

## M. Slaying 351

### Chapter 351: The Dudou Collector

As Li Fujian kept watch over the area with his broadsword in hand, he remarked, "As expected, your divination reading was accurate, Brother Zhuge. He truly did emerge from the direction of the fire."

Zhuge Guanxing just smiled without speaking.

It turned out that Zhuge Guanxing had divined that Li Feiyu had a connection with fire, and they'd spent the day trying to figure out what that meant. Then in the evening, they noticed a fire had broken out in the city and rushed over, arriving just as Li Feiyu was fleeing. Zhuge Guanxing then swiftly cast a spell, instantaneously activating a formation technique and trapping Li Feiyu.

At the next second, Chu Liang arrived at the scene and found Li Feiyu was trapped, and he wasn't making a sound.

However, the trapped thief obviously wouldn't just accept his fate. He twisted his body and transformed into a whirlwind of black wind, spinning upward like a drill. Li Feiyu struck the top of the formation, creating a crack in the barrier!

Zhuge Guanxing waved his feather fan, swiftly reinforcing the formation with his foundational qi. Nevertheless, Li Feiyu changed his strategy. He raised the black iron awl in his right hand and resolutely hurled it forward!

Zhuge Guanxing immediately recognized the item. "It's the Formation-Breaking Awl!"

The Formation-Breaking Awl was an enchanted tool specifically designed to counter formations. With just a burst of power, the enchanted tool could instantaneously disrupt the links in an enchanted formation's patterns, causing the entire formation to collapse. Even if the caster were to repair the formation immediately, the wielder of the Formation-Breaking Awl could use that moment to escape.

The Formation-Breaking Awl was priceless, so Li Feiyu had not intended to use it except as a last resort. Nonetheless, he hadn't expected the formation of this disciple of the Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals would be so hard to break, so he had no choice but to use this priceless treasure. If

given some time, he might have been able to break the formation on his own. However, the longer he let things drag on, the lower his chance of escaping would be.

The Formation-Breaking Awl embedded further into the formation's golden light barrier, making a small gap in it.

Li Feiyu transformed into a beam of black light and swiftly escaped through the gap.

Nevertheless, Li Fujian was already waiting there.

He said, "Trying to escape? Dream on!"

Li Fujian, a core disciple of the Great Astral Sect, swung his broadsword down from above, slashing through the air with a fierce burst of wind!

If Li Fujian's sword strike were successful, not even a cultivator with a higher cultivation level than him would be able to emerge away unscathed. However, the black light twisted like vines, coiling up along Li Fujian's sword and right arm. Li Feiyu, the black light, was obviously trying to reach Li Fujian's face!

Yet, this crafty move did not faze Li Fujian at all. When it came to fighting, the disciples of the Great Astral Sect had never been afraid of anyone!

Li Fujian suddenly clicked his tongue, producing a thunderous sound. "DA!"

Boom.

This thunderous sound was accompanied by a tremendous power that forcefully repelled the black light!

Li Feiyu was sent flying backward, and he reverted to his true form in pain. He then did a flip in midair and tried to escape again.

At this moment, Chu Liang descended from the sky and thrust out his palm!

In haste, Li Feiyu rose and thrust out his palm as well!

Boom.

Li Feiyi's cultivation level was slightly higher than Chu Liang's, but Chu Liang had the Secret Dragon Blood Technique, allowing him to enhance his strength by burning his blood. On top of that, he had the Jiuli Soul Armor, making him very difficult to beat in close combat!

Li Feiyu was sent flying again!

The moment Li Feiyu crashed to the ground, Zhuge Guanxing looked alarmed.

Zhuge Guanxing stomped on the ground and shouted, "Seal!"

A golden light extended into the ground from under his foot, attempting to seal off the ground in that area... but he was one step too late.

Li Feiyu sank into the ground as if melting into water. Just like that, he disappeared!

He'd used Escaping Through The Earth!

It wasn't surprising that he had mastered various stealth traversal arts. Stealth traversal arts like Escaping Through The Earth were relatively basic divine skills, so it was natural that Li Feiyu had perfected them.

Everyone had already known it would be difficult to capture him and had been mentally prepared for this. Nevertheless, they couldn't help feeling a little regretful that even with such an excellent opportunity to catch him, he still managed to slip away.

While Li Fujian was sighing, Chu Liang discreetly took a step back and looked at what was in his hand.

It turned out that the reason he hadn't drawn his sword and had instead used his bare palm to strike Li Feiyu had been to seize the opportunity to come into contact with the thief's hand.

Chu Liang had hoped to steal something from the thief. He'd thought that perhaps he might even be able to grab the Baxia Dual Rings if he were lucky.

Yet, when Chu Liang took the item out, he could tell just by the texture of the item that it wasn't an enchanted tool.

Chu Liang quickly glanced at it and saw that it was a bundle of silk with red strings and embroidery.

It's clearly another dudou![1]

Huh?

Why did I think "another"?

...

Right after that, Yun Chaoxian flew over.

Seeing Li Fujian, Zhuge Guanxing, and Chu Liang, Yun Chaoxian exclaimed regretfully, "Damn it! If I had been here, I wouldn't have let him escape!"

"Yeah, so why weren't you...?" Li Fujian asked weakly. "Was it because you didn't want to come here?"

"I couldn't keep up with them!" Yun Chaoxian stated loudly.

His tone left them all a bit stunned.

They were all thinking, It's fine if you get left behind, but why are you saying it so proudly?

"Now that he has escaped, it'll be harder to lure him out again." Chu Liang sighed. "We'd better just call it a day and think up some new plans on our own."

Zhuge Guanxing nodded. "Agreed."

The four of them then paired off and went their separate ways.

Back in his accommodation, Chu Liang fell into deep thought as he stared at the flower-patterned dudou.

Why would Li Feiyu have something like this on him?

Could it be that he's not just a cat burglar but also a pervert?

This was the second time Chu Liang had obtained a dudou. The first dudou he'd obtained had been stored in an Evil Ksitigarbha statue. The dudou had belonged to Enchantress Liu from the Scarlet-Robe Hall. It had helped him uncover Enchantress Liu's romantic relationship with the Southern-Route Guider, which turned out to be quite useful.

So, what about this one? Could it also help uncover some of Li Feiyu's interpersonal relationships?

The next morning, Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian made their way to another inn.

After investigating through the night, they'd found out that Ji Lingyu and Tang Shi were staying there.

"Senior Brother?" Little Tang Shi was surprised to see Yun Chaoxian and Chu Liang. "Why are the two of you here?"

"We'd like to work with you," Chu Liang said with a smile. "Let's team up to track down Li Feiyu."

"Team up?" Ji Lingyu looked at Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian. "Is there something that you don't have the right abilities to deal with? Is that why you need us?"

Otherwise, there would be no need to team up in a competitive trial like this.

"Miss Ji is indeed wise."

The four of them then sat down together.

Chu Liang chuckled and explained, "Last night, I took an item from Li Feiyu. It's surely stained with his aura. So, I'm wondering if you could see if it's possible to track down his hiding place by following the trail of his residual aura."

Hearing that, Ji Lingyu figured out why Chu Liang had come to her.

Turns out that he's aware of the ability that comes with my Xuan Yuan Golden Eyes. That's why he wants me to help him find the thief.

He's using me like a spirit dog.

Nevertheless, Ji Lingyu and Tang Shi didn't have any leads anyway.

Since a lead had been presented to them, Ji Lingyu readily agreed to Chu Liang's request.

"No problem."

"Let's openly share any leads we find this time. If we find anything further on our own later, we can compete then," Chu Liang said. "The main goal this time is to help the Ultimate Martial Mountain Manor recover the Baxia Dual Rings. We can't waste time; we have to get this done as soon as possible."

"Agreed." Ji Lingyu nodded. "Show me what you got from Li Feiyu."

Chu Liang then placed the dudou on the table.

"..."

Tang Shi and Ji Lingyu fell silent for a moment.

"Young Hero Chu, you didn't take out the wrong item, did you?" Tang Shi asked.

"What are you talking about? How could I have something like this?" Chu Liang replied hurriedly.  
"This is the item I took from Li Feiyu!"

As for how he got it, that wasn't easy to explain. After all, he couldn't just admit he had a skill for stealing things.

The two young ladies' expressions contained a subtle sense of disgust.

Ji Lingyu gave Chu Liang a strange look and then glanced at the dudou.

Eventually, she said, "I'll give it a shot."

Ji Lingyu closed her eyes and formed a hand seal.

Whoosh.

When she opened her eyes again, they glowed with golden light!

"This dudou does indeed have a trace of aura..."

Her gaze followed the faint trail of color out the door.

Using her mystical ability, Ji Lingyu searched through the streets and alleys of Donghuai City for that same aura.

"I see it..."

"The same aura is concentrated in the east side of the city..."

"At the Jubilant Melody Hall."

Chapter 352: You Also Like Yu Xiang'er?

Jubilant Melody Hall, established by the South Melody Conservatory, had branches in over seventy large cities across the Yu Dynasty, offering year-round performances. However, its primary mission was to scout and nurture talents for the conservatory.

Jubilant Melody Hall held auditions every Spring and Autumn, inviting any child interested in cultivating musical skills to participate.

After studying at Jubilant Melody Hall for three to five years, students would leave as excellent musicians or dancers, receiving the same level of hospitality as noble and royal families. Those who were given a chance to stay permanently at Jubilant Melody Hall were guaranteed to become renowned figures.

Of course, the best among them—those who excelled in both cultivation and music—were sent to South Melody Conservatory to explore the true path of music cultivation.

The core disciples of the South Melody Conservatory were the top musical prodigies from the nine provinces. One could only imagine the extent of their remarkable talents.

At this point, Chu Liang had so many questions in mind. Could it be that Li Feiyu has been hiding in Jubilant Melody Hall in Donghuai City all this time? Or perhaps the owner of this dudou[1] is in the Jubilant Melody Hall and she knows Li Feiyu? With these doubts in mind, Chu Liang took the dudou and returned to the inn with Yun Chaoxian. This crucial piece of evidence, obtained with great effort, could not be left with Tang Shi and Ji Lingyu.

After all, they were still competitors.

Similarly, even though Ji Lingyu could easily find the owner of the dudou by wandering around Jubilant Melody Hall and identifying the person whose aura matched it, she would never take Chu Liang and his group along. Their cooperation ended once they discovered Jubilant Melody Hall.

As they walked down the street, Yun Chaoxian asked, "What should we do next?"

He had become accustomed to relying on Chu Liang. With the wisdom he prided himself on in the Great Astral Sect, he concluded that since Chu Liang was wiser, following him would be the right choice.



"Although Miss Ji won't help us find the owner directly, knowing the general area makes it easier. At worst, we can borrow a spirit dog from somewhere else, which will serve the same purpose," answered Chu Liang.

"A spirit dog?" Yun Chaoxian thought for a moment and said, "Thunderbolt Stronghold surely has one. Should we go ask them?"

"Uh..." Chu Liang smiled guiltily and said, "If we really have to go to Thunderbolt Stronghold, I won't show up. Do you know anyone there?"

"Yes, I do." Yun Chaoxian nodded confidently.

