is a cycle of reincarnation in this world?"

"Of course," Mi Li said matter-of-factly, as if she found his question rather strange.

"Since there are deities and immortals, there is naturally a cycle of reincarnation. Only then can the world's life energy and death energy maintain a state of balance..." she continued, but trailed off midway. She said with a puzzled expression. "But I noticed that the many worlds you've experienced don't seem to have a cycle of reincarnation. Could it be that the cycle has been separated from your world, just like the immortal realm?"

Suddenly, the ghost woman said in a pitiful voice, "Young master, this one..."

When the door opened, she instinctively ran toward Wei Suo's arms, but when she saw what he looked like, her body clearly stiffened. Just then, she happened to see Zu An, which immediately made her eyes widen. Zu An was handsome, and beauty was relative to begin with. With Wei Suo as a comparison, he only looked even more handsome.

The woman twisted her waist and skillfully avoided Wei Suo. She leaped toward Zu An and cried, "Young master, please help me!"

Wei Suo had already spread his arms excitedly, already ready to enjoy that soft and wonderful feeling, and yet who would have thought that such a situation would happen? He was completely stupefied, practically turning into a rock.

Zu An took a step back vigilantly as he asked, "Miss, what's wrong?"

The woman fell directly to the ground when she missed and cried out in a lovely manner. She looked up at Zu An with a hint of a grudge, but she still called out, "Young master~"

When the petrified Wei Suo saw that, he immediately ran over to help her to her feet out of pity, saying, "My lady, you must be more careful!"

The woman dodged Wei Suo and arrived at Zu An's feet. She grabbed his legs to crawl back up, then suddenly blinked her large, beautiful, and enchanting eyes at him, saying, "Thank you for helping me, young master."

Wei Suo pulled back his hands in embarrassment. Just how many times have I encountered this kind of thing now? I think I'm already used to it...

Zu An brushed her arms away without batting an eye and asked, "May I ask who this miss is? Why have you appeared here?"

Even though he knew that she was a female ghost, he didn't have enough information. Exchanging some words with her could bring some useful clues.

"This lady's name is Little Ying. My father was recently transferred to the nearby city as the county magistrate. He promised to reunite with me after everything was settled, but we were attacked by bandits along the way. My maid risked her life in order to allow me to just barely survive. I wonder if the young master could escort me to the city? My father will definitely reimburse you generously, and this lady will also engrave this favor deeply in my

memory. I will work as hard as an ox or horse for you..." the woman said, continuing to blink while her tongue also stuck out a bit. Anyone who saw her would get lost in wild and fanciful thoughts.

Zu An shook his head and replied, "I'm not a farmer, so what would I need oxen and horses for?"

Little Ying was speechless. After some hesitation, she still said with a bashful look, "Young master, oxen and horses can actually be... ridden."

Now it was Zu An's turn to be speechless. Why are all female ghosts in this world so tough?

Mi Li couldn't help but laugh before remarking, "Why don't you consider it? This female ghost does have some looks. Rather than fighting to the death, what's the worst that could happen? Just let her suck out a bit of masculine yang energy. Either way, you have more than enough of it."

Zu An thought to himself, Is that how a master should be acting? Just what are you saying?

The woman named Little Ying was about to continue when she suddenly saw the amused Qiu Honglei sitting off to the side, as if she were watching a performance. In that instant, she was completely intimidated by Qiu Honglei's looks. Even as a woman, she thought that Qiu Honglei was just too beautiful. She finally understood why her seduction had failed.

She really wanted to cry and sounded dispirited as she said, "So it turns out the young master already has such an incredible beauty at your side. No wonder you didn't favor this one's looks. I won't disturb you any longer then..."

Afterward, she covered her face with her sleeves and ran away. She was clearly acting weak, and yet she ran so quickly, it made her look as if she were floating.

Wei Suo couldn't even catch up to her. He couldn't help but beat his chest and stamp his feet, calling out, "Come and seduce me then! I'm really easy to seduce, you know?"

Zu An and Qiu Honglei were speechless.

...

Meanwhile, Yun Jianyue and Xie Daoyun both woke up in a ruined house. They discovered that the two of them were really close to each other, but they didn't find anyone else.

Yun Jianyue frowned and asked, "Why am I with you? Where are the others?"

Xie Dayun remembered that this was the legendary murderous demoness and began to shudder, saying, "I... I don't know either..."

Yun Jianyue was full of experience and quickly realized that this wasn't the chaotic void stream, but rather a different world, something resembling a secret dungeon. After looking around, she didn't find Zu An and Qiu Honglei. She felt more and more annoyed, and said, "Lass, don't drag me down, or else I'll end you."

Xie Daoyun nodded like a little hatchling pecking rice. They had suddenly entered a new world and she didn't know anything. Having someone she knew with her would at least make her feel a bit more at ease, even if the other woman was a bit fierce.

Yun Jianyue thought to herself, This woman's cultivation is a bit low, but she has some skills in formations. She might actually be of some use later.

As such, the two tacitly allowed each other's company.

Suddenly, Yun Jianyue's eyes narrowed. She called out, "Who's there?"

Xie Daoyun looked vigilantly in the direction Yun Jianyue was looking at and prepared for battle.

"Je je je..." A harsh and ear-piercing laugh filled the air. The entire place began to feel a bit strange.

Then, a monster suddenly appeared on the house's beam. Even Yun Jianyue felt a bit alarmed. The monster had the body of a lion and the face of a woman. It was as freakish as could be, with a deeply unsettling presence.

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Read Keyboard Immortal - Chapter 1741: My Life Isn't Over

Chapter 1741: My Life Isn't Over

Yun Jianyue took action. The Crescent Ring suddenly appeared behind the monster and spun around, aiming straight for its head.

Xie Daoyun was startled. This monster is clearly not the kind sort, so why is Sect Master Yun attacking it? What if you don't kill it, but end up angering it? Things will really be troublesome then...

Yun Jianyue's way of thinking was different from hers. After realizing that this wasn't a friendly being, she decisively chose to strike first and gain the upper hand. She wasn't going to wait until it attacked, forcing them into a passive position. Her eyes soon narrowed. Her Crescent Ring passed straight through the monster's head, and the creature instantly broke into many pieces.

However, she didn't feel happy at all, because she could sense that she hadn't really killed it. Sure enough, another clump of black mist gathered, and the monster reappeared on another beam.

Yun Jianyue's eyes narrowed. She was about to attack again when the monster said, "Heh heh heh... It's useless! Your attacks don't work on me."

Yun Jianyue and Xie Daoyun were both startled to hear the monster use human speech. However, as they could converse, there was no need for Yun Jianyue to continue attacking. She asked, "Who are you? What kind of place is this?"

"I guess it's fine. My mood is pretty good today, so I'll answer a question. My name is Sphinx. As for what kind of place this is, you all need to explore on your own; that is, if you can pass this trial of mine," the monster replied.

"Sphinx?" Yun Jianyue and Xie Daoyun repeated as they exchanged a look, both thinking that it was a really weird name. However, they quickly noticed the key part of what it had said, asking, "Pass a trial of yours?"

Both of them prepared to attack. This time, they went all-out with much more force.

The lion-bodied, human-faced monster didn't move, allowing all manner of light to strike its body. However, there wasn't even a single scar on its body, as if it didn't exist in this place at all.

Yun Jianyue and Xie Daoyun's expressions changed. Both of them felt as if they were facing a great enemy. This monster was too strange!

The monster raised its claw and shook it back and forth, saying, "I already told you that your attacks are useless. Can you properly listen to me speak now?"

Yun Jianyue retorted with a snort, "Who knows? It's just that we haven't found your weakness yet."

She had gone through all sorts of great battles and experiences, so she naturally wasn't scared by just a few words. Her thoughts moved quickly as she thought about what its weaknesses could be, and which skills of hers could be effective.

The monster said, "If we were to talk about a weakness, there might indeed be one."

Even though both women knew that it wouldn't tell them so easily, they still couldn't help but become interested.

"If you can answer my questions, I will naturally scatter away. The two of you will have passed the trial," the monster explained. However, its tone became sinister as it continued, "But if you answer it wrongly, I will collect your souls! How about it? Isn't that a fair transaction?"

Yun Jianyue sneered and retorted, "I've never been one to like playing by the rules of others!"

As soon as she said that, a sea of blood appeared all around her. Even Xie Daoyun was affected, shuddering all over. Her eyes became bloodshot, and even breathing became a bit difficult.

Yun Jianyue summoned the Empress Lantern as well. Yellow light scattered outward, locking the monster in place. Then, as she charged at it, her presence seemed to embody a mountain of corpses and a sea of blood that drowned the monster entirely. As long as it was devoured by the bloody aura, it would quickly become part of the ocean of blood and fall under her control.

A smile just barely appeared on Yun Jianyue's lips, but it suddenly froze. She discovered that the monster was still in its original spot and completely unfazed.

The monster snickered and said, "Not a bad domain skill. If I really fought you face to face, perhaps your attack would have been a bit tricky to deal with. But there are many dimensions between us. How could your attack possibly harm me?"

Yun Jianyue felt a bit dejected. Just then, she had also noticed that the monster wasn't on the same plane of existence. Perhaps not even an earth immortal could harm it. As such, she could only put away the ocean of blood to avoid harming Xie Daoyun.

Once the domain disappeared, Xie Daoyun gasped for air and looked at Yun Jianyue with lingering fear. No wonder there was that rumor... Just how many people has this woman killed to be able to create this type of domain?

The monster said, "Since you understand, let's begin the riddle. I love stubborn souls like you the most, so we'll just start with you." Afterward, it didn't wait for her to retort and asked, "What has four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening?"

Yun Jianyue's expression changed a bit. She keenly sensed that as it spoke, there seemed to be certain natural laws tangling around her. In that instant, she sensed something. If she couldn't answer the riddle correctly, perhaps her soul really would be seized by it. She broke out into a cold sweat. She had experienced countless battles in this life, but she had never experienced something so treacherous and detestable. She couldn't use any of her skills.

She quickly thought of all of the creatures she had seen before. She initially thought that it was an easy riddle, but when she thought about it, she couldn't find a single thing that matched the description. She immediately felt nervous.

"Tsk tsK tsK, time is almost up! If you cannot answer, then I will collect your soul! Oh my, I can sense just how delicious your soul is from all the way over here," the monster said, licking its lips as if it was already getting impatient.

Yun Jianyue's ear twitched. She suddenly seemed to have realized something and said, "I know the answer. It's man. When they are young, they crawl on the ground when they are infants, and then walk on two legs during adulthood. In later years, they rely on a walking stick, so then they have three legs!"

The monster was surprised. It looked at her reluctantly and said, "I guess you pass."

Then, it suddenly appeared in front of Xie Daoyun and said with a pitiful look, "You must feel quite proud of yourself after helping her. What a pity, what a pity, I would have asked you after she failed, and then you would have easily passed. Now, you're actually in danger."

Xie Daoyun's face paled a bit. This kind of unknown and mysterious creature really was quite scary. She said, "Just... Just ask already."

Yun Jianyue was a bit apologetic. After all, Xie Daoyun had helped her just now. At first, she had thought that Xie Daoyun was just a burden, but it turned out to be the other way around! She wondered how she would protect Xie Daoyun if she couldn't answer the question.

The monster said, "The fact that you were able to answer my previous riddle means you must be pretty smart. In that case, I'll give you a tough one."

Yun Jianyue was discouraged when she heard what it said.

That monster seemed to think bitterly to itself. Suddenly, its eyes lit up and it exclaimed, "I got it!"

With a sweep of its paw, a chessboard appeared in the air. The chessboard was extremely strange, with many checkered squares stretching from left to right. The first square to the left had a chess piece. Carved on it was the monster's visage, while the rightmost square had a pyramid-shaped structure.

The monster giggled and said, "The game's rules are really simple. We will take turns moving the chess piece. Each time, you can only move three to five steps. The one who moves this chess piece to the rightmost check will win. If you win, then you pass. If I win, then I will collect your soul. Fair, no?"

Yun Jianyue quickly scanned the chessboard. She thought, If you wanted to be the last to move to the pyramid check, you would have to move your piece to the check six spaces from the pyramid. That way, regardless of where that monster went, it wouldn't be able to move to the last check. Then, Xie Daoyun would arrive there and win; and then...