"Who?" Chu Liang asked.

"Deng Yixiao. I fought him last time at Mount Shu," Yun Chaoxian said with a grin.

During a massive brawl between the disciples of the Divine Nine and the Terrestrial Ten on Mount Shu, the Monastery Tower aided the Thunderbolt Stronghold. As a result, Yun Chaoxian had confronted Deng Yixiao.

"..." Chu Liang fell silent for a moment.

It seemed Brother Yun couldn't really distinguish between "acquaintances" and "enemies."

After a pause, Chu Liang said, "Let's not rush. We'll go check out Jubilant Melody Hall first."

Chu Liang thought that Li Feiyu, being the Heroic Thief of Jiangnan, would often be out and about. If they could find someone suspicious or ask around about anyone who had behaved strangely, visited unusual places last night, or had close relations with outsiders, they might find some clues.

They needed to conduct more investigation before making any decisions. With this in mind, the two arrived at Jubilant Melody Hall.

The Jubilant Melody Hall in Donghuai City wasn't very large, but it was bustling with activity. Many people were entering and leaving through the main door and main hall. As Chu Liang and

Yun Chaoxian stepped inside, they saw a square table in the main hall. Behind it sat a middle-aged woman in musician's robes, seemingly there to greet guests.

Seeing them approach, the woman looked up and asked, "Here to see the performance?"

"Uh... yes." Chu Liang nodded immediately. "Can we go in?"

"Turn left here, go to the end, and line up for tickets," the woman said as she pointed to a nearby corridor.

"Thank you," Chu Liang said. Then, he headed in that direction with Yun Chaoxian.

However, after walking through the corridor, they didn't find a ticket booth. Instead, they saw a door that seemed to lead out of Jubilant Melody Hall.

What's going on? Chu Liang wondered.

With doubts in mind, he opened the door.

"Whoa—" The two exclaimed in unison.

Behind the door was a large open space crowded with people. Upon closer inspection, it became clear that they were in a winding queue, with countless heads stretching into the distance. Chu Liang felt that even the entire audience at the Mount Shu Summit couldn't compare to the number of people gathered here.

"What's going on?" The two were bewildered.

As they wondered, they suddenly saw two people ahead turn around. One was a stern man with a red saber at his waist, and the other was a masked man wrapped in white cloth.

The stern man was none other than Ren Hongdao, the Senior Brother of the Great Astral Sect, and the masked man, judging by his build and eyes, was Zhang Chen.

It's them! Did we accidentally leak the news? Did we? This was Chu Liang's first reaction.

But in the next moment, he heard Ren Hongdao speak, "Junior Brother, Young Hero Chu, do you also... like Yu Xiang'er?"

Yu Xiang'er? Chu Liang recognized the name because anyone familiar with the South Melody Conservatory would know about the three unparalleled geniuses of this generation. Yu Xiang'er gained fame first, followed by Xue Lingxue, and then Shen Qingyan.

Yu Xiang'er came to Donghuai City?

Chu Liang had only heard a bit about her, but Yun Chaoxian knew nothing. Yun Chaoxian, being a muscular man, could only remember who was the best fighter of his generation.

But both of them nodded and replied simultaneously, "Oh yes, yes."

Even though they didn't know who Yu Xiang'er was, they just nodded.

"I've liked Yu Xiang'er for a long time," Chu Liang said seriously, racking his brain to recall the details. "My favorite in the South Melody Conservatory is Xu Xiang'er and my second favorite would be Shen Qingyan. But looking across the entire martial world, my ultimate favorite is Jiangjiang of Mount Shu Sect! Jiang Yuebai![2]"

These were the exact words he had heard from Lin Bei that day; he had only changed one name.

Upon hearing this, Ren Hongdao—a stern man who had slept with a saber since childhood and whose glare could make children on the street stop crying—suddenly smiled as if he had found a kindred spirit.

He grabbed Chu Liang's hand and said, "I also like these two, but my favorite is Shen Qingyan, with Yu Xiang'er as a close second. Since you like them too, we are good friends."

"Ahaha..." Chu Liang tried to mimic Ren Hongdao's smile while recalling how Lin Bei had said it. "Qingyan! Qingyan! She is beautiful and has a sweet voice!"

Ren Hongdao immediately continued excitedly, "My face shines with joy for Qingqing who has my heart!"[3]

Caught up in Ren Hongdao's enthusiasm, Chu Liang let out a cheerful shout, "Yay! Yay..."

It was Zhang Chen who cleared his throat and said, "Ahem, Brother Ren... let's be mindful of our image."

Hearing this, Ren Hongdao quickly crossed his arms over his chest, stood up straight, and resumed his stern demeanor. He whispered, "It's fine. Not many people know me anyway."

After a bit more conversation, Chu Liang discovered that Yu Xiang'er from the South Melody Conservatory was scheduled to perform here tomorrow. This explained the large crowd lining up for tickets today.

As core disciples of the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten, Ren Hongdao and Zhang Chen could have secured high-level seats at Jubilant Melody Hall by revealing their identities, thereby avoiding the queue. However, Zhang Chen had already lied about heading elsewhere to avoid being recognized in Donghuai City and causing problems for the team. Therefore, he joined the queue wearing a mask to maintain his disguise.

Seeing their appearances, Chu Liang tentatively asked, "Are you two watching the performance so leisurely because you've found some clues about Li Feiyu?"

"Not yet," Zhang Chen replied. "We have no clue at all. It just so happened that Brother Ren is interested in Miss Yu's performance, so I came with him to enjoy and relax."

"I see..." Hearing this, Chu Liang felt relieved.

Zhang Chen then asked, "Isn't it the same for you two? Have you had any clues?"

"We haven't either." Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian immediately shook their heads.

However, Ren Hongdao started staring at Yun Chaoxian and suddenly asked in a state of confusion, "If you haven't found any clues, why are you blushing?"

"Huh?" Yun Chaoxian became even more nervous.

Chu Liang, being at the side, answered, "Brother Yun might be feeling shy that he is about to see Miss Yu."

"Yes, I'm shy," Yun Chaoxian said.

"That's understandable," Ren Hongdao nodded. Then, glancing at Yun Chaoxian, he asked, "But why are you not only blushing but also sweating?"

"Uh..." Chu Liang interjected, "Brother Yun might be feeling a bit hot."

"Yes, I'm hot," Yun Chaoxian agreed.

"We who practice martial arts are impervious to heat and cold. How can you be hot? And why are you shaking?" Ren Hongdao pressed further.

"..." Chu Liang was struggling to come up with an answer at this moment and he couldn't help but inwardly criticize Yun Chaoxian for his weak nerves.

But then, Yun Chaoxian answered the question himself.

"I might be a bit cold..."

Chapter 353: It's Her

Yu Xiang'er's performance at Jubilant Melody Hall wasn't part of a grand tour; she happened to visit and decided to perform here. While it was common for disciples of the South Melody Conservatory to perform and support local halls, a visitation from someone of Yu Xiang'er's caliber was rare.

This performance wasn't heavily promoted like her individual tours. As a result, those queuing for tickets were mostly fervent fans from Donghuai City. Despite the large turnout, the crowd didn't swell beyond that initial group.

Soon, two women joined the queue from the back.

"Junior Sister, Miss Ji?" Ren Hongdao looked at them strangely as he asked. "Why are you here too?"

The two women were none other than Tang Shi and Ji Lingyu, clearly in a situation similar to Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian.

Upon hearing Ren Hongdao's question, the two young girls blinked, pondering how to answer. Before they could respond, Chu Liang asked, "You like Yu Xiang'er too?"

"Ah, yes, yes," Tang Shi and Ji Lingyu nodded eagerly.

The scene mirrored what had happened earlier.

"Excellent," Ren Hongdao said with a satisfied nod. "I had no idea there were so many like-minded people in the Great Astral Sect."

Zhang Chen, standing nearby, watched them with a smile, choosing to remain silent.

Tang Shi glanced at him and asked, "Why is Brother Zhang Chen masked?"

"Shh," Zhang Chen hushed, raising his finger gently. "Don't call me by my full name outside."

Chu Liang chuckled; Zhang Chen's situation was similar to his own. However, Zhang Chen wore a mask because he was too well-liked, while Chu Liang did so because he was hated by too many people.

Chu Liang suggested, "I'm in the same situation. Brother Zhang, why not do as I do and use an alias when traveling?"

"That's a good idea," Zhang Chen replied.

"My alias is Chu Liuxiang[1]. Brother Zhang, how about the alias Zhang San[2]?" Chu Liang suggested.

Zhang Chen: "..."

The two names were essentially similar, but "Zhang San" sounded less thoughtful and a bit perfunctory in comparison.[3]

That day, they queued for a long time to buy tickets and agreed to watch the performance the next day.

Back at the inn, Yun Chaoxian said, "This won't work. My Senior Brother and Zhang Chen are always around. How can we gather information?"

"Not during the day," Chu Liang suggested. "Why don't we visit Jubilant Melody Hall at night?"

...

As night fell, Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian arrived outside Jubilant Melody Hall, ready to sneak in under the cover of darkness.

As they reached the street next to Jubilant Melody Hall and were watching, they saw a shadowy figure climb over the wall and slip inside.

In the next instant, a melody of a guqin echoed from inside Jubilant Melody Hall.

Zheng—

The music was so powerful it seemed almost tangible, and the shadowy figure who had just slipped inside was suddenly propelled back, rolling across the ground.

Immediately, several guards from Jubilant Melody Hall rushed out through the door.

They heard shouts from that direction, "These bastards are trying to sneak into Jubilant Melody Hall to lurk around Miss Yu! Beat them to death! Show them no mercy!"

"Ah! Ah! I won't dare again!" someone pleaded.

"..."

Hearing the person's screams, Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian both grimaced.

Unlike ordinary immortal sects, the South Melody Conservatory did not require its disciples to train through combat. Each core disciple, selected from thousands, was highly valued and not skilled in fighting, so they were typically assigned at least one bodyguard.

These bodyguards were usually former disciples who had not become core members but possessed high cultivation skills. They were often trained specifically as combat musicians.

For example, Chu Liang had seen Xue Lingxue before. Although she didn't appear to have an elder accompanying her, there was undoubtedly a bodyguard in her team to protect her in case of danger.

The person who shouted earlier was likely Yu Xiang'er's bodyguard. Judging by the strength of the attack, he was probably at the peak of the sixth realm.

"How do we get in?" Yun Chaoxian asked.

Chu Liang thought for a moment and said, "To get inside, we need a muscular person to break in through the main gate to distract the bodyguard. Meanwhile, a sharp-minded person should slip in from the side."

Upon hearing this, Yun Chaoxian hesitated. Then, he asked, "But I'm both strong and sharp-minded. What should I do?"

"..." Chu Liang paused for a moment before saying, "Then why don't you give me the chance to be the smart one? Just stride forward and try breaking in."

Neither of them was one to dawdle; once the plan was set, they acted immediately.

Yun Chaoxian covered his face and, without using his World-Dominating Halberd, charged through the main gate of Jubilant Melody Hall with his fists raised, shouting, "I want to see Yu Xiang'er!"



"Another one?" The South Melody Conservatory bodyguard inside was furious. The guqin's sound turned as sharp as a knife.

Zing! Zing! Zang!—

Yun Chaoxian was initially frightened and flipped in mid-air twice to narrowly dodge the attacks. "Your attacks were not this fierce earlier!" he exclaimed.

"To warn the monkeys, one must first kill the chicken as a warning. If I don't set an example, everyone will think the South Melody Conservatory is too weak to handle all of you!" Even before the bodyguard appeared before Yun Chaoxian, his voice and the guqin melody had reached him.

As the melody of the guqin played, a large formation was instantly set up!

Yun Chaoxian was now trapped inside, unable to move freely. He could only dodge as best he could, but occasionally his tough body was struck a few times. Feeling unlucky, he thought to himself, How did I suddenly become the chicken here?

Seeing he couldn't hold on much longer, he suddenly heard a woman's shout from outside, "Ha!"

Another person barged into the formation!

...

While the bodyguard was distracted, Chu Liang seized the opportunity to conceal his aura and quietly slipped into Jubilant Melody Hall.

Once inside, he looked around, hoping to find someone to question and gather information from.

Though the front of Jubilant Melody Hall seemed small, its interior was quite spacious, complete with landscapes and gardens.

As Chu Liang was about to cross the garden to reach the area where the apprentices lived, he suddenly heard someone call out from behind, "Young Hero Chu?"

"Who?" Chu Liang turned around quickly and saw it was Ji Lingyu, letting out a sigh of relief.

No wonder she recognized him at a glance; Ji Lingyu was extremely sensitive to people's auras.

"How did you get in, Miss Ji?" Chu Liang asked.

"I had Tang Shi create a distraction outside, and I slipped in during the commotion," Ji Lingyu said.

When Chu Liang heard this, he smiled.

As it turned out, human ingenuity shared a fundamental similarity.

It was the same with might and vigor.

"Then, let's advance together and conceal each other's presence. Our primary goal is to find Li Feiyu," Chu Liang said.

"Alright," Ji Lingyu responded softly.

At this moment, they couldn't bother distinguishing between friend and foe. All they could do was focus on working together.

Ji Lingyu was clever and understood the implied meaning of Chu Liang's words. If she insisted on competing, Chu Liang would shout, and no one would benefit from the situation.

The two of them proceeded stealthily together, passing through a garden and reaching a large wooden house. They quietly peeked through a window and saw a hot spring inside, with flower petals floating on the water and the shadows of people underneath.

Although the water surface obscured their forms and auras, it wasn't hard to tell through the petals on the water... It seemed that a woman was bathing.

Ji Lingyu immediately glared at Chu Liang and whispered, "Don't look!"

Chu Liang quickly turned his back.

Ji Lingyu nodded in satisfaction and remarked, "You are quite the gentleman."

"It's not just about being a gentleman. I suggest you turn around too..." Chu Liang said weakly.

"I'm a woman too. What's the harm in taking a look..." Ji Lingyu replied as she turned to take a glance.

With that glance, she was stunned, frozen in shock.

It turned out that behind them stood a middle-aged woman in a long purple robe. She held a guqin in her left hand and was glaring at them with cold eyes.

Who else could it be but the South Melody Conservatory bodyguard who had attacked earlier?

The strength of someone at the peak of the sixth realm was indeed formidable. Even the two core disciples of the Great Astral Sect, Yun Chaoxian and Tangshi, hadn't managed to delay her for even a moment.

Ji Lingyu waved her hand and said with a smile, "Esteemed senior, if I tell you we just happened to pass by here, will you let us leave?"

"Hmph!" The bodyguard snorted coldly and suddenly struck the guqin with her right hand. Zing—

The sound of the guqin was like a sword, sharp and unstoppable, cutting through the air with indomitable force!

Chu Liang and Ji Lingyu dodged to either side simultaneously!

The guqin's sound naturally disturbed the woman in the hot springs inside the house. She immediately rose from the water and dressed swiftly, all in a single breath.

A woman exuding a delicate fragrance hurried out of the wooden cabin, asking in shock, "Master Zhao, what happened?"

The bodyguard replied, "Xiang'er, there's no need to panic. It's just two little thieves who sneaked in."

When she was speaking to this woman, her tone was much gentler.

In his panic, Chu Liang noticed the woman's slender figure. Her face was partially hidden by her wet hair, but her beauty was still evident. She exuded an aura of grace, like a lotus emerging from the water.

On the other side, Ji Lingyu suddenly shouted, "It's her!"

Chapter 354: Why do you understand it so well?

"Your names," demanded Musician Zhao of the South Melody Conservatory.

She sat coldly at the front of the hall as she gazed sternly at the two youths standing in the middle of the hall.

The young lady who had just taken a bath sat elegantly on the side, her skin glowing softly in the candlelight. She looked like a lotus flower emerging in a clear pond—so immaculate that it was as if she had been carved by deities.

With long hair draped loosely over her shoulders and limpid eyes reminiscent of a pool of water, the young lady was the very image of pure and unadulterated beauty.

This young lady was Yu Xiang'er.

There had been rumors in the streets about her. If Shen Qingyan was ravishingly beautiful like a tree peony[1] and Xue Lingxue had a glacial beauty that prevented others from approaching her, then Yu Xiang'er was a youthful and gentle beauty that made her seem warm and approachable.

Chu Liang witnessed it for himself this evening. The rumors appeared to be true.

Unfortunately, this was not the right moment to appreciate Yu Xiang'er's beauty... because it was too embarrassing for him to raise his lowered head.

"Ji Lingyu."

"Chu Liuxiang."

Ji Lingyu and Chu Liang gave their names.

"I attended the Mount Shu Summit. Who are you trying to fool?" Musician Zhao shot Chu Liang a sidelong glance. "I recognize you. You're Chu Liang of the Mount Shu Sect. I was there when you killed Taowu."

"..."

Chu Liang remained silent for a moment.

No wonder people fear getting famous like pigs fear getting fattened, especially pigs that have already been caught...[2]

Chu Liang had to admit, "Esteemed senior, my surname is Chu. My given name is Liang, and my courtesy name is Liuxiang."

"I don't care what your real name is, and I don't care which sects' prodigies the two of you are. You dared to sneak into Jubilant Melody Hall and peep at a disciple of the South Melody Conservatory. Both acts are disgraceful. I will inform your families and sects and have your elders take you home," Musician Zhao said sternly.

"No!"

"Esteemed senior, please don't!"

Ji Lingyu and Chu Liang shouted at the same time.

Ji Lingyu was anxious because she was still running away from home. Everything would be fine if her family didn't come looking for her, but if they did... I can't go back like this. If they catch me here, they definitely won't let me leave home for the next ten years.

Chu Liang was even more nervous than Ji Lingyu. After all, Ji Lingyu was a young lady. It wasn't as big a problem for her to get caught peeping at another young lady, and it would be easier for others to accept her explanation.

If news were to get out that Chu Liang had gotten caught for peeping at Yu Xiang'er, that would just make his already famous name spread further and even faster across the mortal realm.

In the future, I will truly have to change my name just so I can live.

I'm so young, yet I've already achieved much success in cultivation. It would be tragic if I ruined my clean reputation for life because of such a shameful incident.

Musician Zhao looked at them and asked irritably, "Do you have anything else to say?"

Chu Liang's mind raced, and he glanced at Yu Xiang'er beside him before revealing the truth.

"Esteemed senior, please discern the truth. We did not come to peep at the disciples of the South Melody Conservatory but to find the notorious thief Li Feiyu from Jiangnan!"

"Oh?" Musician Zhao uttered in surprise and doubt.

Chu Liang then told her about the theft of the Baxia Dual Rings from the Ultimate Martial Mountain Manor. He also told her how he and Ji Lingyu were helpers in the Great Astral Sect's trial to select their next head disciple.

"But what does this have to do with the South Melody Conservatory?" Musician Zhao questioned.

"That's because I fought with Li Feiyu last night. Esteemed senior, look at this item!"

Chu Liang turned his hand over, taking the dudou out from his storage tool.

"..."

The room fell silent.

After a while, Musician Zhao questioned quietly, "Do you think I do not know what this is?"

Chu Liang continued, "I stole this item from that thief."

Musician Zhao thought that there was something rather odd about this statement.

You stole this item from a thief... and the item's a dudou. Doesn't that make you a scoundrel too?

He's a cat burglar, and... you're a perverted thief[3]?

Chu Liang said, "I won't go into the details. In short, Miss Ji and I tracked the residual aura on this item to this place. That's why we wanted to come in and investigate."

Throughout his explanation, Chu Liang had kept an eye on Yu Xiang'er and noticed she just sat there quietly the whole time.

"In that case, your actions are understandable." Musician Zhao finally dropped her stern expression. "However, if there are people connected to the thief in the Jubilant Melody Hall, you could have just informed us. Why sneak in so late at night?"

"We were still uncertain about the details of the situation. Please forgive us for sneaking in here, esteemed senior," Chu Liang apologized again. Then he stated, "However, Miss Ji did manage to confirm earlier that the owner of this dudou... is Miss Yu."

"Hmm?" Musician Zhao uttered, turning to look at Yu Xiang'er.

It was only then that Yu Xiang'er finally spoke up.

She gave a slight nod and explained, "I did lose a dudou the day before yesterday. I was too embarrassed to mention it and thought I had just forgotten where I'd placed it. Now, it appears that it might have been stolen."

As Yu Xiang'er spoke, she glanced at Chu Liang.

Her gaze seemed to be questioning whether the dudou had been stolen by the thief... or Chu Liang. There might even have been someone else in the middle.

Chu Liang replied, "In that case, it shall finally be returned to its rightful owner today."

He handed the dudou to Yu Xiang'er. She delicately picked the dudou up with two fingers and put it away.

"I will conduct a thorough investigation in the Jubilant Melody Hall tomorrow to see if anyone's acting suspiciously or if there's anyone who may be connected to that thief," Musician Zhao declared, standing up. "You two can rest assured. If that cat burglar is indeed in the Jubilant Melody Hall, we will not let him go unpunished."

"Esteemed senior, we have full trust in the South Melody Conservatory," Chu Liang said.

Then Musician Zhao asked, "But didn't you say that you're here to assist the disciples of the Great Astral Sect? Why is it just the two of you? Why don't I see any of them here?"

Chu Liang answered weakly, "Uh... Esteemed senior, they're the two people you beat up outside earlier."

As Chu Liang and Ji Lingyu walked out of the Jubilant Melody Hall, they both let out a long sigh of relief.

Then Ji Lingyu quickly pointed out, "The dudou led us to a dead end. It will be really hard to find Li Feiyu now."

"Something's off about Miss Yu," Chu Liang said definitively. "I'm sure she's lying."



"Huh?" Ji Lingyu was startled. "Why are you so sure?"

Chu Liang explained his reasoning with certainty. "Earlier, I deliberately took out the dudou without mentioning what it was first so I could see her reaction. When a woman suddenly sees her lost dudou presented in front of her, her first reaction shouldn't have been like that, regardless of what situation she was in."