She calculated quickly, but she soon got a big headache. In the end, she kept running into problems. She thought in frustration, Ah... I just want to fight! This kind of intellectual battle is freaking annoying!

While Yun Jianyue was going crazy, Xie Daoyun was calculating quickly. From left to right, there were thirty-six checks...

The monster said, "If you don't have any objections, then I'll go first."

It was about to move when Xie Daoyun quickly said, "Hold on!" She continued, "That isn't fair. Since you made the rules, you already have the advantage. Then, I should be the one to go first to make it fair."

The monster was stunned. It nodded and said, "You're surprisingly sharp. I won't take advantage of you then. You can go first. After all, I care about fairness more than anything."

Xie Daoyun took a deep breath, then walked over. She picked up the chess piece all the way to the left and moved it three spaces to the right. Even though the chess piece was also an illusion, it actually felt like a real object. However, the monster's appearance really was too frightening. She quickly pulled her hand back after moving it, as if she had been zapped.

"Hmm, interesting," the monster said. It laughed and also moved its chess piece three spaces.

Then, they each took turns one after another, moving quicker and quicker.

Yun Jianyue's eyes widened. She was smart and quickly realized the pattern. No matter how the monster moved, Xie Daoyun always moved eight spaces minus the monster's move. Just like that, she finished the game.

Xie Daoyun placed the chess piece on the right-most pyramid and exclaimed, her face brimming with confidence, "I've won!"

"Ah, how hateful!" The monster cursed a few times. As if it had been affected by some kind of natural law, its body began to distort. In the end, it completely disappeared.

Yun Jianyue couldn't help but look at Xie Daoyun again. This woman looked weak and delicate on the outside, but she was actually incredibly smart! I

have to warn Honglei to be careful in the future, or else she might end up being screwed over without knowing a thing!

...

On the other side of the world, Zhao Han swiftly opened his eyes. He sized up his surroundings, while taking in a deep breath. Then, a look of rapt joy appeared on his face. This wasn't the chaotic void stream the libationer had spoken of! It seemed there had been some error somewhere.

Hahaha! This emperor is blessed by the heavens; my life won't end here!

Two groans filled the air nearby, as two people gradually woke up. They were none other than Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing. The two rejoiced to find that they were still alive, but a second later, they saw Zhao Han. Their smiles immediately froze on their faces.

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Chapter 1742: We Can Have Some Fun

"Your majesty! What a coincidence..." Xuan Bajing said with a smile that was even uglier than crying.

Li Changsheng no longer had his usual free and confident appearance. His expression was as dark as charcoal.

"Indeed, it is quite the coincidence," Zhao Han said, looking at the two of them with a big smile. "I hadn't expected to encounter the two of you here. To be honest, your previous scheme wasn't half bad."

Xuan Bajing started sweating buckets. He quickly begged for mercy. "Your majesty, please forgive me! I was forced to do all of that by King Qi and had no choice, so I ended up offending your majesty. I hope that your majesty can be magnanimous and forgive me!"

Li Changsheng thought disdainfully, This guy's tail wagging really is nauseating.

He sorted out his clothes before saying to Zhao Han, "Your majesty, your respected self needs some manpower to deal with any trivial matters in this secret dungeon. Please give us a chance to atone for our crimes."

Xuan Bajing was stupefied. Judging from the proud look on that guy's face, I thought he was going to show some unyielding nature. And yet in the end, it was just this?

Zhao Han frowned and said, "You just used a great scheme against this emperor, and yet you are wagging your tails and begging for mercy. How can this emperor trust people such as you?"

Li Changsheng said, "If your majesty does not believe us, we can simply make a vow!"

Even though the consequences would be severe, being alive was better than being dead.

Xuan Bajing thought, This guy is actually going that far? However, he didn't have time to think too deeply about it and immediately nodded, saying, "That's right; I am also willing to make a vow to the world and swear my loyalty to your majesty!"

Zhao Han briefly fell silent. A vow to the world wasn't something to be taken lightly, and these were even members of the daoist sects. The restrictions of a vow in that scenario would be even stronger.

However, he wasn't moved and said indifferently, "You two are severely injured right now and are only slightly better than cripples. What help can you even offer this emperor?"

His tone became more and more intimidating as he spoke. He was really pissed off from all the things that had happened today. In all these years, this was the first time he had ever been left in such a sorry state. It was all because of these damn ants. When he thought of that, his gaze filled with killing intent.

Xuan Bajing felt as if he had been targeted by a primal beast. He knew that he likely only had a few more seconds of life left. His mind moved quickly and he said, "Even though your majesty's power is boundless, we know nothing about this world. We can help you explore this world, and we can just serve as a meat shield for any special mechanisms."

Li Changsheng was stupefied. He thought, This guy really is shameless! A glorious grandmaster is actually going to fall to such an extent? However, with their lives at stake, he could only speak up in agreement. Meanwhile, Xuan Bajing also cursed him inwardly.

Zhao Han was now a bit tempted. After all, what they were saying did make sense. The reason he was so powerful now was due in no small part to the secret dungeons he had encountered in the past. He knew about the special mechanisms of secret dungeons and how they needed the cooperation of many people to activate. If he encountered such things again, trying to solve them by himself would be a bit difficult.

His expression eased a bit when he thought of that, and he said, "I suppose. Out of consideration for your sincerity, this emperor will forgive you two here. Make your vows, then." He naturally wouldn't just trust their words; he had to have something to keep them in check.

Xuan Bajing and Li Changsheng exchanged a look. They saw the helplessness in each other's eyes. However, since the situation was already like this, they had no choice. As such, they both made vows. Soon after, there was a reaction in the world. Some wisps of profound laws tangled around the two of them.

Zhao Han listened to their vows carefully. He nodded in satisfaction when he saw that they didn't try to pull any tricks.

Xuan Bajing and Li Changsheng sighed in relief. Then, they carefully said, "Your majesty, you were the first to wake up. Did you notice anything about this world?"

"I have not," Zhao Han slowly replied. "The only thing I have noticed is that this world seems to be especially sinister. It might very well be related to deathly spirits."

He had actually made another discovery. When he first arrived in this world, he had sent out his primordial spirit to look around and understand a bit about it. However, as soon as his primordial spirit left, he sensed danger, as if there were something in this world that could threaten his primordial spirit.

Such a thing was inconceivable for Zhao Han. Previously, he probably wouldn't have cared much, and would have explored a bit first. After all, he had remained invincible for so many years, so he hadn't believed that

anything could harm him. However, after what had happened today, and the way he had almost died because of King Qi and the libationer's schemes, he couldn't help but become a bit more prudent.

"Deathly spirits?" Xuan Bajing and Li Changsheng repeated, stunned. Then, they secretly felt joy, because they were daoist experts. They naturally knew things that could counter deathly spirits and the like. Deathly spirits usually lacked consciousness, so even if they were strong, they were still on the easier side to deal with.

Xuan Bajing and Li Changsheng both took out pills and ate them. Their complexions immediately became a bit rosier as their injuries clearly improved a bit.

The two of them suddenly realized something, though. Their faces turned deathly pale and they cried, "This subordinate deserves death; we should have immediately offered our treatment medicines to your majesty!"

Both of them felt a bit strange after saying that. Why were they saying the same thing? Normally, they were always the ones who received praise from their sects, and yet now that they were bootlicking someone else, it actually came so naturally. They thought, Sigh, it's only because the pressure Zhao Han gives off is just too much.

Zhao Han replied, indifferently, "Why would this emperor need your pills? Just eat them yourselves and recover sooner. I do not want to keep useless people at my side."

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing were frightened, but they also felt some admiration. Zhao Han had first fought against King Qi, and then the libationer, and yet he still appeared to be fine. They couldn't even see a single injury. It really was incredible.

Thus, both of them focused on recovering. Their statuses in their respective sects were formidable, so the pills they carried were naturally also extraordinary. As the medicinal strength spread out, they gradually recovered a bit of strength.

They were about to say something when they noticed two people lying nearby. They exclaimed in alarm, "Who are they?"

They seemed to be inside an abandoned ancestral hall. Because of the pressure from Zhao Han, they hadn't dared to show the slightest bit of distraction. Only now did they discover that there were actually two people lying there.

Zhao Han replied indifferently, "How would I know?" When he woke up, these two had already been lying there. From the looks of it, they were cultivators too.

Li Changshen and Xuan Bajing exchanged a look. They both chose a target to examine and then moved to wake them up.

"Who... Who are you?" the two asked after gradually coming to. When they saw the scene in front of them, they were startled. They were actually well-known experts too, but these three who had suddenly shown up were ridiculously powerful. The yellow-robed one in particular... Wait, yellow robes?

"Your majesty?" the two exclaimed, scared out of their minds. However, Zhao Han didn't confirm or deny it.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing asked about the other two's identities and quickly learned that they were cultivators from the Great Zhou Dynasty. They had been exploring a secret dungeon and were about to succeed when they ended up being sucked into this world somehow. Their cultivation ranks weren't that low, and they were both around the eighth rank. Of course, in front of these three, they could only shiver like quails.

Zhao Han had an amused expression. Normally, with the libationer and Yan Xiang's skill in formations, the trap they had prepared for so many years shouldn't have encountered any problems. However, something had happened. Not only had they been sent here, it also seemed to have sucked in people from other secret dungeons too.

Just what is the reason for this?

Suddenly, sinister cackles filled the air, and a voice said, "Heh heh, everyone seems to have arrived. That means we can begin!"

Zhao Han's expression changed. He stared in a certain direction. He actually hadn't been able to detect this thing's approach despite his cultivation! How was that possible?!

A lion-bodied monster with a woman's face suddenly appeared at the entrance. It looked around and nodded, saying, "Not bad. Now, we can have some fun together."

Zhao Han snorted. He didn't say anything and reached out with a great golden hand that instantly engulfed the monster.

Poof!

The monster scattered into a black mist. A second later, however, more black fog condensed and it reappeared.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing's eyes widened. The invincible Zhao Han's attack had actually missed? Just where did this monster come from?!

Zhao Han also frowned. He was someone who had comprehended the power of space. Just now, even if the creature dodged, it shouldn't have been able to avoid his grasp, and yet it had. That could only mean it wasn't in this world! His spatial abilities were only effective in the same world. At least for the time being, he couldn't move between different worlds.

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Chapter 1743: Full of Expectation

"Hm? Interesting," the monster said in surprise. "Your cultivation has exceeded my expectations. If I were really fighting against you face to face, it would indeed be a bit tricky."

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing exchanged a look. They were both horrified. This monster was just too ridiculous! Furthermore, it had only said that it would be 'a bit tricky'. That meant that even if they did face each other, the emperor wouldn't necessarily be able to win against it. Just what kind of monster was this? How was it so powerful?

"You are not located in the same dimension?" Zhao Han asked, raising his brows. He couldn't understand how the monster did such a thing even with everything he knew. The world was large and mysterious, as expected.

The monster nodded and said, "You're a smart fellow. I'm several dimensions away. Of course you can't hurt me."

Zhao Han's expression now truly changed. All of this was beyond his imagination. However, he was also a bit excited. There are beings more powerful than myself after all! Doesn't this mean the road to immortality isn't just a fleeting rumor?

He couldn't help but ask, "Have you achieved immortality?"

The others also shivered, looking at the monster with fervent expressions. In that instant, they even found its grotesque body a bit cute.

The monster was also stunned. Then, it laughed and said, "How strange! Normally, I'm always asking the questions, and yet today, I'm the one being asked the questions." It paused for a moment before continuing, "If my mood were good, it wouldn't be a big deal to answer this question of yours. But my mood just doesn't happen to be that good today." It recalled the two ladies from earlier and immediately felt annoyed. It had never lost so miserably in so many years.

Zhao Han only became even more excited when he heard its tone. This creature seemed to really know the truth about immortality. He asked, "How can I get you to answer my questions?"

"Pass my trial first, and we'll talk about the rest after," the monster said, revealing a strange smile. "Right, I'm Sphinx. Remember this name, or else you won't even know how you perished."

The others all felt dejected. This monster was incredibly freakish. It definitely wasn't boasting idly.