Recalling Enchantress Liu's expression from that day and Yu Xiang'er's expression earlier, Chu Liang slowly analyzed the difference between them.

Chu Liang continued, "Miss Yu should have shown some embarrassment or anger. Instead, she was very calm. She wasn't even surprised in the slightest. It was like... she was prepared for it."

As Ji Lingyu listened to Chu Liang speak, her focus wasn't on Yu Xiang'er. Instead, she was gazing at Chu Liang with a strange look.

Ji Lingyu asked, "Why do you understand this matter so well?"

Chu Liang slowly uttered one word, "Experience."

That one word made Ji Lingyu shiver. She silently took two steps back, looking at Chu Liang with a terrified gaze.

...

The next day at noon, the Jubilant Melody Hall was crowded with people.

Unfortunately, the concert they were attending was not part of a tour, so Miss Yu would only perform two or three pieces at most.

Additionally, the venue wasn't as large as what would be used for concerts during a tour; they were only using this hall. The hall wasn't very large, so many residents of Donghuai City stood outside the Jubilant Melody Hall, hoping to hear Miss Yu's performances.

When Ren Hongdao and Zhang Chen arrived at the hall, they were surprised to find that Chu Liang, Yun Chaoxian, Ji Lingyu, and Tang Shi weren't the only ones there...

Li Fujian and Zhuge Guanxing were sitting with them.

"Junior Brother, do you also like Miss Yu?" Ren Hongdao asked, pleasantly surprised.

Li Fujian nodded repeatedly. "Yes, yes."

Standing behind Ren Hongdao, Zhang Chen rubbed his forehead helplessly and decided he had to say something.

However, when he opened his mouth to speak, he noticed an adorable and innocent-looking little girl sitting on Chu Liang's right. She had large eyes that were filled with spiritual qi. It appeared that she was there with Chu Liang.

Zhang Chen curiously asked, "This is...?"

Smiling, Chu Liang introduced the little girl. "Oh, this is Liu Xiaoyu'er, the champion of my sect's Mahjong Tournament."

"Miss Liu rushed here all the way from Mount Shu?"

"Yes, Xiaoyu'er loves singing and dancing. When she heard that Miss Yu was holding a concert here, she made a fuss and insisted on coming."

Beside Chu Liang, Liu Xiaoyu'er's little head drooped down upon recalling something unpleasant.

Chu Liang nudged Liu Xiaoyu'er gently. "Isn't that right?"

"Yes," Liu Xiaoyu said with a pained expression. "I love singing and dancing the most."

Chapter 355: How Dare You Hit Me!

The local musicians of this branch of the Jubilant Melody Hall were the first to perform. They were considered the local masters in Donghuai City, with their skills honed to perfection. Paired with singing and dancing, their performance was brilliant.

Although most of the audience came for Yu Xiang'er and were not very knowledgeable about music, they could still feel the excellence of the performance and responded enthusiastically.

After the musicians finished their performance, it was finally Yu Xiang'er's turn to take the stage, and the atmosphere in the venue instantly reached its peak.

Yu Xiang'er appeared alone, without any accompaniment or backup dancers. She walked up the stage and sat in the center of the stage by herself.

Her long hair flowed gracefully as she wore a blue and white dress that trailed on the ground, revealing her fair-skinned arms. When she looked up, she radiated an aura reminiscent of Jiangnan's misty rain.

Before she appeared, the hall was filled with noise, but as she gently walked to the center of the stage, the entire hall subconsciously fell silent.

Yu Xiang'er specialized in playing a long flute.

Upon seeing that she had sat down, Chu Liang cast a glance at Zhuge Guanxing.

Seeing this, Zhuge Guanxing got up and started walking to the exit.

Before long, Zhuge Guanxing returned, his eyes gleaming slightly, and gave Chu Liang a subtle nod.

Chu Liang nodded back, then turned to Xiaoyu'er beside him and said with a determined smile, "Wish me luck."

"Mm!" Xiaoyu'er responded, her brows immediately frowning with nervousness.

She had been acting as a mascot in Berry Wonderland, giving blessings to people every day, which was not tiring. So, when Chu Liang suddenly offered her a day off, she was naturally happy.

However, when Chu Liang mentioned that he wanted to take her to a music performance, the girl immediately refused.

She had once failed to sneak into South Gate City because she couldn't sing or dance at all.

When it came to the arts of singing and dancing, she had no interest in either.

She would rather stay at Silver Sword Peak giving blessings than travel a thousand li to listen to a performance. However, when Chu Liang insisted that he really needed her for something important, she reluctantly agreed to come along.

The little girl was no longer just a helper; now she was an important mascot of Berry Wonderland. Her opinion mattered more now, so Chu Liang had to ask her nicely to get her to do anything.

After all, no matter where you work, being irreplaceable was the most important thing.

Suddenly, Chu Liang stood up and said to Yun Chaoxian next to him, "Hit me."

"Huh?" Yun Chaoxian's eyes widened in surprise. He never expected Brother Chu to make such a request in public.

Chu Liang glanced at the stage behind him and said, "Just aim for that direction."

"With full force?" Yun Chaoxian asked, bewildered.

"Uh... Seventy percent," Chu Liang replied after a moment's hesitation. Considering Yun Chaoxian's rapid cultivation progress, it was safer to hold back a bit to avoid taking a full-force hit.

Immediately, Yun Chaoxian swung his fist, aiming to deliver precisely seventy percent of his strength, and struck Chu Liang squarely in the chest!

BAAAAAAM—

He was surprised to feel at least twenty percent of the force rebound onto himself, twisting his right arm and slamming his body back into his chair, instantly crushing it!

Chu Liang's body was also thrown forward, flying straight toward Yu Xiang'er on the stage! While he was in mid-air, he didn't forget to shout, "How dare you hit me—"

Yu Xiang'er had just started her performance. The sound of the flute was melodious, with a gentle breeze, bright moonlight, and the fragrance of exotic flowers. The entire audience, including her, was immersed in it.

Suddenly, an unexpected change occurred as a figure flew toward her.

Yu Xiang'er opened her eyes wide in surprise.

Instantly, the sound of the flute changed. The gentle breeze swirling around the venue transformed into a howling whirlwind, protecting her and preventing anyone from approaching.

In her haste, this was her quickest response.

However, Chu Liang not only used the force from Yun Chaoxian's punch but also his own blood-burning power, crashing through the whirlwind with a bang!

He collided next to Yu Xiang'er, grabbing her arm and pulling her down to the ground with him.

Boom—

The accident happened so suddenly that everyone in the audience stood up, trying to see what had happened.

Yu Xiang'er also tried to stand up, but as soon as she did, Chu Liang quickly grabbed her wrist again.

"Miss Yu, you are not hurt, are you?" he asked loudly.

"Let go!" she demanded, shaking off his hand.

"Oh... Miss Yu, give me a hand," Chu Liang cried out miserably, grabbing her arm once more.

Yu Xiang'er wanted to slap him, but with so many people watching, she reluctantly broke free. Before she could move, she felt her ankle tighten as Chu Liang grabbed it.

"Miss Yu, sorry for disrupting your performance," he apologized, lying on the ground.

"Let go of me first," Yu Xiang'er said in a grimaced voice.

"Oh, okay." Chu Liang suddenly leaped up, stopping his howls of pain as if they had never happened. He gave a bow to the audience and quickly slipped off the stage.

Yu Xiang'er was left alone, frowning in puzzlement for a long time. It wasn't until everything was reorganized on the stage that she resumed her performance.

...

Chu Liang and his group did not stay at the Jubilant Melody Hall but went straight back to the inn.

That evening, a letter arrived from the Jubilant Melody Hall—an invitation from Yu Xiang'er. Chu Liang smiled, as if he had anticipated this.

Yun Chaoxian, Li Fujian, and Zhuge Guanxing joined him to meet Yu Xiang'er. This was the arrangement between both groups.

In a quiet room at the Jubilant Melody Hall, Yu Xiang'er sat silently. When she saw them arrive, she stood up and bowed.

Her expression was calm, with a hint of loneliness that made her appear more fragile. The expression could easily evoke sympathy.

"Miss Yu," the group greeted her as they gently took their seats.

"There's not much for me to say. You have one of the Baxia Dual Rings, which means the evidence is conclusive," said Yu Xiang'er.

Indeed, Chu Liang had dramatically flown onto the stage to steal one of the Baxia Dual Rings from her. It was a risky move, but there was no better option at the time.

However, he had made careful plans. He first called on Zhuge Guanxing to perform a divination to determine if the Baxia Dual Rings were with Yu Xiang'er.

While locating the rings with a general divination reading would have been too difficult for Zhuge Guanxing, the task of divination focusing on a specific item and a specific person would be much easier.

At that time, Zhuge Guanxing had performed divination calculations from below the stage and confirmed that the Baxia Dual Rings were indeed with Yu Xiang'er.

However, whether or not Chu Liang could retrieve the Baxia Dual Rings by touch alone depended on luck, but luck just so happened to be the strong suit of a koi fish.

With the blessing of the koi, Chu Liang managed to grab three items from Yu Xiang'er: a mask identical to the one Li Feiyu wore that day, a pill, and an ancient, heavy golden ring imbued with dragon qi.

This ring was one of the Baxia Dual Rings, making the evidence conclusive.

However, Chu Liang did not expose her on the spot. He quietly left. After all, the disciples of the South Melody Conservatory were public figures. If this incident became known to the public, regardless of the reasons, Yu Xiang'er's reputation would be ruined.

And so, Chu Liang wanted to hear her reasoning first.

"Actually, there's something I don't understand," Chu Liang began. "Li Feiyu has been stealing in Jiangnan for years. He has always targeted cultivators who bullied the common folk and wealthy households that were unkind. He often helped the poor, earning a reputation for robbing the rich to

help the poor. But the Ultimate Martial Mountain Manor is far away in the East Sea... Why did you steal from them?"

"Because..." Yu Xiang'er paused before continuing, "I am not the real Li Feiyu."

"Hmm?" The group looked at her in surprise.

"I stole the Baxia Dual Rings to rescue the real Li Feiyu," she explained.

Chapter 356: Li Family Affairs

"Everyone knows that I am an orphan," Yu Xiang'er began her story softly, with a hint of sadness in her tone.

"I am too," Chu Liang said. There was a comforting tone in his voice.

Yun Chaoxian sighed and added, "Me too."

Li Fujian also said sadly, "Who isn't?"

Although he had some relatives, his parents died when he was young, so he was technically an orphan. This statement struck a chord with him.

"I am not!" Zhuge Guanxing immediately interjected, widening his eyes. He didn't dare to follow along on this matter.

Great. I was just invited here as a helper but they almost made me curse my parents to death.

The Zhuge family had considerable influence in the Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals. Not only were Zhuge Guanxing's parents still alive, but they also held high positions within the Mountain of Immortals. Like Li Shiyi, he came from a long lineage of immortal cultivators.

The three simultaneously glanced at the one who wouldn't cooperate and follow along. Then, they turned back and said, "Miss Yu, please continue."



Yu Xiang'er paused for a moment. She had been deeply immersed in her sadness, only to be suddenly interrupted. At this moment, she had lost touch with that sorrow and couldn't find it again. With no other choice, she nodded slightly and said, "Okay."