The monster continued, "I'll ask you all some questions soon. If you answer correctly, you pass. If you're wrong... Heh, I'll collect your souls! How about it? Isn't it fair?"

Zhao Han frowned slightly. He doubted the authenticity of what it had said earlier. Was it really many dimensions away, or had it fooled him through some sort of diversion? There was no reason for his attack to have completely missed it. He wasn't used to putting his own safety at risk, so he wanted to give it another try.

As if it sensed what he was thinking, the monster said with a malicious expression, "My patience is limited. Don't make me angry."

Zhao Han decided to speak his mind. "Since I cannot hurt you, you should not be able to hurt me either. What you are doing is nothing more than a bluff."

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing both felt admiration. As expected of his majesty, the strongest of them all! This degree of calmness and confidence isn't something we can ever hope to have.

As for the other two, they were already shaking so much they couldn't even think properly anymore.

The monster replied, "That's right. My offensive methods might not be able to injure you. Still, if you don't answer my question within the set time, your soul will be mine. That's the law of this world, something none of you can defy." It paused for a moment before adding, "You've angered me after all. So, I'll ask a question no one has been able to answer correctly. Then, you'll all be dead for sure."

Zhao Han was alarmed. At his level, he was able to glimpse the laws of this world. He knew this was what the world had decided on and that he really couldn't go against it. He didn't dare to attack again when he realized that. Otherwise, he would really anger it, and that wouldn't be a smart decision. But if I don't answer its question correctly...

Just then, the monster said, "Hmm, there are five people, so let's simplify matters and just ask one question."

With a wave of its paw, nine pieces of flat bread appeared in midair, as well as a blade. Then, it asked, "The question is, how can these nine pieces of flat bread be divided evenly among the people present with one cut?"

Those present were stunned. They found the question incredibly strange. It looked simple at first, and yet when they thought about it carefully, it turned out to be extremely difficult.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing were sect master-level figures of the daoist sects. They were outstanding geniuses to begin with, and were good at things like arithmetic. They quickly began to think to themselves.

It was possible to divide the nine flatbreads among five people, but there was no way to do it in one cut. But if one used a sufficiently refined blade skill, a single cut could do many things. Perhaps it could be done. However, the problem was whether or not the monster would acknowledge that cut. Furthermore, the bread floating in midair wouldn't necessarily be able to withstand that blade skill. Perhaps it would just end up being destroyed and scatter...

They all sank into their own thoughts and decided to wait until someone else tried it first. That way, perhaps they would be able to gain some enlightenment from it. Even if they couldn't, they would still at least have more time to think.

When it saw that they all fell silent, the monster said sinisterly, "There is a time limit for the answer. If no one makes an attempt within the time it takes for an incense stick to burn, all of your souls will be mine for the taking."

A stick of incense began to burn in the air, imposing a degree of invisible pressure

The monster spoke up again and said, "No matter who comes up with the solution, it will be considered as everyone passing. Right, and as a friendly reminder, the longer you spend on this task, the more you might end up losing out."

The listeners were confused by its addendum. If everyone could pass no matter who went first, why would it say that the later they tried, the worse the consequences would be?

Zhao Han stepped forward and arrived in front of the blade, saying, "I will divide them!"

When they saw him act completely calm, seemingly certain of success, Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing were overjoyed at the unexpected good news. His majesty is his majesty after all! The feeling of having the strongest on your side really is great.

The monster had an ambiguous smile as it said, "You have to divide it properly, you know? Otherwise, no matter how strong you are, according to the laws of this world, your soul will be seized by me."

Zhao Han didn't reply. He picked up the blade and made a cut. Then, he said indifferently, "It's done. One person, three pieces."

The two weaker cultivators wanted to see how he had divided it, but they suddenly felt a chill by their necks. Then, everything went cold, and they entered complete darkness.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing jumped in fright. Their faces were deathly pale. Those two had been killed with one slice! They didn't even see how Zhao Han had used the blade! But who would have thought that he would aim the blade at his companions?

The monster was clearly stunned. After a while, it sighed and said, "I didn't expect that they could be divided like this."

Afterward, its figure distorted, and it disappeared. The mysterious laws surrounding the three cultivators also disappeared with it.

Zhao Han remained completely calm as he walked out, saying, "Alright, let's explore this new world together."

"Yes, absolutely! Of course!" Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing replied, both feeling shocked. They hurriedly followed.

...

Meanwhile, Wei Suo was scolding Zu An. "Boss, it's not that I'm criticizing you, but why are you acting like some upright gentleman? For better or for worse, we could have at least gotten a bit of intelligence. Either way, you're a man, so you don't even have anything to lose."

"Ahem!" Qiu Honglei shot him a glare.

Wei Suo hurriedly said, "If there really is a ghost, there's no way it would give up so easily. I'll deal with the next one, so don't fight with me over it! It'll be a waste anyway even if you do."

Zu An had a grin as he replied, "Sure, sure, I won't fight with you."

When he saw Zu An's bright and relaxed smile, Wei Suo was stunned. He quickly said, "No way, no way, boss, you're too handsome! If you stand there, that female ghost will only go after you!"

Zu An had a strange expression as he said, "Alright, we'll go for a stroll then, to see if we can find that female ghost to chat with."

Wei Suo beamed and replied, "That's great!" Without boss, that handsome bastard, here, I might really be able to get lucky...

Zu An and Qiu Honglei walked up to the entrance. Zu An couldn't help but turn around and ask, "Will you be in danger by yourself?"

Wei Suo patted his chest and said, "Boss, don't look down on me now! I've been to all sorts of places and experienced all kinds of things. I'm a respectable expert in my own right now! Aren't you worrying too much when it's just exorcising some female ghost?"

"Then you have to be careful," Zu An said, figuring that made sense. As such, he took Qiu Honglei with him into the dark night.

...

Just then, thick tree vines that resembled countless snakes slithered within a mountain cave. A strong and robust madam at their center looked at a weak woman across from her. She asked in a voice that was rather androgynous, "Little Ying, why are you back so soon? Where is the person?"

The madam's appearance was as androgynous as her voice. Her brows were so thick that it was as if someone had drawn them with a writing brush, and there was a thick layer of white powder applied to her face. Her cheeks had a fiery red blush. All in all, it gave her quite an ugly appearance.

Little Ying was clearly afraid of her as she replied, "Great Sister, it was because that young master had a woman who looks like a goddess at his side. I wasn't able to seduce him..."

When she heard what happened, the ugly madam immediately roared with laughter. "Hahaha! An incredibly handsome young master, and a gorgeous goddess? Those are exactly the types I like to play with! Then, I'll go and pay them a visit!"

As soon as she spoke, countless vines reached toward the distant temple.

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Chapter 1744: Humiliation

“Grandmother might not be happy if we act on our own...” Little Ying said, feeling a hint of regret. Her impression of that gentlemanly young master was really good, and she really didn’t want bad things to happen to him because of Great Sister. However, Great Sister didn’t pay her any attention. Countless vines extended from the ground in Ruo Lan Temple’s direction.

Little Ying bit her lip. Great Sister and Grandmother had a closer ancestral relationship, which was why Great Sister was always throwing her weight around. Little Ying didn’t dare to offend her. Now that she had been ignored, she couldn’t say anything else. However, she was still a bit worried. If that really handsome young master ended up being ruined by Great Sister, that would be really sad.

After hesitating for some time, in the end, she clenched her teeth and quickly followed. She wanted to see whether there was a chance to help that young master...

...

Meanwhile, Zu An and Qiu Honglei left Ruo Lan Temple. There was still a faint hint of fragrance left in the air, so they followed the scent trail.

Along the way, Qiu Honglei turned to look at Zu An from time to time. Zu An couldn’t help but rub his face and ask, “Why do you keep looking at me like that?”

“That Little Ying from earlier was quite pretty. Why did you refuse her so firmly?” Qiu Honglei asked with a smile.

“She’s a ghost, you know?” Zu An reflexively replied.

“So what if she’s a ghost? She doesn’t seem that different from a normal person. She clearly has all of the normal functions,” Qiu Honglei said with a smirk. “That Wei Suo seemed pretty interested. He was about to commit to her for romance.”

Zu An exclaimed with a righteous expression, “Am I that kind of person?!”

"If I hadn't been next to you, would you have been tempted by her?" Qiu Honglei asked with a sigh. "At first, I was pretty happy that I was next to you in this dungeon. However, I didn't expect to end up dragging you down..."

Zu An grabbed her hand and looked at her deeply, then said, "With beauties such as all of you, why would I still think about others?"

"All of you..." Qiu Honglei murmured, sighing inwardly, but she was still really moved. "Ah Zu~"

"Eh..." Mi Li muttered in an exaggerated manner. "I'm about to get goosebumps from all of this."

Zu An was speechless. You don't even have a real body, and yet you're saying you have goosebumps. Who are you trying to fool?

"Hmph, talk between immature lovers doesn't suit me. I'm going to sleep," Mi Li grumbled, then fell silent. She had a special soul body, after all, and needed to sleep a lot to recover her energy.

Zu An and Qiu Honglei had spent more time apart than together. Now that they had this rare chance to be together alone, they exchanged murmurs of endearment while looking for the female ghost.

They had clearly felt that their surroundings were sinister and frightening before, but Qiu Honglei suddenly felt as if their surroundings had gained something of a tranquil aesthetic that was perfect for a date. She was even starting to hope that they wouldn't find the ghost, and that they could just continue to stroll around just like that.

...

Meanwhile, Wei Suo waited expectantly in the temple, thinking, My time has finally come! This is my lucky break!

He even began to clean up around the room, for fear that the female ghost would be unhappy because she found the room too messy. After sorting things out, he found a chair to sit down on. He thought, If the first female ghost failed, the second ghost definitely has to be even prettier!

After all, if Little Ying had been in a brothel in any major city, just having tea with her would cost at least 98 silvers! If a 98 silver girl was already like that, what about a 298 silver girl?!

He became more and more excited when he thought of that. However, he suddenly wondered, Wait, should I act like an upright gentleman later, or should I just give in after a bit of resistance?

According to the stories, whether it was female ghosts or real women, they seemed to appreciate an upright gentleman more. But he still understood the limitations of his own face. If he really did decline the woman, perhaps he really would just end up forfeiting a chance of sweet romance. Maybe I should just give in quickly...**innread.com**

Suddenly, his ears twitched. There seemed to be some rustling outside, followed by a knock on the door. He immediately jumped out of his seat, thinking, The beautiful female ghost is here! He rushed out eagerly to open the door.

Meanwhile, Little Ying's Great Sister was also burning with anxiety, especially when she had heard her junior sister Little Ying talk up that young master like crazy, saying he was more handsome than any of the men they had encountered so far! She couldn't help but swallow. She felt as if today had to be her lucky day. She was even more excited when she thought about how there was a goddess-level beauty too. It was just one happy occasion after another!

Her tastes were a bit peculiar. Not only did she like men, she also liked women. She had actually desired Little Ying for a long time. Unfortunately, Grandmother had given strict orders, and she didn't dare to go against Grandmother. And yet today, there was a woman who was even prettier than Little Ying!

I can play with them together! Either way, I have more than enough tentacles... she thought. She was a tree spirit, after all. The countless roots quickly reached Ruo Lan Temple and targeted the room with the light.

Since there are two attractive people, I shouldn't scare them too badly. I should try some peaceful tactics before using force. Hopefully, they won't fail to appreciate my kindness.

As such, she politely knocked on the door, but who would have thought that the door would immediately open as soon as she knocked? It was almost as if the other side had been waiting the entire time!

Both people stared at each other face to face. In that instant, Ruo Lan Temple became dead silent.

Ugh!

Both of them turned away and retched at the same time.

“This is that ridiculously handsome young master Little Ying spoke of?!” Great Sister exclaimed furiously. Little Ying actually dared to mess with me!

“That’s it for 298? Isn’t it supposed to be someone prettier?!” Wei Suo exclaimed, equally furious. In that instant, he felt as if he had dropped from heaven straight down to hell.

Bang!

He slammed the door shut in his rage. Even though he had been looking forward to a meeting with a female ghost, he still had a bottom line!

He actually knew his own looks well. Even if the woman who came this time wasn’t that pretty, as long as she had decent features, he would likely have given in. But what the f*ck was this?!

This person doesn’t look like a guy or a girl! Compared to her, even I can be called a stud!

Great Sister erupted into a rage when she heard the curses inside. She cried, “Damn brat, you’re courting death!”

Bang!

The door was instantly smashed to pieces. Then, countless vines stormed in, wrapping around Wei Suo in an instant.

Wei Suo was alarmed and quickly tried to retaliate. Unfortunately, they were too close to each other, so his arms and legs were instantly ensnared and he couldn’t use any of his skills. He could only rely on brute force to struggle.

“Hm? You have a bit of strength to you,” Great Sister said in a low and muffled voice. Her gaze swept through the room, but she didn’t see anyone else. That bitch tricked me after all!

“You are a bit on the ugly side, but your blood essence is still pretty rich,” she said as she moved closer and took a deep breath. She revealed a happy look and said, “Once I absorb you, I’ll be able to advance.”

“Ugh! Your mouth is so disgusting!” Wei Suo exclaimed as he smelled her breath from up close. He felt his stomach churn, and he almost vomited.

“You’re courting death!” Great Sister roared angrily. A thick vine lashed at Wei Suo’s face as she cried, “Just watch as I suck you dry!”

In a moment of crisis, Wei Suo quickly grabbed the vine. His face was entirely red as he used every drop of strength he had. However, he still couldn’t stop the vine from getting closer and closer to his mouth.

Great Sister frowned, and a few more vines moved closer to pry Wei Suo’s hands apart.

Wei Suo was really frightened. He knew his life was in danger, but he was completely restrained and couldn’t fight back. He suddenly thought of Zu An and immediately shouted, “Boss, save... Gurgle...”

In that moment of distraction, the especially thick vine broke through his defenses and shoved itself down his throat.

“Gurgle...” Wei Suo shed tears of humiliation. He had never expected that a man like him would one day experience such a freakish situation.

More importantly, this damn thing was full of hard lumps!

...

Meanwhile, Zu An and Qiu Honglei were exchanging words of endearment when they suddenly saw a woman float over to them. It was none other than the female ghost from earlier.

Zu An was about to capture her to gain some intelligence, but she suddenly revealed a look of happiness when she saw him and cried, “Young master, thank goodness nothing happened to you!”

Zu An was stunned. Now, he was too embarrassed to do anything to her.

Qiu Honglei casually stood in front of Zu An and asked, "Why would you say that?"

"My Great Sister went to Ruo Lan Temple to look for you guys. I was worried that you would be in danger," Little Ying said, then urged them, "My Great Sister is really strong. You two should run away. It'll be dangerous if she leaves Ruo Lan Temple and finds you!"

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Chapter 1745: A Unexpected Grandmother

Zu An's expression grew grave. He asked, "How strong is your Great Sister?"

Little Ying replied, "Not even ten of me would be able to beat her."

Zu An and Qiu Honglei's expressions changed. They both saw the worry in each other's eyes. Wei Suo was still in Ruo Lan Temple! Even though he should have been fine with his cultivation, he was completely smitten with romance. Furthermore, if this Great Sister was so strong, it would be over if he instantly got his blood essence sucked out of him.

Zu An's body flickered as he ran straight for Ruo Lan Temple. Qiu Honglei kicked off lightly and quickly followed him.

Little Ying was stupefied. She had thought that this gentlemanly young master appeared to be a weak and refined sort. She clearly couldn't sense any cultivation from him, so how was he so strong? Also, that dainty-looking beauty's cultivation seemed a bit ridiculously high!

After some hesitation, even though she was a bit scared, she still decided to follow along after Zu An's dashing face appeared in her mind. He's so handsome, so he's definitely a good person. He definitely won't make things hard for me.

...

Meanwhile, Zu An moved as fast as lightning. By the time he arrived at Ruo Lan Temple, he just happened to see Wei Suo being... invaded in the mouth. He was shocked. He had only seen similar scenes from hentai in his previous world, and hadn't thought he would witness it in person. It really was quite a shock to the eyes.

Wei Suo struggled frantically to use his two fists to fight against the endless... hands. The thick vine reached deeper and deeper down his throat, almost completely filling his mouth. It was difficult for him to even shout for help now.

Suddenly, he saw Zu An and tried to cry out for help, shedding tears of humiliation. "Mmm! Mmm..."

Zu An snapped out of his daze. He reached out and unleashed a blade of flames forward.

Geaaack!

Great Sister screamed miserably as the thick vine that was filling Wei Suo's mouth was severed. She pulled back all of her vines out of fear, while urgently beating out the flames left on the damaged vine.

Wei Suo was also freed, and quickly pulled out the thing in his mouth. Without the support of the main body, the severed vine no longer had any power, so he was able to quickly pull it out and throw it onto the ground. It wriggled back and forth as if it were still alive.

Off to the side, Wei Suo vomited repeatedly. At the same time, he gasped for air. He had almost suffocated to death just then!

Zu An couldn't help but look at the vine on the ground. His expression was quite strange as he thought, Just how did Wei Suo keep such a huge thing in his mouth...

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but frown when she arrived. She reflexively hid behind Zu An.

Great Sister finally got rid of the flames around her and cursed, "You damn brat, you dare to meddle in the business of other people... Huh?"

She was about to fly into a terrible rage, but when she saw what Zu An looked like, she was completely stupefied. There was actually such a handsome man

in this world? When she saw the gorgeous woman next to him, she suddenly understood. These were probably the two Little Ying had talked about.

Her anger instantly subsided and she said, "Greetings, young master. So this one was the young master's friend! It was all just a misunderstanding."

"F*ck you!" Wei Suo cursed. He immediately charged at her with his tiger claw saber.

He had been caught off guard earlier and been instantly restrained. After enduring such shame, he was utterly furious. The surface of his saber was enveloped in an earthen yellow light, and it let out an ear-splitting sound as it tore through the air. His skill with the blade was clearly quite proficient.

Zu An nodded as he thought, It looks like Wei Suo is an earth element cultivator. Furthermore, both the strength behind his attack and the angle are remarkable. No wonder he's been able to live well these years.

Great Sister had been about to let Wei Suo go after seeing such a handsome young master, and yet this damn clown didn't have any sense of self-preservation! She brandished her countless vines and thrashed them at him.

A cold glint flickered, and the vines were instantly sliced apart. However, her expression didn't change at all. She didn't necessarily have a lot of other things, but she had more than enough vines.

When he saw dozens more come after he sliced up a few, Wei Suo hacked at them with his blade again. However, he discovered that it didn't do too much. The endless tentacles that were all around him made him think about what had happened just a moment before, which made him feel nervous. He was worried that the earlier tragedy would repeat itself and backed up to a safe distance.

Since they had already started fighting, Great Sister didn't keep up the act anymore. I was going to play nice with you, but if that's how you want it, that's what you'll get! As such, countless vines swept at Zu An and Qiu Honglei. With these two beautiful individuals, why would she still bother with that clown?

Qiu Honglei's expression turned cold. She was about to attack when Zu An moved first.

A sharp blade of energy slashed through all the vines. At the same time, a burst of dazzling flames erupted. Whether in terms of power or scale, they greatly eclipsed the previous attacks.

“AHHH!” Great Sister screamed miserably. She brandished all of her tentacles to try and put the flames out, but no matter what she did, the flames seemed to stick to her. They quickly began to spread toward her main body.

Wei Suo widened his eyes. He had never expected to see such a strong energy blade! He thought, Boss is boss after all!

Great Sister was absolutely frightened. She gritted her teeth and cut off all the burning tentacles herself. Meanwhile, she began to burrow underground. However, Qiu Honglei quickly took out the Empress Lantern and shone it over her body, and she immediately stopped moving.

With a wave of Zu An’s hand, a streak of sword energy delivered a lethal blow. This thing looked so ugly, and judging from how it sucked out the blood of others, it was clearly a habitual criminal. He wouldn’t spare such a creature.

Great Sister screamed bitterly, “Grandmother won’t let you all go...” Afterward, she took her last breath.

Zu An felt as if his experience bar had increased a bit. However, that wasn’t what he was concerned about at the moment. He looked at Little Ying, who had followed them, and asked, “Grandmother?”

Little Ying just happened to see Great Sister being killed as she arrived. Her entire body started shaking. Fortunately, Zu An’s handsome face calmed her down a bit, and she said, “Grandmother is our master. When she came here for the first time, because she saw that Great Sister was of the same race as herself, she granted her a magical transformation. Great Sister was thus able to achieve a human form.”

“Grandmother is a tree spirit?” Wei Suo asked, turning pale with fright. If even the disciple was so disgusting, what kind of grotesque thing was the master? He recalled the romance in ‘A Chinese Ghost Story’. The grandmother there seemed to have been an ugly tree spirit too. He couldn’t help but shiver.

Suddenly, an ice-cold voice called out, “Who dares to kill my disciple?!” Then, a terrifying aura sped in their direction.

Little Ying's expression changed greatly. She said, "Big Sister was magically transformed by Grandmother, who left an imprint inside her. Grandmother would have found out about her death immediately. Oh no, here she comes! You all need to run!" She didn't dare to stay there and quickly ran. She was clearly afraid of being brought down by them.

Zu An didn't stop her either. Little Ying was quite the good-natured female ghost, so there was no need to trouble her. He thought, I'll just ask that Grandmother for any information I need. She definitely knows more. As he sensed the aura getting closer and closer, he looked at Wei Suo with a smile, asking, "Should it be you or me who greets her this time?"

"Of course it's boss!" Wei Suo exclaimed, having already hidden himself in a corner at the first sign of danger.

Are you freaking kidding me? That tree spirit earlier was already nauseating to look at! Now, an old one is coming... Judging from the little one's appearance, that Grandmother is definitely vicious and nasty.

If he experienced that again, perhaps he would just lose his interest in women altogether. This time, he didn't think about the fantasy of dating a female ghost. He just wanted to stay away from those things as much as possible.

Zu An didn't pay him too much mind. He sat at the very center of the room and calmly waited for Grandmother's arrival. Qiu Honglei stood at his side while preparing to fight with him.

Soon after, a wild wind swept over. All of the trees near the temple began to rustle; something seemed to be rushing through them. Judging from the sound, it seemed to be many times more formidable than that Great Sister.

Soon after, the voice and the aura converged into a figure at the entrance. When he saw the appearance of that figure, the previously calm Zu An was stunned. Qiu Honglei was also stupefied. In the corner, Wei Suo's eyes almost popped out.

The one who arrived was a woman dressed in an elegant gown. She had long wavy hair, snow-white skin, and red lips. Her figure was slender and graceful, and her features were delicate and beautiful. She was an incredible beauty! She had a unique air of glamor and grandeur.

The woman looked down at Great Sister's remains. Her expression was cold as she asked, "Was it you who killed my disciple?"

Wei Suo's jaw almost dropped to the ground. This ridiculously beautiful woman was Grandmother? He thought, If I had known it would be like this, I would have gone!

He immediately began to question life itself. Why is it that boss always faces incredible beauties, while I ended up meeting that disgusting thing?

...

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, there was a sole tavern in a small town. All those inside were looking toward a white-dressed woman seated there, looking aloof and transcendent like a goddess. When had such a small place as theirs ever seen such a beautiful woman before?

Yan Xuehen frowned slightly when she sensed the surrounding gazes. She had thought that this tavern was a good place for information, so she had gone over to see if anyone knew about Zu An's whereabouts. Unfortunately, with how things were now, it didn't seem as if she could get any decent information.

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Chapter 1746: Ghost King Pt. 1

There weren't many people in the tavern, and there were only a few tables. Yan Xuehen had been listening in on their conversations, but she hadn't obtained any useful information. All she had learned was that this world was really chaotic.

After listening for a while, she decided to just walk up to those other tables and ask the people there if they had met Zu An and the others. She also described Yun Jianyue and the others' appearances to them. Whether it was Zu An's handsome and confident appearance or Yun Jianyue's glamorous yet domineering looks, they were clearly distinctive features. There was no way anyone would forget them after meeting them even just once.

The people at those tables were all stunned. They had never expected this goddess-level woman to actually strike up a conversation with them!

Someone was about to respond when another person's eyes moved quickly. He seized the chance to say, "I've seen them before!"