Then she continued, "But actually, I have a brother."

I have never heard about you having a brother, Chu Liang thought. But it's not like I know much about the core disciples of the South Melody Conservatory.

"My father was a notorious thief who roamed the martial world for many years, even earning the title of Saint of Thieves. In the end, he met his retribution," Yu Xiang'er said softly. "When my brother and I were still young, he was killed after a failed attempt."

"Oh?" The people present were a bit surprised.

Saint of Thieves...

Everyone had heard of this title. It seemed that there really was a Saint of Thieves in the Northern Regions back then, who specially targeted various immortal and diabolical sects. After every successful theft, he would leave a symbol of his own.

This Saint of Thieves was extremely arrogant. Nevertheless, it was said that he died a tragic death later on.

"At that time, my brother was only thirteen, and I was only four," she said as she delved into the past, seemingly unveiling some painful memories. "When our father died, his so-called friends turned against us, hunting for my brother and me to seize our family's secret manual. To avoid being captured, we fled to Jiangnan."

"My brother's cultivation level was not high, and he had to care for me, a helpless child who knew nothing of the world. Desperate and out of options, he secretly left me at the entrance of the Jubilant Melody Hall in Donghuai City."

"That was the day that I lost track of him," Yu Xiang'er continued, her voice tinged with sorrow. "The next day, a master from the Jubilant Melody Hall, with the surname Yu, stepped out of the

door and found me at the entrance. She adopted me, and I took her surname. But my actual surname is Li."

"So..." Chu Liang interrupted, "Miss Yu, your real name is... Li Xiang?"

"Yes." Yu Xiang'er nodded and continued, "I had no idea that I would be musically talented. As I continued on this path, I eventually joined the South Melody Conservatory. Two years ago, I began to gain some fame and organized my first tour. It was during that tour that I met my brother again."

Yu Xiang'er explained, "At that time, I found out he had become a thief. However, he aspired to be a heroic thief. He gave himself the name Li Feiyu and was already somewhat famous in Jiangnan."

"But because of his identity, I couldn't acknowledge him as my brother. The South Melody Conservatory has strict requirements for us. If it were known that I had a brother who was a thief, I would no longer be able to compete for the head disciple position."

This was also well-known. During their years of touring, the core disciples of the South Melody Conservatory were held to stringent standards. They were not allowed to date, nor could they be caught breaking the law or have any blemishes on their records. In short, any flaw could disqualify them from competing for the head disciple position.

To normal people like Chu Liang and his friends, these requirements were excessively strict.

For example, if Chu Liang were in that position, being discovered meeting with Senior Sister Jiang in private could lead to harsh criticism, and he might be forced to leave the martial world forever.

If Yun Chaoxian were in that position, his frequent swearing would already warrant an apology by death.

In short, the head disciple selected by the South Melody Conservatory each generation had to be someone who was nearly perfect.

"But because my brother insisted, I began practicing our family's divine technique with him," Yu Xiang'er continued. "Eventually, I also occasionally joined him in his thefts, and the name 'Li Feiyu' became something we both shared."

As she spoke, a faint glimmer of light flashed in her eyes.

Chu Liang keenly noticed that Yu Xiang'er had enjoyed the thrill of stealing and might even take pride in the title of a heroic thief.

Otherwise, when he had previously contacted her through the criminal world, she didn't actually need to respond.

The mere thought of this dual life was thrilling. By day, she was a highly respected core disciple of the South Melody Conservatory, bound by many rules. By night, she transformed into the Heroic Thief of Jiangnan, stealing from the rich to help the poor. The contrast was striking.

Yu Xiang'er explained, "He said he named himself Li Feiyu[1] because, in his time of distress, he was rescued by a Flying Fish Demon. The esteemed Flying Fish Demon brought him underwater to escape his pursuers. Not only did this esteemed senior save him, but he also told my brother that he wouldn't live much longer. He instructed my brother to return to his water mansion after a few years to refine the Flying Fish Soul that would arise from his remains.

"A few days ago, my brother returned to that water mansion, but he didn't find the Flying-Fish Soul Essence. Instead, he encountered a group of aquatic demons. The leader of the aquatic demons had a high cultivation level. If they had been on land, my brother wouldn't have been captured. However, it was difficult for him to use his power effectively in the water, and so he was caught.

"The aquatic demons initially planned to kill him, but when he overheard them talking about their search for the Baxia Dual Rings, he claimed he knew where to find them and offered to retrieve the rings for them," Yu Xiang'er said, shaking her head. "But the aquatic demons didn't believe him, so he had to write a letter to me. They gave me a month to steal the Baxia Dual Rings in exchange for his release.

"After I stole the Baxia Dual Rings, I felt deeply conflicted," Yu Xiang'er confessed, her eyes flickering with emotion. "We've never used Li Feiyu's name to steal from good people before. This precious item from the Ultimate Martial Mountain Manor is an exception.

"I could inform the sect and ask for help from the South Melody Conservatory to save my brother," she mused. "But if I did that, I'd lose my chance to compete for the head disciple position."

She must have felt genuinely conflicted. Otherwise, she wouldn't have held onto the Baxia Dual Rings for days without delivering them.

Apart from the delays caused by her schedule at the Jubilant Melody Hall, the main reason was likely her internal conflict over whether to give away someone else's valuable item or sacrifice her own future.

Hearing about her situation, Li Fujian felt a surge of emotion.

"So you're actually the Heroic Thief of Jiangnan. I've always admired people like you..." Li Fujian said. He paused before suggesting, "Why don't we hand the Baxia Dual Rings over to those aquatic demons first and get your brother back? Then, the Great Astral Sect can move in and eliminate them. Everything will turn out fine."

"That's not realistic. We want to save both siblings, but what if the aquatic demons take the Baxia Dual Rings and immediately escape?" Zhuge Guanxing countered. "We don't know how strong they are. To ensure we get the valuable item back, we need to notify the elders of an immortal sect in advance."

"That is indeed not a good idea," Yun Chaoxian nodded. "I think it's better if I wear the Baxia Dual Rings and go there to wipe out those aquatic demons myself."

Zhuge Guanxing stayed silent for a moment before turning to Li Fujian. "Why don't we discuss which elder we should ask for help?"

"There's no need to trouble you all," Yu Xiang'er said with a sigh. "Before I invited you here, I had already prepared myself. With my current ability, I might not be able to win the position of head disciple at the South Melody Conservatory. I'll report this matter to the sect and take responsibility myself."

As she spoke, she took out the other golden ring and placed it in the center. "This is one of the Baxia Dual Rings. Please return them to their rightful owner."

As Chu Liang stored the golden ring away, he suddenly suggested, "Actually, I think what they said earlier makes sense. The four of us can keep this secret and rescue your brother. Miss Yu, you won't have to reveal yourself. This way, there won't be any negative consequences."

He wanted to do this for two reasons: firstly, to help Yu Xiang'er, and secondly, because he had heard that there were demons.

When it came to tasks like slaying demons, Chu Liang was always the first to say yes.

"But this way..." Yu Xiang'er looked at them incredulously, unable to believe they would actually help her.

"I think this is great." A voice suddenly came from outside the quiet room.

Everyone was startled and turned to see two figures pushing the door open.

It turned out to be Zhang Chen and Ren Hongdao, with Ren Hongdao being the one who had just spoken.

By suspending a sheet of paper over their heads, Zhang Chen and Ren Hongdao managed to conceal their presence completely. As a result, no one noticed them.

It was broad daylight, with people passing to and fro inside the Jubilant Melody Hall. Yu Xiang'er's bodyguard likely didn't notice them either.

"Eldest Senior Brother, why are you here?" Yun Chaoxian asked.

"Brother Zhang and I noticed something was off with you," Ren Hongdao replied coldly.

Zhang Chen stood by with a smile, not saying a single word.

"After we left the Jubilant Melody Hall, we kept an eye on you. Sure enough, you came back here to see Miss Yu," Ren Hongdao said as he and Zhang Chen both sat down. "Miss Yu, rest assured. You can count on us to resolve this matter."

"You..." Yu Xiang'er's eyes shimmered with emotion, clearly moved by their support.

Seeing this lineup, Chu Liang chuckled and said, "Since most of us are here, why don't we invite Miss Ji and Miss Tang to join the fun?"

"Hmph, we've been here for a while!" a clear voice sounded from outside the window.

With a creak, the window was pushed open, revealing Ji Lingyu and Tang Shi outside the window.

"When the incident happened on stage, I knew something was off and I have been keeping an eye on you both since then," Ji Lingyu said with a laugh.

With her clairvoyant eyes, it was indeed impossible to hide from her.

"All of you have been listening..." Yu Xiang'er felt momentarily speechless.

"Yes, Elder Sister Yu," Ji Lingyu said as she excitedly climbed in through the window. "I had no idea you were Li Feiyu, the famous Heroic Thief of Jiangnan. That's amazing! Don't worry, your secret is safe with us!"

Yu Xiang'er stared blankly at the people in front of her.

These people were from the Great Astral Sect, the Mount Shu Sect, the Ji Family, the Ascending Dragon Academy, and the Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals.

Members of the Divine Nine, the Terrestrial Ten, and the noble families were all gathered here. It seemed that whether this remained a secret or not was now irrelevant...

For a moment, she looked at these young and passionate faces, and her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"Thank you all."

## Chapter 357: Fish Connection

Liu Xiaoyu'er looked at the surging Qinnan River in front of her, suddenly feeling rather out of place.

After staying on a mountain for so long, she seemed to have forgotten how to swim.

The little girl could never have dreamed that this task would suddenly fall on her shoulders.

"Just go and find the general location of that water mansion, and if possible, check out the strength of the aquatic demons inside," Chu Liang said from beside her. "Of course, the most important thing is your safety. Come back immediately if anything unexpected happens."

To rescue Li Feiyu from the water mansion, the first thing they had to do was to determine its location. Nevertheless, the group of aquatic demons had only told Yu Xiang'er to go to this riverbank one month later to make the trade. They hadn't disclosed the underwater location of the water mansion.

The problem was that the deep waters of the river prevented Chu Liang's group from scanning the river with their divine sense. Moreover, no one could clearly see the depths of the river from the riverbank. Consequently, their only option left was to dive into the river and search.

To do that, they would need to constantly use the Water-Repelling Seal. However, they would suffer the negative side effect of having their combat power significantly weakened, as was the case with using many divine skills in succession. If they were to encounter aquatic demons in such a state, they would be at a great disadvantage.

Right then, Chu Liang thought of Liu Xiaoyu'er.

Liu Xiaoyu'er was normally just a silly little girl, but her true form was a river fish that had absorbed the Flying-Fish Soul Essence. On land, she ran like the wind, and in the water, she swam as swiftly as lightning. Ordinary aquatic demons couldn't catch up with her.

The little girl was rather lacking in intelligence, but she had exceptional luck, which allowed her to avoid many dangers with ease. She would make the perfect underwater scout.

Liu Xiaoyu'er hesitated on the riverbank for a moment. Then she dived into the river, turning into a colorful beam of light.