The others seemed to have thought of something and quickly nodded, saying, "That's right, we did see them before."

Yan Xuehen was a bit surprised. She had just been randomly trying her luck and hadn't expected there to actually be results. She asked, "May I ask where you've seen them before?"

"I think it was yesterday? It was over in the next town..." The gathered people began to talk all at once in a lively manner.

Seeing her bewildered expression, one of them suggested, "How about we take the lady there?"

"That's a bit..." Yan Xuehen said, seeing that they hadn't even finished their meals. She felt a bit embarrassed.

"It's not a problem at all! Everyone is a friend around these parts," the others replied, laughing heartily. They seemed to have something of an outspoken air and a straightforward nature.

"Then I'll have to trouble you gentlemen," Yan Xuehen said, then called out to the boss to settle the bill for the meal.

She was the sect leader of the White Jade Sect. She didn't necessarily have enough wealth to single-handedly dictate the prosperity of a sect, but she definitely had no problem at all supporting herself.

"I'll be right over!" the boss replied and went to check on the bill. He then said, "I'll just take off the change and charge you two silvers." He secretly gave Yan Xuehen a gesture behind the other people's backs.

Yan Xuehen was quite surprised. She calmly handed the silvers over, and the other people quickly escorted her out. Along the way, they were extremely friendly and asked her all sorts of questions about where she was from and what she was doing in the village. They didn't forget to constantly praise her beauty.

Yan Xuehen was generally quite cold in nature and responded to them with very few words, but they didn't seem to feel that she was being rude, and only seemed to get even more excited. After all, such a beautiful goddess would be treated with unlimited patience by all the men in the world.

Just like that, their group left the small town. When she saw the surroundings becoming more and more remote, Yan Xuehen frowned and asked, "Could it be that we went the wrong way? This doesn't seem similar to the place you described earlier."

The group looked around and saw that there was no one else around them. Then, they laughed confidently and asked, "Miss, is the one you're looking for your man?"

When she sensed the frivolousness in their expressions, Yan Xuehen said coldly, "That has nothing to do with you."

"How does it not? You're so pretty, so why are you looking all over for someone? We brothers just happen to be available to service your needs. We promise you'll forget about that man as long as you give us a try." The group catcalled her a few times as they surrounded her. They greedily eyed her body with incredibly excited expressions. In all these years, this was the first time they had met someone so beautiful. If they could spend the night with her, they wouldn't mind even if they had to give up a decade of their lifespan for it!

Yan Xuehen replied indifferently, "Which means you all deceived me earlier and that you haven't seen them?"

"Of course," the men said with mocking sneers. "Who would have thought that there would be such a gullible and innocent woman? Don't tell us you're still inexperienced?" When they saw her cold and aloof nature, they felt more and more convinced that that was the case. As such, they began to discuss who would go first, starting to get all worked up.

As she listened to their filthy discussion, Yan Xuehen's expression remained completely cold.

"Hm? Why would it snow in this season?" someone wondered as he suddenly noticed something strange, and reached out to touch the falling snow. As soon as his hand made contact, however, a layer of frost covered it. Then, he completely turned into an ice sculpture.

The others' expressions changed greatly when they saw that. They were about to run, but they were quickly covered under ice and snow. From then on, they breathed no more.

Yan Xuehen didn't even want to give them a second look and drifted into the distance. Shortly after, she returned to the restaurant from before, but there were no guests left. There was only the boss and the waiter, cleaning up the tables. They were stunned and surprised to see her return.

"Thank you for earlier," Yan Xuehen said to the boss. It was this man who had secretly warned her to be careful previously.

The boss said with a simple and honest smile, "You're being too courteous. It's only right to do such a thing. But since we still have to do business here and are scared of revenge, we can't make it too apparent. Fortunately, the lady was smart."

Yan Xuehen nodded. She took the chance to ask where the local official manor was. Even though she hadn't spent too much time here yet, she had passed through some areas in search of Zu An. Despite that, she hadn't seen any sign of an official's manor. She figured that going through the officials would make things go much faster if she was trying to find someone.

"Official manor?" the boss asked with a strange expression. "There are many officials in the world, but no one recognizes them outside their respective territories."

"Why is that?" Yan Xuehen asked in surprise.

Then, as the boss explained things, Yan Xuehen learned a bit more about this world. The whole place was filled with chaos from end to end. There wasn't a single powerful unified country, and instead, it was ruled by countless small countries. The smaller ones among them were only about the size of one or two cities. Although many of them called themselves countries, they were more like feudal fiefdoms. In order to fight for resources and wealth, there were wars year-round. It was difficult for the common people to scrape by.

"Those officials only have authority over an acre and a half of land or so. No one outside of their territories recognizes them," the boss said after thinking about some things. He continued, "If the lady is looking for someone, you can look into the Adventurer's Guild."

“The Adventurer's Guild?” Yan Xuehen asked, stunned. The name sounded really strange and quite different from the way things were named in her previous world.

“That’s right. The different forces all have their own domains and don’t interact much with each other, but the Adventurer's Guild can be found in many of their territories. They have good access to information as well,” the boss said. He paused for a moment before continuing, “But they won’t easily give out their information to outsiders, and will only provide it to their adventurers. The higher your rank, the more information you’ll have access to. If the lady is interested, you can join the guild and become an adventurer yourself.”

Yan Xuehen frowned and asked, “Is it that easy to join?”

After all, sects typically picked their disciples really carefully.

The boss said with a smile, “I guess it isn’t that hard, but it ain’t that easy either. As long as you can complete the mission they give you, you can become an adventurer. The more missions you complete, the higher your rank will climb.” He paused for a moment, then said with a sigh, “This world is quite chaotic. All sorts of monsters are roaming about and there are dangers everywhere. That’s why the guild has many dangerous missions too.”

“Monsters?” Yan Xuehen repeated, her expression changing a bit. Judging from his tone, the word didn’t seem like an adjective, but rather a noun.

“That’s right. There are all sorts of demons and ghosts...” the boss said, giving her a rough explanation.

As she listened, Yan Xuehen was inwardly shocked. She came from a daoist sect, so she had some exorcism methods, but those were usually only used to deal with non-sentient deathly spirits. She hadn’t met any ghosts who weren’t all that different from real people. She asked the boss a few more questions, which he answered patiently one after another.

The boss looked out the window and warned her, “Miss, it’s already dark out. Why not just spend the night in this small store? Roaming outside at night without proper shelter is extremely dangerous.”

Yan Xuehen recalled the demons and ghosts he had talked about earlier and thought to herself that it would be best if she found Zu An and the others as

soon as possible. As such, there was no reason to create more unnecessary issues. She nodded and said, "Then I'll be troubling you."

"It isn't any trouble at all, not at all. I'm trying to make a living here, and you're only helping me out," the boss said as he scratched the back of his head, his expression looking simple and honest.

...

At midnight, several figures walked quietly on tiptoes toward Yan Xuehen's door. They carefully cut through the bolt with blades and pushed open the door to see the sleeping beauty within.

One of them released a sigh of relief. He laughed and said, "Boss, the Horizontal Alliance's Five Hegemons were all done in by this woman, so she's definitely quite something! I was worried that we might have been in over our heads ourselves."

The one in the lead was none other than the boss of the tavern. There was a treacherous smile on his face, and his previous honest and sincere look was nowhere to be found.

"Those Five Hegemons only know how to use brute force; how can they compare to me? After being afflicted by my Happy Bliss, she has no choice but to let me ravage her no matter how high her cultivation is," the boss replied. When he looked at Yan Xuehen's stunning face and body, even his breath quickened. His luck with women was absolutely incredible today!

One of his underlings said in confusion, "This woman's cultivation is definitely incredible. After what the Five Hegemons went through, she'd definitely be more careful. Boss, just how did you drug her?"

"I added the poison into both the tea and the candles. A single one wouldn't do anything, but it's impossible not to be poisoned when both are used together. No matter how careful she was, she wouldn't have been able to avoid the trap," the boss said, laughing complacently.

"So that was what happened..." a voice said with a soft sigh.

The boss felt all of his fine hairs standing on end. When he turned around, he saw that Yan Xuehen was already standing up.

“You... You weren’t poisoned?” the boss muttered, feeling his very soul tremble.

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Chapter 1747: Ghost King Pt. 2

Yan Xuehen remained silent. She had spent many years in the world of warriors, and because of her beauty, she had attracted all kinds of annoying trouble. What dangerous schemes hasn’t she experienced? Furthermore, the White Jade Sect had some treasures that guarded against poison as well, so she didn’t fear such things. Of course, there was no need for her to explain any of that to the boss.

The boss roared, “What are you all scared of? Just attack her together!”

The underlings drew their blades. As people who worked in the daylight robbery industry, which one of them wasn't a vicious and ruthless individual? They quickly rushed at Yan Xuehen while shouting.

However, a gust of frigid wind blew. Before they could even react, they felt as if all of the blood in their bodies had been frozen. Then, all that followed was endless darkness.

When she saw the sinister faces perfectly preserved on those frozen statues, Yan Xuehen sighed and remarked, “Amid the chaos of war, the weak are prey to the strong. The people become cruel and ignorant. No wonder there are demons and ghosts running amok.”

After coming to this world, she had discovered that there wasn’t even a single good person left. It truly was a saddening sight.

...

Meanwhile, after passing Sphinx’s test, Zhao Han’s group began to look around for clues related to this world.

Unfortunately, the shoddy house they had appeared in was surrounded only by a desolate wasteland, uninhabited for a thousand miles. As the party sighed at the barrenness of the world, a strange creature suddenly passed by.

The thing was completely covered in black mist, and its body appeared to have been pieced together from different corpses. Furthermore, each part still squirmed from time to time. There were many human faces all over its body, all bearing sinister and malevolent expressions, as if they were experiencing endless agony.

Even Xuan Bajing and Li Changsheng, who had experienced all sorts of things, jumped in fear. Only Zhao Han remained calm. He sized up the creature while wondering where its strength originated from.

When it saw the three of them, the monster released a nasty-sounding laugh. "Kek kek kek, I can smell the delicious scent of blood essence from your bodies! Come, enter my embrace..." It vanished after speaking.

Xuan Bajing and Li Changsheng were both extremely alarmed. They reflexively tried to dodge, but they were seriously injured, so they were a bit too slow. As every single cell in their body felt as if it were frantically warning them, their thoughts turned ice-cold.

Who would have thought that we would end up dying in the belly of this kind of monster? It's even worse than being killed by the emperor, as that would have been a more heroic death...

Suddenly, Zhao Han's hands clamped down on both of their shoulders, and they were instantly moved back around a hundred feet. Mere moments later, the monster appeared where they had just been. When it appeared, it instantly devoured the nearby flowers and plants, and even a large boulder.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing swallowed with great difficulty. If they had entered that 'embrace', wouldn't they have been instantly digested?

"Hm?" the monster exclaimed, clearly a bit surprised by their speed. The head at the very top suddenly opened its mouth and roared.

A shrill, ear-splitting noise tore through the air. Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing were both grandmasters who had even cultivated yang spirits, but they were seriously injured, so the noise made them feel extremely miserable. It was an attack targeted at the soul!

At the same time, the monster teleported again. The black mist-covered corpses on its body began to separate, surrounding the group from all directions.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing both drew their longswords, sending sword ki ripples through the corpses one after another. However, corpses were naturally already dead. As they were sliced through, they fell to the ground, but they were soon wrapped in black fog again and raised to fight once more.

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing's expressions changed. These things were too strange! They advanced endlessly and couldn't even be killed! Furthermore, the two could feel that the yin spirits they had attached to their swords were being corroded by the black mist.

Suddenly, a streak of golden light flashed past them, and the corpses screamed miserably and collapsed. A large golden hand passed straight through the black mist and grabbed the monster behind it. The mist seemed almost as if it had been burned by the sun, melting away as the golden light touched it.

The monster struggled frantically as it screamed in pain. It had never expected this person to be so strong! Its vitality had been greatly damaged when he broke through its skill. Who knew how many more people it would have to devour to recover again?

Zhao Han looked at the golden hand, which had started sizzling from the black mist's corrosion. He frowned and asked, "Just what kind of monster are you?"

However, the monster didn't respond to his question and instead cursed, "I'm working under the Ghost King! The Ghost King won't let you all off if you kill me!"