Chu Liang and the others watched over the riverbank, waiting for Liu Xiaoyu'er to return with some information.

After some time, Chu Liang began to worry about Liu Xiaoyu'er. She's been gone for quite a long time. Could something have happened to her?

It's just a simple scouting task, but Xiaoyu'er hasn't experienced many dangerous situations before. What if she found herself in a dangerous situation and didn't know how to escape? Or what if she encountered some vicious aquatic demons? Won't I be guilty of exploiting a child...? [1]

Chu Liang couldn't sit still any longer and planned to go into the river to find out what happened to Liu Xiaoyu'er.

Just as he was about to dive in, he heard two splashes of water. Two beams of light shot out from the water.

In the blink of an eye, the beams of light faded and revealed two humanoid figures. One was Liu Xiaoyu'er. Seeing her immediately put Chu Liang at ease.

The other was a young woman who looked similar to Liu Xiaoyu'er, but she had a denser aura and a rather steely expression.

Who is this? Chu Liang wondered inwardly.

Liu Xiaoyu'er excitedly skipped over to Chu Liang and said, "Big Bro Chu Liang, this is my big sis!"

"Your older sister?"

"Yes, she is the leader of those aquatic demons."

"Huh?!"

"

The group of elite immortality disciples immediately tensed up and spread out, readying themselves for a fight.

Yun Chaoxian looked at Liu Xiaoyu'er and then at her older sister.

Then he suddenly realized, "So, you're a spy that the aquatic demons sent to Mount Shu!"



"Brother Yun, do not use that brain of yours[2] to make conjectures about what's going on." Chu Liang quickly stopped him. "I'll explain everything to all of you later."

Chu Liang had long known that Liu Xiaoyu'er had an older sister. However, back then, her older sister had encountered the young lord of the House of the Mountain-Subjugating Marquess and nearly died at that cheating scumbag's hands. Later on, Chu Liang and his teacher sought Old Man Sikong's help to find Liu Xiaoyu'er's sister.

Old Man Sikong said that Liu Xiaoyu'er's older sister had her own destiny.

So, that destiny was here?

It turned out that the leader of the aquatic demons was a koi-fish demon.

Liu Xiaoyu'er's older sister looked at Chu Liang's group with a cold expression, but she only spoke to Chu Liang.

"I'm Liu Xiaoyu. Xiaoyu'er said you've been very kind to her. Come with me."

The group of people left behind watched Chu Liang dive into the river with the two fish demons.

Yun Chaoxian muttered, "I knew Brother Chu had extensive connections, but I didn't expect that he would even have fish connections[3] with such a wide reach. Truly remarkable."

The others nodded in agreement.

...

During the underwater journey, Xiaoyu'er [4] chattered away, telling Chu Liang about what had happened to her older sister.

It turned out that when Master Lu injured Liu Xiaoyu back then, the smell of her blood in the water had attracted some demonic beasts. Despite being surrounded by perils, she managed to escape, and

it just so happened that the place she escaped to was an ancient tomb. That tomb turned out to be the legendary Baxia's tomb!

Liu Xiaoyu found Baxia's soul essence, similar to the Flying-Fish Soul Essence that Xiaoyu'er had fused with. Like the Flying-Fish Soul Essence, the Baxia Soul Essence contained Baxia's physical power. However, Baxia was far more powerful than the Flying Fish Demon. Baxia was a second-generation draconic descendant, carrying the pure blood of a True Dragon.

Liu Xiaoyu fused with the Baxia Soul Essence. She gained formidable physical strength, and her injuries were healed. However, she discovered that the tomb had a second floor that she couldn't access with her current power. She could only do it if she possessed the legendary Baxia Dual Rings.

After leaving Baxia's tomb, Liu Xiaoyu swam through countless rivers, subduing many aquatic demons. She formed a force of aquatic demons and brought it to Qinnan River.

Liu Xiaoyu had lost her younger sister in the Qinnan River, so she chose to stay there to continue searching for her younger sister. Unexpectedly, after many days of fruitless searching, Xiaoyu'er delivered herself right to Liu Xiaoyu.

It seemed that it was perhaps due to her past trauma that Liu Xiaoyu now had an instinctive aversion to humans and was unfriendly toward them.

After listening to Xiaoyu'er's recount of what her older sister had experienced, Chu Liang told Liu Xiaoyu, "Master Lu died by my hands, the Mountain-Subjugating Marquess was killed by my teacher, and the Young Lord was captured and beheaded in the capital of Yu. Revenge has been served on your behalf, Miss Xiaoyu."

Hearing that, Liu Xiaoyu looked at him with a complicated gaze. As her gaze softened a little, she turned away.

She said, "You're here to rescue that male human, right?"

"That's right. His younger sister is our friend, so we want to rescue him," Chu Liang replied.

"In light of your kindness to Xiaoyu'er, I won't make things difficult for you, especially since you even got revenge for me."

At this time, they arrived at the bottom of the river, in front of the large turquoise gates of the water mansion.

Liu Xiaoyu stepped forward and pushed open the gates of the water mansion. There was a group of shrimp soldiers and crab generals inside. They didn't seem very strong.

Seeing Liu Xiaoyu return, they all rushed up and shouted fawningly.

"Great King, you're back!"

"Great King, are you okay?"

"Great King, is this human also a prisoner?" "..."

Liu Xiaoyu waved her hand dismissively without responding. She then led Chu Liang around the front courtyard to the back of the water mansion, where there was a black-clad man tied to a pillar.

The young man was thin and handsome. He bore some resemblance to Yu Xiang'er, indicating he was indeed Li Feiyu.

Upon seeing Liu Xiaoyu, Li Fei softly said, "Can you let me down to move around a bit? I can't beat you anyway. What are you afraid of—"

"Don't worry. I'll let you go now." Liu Xiaoyu pointed at Chu Liang. "He's here to rescue you."

"Huh?" Li Feiyu uttered as he looked up at Chu Liang in surprise.

Chu Liang smiled and explained, "We're here to rescue you on Miss Yu's behalf."

Tears welled up in Li Feiyu's eyes. "Finally, someone has come to rescue me. Brother, I've been here for so many days... I'm about to swell up."

Fortunately for Li Feiyu, he was a cultivator; an ordinary person would have gotten all swollen and bloated by now, having stayed underwater for so long. Even a cultivator would feel extremely uncomfortable in such a situation.

Liu Xiaoyu added, "You should thank Young Hero Chu. If not for him, I wouldn't release you without the Baxia Dual Rings."

"About that..." Chu Liang suddenly said. "Miss Xiaoyu, if you need the Baxia Dual Rings just to open the door to the second floor, I can lend them to you this once. After you're done with them, you can return them to Ultimate Martial Mountain Manor."

Liu Xiaoyu's eyes lit up. "Really?"

She only wanted the Baxia Dual Rings so that she could open up the second floor of Baxia's tomb. Borrowing it once and returning it later would be enough to achieve her goal.

Chu Liang smiled. "I wouldn't feel at ease if it were anyone else. But you are Xiaoyu'er's sister, so you have my full trust."

That's how the martial world works. You help me, and I help you.

Isn't this how we establish connections with the fish demons?

Chapter 358: Dragon Soul of a Baxia

"I am finally out," Li Feiyu exclaimed with a heartfelt sigh as he emerged from the water.

In that moment, he thought to himself that he might as well change his name to Li Feihu[1] or Li Feiniao[2] when he got back. Having the word "fish" in his name seemed to have brought him much misfortune.

"Brother..." Yu Xiang'er approached him, the worry in her eyes finally dissipating.

Li Feiyu looked up and saw that a large group of people had gathered around him. He asked nervously, "Are all these people your friends?"

"Yes," Yu Xiang'er replied.

"I'm not quite used to seeing so many people all of a sudden," Li Feiyu admitted.

Chu Liang, who stood at the back, listened and wondered if Li Feiyu's reaction was due to being underwater for too long or simply a result of his occupational habits.

He then stepped forward and said to the others, "Xiaoyu is not an evil demon. She was hurt by humans before, which is why she isn't very friendly. She needs the Baxia Dual Rings for something important, which is why all this happened. Now that everything's out in the open, I want to lend her the Baxia Dual Rings. She'll return them right after. Is that alright with everyone?"

The members of the Great Astral Sect exchanged glances before Ren Hongdao nodded and said, "No problem."

The harmonious resolution of this matter was thanks to Chu Liang's acquaintance with the koi-fish demon. Lending the rings once was certainly no big deal.

In fact, Li Zhutian had a straightforward personality. If a friend had asked to borrow the Baxia Dual Rings, he wouldn't have minded. This entire incident occurred simply because there was no communication between them.

This further highlighted the importance of connections.

While everyone else returned to Donghuai City to wait, Yun Chaoxian accompanied Chu Liang back to the water mansion.

In theory, Chu Liang was there to supervise the aquatic demons and ensure they didn't run off with the Baxia Dual Rings. Yun Chaoxian, in turn, was there to supervise Chu Liang to make sure he didn't abscond with the rings. Of course, this was just a formality.

When Liu Xiaoyu took the pair of golden rings, she gently thanked them. Then, she turned around and shouted, "Everyone, follow me!"

Before she finished speaking, she picked up a pair of massive, drum-shaped weapons known as Drumming Urn Golden Hammers, each several times larger than her head.

"At your command!" the shrimp soldiers and crab generals responded loudly.

Seeing her imposing demeanor, Chu Liang couldn't help but click his tongue in surprise. It was hard to imagine that this formidable figure was Xiaoyu'er's big sister.

Xiaoyu'er was equally amazed as she had never seen her elder sister like this before.

During the time they were apart, both sisters had undergone significant changes. Xiaoyu'er had become an honorable worker, while her elder sister had risen to the position of the great ruler of this water mansion.

A grand procession of aquatic demons set out immediately.

Liu Xiaoyu had likely stayed in this mansion, hoping to chance upon her little sister nearby. After all, the Baxia's tomb, the location in which she had gained the opportunity for the transformation, was some distance away from this water mansion.

Chu Liang and Yun Chaoxian followed them, swimming underwater for a long time until they finally arrived at a deep, dark underwater cave dwelling.

Liu Xiaoyu, clutching her Golden Thunder Drum Urn Hammers, led the way and rushed in, with the rest of the group following closely behind.

As they navigated through the cave, a faint glimmer of light appeared ahead. The narrow passage suddenly opened up into a vast, illuminated space.

"Wow—" the demons exclaimed in surprise.

Before them lay a vast underwater valley, encircled by endless green stone walls. At a glance, all that could be seen was the horizon. Directly ahead stood a massive black statue, worn down and covered in aquatic plants. Despite the erosion, it was clear that this was the body of a giant tortoise. However, the tortoise had a dragon's head.

Chu Liang recognized this mountain-like statue. It wasn't just a giant tortoise; it was the legendary Dragon's Son, Baxia, the most powerful among the draconic descendants.[3]

A black fissure marred the shell of the massive statue. It might have been just a crack on a mountain, but it was a few zhang tall, serving as a passageway for them.

Liu Xiaoyu led the demons through this passage.