"Ghost King?" Zhao Han asked with a frown. "What kind of thing is that?"

The monster was stunned, and a fearful expression appeared on its face as it replied, "You... dare to disgrace the Ghost King? You're dead for sure! Your soul won't even be able to reincarnate!"

With a snort, Zhao Han's hand erupted with golden light. The monster screamed miserably, and all the black fog disappeared. Its true form resembled a shriveled black dog.

“Who is the Ghost King?” Zhao Han asked with a threatening gaze.

The monster was gripped with excruciating pain and could only reply, “The Ghost King is the ruler of all ghosts, one who is incomparably powerful! All of us monsters need to obey his orders...”

“You said you were working under the Ghost King? What was your task?” Zhao Han continued asking.

The monster clearly hesitated, but it couldn't withstand the golden light coming from Zhao Han's body and said, “Baopuzi! I was given the order to find the Baopuzi!”[1]

“Baopuzi?” Zhao Han repeated, stunned. The name sounded a bit similar to a certain book.

“It's something Immortal Ruler Baopu created with all his knowledge, rumored to contain the method of immortal ascension! The Ghost King wishes to become a ghost immortal, so he sent all of his people to find the Baopuzi for him...” the monster quickly said.

“This world really has a method for immortal ascension?” Zhao Han exclaimed, breathing hurriedly. He had used countless resources over the years, and yet he had never been able to find a method of immortality. Now, his heaven and man deterioration was drawing near, so his desire for immortality was even stronger.

Even Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing perked up their ears. After all, immortality was something that was desired by every cultivator. In their world, achieving immortality was nothing more than a pipe dream, but they hadn't expected this world to actually have some clues!

“I don't know. The road to immortality was severed, and for a long time, there were no immortals. However, when Immortal Ruler Baopu appeared, he left an entire generation stunned. Later, it was rumored that he ascended to immortality. That's why the Ghost King wants to find his Baopuzi to consult it,” the monster replied.

“Where is the Baopuzi?” Zhao Han shouted.

“That's...” The monster hesitated, but when it recalled the pain it had gone through, it still quickly replied, “I heard that a great tomb appeared by the Zhi

River. The things that emerged from that tomb were related to Immortal Ruler Baopu. Furthermore, the Zhi River is also where Immortal Ruler Baopu previously found his dao, which is why people suspect there might be some discoveries to be made in that tomb.”

“And where is this Zhi River?” Zhao Han asked. The monster gave him a rough description.

Li Changsheng couldn't help but say, “It's so far away. Will you even make it in time if you go now? Everything inside might already have been looted by other strong people nearby!”

The monster replied, “The great tomb has a powerful seal covering it. It isn't the time for it to open yet. I should be able to make it in time.”

Li Changsheng and Xuan Bajing exchanged a look. Both of them wanted to look around inside. If even the Ghost King was interested in the Baopuzi, perhaps it would really have some clues to immortality. Unfortunately, they knew they could only follow Zhao Han's orders right now.

Zhao Han looked down at the monster in his hands and asked, “How does that Ghost King's strength compare to mine?”

The monster's face distorted as it said, “Even though you're strong, you're still far from the Ghost King. It would be best to let me go, or else...”

Zhao Han snorted. Golden light flashed in his hand, and the monster was crushed into dust.

“Your majesty, what should we do now?” the two grandmasters carefully asked.

“This monster had some strength. That Ghost King must be extraordinary to be able to make it act under those orders,” Zhao Han said. He fell silent for a moment before saying, “Either way, we don't know much. We might as well take a look around that Zhi River.”

His experience in all sorts of secret dungeons had informed him that there were often special missions that had to be done before they would successfully pass and be allowed to leave. Now, it seemed the mission was most likely related to the Baopuzi. There were supposed to be secrets to immortality hidden inside, so he naturally had to take a look.

The two grandmasters were overjoyed, saying, “Your majesty will naturally be successful in every endeavor!”

...

Meanwhile, in Ruo Lan Temple, Zu An stared at the stunning beauty in front of him. He was briefly left absent-minded. Forget about Wei Suo, even he had reflexively felt that this Grandmother had to be a disgusting monster because of all the ghost movies he had watched. That Great Sister or whatever seemed to have matched that impression. Thus, he had never expected Grandmother to be such a gorgeous woman. He couldn't even sense the slightest trace of sinister energy from her. On the contrary, she seemed like the precious daughter of a great clan. Furthermore, she seemed a bit familiar. She looked a bit like a certain female celebrity in his previous world...

“You dare to stare at me like that? Are you tired of living?” the woman snapped, her expression cold. She waved her sleeve, and countless specks of green light flashed over.

“Huh? Why am I blooming with flowers?” Wei Suo cried in alarm, raising his arms. Traces of green appeared on his skin, and young green sprouts burst through. Then, in just a few breaths of time, the green sprouts grew bigger, producing leaves, and then a small white flower. Even more horrifyingly, more and more sprouts began appearing and creating little flowers. They began to extend toward his entire body. He was horrified, but he couldn't stop those sprouts no matter what he did.

Zu An also felt many fine things starting to stir in his flesh, as if they were absorbing the power in his flesh and wanted to break out. However, his body was too sturdy and they couldn't break out. He harrumphed and used the power of the Fire Phoenix. Pure fire elemental energy cleansed his entire body, and all of those little things were burned away.

At the same time, he looked at Qiu Honglei worriedly. He saw that she wasn't experiencing the same thing as Wei Suo; instead, she shone with light, blocking the glowing green specks. There were some that touched the protective barrier, but they quickly grew dim and fell to the ground. She was clearly using a defensive skill of the light element.

Zu An looked at the green specks. They looked like seeds... No, they were smaller than seeds, and actually resembled spores. They were so small that

they were easy to inhale into one's body. Then, they would take root and grow. Such things really were difficult to defend against.

When he saw that she was fine, Zu An moved closer to Wei Suo. He grabbed the arm that was blooming with flowers, then used the phoenix' flames to burn all the sprouts and little white flowers away. However, Wei Suo screamed miserably, as if the fire was burning his flesh.

The stunning woman was shocked to see that Zu An and Qiu Honglei were actually unaffected. She couldn't help but say with a sneer, "It's useless. They've already become one with his flesh. To a certain degree, those sprouts and flowers are part of his own body. If you burn away those sprouts, it will be no different from burning his body."

Zu An's expression darkened. This attack really was treacherous. If he didn't do anything, wouldn't Wei Suo end up turning into a plant?

"You dared to kill my disciple, so this is the price you must pay," the beautiful woman said. Her expression was ice-cold, as if she were saying something completely expected.

1. The Baopuzi is a collection of essays on alchemy, immortality, and other topics. 📖

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Chapter 1748: Proverbs

Zu An's expression changed. He naturally couldn't just watch such a thing happen. He charged at the woman, thinking, The one who starts trouble should end it.

The beautiful woman seemed to have already prepared herself for his retaliation. The floor suddenly split apart and thick saplings sprouted one after another, growing large in almost an instant. Then, they became like tree soldiers that blocked Zu An's path.

"Boss, be careful not to get caught!" Wei Suo quickly warned him.

Many wood element cultivators were capable of summoning treants. Even though treants were a bit sluggish, they were as tough as oxen. After being caught by them, one wouldn't be able to use one's skills freely anymore. For example, when Wei Suo had been caught earlier...

Zu An remained calm and used his Flame Blade. Fire was the bane of plants, after all.

The treants immediately became extremely alarmed, screaming miserably. The beautiful woman frowned slightly. She waved her hand slightly, and a ball of water condensed in her palm. Then, she tossed it at the treants, quickly creating a light drizzle.

However, her expression quickly changed again, because the water should have been able to put out the flames, but they seemed completely undeterred! On the contrary, it was as if oil had been poured onto them, making them burn with even greater ferocity.

The large, tall treants were burned to ashes almost instantly. Zu An didn't stop and charged forward. Qiu Honglei also moved, taking out her Empress Lantern. The light surrounded the woman, supporting Zu An's attack.

The beauty's hair turned into numerous fine tree vines and quickly formed an umbrella-like shape, blocking the Empress Lantern's light. She wasn't affected by it at all.

Qiu Honglei voiced her surprise. She hadn't expected the woman to actually neutralize her skill like this!

Just then, countless vines surged in front of the beautiful woman and shot toward Zu An. Compared to the vines Great Sister had used, they were clearly thicker, and they swirled with brilliance. They were clearly special.

Zu An's entire body erupted into flames. He turned into a Fire Phoenix and rushed at his opponent.

"This isn't normal fire!" the beautiful woman muttered with a frown. She suddenly backed up, her hands forming a series of complicated seals along the way. "When faced with the enemy, one should step forward courageously and join the battle formation!"

Zu An was completely confused now. He had heard such a proverb before and knew that it was normally used for exorcism. And yet it was a tree monster speaking an exorcism incantation... Is there something wrong with this world?

The beautiful woman shouted again, "The formation is in the south; the vermilion bird obeys its orders!"

As soon as she spoke, a loud and clear bird cry suddenly rang out behind her. A bird covered in flames rushed into the air and charged at Zu An.

Bang!

A blinding flash of flames erupted. Both sides took several steps back. Zu An noticed that his own flames couldn't burn through the woman's vines anymore either.

Is that fire bird the legendary vermilion bird? The vermilion bird and phoenix are both fire-type sacred birds. If she has the vermilion bird protecting her, trying to attack her with flames probably won't be so easy.

But why would a glorious sacred vermilion bird protect a monster? Also, isn't she chanting daoist proverbs?

The beautiful woman took to the air. Countless vines rose and attacked the two of them from different directions. Wherever they passed, the nearby chairs, tables, and even pillars ruptured.

Qiu Honglei's body suddenly shone with brilliance. She formed a wall of light in front of herself and Zu An to block the vines. This was the light element's most powerful defensive skill: The Wall of Sighs!

The beautiful woman was shocked. She hadn't expected her large-scale attack to be blocked just like that. Her hands quickly formed seals again as she chanted, "Face..."

Unfortunately, Zu An had already begun moving. A resplendent streak of sword light flashed past, forcefully cutting open a path through the endless vines. Then, under the woman's stunned gaze, he arrived in front of her. He grabbed her neck, stopping her from chanting any more proverbs.

The woman still wanted to retaliate, but she suddenly felt a wave of power seal her major acupoints. Strangely, there also seemed to be some kind of suction force coming from Zu An's palm. It was like a black hole, ready to suck away all of the blood essence within her at a moment's notice. Thus, she no longer dared to do anything. The vines that had previously filled the room shrank back, disappearing without a trace.

"What kind of monster are you?" she exclaimed in horror. Wasn't this guy's cultivation a bit too frightening? That wasn't all; he even seemed to be capable of sucking her dry at any time.

"I'm human, of course," Zu An said, giving Wei Suo a look. He barked, "Get rid of the skill you used on him!"

Wei Suo was practically about to cry. Boss is still the best! At the same time, he was also surprised by Zu An's cultivation. It was actually higher than he had imagined!

And yet, the beautiful woman only said indifferently, "I, Jing Teng, have never listened to threats."

Zu An frowned and reflexively tightened his grip. He thought, This woman is named Jing Teng? What a strange name.[1]

The beautiful woman groaned, a look of pain appearing between her brows. However, she remained stubborn, without any intent of bowing down.

Zu An asked seriously, "Do you really think I won't kill you?"

The beautiful woman said calmly, "This is a world where the strong prey on the weak, anyway. Since I lost to you, I'll accept my fate. However, you can forget about me begging for mercy!"

When he sensed the resolve in her voice, Zu An was briefly troubled. If he killed her, Wei Suo would also die with her.

Qiu Honglei smiled and asked, "Ah Zu, why don't you leave her to me? Our Holy Sect is a bit better in matters of interrogation."

The beautiful woman gave her a calm look, saying, "Your human race's torture methods aren't very useful against me. Even if I die, I won't even make a single frown."

Qiu Honglei walked up to her side, gently tracing a slender finger across her perfect face. She said with a smile, "You're such a pretty woman. Sometimes, dying isn't the scariest thing."

The beautiful woman's expression changed. She exclaimed, "What are you trying to say?!"

Qiu Honglei smiled in a bewitching manner, saying, "As a woman, you naturally know what I mean." Her gaze passed over Zu An, but then moved past him and focused on Wei Suo. She asked, "Brother Wei, didn't you want to experience romance with a female ghost? This woman is all yours."

Wei Suo had been brought to the brink of death because of this woman, so when he heard that, his eyes immediately lit up. He replied, "Really?"

"Of course. If this lady doesn't undo the witchcraft on your body, that means she's really looking forward to being with you," Qiu Honglei replied.

To their surprise, however, the beautiful woman sighed in relief and said, "He's currently being restrained by my vines. Even if he has the heart, he doesn't have the strength."

Wei Suo's face immediately fell. This was just too big of a blow to his self-esteem. Sigh, it's such a great opportunity...

Qiu Honglei was stunned. The situation was a bit troublesome. She thus pushed Zu An forward and said, "Then we might as well let you go."

Zu An was speechless. Why am I getting shot even when lying down?

A faint smile appeared on the beautiful woman's lips as she said, "He's your man. Would you be willing?"

Qiu Honglei's expression remained natural as she replied, "It's normal for a man to have three wives and four concubines. Furthermore, he's even doing this to save a brother, so what's the big deal with a bit of a sacrifice?"

Zu An was bewildered.

Tears almost poured out of Wei Suo's eyes. If you had to do something like that to save a brother, I'd do it every damn day!

The beautiful woman frowned. Sure enough, her expression changed a bit, but she quickly calmed down and said, "He's pretty handsome, so I'm not really losing out."

Now, it was Qiu Honglei's turn to be bewildered. She became upset and snapped, "A monster is a monster! What a shameless woman. We should just kill her and be done with it!" She took out her sinister dual blades and prepared to attack the woman.

"Please have mercy!" someone suddenly cried out in alarm. It turned out to be the female ghost Little Ying, who ran inside while holding the hem of her dress.

She had previously run away because she was scared of Grandmother, but then she became worried about the handsome young master and secretly snuck back in. Who could have thought that the invincible Grandmother would be restrained?!

Zu An was a bit surprised. He asked, "Are you pleading for her life? Aren't you scared of her?" Because of 'A Chinese Love Story', he reflexively thought that this Grandmother was oppressing such unfortunate female ghosts.

"Grandmother is really fierce and I'm scared of her, but she actually treats us really well," Little Ying said timidly.

Zu An and Qiu Honglei exchanged a look. They hadn't expected things to develop like this!

When she saw that they didn't believe her, Little Ying quickly said, "It's because of Grandmother's protection that I wasn't captured by the Ghost King's subordinates. Grandmother strictly ordered us not to harm others over the years and only allowed us to suck out yang energy from some greedy and perverted garbage men. We never threatened their lives! They were all able to recover after resting for a while."

"That's nonsense!" Qiu Honglei snapped, her expression cold. She continued, "I clearly heard that many people were found dead in Ruo Lan Temple. Do you think we didn't know about that?"

Wei Suo nodded. He had accepted the villagers' task and came here to deal with the ghost rumors precisely because he and the female ghosts could have

a lover's rendezvous... ahem, precisely because he could get rid of the village's problem!

Little Ying quickly explained, "We really didn't harm anyone! Those were all people killed by some bad people, and they were thrown near Ruo Lan Temple to frame us!"

Zu An and the others were stunned. They hadn't expected things to be like this.

"Little Ying, there's no need for you to explain these things to them!" the beautiful woman snapped, feeling a bit irritated. She clearly felt disdain toward such pleas for mercy.

"But that Great Sister of yours seemed to have sucked out blood essence more than a few times," Zu An said coldly. That thing had clearly had a malicious look on her face. She had quite a bit of blood on her hands.

Little Ying said weakly, "Sometimes, Great Sister indeed couldn't hold herself back and secretly sucked some people dry. But due to her misgivings toward Grandmother, she didn't do it that much."

The beautiful woman's eyes widened as she exclaimed, "There was something like that? Why didn't you ever tell me before?!"

Little Ying shivered. Grandmother's accumulated prestige clearly had quite an effect on her. She said, "Because Great Sister and Grandmother are of the same race, so I didn't dare to mention it."

"The same race?" the woman replied, her expression cold. "I merely taught her a few things out of pity back then. How could she and I be considered of the same race? If I had known she was so vicious, I would have killed her long ago!"

Zu An said with a smile, "In that case, then, there should be no grudge between us any longer. As a favor for Little Ying, I can let you go, and you can save my friend. What do you think?"

The beautiful woman hesitated for a moment, but then she nodded and said, "Fine!"

“To show my sincerity, I’ll let you go first,” Zu An said, opening his hand and taking a few steps back. Qiu Honglei was a bit worried, but Zu An gave her a reassuring look. It wouldn’t be hard for him to restrain her again at all.

A look of surprise appeared on the beautiful woman’s face. Then, she reached her hand toward Wei Suo, and countless green lights flew out of his body. Afterward, the tree buds and flowers all vanished. Wei Suo rubbed his entire body. He was so happy that he began to laugh in a silly manner.

The beautiful woman turned around and began to walk away, saying, “Little Ying, we’re leaving!”

“Please wait!” Zu An called after her.

The beautiful woman suddenly turned around and said, “Humans can’t be trusted after all!”

Zu An said with a smile, “The lady has too many misgivings. We aren’t thinking of troubling you. We only wish to ask you some questions. Have you met any of these women...” He then described Yan Xuehen, Yun Jianyue, and Xie Daoyun’s appearances to her.

“I didn’t expect you to be such a romantic,” the beautiful woman said with a sneer. “I haven’t.”

Based on their previous interaction, it didn’t seem as if someone with her personality would tell lies. Zu An was disappointed, but he continued, “Right, what’s the deal with that Ghost King you mentioned?”

1. Jing is a surname that can mean ‘bright’ or ‘scenery’. Teng means ‘vine’. ㄟ

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Chapter 1749: A Deal

When she heard the words ‘Ghost King’, Little Ying clearly shivered. The cool and elegant Grandmother’s expression also became grave.

“The Ghost King is the ruler of all ghosts. All those who haven’t passed on to the yellow springs and yet remain in this world obey his orders. He has

incomparably powerful strength, and no one dares to defy him,” Grandmother explained. After a pause, she looked at Zu An and said, “Your cultivation is very high, but you’re still far from the Ghost King’s match.”

Qiu Honglei looked at Zu An, a hint of worry in her eyes. Wasn’t this world a bit too dangerous if there was someone so powerful?

Zu An remained calm. He had already experienced countless chaotic situations and wasn’t scared of some Ghost King. He asked, “Are there many ghosts in this world?”

The beauty paused for a moment, then said, “There are constant wars here, and the people of the world have become ignorant and cruel. That’s why demons and ghosts roam freely.”

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but look at her curiously, asking, “Are you also a ghost?”

“I’m a fiend, not a ghost!” the beauty snapped impatiently. Qiu Honglei had just been too vicious with her methods earlier, so she didn’t have a good impression of her at all.

“What’s the difference between fiends and ghosts?” Wei Suo asked while reflexively rubbing his skin.

“Are you guys done yet? Are you curious babies or something?” the beauty asked in irritation, but she still replied, “Fiends are born from the essence of the world. All things in the world can become fiends, but it isn’t so easy to become a fiend. On the other hand, there are some fiends that are more sinister and can’t absorb the world’s essence for their cultivation, so they decide to suck out people’s blood essence instead. Their cultivations often rise quickly, but they’re usually filled with killing intent. They all end up as nothing more than murderous beasts.”

Zu An’s group couldn't help but give her an extra look. This woman’s temperament was graceful and refined, and there was a refreshing fragrance coming from her. She clearly wasn’t the type who absorbed blood essence.

Zu An wondered if such fiends were the result of flowers, plants, birds, and beasts developing intelligence. They didn’t seem to be the same as the Fiend races of the outside world.

The beautiful woman continued, "As for ghosts, normally, they come into existence after people perish while retaining a strong lingering will. Normally, once they perish, people first enter the yellow springs, then enter the cycle of reincarnation. However, there are some who die unnatural deaths, or perhaps have too many cherished desires when they die. Their powerful will allows them to remain in this world. Among those wills, resentment is the most powerful. That's why most ghosts are resentful souls or malicious spirits that instinctively harm others."

Zu An's group was shocked as they listened. They all looked at Little Ying, whose face reddened from their stares. She instinctively hid behind the beautiful woman.

The beauty harrumphed and explained, "She's one of the rare kind-hearted ghosts. She isn't a malicious spirit."

Zu An asked curiously, "Little Ying, what kind of lingering will do you have?"

According to what they were saying, one had to have a very powerful lingering will in order to become a ghost.

Little Ying's face reddened. She replied, "I wanted to go back home and see my parents one last time."

The beautiful woman added, "She was always filial to her parents, but because of an unfortunate event, she died in a foreign land..." Then, she gave a rough account of Little Ying's history.

Zu An's group was filled with sympathy as they listened. They hadn't expected her to be so pitiful.

Qiu Honglei asked curiously, "Then why didn't you go back home? Could it be that you're trapped here?"

The beautiful woman raised a brow, sensing that Qiu Honglei was implying something, but she didn't say anything.

Little Ying hurriedly waved her hands and said, "Actually, Grandmother has been protecting me. This world is full of monsters and evil spirits who swallow up others to make themselves stronger. I'm so weak that I'll definitely be eaten if I leave her protection."

“Then, since you’re so nice to her, why don’t you see her off on this trip?” Qiu Honglei asked. Because of their earlier conflict, he felt an instinctive dislike for the gorgeous woman.

“That’s because I can’t leave this place,” the beauty answered frankly.

“Why is that?” Zu An’s group all asked in confusion. Even though they didn’t know whether she was a tree fiend or a vine fiend, judging from the strength she had shown, there was no reason for her to be bound just because she was a plant.

The beauty didn’t reply; instead, she hesitated. Then, she looked at Zu An and said, “Human, let’s make a deal.”

Qiu Honglei vigilantly stood in front of Zu An and asked, “Why would you make a deal with him alone and not with all of us?”

The beauty said calmly, “It’s because I can’t trust the rest of you. However, the character he displayed earlier made me feel that it might be worth the risk.”

Zu An patted Qiu Honglei to reassure her, then asked, “What kind of deal?”

“I’ll help you find those companions you speak of, but you’ll help me with something,” the beauty said, staring deeply at Zu An. For the first time, there was a hopeful look in her eyes.

Zu An didn’t agree immediately. Instead, he said skeptically, “But you said you’ve never seen my companions. How will you find them?”

“I’m a fiend who transformed from a green vine, so I’m naturally close to all plant life. There are plants all over the world. I can ask for their help to search for your companions, which will definitely succeed,” the beauty explained. She paused for a moment before adding, “But I’d need to pay a great price for that, so I need you to help me with something.”

Zu An was moved. This world didn’t seem to be that small. He wouldn’t necessarily be able to find his friends that easily with his own two eyes. If something bad happened and one of them were forced to remain here forever, he would regret it for the rest of his life. Things seemed as if they would be much easier if he had the help of the vine fiend.

As such, he asked, "What kind of thing?"

The beautiful woman slowly said, "Because of an opportunity in the past, I was granted intelligence by another being. I was even given the name Jing Teng. I was naturally close to the human race..."

"Then, I fell in love with a human man. Everything was perfect at first, but later, once he found out about my real identity as a fiend, he became scared of me and we became estranged. Eventually, he worked with my enemy to kill me on our wedding day." When she reached that point in her explanation, her gaze turned completely cold.

Zu An and the others exchanged a look. They hadn't expected her to have such a past, to have been betrayed by her lover. No wonder she didn't trust humans at all. Even Qiu Honglei felt sympathy for her. Her impression of the woman became a bit better.

"If you've already died, what's going on right now?" Zu An asked curiously.

The beauty replied, "Even though I refused to believe that he had killed me, the one who granted me enlightenment in the past had told me I would experience a great tragedy. That's why I separated a seed from my body and buried it nearby just in case. Later, when my original body died, the seal on that seed was activated and I was reborn."

Zu An was quite shocked. This fiend really had some incredible methods. She could actually be reborn after dying!