The inner space was expansive, with ancient dragon carvings adorning the surrounding stone walls. These carvings were similar in style to those Chu Liang and the others had seen in the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm.

Using his divine sense, he scanned the carvings, quickly breezing through their content.

The carvings told the life story of a draconic descendant. This Baxia was the offspring of a pureblood True Dragon and a giant tortoise, born with extraordinary divine strength. Due to this innate ability, once it reached adulthood, the Baxia was chosen by the great Dragon God to carry its throne.

Of course, this was a symbolic throne, not one that required Baxia to carry the Dragon God daily.

But the Dragon God died later on. The following scenes depicted events that Chu Liang had witnessed in the jade carvings in the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm, which was why he had some understanding of this part of history.

However, what followed caught his attention.

The jade carvings in the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm had not recorded the collapse of the Ancient Dragon Lair, as it had fallen before then. However, the carvings on the statue of Baxia detailed how it happened.

The carvings depicted a few small figures watching as the Dragon God died. The Dragon Clan seemed to harbor great hatred for these individuals. After many years of searching, the king of the dragons finally located their lair and led an army of dragons from the Dragon Lair to attack it.

However, before the battle could commence, the enemy attacked the Dragon Lair. None of the carvings depict scenes of a battle between the dragons and those existences, but a fierce battle must have occurred, leading to the collapse of the Dragon Lair.

The remaining dragons fled to the distant Abyss of the Hidden Dragons, while others scattered and escaped to various parts of the human world.

This Baxia was likely a remnant of that battle. It was heavily injured when it drifted to this location. Upon sensing that its lifespan was nearing its end, it hastily built this tomb for itself.

These carvings, though crude and simple, held a wealth of information. Why did the Dragon God die? What caused the collapse of the Ancient Dragon Lair? Why did Baxia refuse to describe the details of that battle, even in its dying breath?

These questions were indeed thought-provoking.

Regardless, the aquatic demons didn't care about these carvings. They hadn't even taken a close look at them. Yun Chaoxian was equally indifferent. In some ways, he wasn't much different from the aquatic demons.

So, despite the lively atmosphere, Chu Liang was the only one paying attention to the story.

Meanwhile, Liu Xiaoyu was preparing to push open the stone wall.

Behind the stone wall lay the second floor of Baxia's tomb, but it seemed as if the weight of the entire mountain and river was pressing on it. Previously, Liu Xiaoyu couldn't push the door open by herself, even though she had merged with Baxia Soul Essence.

However, things were different this time. She now wore the Baxia Dual Rings, which gifted the wearer the divine strength of the celestial beast Baxia.

With the combined power of the Baxia Dual Rings and Baxia Soul Essence, it was as though the dragon's child from back then had reappeared!

Boom—

As Liu Xiaoyu pressed her slender hand against the stone wall, her arms adorned with the golden rings, she exerted tremendous force and pushed forward.



Suddenly, the stone wall began to rumble! The river water erupted into turmoil, and the land on both sides of the river started to shake!

Rumble, rumble, rumble—

The rumbling grew louder and louder, and the surrounding river water surged violently.

With immense effort, Liu Xiaoyu pushed the entire stone wall back a total of ten zhang! Finally, a hidden doorway was revealed on one side of the stone wall!

Thud!

As the stone wall was pushed back, she stepped down, exerting just a tiny bit of strength. Even so, the ground cracked and shattered!

Even Yun Chaoxian found himself shocked by the scene. At this moment, his eyes were filled with envy.

Just when everyone thought the matter was settled, a thunderous dragon chant suddenly echoed from within the doorway!

Roar—

It was as though something had finally been set free after being trapped for ages. After a furious roar, a burst of black light shot out from the doorway, piercing through the river and shooting up into the sky!

Wherever it passed, massive waves were created, tossing everyone underwater!

"What is that?" Yun Chaoxian asked in shock.

"It's a Dragon Soul!" Chu Liang exclaimed. The moment it burst out of the doorway, he felt a surge of agitation from the Blue Dragon's Orb on his body, which immediately made him realize what it was.

It was the Dragon Soul of Baxia!

## Chapter 359: Hard to Explain

If one followed the stretch of the river downstream and turned into a tranquil tributary, they would find themselves in calm waters.

Amidst this serene stretch of the river, a pleasure boat was seen gently floating.

On the boat, light singing and dancing filled the air, with guests in a state of intoxicated enjoyment. Inside the cabin, a young man with golden eyes and a patch of silver scales on his forehead lay on a soft couch, resting with his eyes half-closed.

Suddenly, a disturbance appeared on the river's surface, as if distant ripples had reached this calm place.

The young man suddenly widened his eyes. At this moment, his eyes sparkled with a beam of divine light that seemed to pierce through the heavens and earth.

"What's wrong?" A tall man with red hair and beard, dressed in black robes, pushed open the cabin door and stepped inside.

"I sensed dragon aura, the young man replied, his golden eyes still glowing with divine intensity as he peered into the distance. "I'll be right back."

With that, he leapt up, transforming into a streak of silver light and vanishing from sight.

"You told me not to act rashly, but then you go off on your own..." the red-haired man grumbled, pausing to confirm that the young man with golden eyes was truly gone before cursing under his breath. "Damn it."

...

"The Dragon Soul of Baxia is still around?"

In the underwater tomb, a long time passed before things settled down again. The aquatic demons, still in shock, climbed back up, wondering what had just happened.

Chu Liang voiced his own question.

Some powerful demonic beasts could sometimes preserve their soul essence.

As time passed, souls would usually degrade until they eventually withered away. However, unless the soul suffered severe damage, which could shatter the soul while leaving the essence intact, they would follow this gradual decay.

At that point, they would often leave their soul essence to their descendants, allowing them to merge with their power. This portion of the soul essence carried some of the physical power without any side effects.

For example, Liu Xiaoyu'er, after merging with the Flying-Fish Soul Essence[1], became incredibly fast, and Liu Xiaoyu, after merging with the Baxia Soul Essence, gained immense strength. These were the powers of the soul essence.

But the soul was in a more mysterious and mysterious realm.

If the physical body were to be destroyed, the soul essence would shatter, leaving the soul unanchored and causing it to swiftly dissipate and die. Only a soul that had been specially refined could survive on its own. However, most of these souls were unconscious remnants, essentially lifeless. A fully self-refined soul, like Old Fei's, was a rare and extraordinary exception.

Generally speaking, as long as both the soul and soul essence remained intact, it meant the being was still alive!

But if the Baxia was not dead, why would it hastily build such a tomb for itself? It even completed the carvings and separated its soul and essence.

Had it been that impatient?

While Chu Liang felt very curious, he continued stepping through the door way into the second floor of the tomb with the group of aquatic demons.

As they took this step forward, everyone held their breath, involuntarily gasping in astonishment.

What was this before their eyes...

The second floor was much bigger than the first. In fact, the majority of the space within the giant tortoise statue seemed to be dedicated to this second floor, designed solely to house one mysterious item—an incredibly massive bronze throne!

This throne, as large as a mountain, was meticulously refined from bronze. It was engraved with intricate patterns, seemingly resembling inscriptions of the Heavenly Law, imbued with the primordial power of the Great Dao.

At the sight of the throne, the aquatic demons immediately dropped to their knees. Those with lower cultivation levels were especially affected, unable to withstand the overwhelming force emanating from it, their bloodlines compelling them into submission.

Even Chu Liang, influenced by his dragon blood, felt an overwhelming urge to worship.

The influence of the dragon blood was subtle, but he could feel the Dragon Orb inside him going wild. It was trembling violently within him!

In comparison to the quivers of the Dragon Orb, the tremors of the Crimson Executioner when encountering ten thousand evil beings were not as intense. Not only was the Dragon Orb trembling, but it was also heating up. In an instant, it drained all of Chu Liang's foundational qi, leaving him momentarily weak and empty.

Boom—

The throne, as massive as a mountain, suddenly lifted off the ground, causing a second tremor to ripple through the surroundings. Then, right before everyone's eyes, it vanished into thin air!

Rumble—

As the massive item vanished from the underwater world, the surrounding water instantly rushed to fill the void left by the object, creating a tremendous force that pushed everyone forward.

The aquatic demons were scattered in all directions, screaming as they were flung high into the air. Liu Xiaoyu quickly grabbed her little sister, preventing her from being swept away.

Yun Chaoxian, on the other hand, remained unconcerned. While his strength might not match Liu Xiaoyu's, it far surpassed that of the lesser demons.

Chu Liang also shouldn't have been worried, but a moment ago, the Dragon Orb had drained all his qi. His Sea of Qi was now empty and struggling to recover. This sudden emptiness made him momentarily unsteady, and he was suddenly lifted a few chi off the ground.

He quickly grabbed Yun Chaoxian beside him and used his physical strength to steady himself.

When Chu Liang finally managed to stabilize himself, he realized that Yun Chaoxian's face was flushed red.

"Brother Chu... I understand if you can't stand firmly, but you didn't have to choke me..." Yun Chaoxian said.

...

After a while, the current finally settled down. The scattered aquatic demons returned in a disheveled state, and Chu Liang spent a long time apologizing to Yun Chaoxian, who eventually managed to regain his composure.

Liu Xiaoyu gazed intently at the vast, empty space that resembled a valley. After the throne disappeared, there was nothing left.

"What exactly was that throne just now?" she pondered aloud.

"It's the Dragon God's throne..." Chu Liang silently muttered to himself, inwardly lamenting that Liu Xiaoyu and the aquatic demons hadn't paid more attention to the carvings earlier. The carvings had clearly depicted Baxia once carrying the Dragon God's throne.

The answer was right in front of them.

"Why is Baxia's soul still here?" she asked another question.

It was because of the power of the Dragon God's throne... Chu Liang answered silently in his heart.

Baxia's soul had indeed dissipated, but because it died in this space, it triggered the mystical power of the Dragon God's throne. Over the centuries, the throne reassembled Baxia's soul, which was why its Dragon Soul was so complete.

However, the dispersal and reassembly of the soul was like a rebirth. The Dragon Soul that had just left was no longer closely related to the Baxia that died.

For this reason, the newly formed Dragon Soul was trapped by the wall created by the Baxia that died. Only after Liu Xiaoyu pushed open the wall with the Baxia Dual Rings could it escape.

"Where did that mountain-like throne go?" Liu Xiaoyu murmured one last question.

Chu Liang knew the answer to this question as well.

Even though he knew the answers to Liu Xiaoyu's questions, he didn't respond, as doing so would lead to more complications. The reason was that the Dragon God's throne was with him!

To be precise, it wasn't literally with him. When Chu Liang saw the Dragon God's throne, the Blue Dragon's Orb within him unleashed immense power and summoned the Dragon God's throne away! Obviously, it had to leverage Chu Liang's own strength as the host of the orb.

Even with Chu Liang's vast amount of foundational qi, it wasn't sufficient to perform such a powerful summoning. As soon as the Dragon God's throne landed in the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm, Chu Liang sensed that at least half of the draconic demonic beasts within the hidden realm had exploded to their deaths.

These draconic creatures came into being through the hidden realm. At this moment, they were used to nurture the hidden realm, becoming part of the power used to summon the Dragon God's throne.

The moment the throne landed, the earth shattered and mountains crumbled!

The entire Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm underwent unprecedented upheaval! It was as if a meteor had struck, bringing the world to the brink of destruction.

However, Chu Liang, being the host of the Dragon Orb, which served as the core of the hidden realm, was tens of thousands of miles away. Though his heart was heavy with worry, he could not do anything. All he could do was hope that the three winged draconic beasts he cared about were safe...

Summoning the bronze throne was never Chu Liang's intention. However, when the Blue Dragon's Orb activated the summon, he couldn't stop it. But then, this meant that he couldn't reveal this to Liu Xiaoyu.

She had gone through so much effort to open the second floor of Baxia's tomb, only to find this one throne. Imagine how she would react if Chu Liang suddenly appeared and said, "I just airlifted it to my backyard. Hehehe..."

Even though it wasn't his doing, it would still be very difficult for him to explain.

Chapter 360: I Guarantee They Are of One Mind With Me.

"The matters of the world sure are mysterious and difficult to fathom. It is common to labor in vain, so Miss Xiaoyu, you need not feel upset over it," Chu Liang consoled Liu Xiaoyu sincerely.

Liu Xiaoyu had put great effort into opening up the second floor of Baxia's tomb, only to see a Dragon Soul escape and a throne disappear into thin air. It was inevitable that she would feel disappointed.

Chu Liang continued to console her. "Although you gained nothing from Baxia's tomb, searching for a way to access the second floor led you to your sister. You wanted to find her the most, so isn't that a gain?"

"That's true," Liu Xiaoyu said.

She gazed at Xiaoyu'er and regained her spirits. Her younger sister was indeed far more precious than any treasure.

"The two of you have been separated for a long time. Let Xiaoyu'er stay with you for a few more days so that you can spend some time catching up. Then let her bring you to Silver Sword Peak.

You can stay there as our guest for a few days to see what her life is like these days," Chu Liang suggested gently. "From now on, Silver Sword Peak will be your second home."

He said that because he knew that once things had settled down, Liu Xiaoyu would definitely want to keep her younger sister by her side. However, Silver Sword Peak needed Xiaoyu'er like how tripe was a key ingredient for hot pot.

It would be useless to forcefully try and stop Liu Xiaoyu from keeping her younger sister by her side. In fact, it would ruin Liu Xiaoyu's impression of Mount Shu, souring their relations. It would be better to let Xiaoyu'er stay in Qinnan River with her older sister for a while. Then Xiaoyu'er could take her older sister to Mount Shu and let her have a look at where Xiaoyu'er had been staying.

Chu Liang thought it would be best to let the sisters decide for themselves what they wanted to do.

"Yes, Big Sis. In a few days, I'll take you around Mount Shu," Xiaoyu'er said, holding her older sister's hand with a bright smile. "There are many people and lots of food on Silver Sword Peak. And there's the big-headed Golden-Furred Hou and the beautiful little Baize..."

Liu Xiaoyu looked at her younger sister and then at Chu Liang, still feeling rather hesitant.

Xiaoyu'er hadn't experienced a harsh life during the time that she had been separated from her older sister, so she had retained her innocence.

Liu Xiaoyu, on the other hand, had grown into a little demon king who understood the law of the jungle. Moreover, she had been deceived by the son of the Mountain-Subjugating Marquess, so she now found it very difficult to trust humans.

However, Liu Xiaoyu didn't have a bad impression of the peak master and disciple of Silver Sword Peak. After all, they had gotten revenge for her by destroying the House of the Mountain-Subjugating Marquess. Furthermore, it seemed that Chu Liang had no intention of separating her from her younger sister.

Taking all of that into consideration, Liu Xiaoyu's gaze softened.

Then Chu Liang added, "By the way, Xiaoyu'er received the cultivation legacy of the True Dragon residing at Mount Shu. Peak Master Sikong even said that she has a great chance of jumping over the dragon gate and becoming a dragon in the future."



"Eh?" Liu Xiaoyu uttered, finally noticing the white scales on her sister's wrist.

Liu Xiaoyu had fused with the Baxia Soul Essence, but Baxia was only a second-generation draconic descendant of a True Dragon. Her sister, on the other hand, had received the cultivation legacy of a pure-blood True Dragon.

This was a great destiny for the aquatic race!

"Alright." Liu Xiaoyu gave a light nod. "Xiaoyu'er will stay with me for a few days, then I will go with her to visit Mount Shu."

Chu Liang agreed with a smile.

After that, Liu Xiaoyu returned the Baxia Dual Rings, which Yun Chaoxian took and stored away.

"Brother Chu, you truly are a man who is wiser than me." Yun Chaoxian laughed. "I didn't expect that the hard work of so many people these few days would end up benefiting you."

Chu Liang, who was hiding the matter of the Dragon God's throne, felt a pang of anxiety.

He forced a chuckle and said, "Brother Yun, what benefits are you talking about?"

"The Baxia Dual Rings, of course," Yun Chaoxian replied. "You led the entire process of retrieving the rings, so there's no doubt that we'll be the winners of the trial. Even if Li Fujian and the others take some of the credit, they can only be second place."

"Oh, you're talking about that..." Chu Liang's genuine smile returned. "It's the result of our joint efforts."

On their way to Donghuai City, Chu Liang suddenly felt something vibrate in his storage tool. It was the communication jade talisman that Ghost Face had given him.

Ghost Face was going to be a guardian for the hall of the Elder of White-Bone Mountain, and so he had passed his position of chamber master to Chu Liang. He had instructed Chu Liang to strengthen the Ghost-Face Chamber and stay in close contact in the future.

Recalling all that, Chu Liang slapped his forehead. Oh, no.

He had wanted to ask Luo Yao and Pushan to get some of their senior and junior brothers to make up the numbers for the Ghost-Face Chamber. Nevertheless, he had been too busy recently, so he had put the matter on the back burner.

If Ghost Face sees that the Ghost-Face Chamber still only had the same few members, would he think that I haven't been a diligent chamber master? Well, it is true though.

But without his support, it will be difficult for me to climb up the ranks in the White-Bone Hall in the future. Then my undercover mission may be hindered.

With these worries in mind, Chu Liang returned to Donghuai City alongside Yun Chaoxian.

The group of prodigies were waiting to hear about Baxia's tomb from them. Yet, when Chu Liang spoke, he did not mention that.

Instead, he asked, "Everyone, may I ask a bold question...

"Would you be interested in joining the White-Bone Hall?"

...

In that old meeting place on a mountain on the outskirts of the Southern Regions...

Ghost Face, a guardian of the Dark King Sect's White-Bone Hall, had waited there for most of the day before Chu Liang arrived with his group.

This was a common occurrence since the chamber members could be spread across the nine provinces, and sometimes they might even need to wait for up to three days just to meet up with

everyone. If they didn't have the time to wait, they would leave a message in a secret spot and then leave.

When Chu Liang approached the meeting place, Luo Yao and Pushan were already there, along with the fourth member of the Ghost-Face Chamber—the only true disciple of the diabolical sect.

At this moment, Xiao Si[1] was secretly wondering if the new chamber master had died. Then he would have another chance to compete for the position of chamber master.

Surely, I wouldn't lose again if it's a competition among three people, right?

Nevertheless, his dream was shattered when he saw Chu Liang fly over with a large and mighty group in tow.

There were eight people in this group; no one was missing from the four teams participating in the Great Astral Sect's trial. After all, which genius cultivator of the righteous path could refuse an opportunity to go undercover in a diabolical sect?

Before, when Chu Liang asked if they were interested in joining the White-Bone Hall, they had thought that he was being presumptuous. It was quite outrageous that he tried to openly recruit a group of people who would become pillars of righteous sects. However, once they heard it was a thrilling undercover mission, they jumped at the opportunity to join, competing to secure their spot in the mission.

The siblings, Yu Xiang'er and Li Feiyu, would have joined in too, but Yu Xiang'er had no choice but to turn down the opportunity. She had a tour coming up, so her sect was keeping a close watch on her. Consequently, her brother, Li Feiyu, turned down the opportunity too since he wasn't familiar with anyone in the group.

Chu Liang then briefed everyone else on the essentials of going undercover in a diabolical sect, making sure to advise the disciples of the Great Astral Sect to speak less. Thus, an undercover squad was formed.

Ghost Face was sitting cross-legged on the ground with his eyes closed. When he opened his eyes and saw the group of people coming over, he showed a satisfied expression.

They chose the right person to be the new chamber master.

"Not bad," Ghost Face remarked as he stood up. He looked at the people behind Chu Liang and told them, "Everyone, joining the Ghost-Face Chamber is definitely the right choice."

He then climbed onto a large rock and said, "My brothers, I've called you here for an important operation. Right now, the White-Bone Hall needs people, and you have joined at just the right time!"

The newcomers didn't find these words unusual.

Meanwhile, the three old members, Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Pushan, felt something was off. They had heard the same words every time they joined a part of this diabolical sect.

Once or twice was fine, but every time...

Does the Dark King Sect only have one season throughout the year? The season of needing people?

Nevertheless, Monk Pushan responded to Ghost Face's call to action. "Old Chamber Master, just tell us what you need us to do. No matter how many people join Ghost-Face Chamber, we will always follow your lead. It doesn't matter what the operation is. We will not hesitate to go through raging fires and scalding waters for you!"

Ghost Face nodded with a smile.

He recalled how Pushan had chatted with him for a long time before Chu Liang and his group arrived.

This person talks a lot, but... sometimes the things he says are quite pleasant to hear.

As the old chamber master, Ghost Face's biggest worry was that the new chamber master would no longer follow his orders, leaving him isolated and without support in White-Bone Hall.

It seems this kid hasn't forgotten the kindness I've shown him. Well, at least for now.

Therefore, Ghost Face intended to fight for operations and assign them to his old subordinates, proving that it was still beneficial for them to have him around.

"In ten days, a local official will be traveling from the Southern Regions to the capital. The hall master wants to send a team to kill him before he gets there. I have secured this operation, and when the time comes, you will accompany me. If we complete this operation successfully, it will be of great merit to the White-Bone Hall, and you'll become known to the hall master."

"Yes!" everyone responded in unison.

After giving a brief on the operation, Ghost Face called Chu Liang aside and asked, "You managed to bring in so many subordinates in such a short time... What are their cultivation levels? Are they reliable?"

Ghost Face had taken in Chu Liang and the other two from the chamber of the deceased Hei Yu, so he had never doubted that they were genuine diabolical disciples of the Dark King Sect. However, he was a bit suspicious of the newly recruited members.

"Don't worry. All of them are skilled and have great potential," Chu Liang said confidently. "The most important thing is that I guarantee they are of one mind with me." [2]

Satisfied, Ghost Face laughed heartily. "I knew I didn't misjudge you."

Meanwhile, the only genuine diabolical disciple Xiao Si turned around and coldly snorted at the new recruits.

"Hey," Xiao Si called out to them, sticking his chin out. In a tone laced with hostility, he warned, "You newcomers better recognize your place and show respect to your seniors. People often disappear without a trace in this diabolical sect of ours."

Everyone nodded. "Understood."