The beauty continued, "Unfortunately, I lost most of my strength after I was reborn. I'm now incredibly weak. Only by merging with my original body can I recover my peak strength."

"But I already told you that the people of this world are treacherous and monsters are everywhere. I can still protect myself by using some special restrictions I left behind in the past, but if I leave this place, many monsters will want to devour me and take my power. That's why I never dared to leave this place to search for my own body even after all these years."

She paused for a moment and continued to look at him, then said, "So, I'm asking you to help retrieve my original body. With your cultivation, I believe that as long as we remain careful, there's a chance of ensuring my safety."

Zu An remained silent for a bit. Then, he slowly said, "You said earlier that you would use all of the plants in the world to help me find my friends. That's something you can probably only do with all of your original body's power, right?"

"That's right," the beauty said with a nod. "With my current strength, I'm indeed incapable of that."

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but say with a snort, "What a plan you have here. We want to find someone, and yet we have to help you with your goal first."

The beauty smiled and replied, "Isn't this a win-win situation?"

Zu An said with a serious expression, "This isn't a fair deal. We still have other ways of finding our people and don't need to rely on you. However, you have to rely on us."

The beauty shook her head slightly and said, "Perhaps you don't know this, but this world is far greater than you could imagine. It would be hard for you to find every single person even if you scoured the entire world. But as long as I recover my strength, I can definitely find them all."

"Definitely?" Zu An repeated, stunned.

"Right, definitely!" the beauty replied. Her voice carried a mysterious confidence, and there was a profound meaning behind her expression. "Furthermore, if you help me, you might very well receive unfathomable benefits."

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Chapter 1750: Kill Them All

Zu An remained silent for a long time, but then said with a nod, "Okay. I can agree, but if I find my own companions along the way, I'll have to reconsider whether I still want to help you."

A hint of worry appeared on the beautiful woman's face, but in the end, she still nodded and said, "Fine. Let's use a hand clap as a vow!"

She raised her fair white palm as she spoke. Zu An gently clapped her hand with his. He thought, How is this vine monster's skin even softer than a human's? It really doesn't match that impression of Grandmother I had.

The beautiful woman said, "Since we're already companions, then let's introduce each other once more. My name is Jing Teng. You haven't told me your names yet."

"My name is Zu An, and she's Qiu Honglei," Zu An said. He was about to introduce Wei Suo as well, but the latter quickly ran over while salivating.

"I'm Wei Suo, and I'm really happy to meet you! I didn't expect there to be such a beautiful Grandmother!" Wei Suo exclaimed, maintaining an obsequious smile while rubbing his hands together; he looked as wretched as could be.

Jing Teng just ignored him and looked at Zu An instead, saying, "Then, you should return with me. This place is too shoddy. We can return to Little Ying's ash altar and leave when it's daytime again. This world is safer during the day."

After hearing her talk about how dangerous it was at night, Zu An wasn't all that interested in traveling through the night anymore. He said, "Okay."

...

The group quickly entered a jungle. The trees were especially dense, with a layer of faint mist surrounding them. Not even divine sense could reach very far within. From time to time, they heard strange cries. The whole place carried something of a cold and sinister air.

The forest seemed to be a sort of maze in itself. Fortunately, with Jing Teng leading the way, many places that seemed to be dead ends at first suddenly revealed new paths. Her figure was tall and slender, and the view of her back was elegant and wonderful. When she walked, her body swayed back and forth rhythmically, but it didn't seem flirtatious at all and only gave her an even more graceful aura.

Wei Suo itched inwardly as he watched her. Earlier, if this woman had come to suck out his yang energy, he wouldn't even have resisted in the slightest! And yet it just had to be that damn Great Sister!

Qiu Honglei secretly said, "Be careful of any treachery."

Zu An nodded and increased his alertness. He said probingly, "There seems to be a profound formation in place here." If Xie Daoyun or Yan Xuehen were present, perhaps he would have been able to recognize something. Unfortunately, even though he had dabbled in quite a few areas, he didn't know anything about formations.

Jing Teng nodded slightly and said, "That's right. It was arranged to stop those with evil thoughts."

Zu An was a bit surprised, asking, "You're also good at formations?"

This woman knew about the daoists' proverbs, and she was even proficient in formations. What next?

Jing Teng turned around to give him a look. She raised a brow and asked, "Who said a fiend couldn't know about these things?"

"I guess that's true," Zu An said with a chuckle and didn't continue pressing her.

...

Soon after, they arrived in front of a giant boulder covered in large vines. Jing Teng didn't stop at all and walked directly toward it. The vines on the boulder shrank back to either side, revealing a spacious cave opening.

Zu An and the others were amazed. This design really was intricate! If Jing Teng hadn't personally led the way, no outsiders would notice that there was a cave here at all.

As the group followed her inside, the view suddenly opened up. The gloomy, cold, and treacherous atmosphere was completely gone, replaced with a feeling of exuberant life. Even the air seemed to be full of spiritual energy. One after another, they saw several refined gazebos that rested above the water. It was just like the waterway landscape gardens of Zu An's previous world. It didn't feel as if they were inside a cave at all.

Qiu Honglei couldn't help but say, "This doesn't seem like the cave from earlier. Where did you bring us?" She had left behind markings along the way,

and yet as soon as she entered, she couldn't sense the trail she had left outside at all.

Jing Teng gave her a look and calmly said, "Don't worry. This is a hidden paradise I created myself. This is the place I use to rest. There are no dangers."

Zu An was stunned. He asked, "You can create a space on your own?"

"Is there a problem?" Jing Teng replied with a grin, a proud look appearing on her face. She seemed quite fond of seeing his surprise.

Zu An was completely shocked. This woman was quite strong, but it was far from the level of establishing a world of her own, right? Even someone as powerful as Zhao Han wouldn't necessarily be able to create a world. The profound runemasters of the academy could only create some small storage sacks, and even those could only store some small dead things and couldn't store a real person. Strictly speaking, this was already a whole pocket world, albeit relatively small in scale! Just what kind of cultivation realm had this woman reached before to allow her to forge such a place?

"Stop believing her boasts," Mi Li said in his mind. "It's rumored that ancient immortals could create a paradise to aid in their cultivation, but this woman clearly doesn't have such skill. It's probably some immortal treasure she inadvertently stumbled upon, that contained this hidden paradise."

Zu An asked in surprise, "There really are immortals?"

Mi Li said in annoyance, "Didn't you already see them in the Fiend races' Xia secret dungeon? And yet you're still asking something like that."

Zu An couldn't help but chuckle. That really was the case. When he was in the secret dungeon, it had felt a bit unreal, so he sometimes felt doubtful.

"Little Ying, bring them to the guest rooms," Jing Teng said, pausing for a moment. "I'm going to get some rest. Don't disturb me if you don't need anything." She drifted off after speaking. Every single movement she made Wei Suo's eyes almost pop out of their sockets.

"Understood!" Little Ying replied with a bow, then said to Zu An's group with a smile, "Please follow me." She first got Wei Suo settled, but then she turned to

Zu An and Qiu Honglei and asked, "Should I arrange for one room or two rooms?"

Qiu Honglei's face reddened. She said, "Two rooms are fine, but they have to be next to each other."

Zu An couldn't help but laugh. This Qiu Honglei had been all flirtatious when she was a courtesan queen, and she even had the charm skills of the Devil Sect, and yet she was all embarrassed now.

When she heard what Qiu Honglei said, Little Ying's eyes lit up. She had an even brighter smile on her face as she replied, "Okay!"

Qiu Honglei was quickly given a room, then Little Ying brought Zu An to the room next door. After sorting out everything for him, her face suddenly reddened. She said quietly, "Young master, the night is long and you might be lonely alone. I can service the young master... Don't worry. I won't absorb your yang energy."

Zu An chuckled in embarrassment and said, "There's no need. Thank you for your good intentions."

Little Ying bit her lip, tears welling up in her eyes. She said, "The young master must think that I'm a fickle woman. Actually, it's because the young master was willing to bring me to my hometown that I felt really grateful, so I wanted to repay the young master in any way possible."

Zu An quickly helped her to her feet and said, "That isn't too difficult. The lady doesn't need to go so far."

"It might not be too difficult for the young master, but for me, it's a miracle that will change everything..." Little Ying said as she gave the next door a look. A bashful expression appeared on her face as she continued, "Young master doesn't need to worry about your female companion. I can remain completely quiet."

Zu An was speechless.

...

After tossing and turning for a while longer, he finally managed to send her away after reasoning in every way possible. He sighed in relief. People all

said that being a playboy was hard, but being a gentleman wasn't so easy either!

Suddenly, the Tai'e Sword appeared. With an audible vibration, a beautiful figure clad in red appeared. She had beautiful eyes and red lips, glowing with high spirits. It was none other than Mi Li. She looked at Zu An with amusement and asked, "Why did you turn her down? That female ghost is pretty cute. You've played with foxes and snakes or whatever, so your tastes are definitely out there. What's the big deal with messing with the dead too?"

Zu An started sweating nervously, saying, "I'm not that kind of fickle person..."

Mi Li harrumphed. "When you're fickle, you aren't a person? Whatever. You're probably just too embarrassed because of your little girlfriend next door."

Zu An said impatiently, "I actually feel even more embarrassed when you're always off to the side monitoring me."

Mi Li was stunned, but then she said with a smile, "Don't worry. I've lived for so, so long already. Those romantic affairs are no different from the mating of pets. Why would it make me feel anything?"

Zu An was speechless. Why are you randomly cursing people when we're just having a normal conversation?

Mi Li stretched lazily, fully revealing every part of her wonderful figure. She said, "I was getting bored from staying in the sword all day. I'll be taking the bed today. Just treat it as respect for your master."

Then, she lay down straight on the bed with a pleased expression. This cave paradise was actually nourishing for her soul.

Zu An was stunned, asking, "Then where will I sleep?"

"You can come and sleep with me if you want..." Mi Li said, turning to one side while propping her head up with one hand. Even though she was smiling, the look in her eyes was full of danger.

"Forget it..." Zu An replied, thinking, This woman really has some weird tastes. What does she have to say these teasing things for?

“Master empress, you’re wise and knowledgeable. What do you think about this world?” he eventually asked. He figured that since there was nothing to do anyway, he could at least consult her a bit.

“What is there to see? Isn’t it just some ghosts?” Mi Li replied with a yawn. “But that woman’s proverbs seemed a bit interesting. They seem to contain countless permutations. Normally, they aren’t things someone of her level should be able to grasp. That woman has many secrets about her.”

“That’s what I thought too. There’s also this hidden paradise,” Zu An said, then added bitterly, “But she won’t tell me even if I ask.”

“You aren’t that close yet, so why would she tell you?” Mi Li replied with a laugh. “That’s why you should do your best to gain her trust as early as possible and obtain all of her secrets. You’ll definitely gain a ton of benefits.”

Zu An said in annoyance, “She was already betrayed once before, so how could she so easily trust someone again?”

“Isn’t that your strong suit, though?” Mi Li replied curiously. “She’s a woman, and you’ve always had skill against women. Just take her and subdue her!”

“Aren’t you a woman too? I haven’t even subdued you yet,” Zu An said, rolling his eyes.

Mi Li’s expression turned cold and she retorted, “Oh? You were actually having thoughts about your master? As expected, you were a disgrace to the ancestors.” Even though her voice was cold, she wasn’t that angry. She clearly knew he was joking.

“Yes, yes, yes, I am a disgrace to the ancestors,” Zu An replied absent-mindedly. He recalled the excitement on her face and said, “Master empress, why do I feel as if you care more about these things than even me?” He felt that was even starting to become a bit weird.

“But of course. I’m so bored spending every day in this state. I need something for my amusement, right?” Mi Li replied matter-of-factly.

Zu An was speechless.

...

Meanwhile, in a dusky place that didn't seem like either the mortal realm or the underworld, but rather somewhere in between the two...

On a giant throne made of endless bones, there was a cloud of black fog that changed endlessly. All manner of powerful ghosts kneeled down below it. A ghost said respectfully, "Guide of the Yellow Springs greets the ruler of all ghosts respectfully. May I humbly ask why we have been summoned?"

"I sensed that woman's aura earlier. Seize her for me. Apart from her, everyone at her side is to be killed!" a malevolent voice replied from within the black fog.

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