

M. Slaying 82

Chapter 82: Morale-Boosting Melody

"...?"

Upon hearing Xue Lingxue's words, the people below the stage, including Chu Liang himself, were quite astonished.

Everyone present was a regular in the upper echelons of South Gate City, so they had long since been well-versed in the basic life skill of having emotional intelligence.

That was why, after witnessing the young lord Xia An deliberately arrive late to show off his status and give a gift as precious as a sandalwood kite-shaped guqin[1] to Xue Lingxue, almost everyone present could tell that he had intentions toward her.

Consequently, Master Li's suggestion that Xue Lingxue should play the guqin had been an indirect reminder that she should choose the young lord to accompany her on stage.

Be it in terms of his status or his gift, the young lord was undoubtedly the top figure of tonight. It had been expected that Xue Lingxue would choose him.

However, Xue Lingxue hadn't gone along with the expected choice. She had baffled everyone by calling out a name they didn't know.

Chu Liang stood up with a small smile and said, "It's truly an honor to receive Miss Xue's invitation, but I have no skills in music... I'm afraid I won't be able to assist you."

"No matter," Xue Lingxue replied, smiling gently.

Someone was already setting up a table in front of her, and they placed the guqin on it.

Xue Lingxue gently caressed the guqin and continued, "Because the piece I've prepared for tonight is the South Melody Conservatory's 'Morale-Boosting Melody: The Rise of the Azure Waves.' The song is imbued with divine skills for assisting in battles. I want everyone to appreciate the magic of my sect's music.

"That's why I need a highly skilled cultivator as my accompanist. Young Hero Chu is from the Mount Shu Sect, so you're naturally the most suitable for this role. Would you do me the honor of joining me on stage?"

The piece is called "Morale-Boosting Melody: The Rise of the Azure Waves"...?

Chu Liang had heard of the song before, as it was considered one of the classic songs that the South Melody Conservatory had produced. Nevertheless, he had never heard the song itself.

Seeing as Xue Lingxue had explained why she'd chosen him, it wouldn't be right for Chu Liang to embarrass her by declining again.

So, Chu Liang nodded and accepted the invitation, "I'd be honored."

Lin Bei, who was beside Chu Liang, wore a dour expression as he muttered, "A person who has a high level of cultivation and is from the Mount Shu Sect... Am I not counted as a person?"

Similar sentiments were shared by the young lord sitting opposite them. Xia An gritted his teeth and forced a smile while anger surged inside him.

Am I not a person? Do I not have emotions?

I spent so much money just to win your affection, yet all you did was say thank you. Then you turned away to closely interact with another man.

You're even using the guqin I gifted you. Are you just trying to let me feel a little involved?

Xia An felt really angry, but he had to maintain his elegant demeanor. The young lord's anger continued to surge uncontrollably while he watched Chu Liang walk onto the stage.

By the time Chu Liang arrived at the table on which the guqin had been placed, Xue Lingxue had already sat down. She gently raised her hand, indicating for Chu Liang to sit on the floor as well.

"What should I do?" Chu Liang asked.

"Young Hero Chu, just calm your mind and activate your cultivation techniques," Xue Lingxue instructed. "If anything odd happens later, there's no need to be alarmed as long as you don't feel any discomfort."

Simultaneously, Xue Lingxue plucked the strings of the guqin one by one, getting a feel for the guqin's sound.

"All right," Chu Liang replied with a nod.

In full cooperation, he took a deep breath and used the Qi-Circulation Technique while slowly activating the Divine Nine's Profound Mental Cultivation Technique that the Mount Shu Sect had developed.

Ever since Chu Liang began using the Qi-Circulation Puppet, all he had to do was supply it with Qi-Gathering Pills every day for it to work day and night for him, so he hadn't spent much time cultivating. Now that he was activating his cultivation techniques again, it gave him the familiar feeling of something he hadn't done for a long time.

Chu Liang's virtuous and placid foundational qi flowed along the established routes in his meridians at a smooth and steady pace. He soon entered a state of calm.

...

Twang.

Xue Lingxue very swiftly plucked the first note of the song.

Having Chu Liang accompany her on stage was all part of her plan. This test, however, was something that she had decided to include on the fly.

Cultivators who were able to reach the fourth realm of cultivation at their age were considered geniuses. They could be said to be the core disciples of the immortal sects, the cream of the crop of the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten.

Naturally, Xue Lingxue, who was an inner disciple of the South Melody Conservatory, was considered a genius in cultivation as well. Her cultivation level wasn't lower than any of her peers.

Yet, Chu Liang had displayed a truly formidable sword qi the day before. If he had indeed reached such a high realm of cultivation at his young age, then he would undoubtedly be a peerless genius—the best of their generation.

Chu Liang seemed to be such an impressive person, but he wasn't particularly well known as a disciple of the Mount Shu Sect. Xue Lingxue hadn't met the Mount Shu Sect's famous disciples Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai, but it seemed impossible their cultivation level would be as high as his.

As a fellow disciple of an immortal sect, Xue Lingxue was naturally curious about this. Could it be that the Mount Shu Sect had been deliberately concealing their most brilliant disciple?

Of course, it couldn't be ruled out that Chu Liang had used some life-saving treasure. He might not have been the one who unleashed that formidable sword seal.

However, the possibility of that being the case was very low. He couldn't have used a jade talisman with a stored spell, as jade talismans had a special characteristic that meant the effects of purely offensive spells weren't that great after being stored. Consequently, it was rarely used to store sword qi. Additionally, while it was possible that he had used some kind of treasure to amplify the power of his sword seal, such treasures were very rare.

After pondering for a while, Xue Lingxue was unable to reach a conclusion regarding Chu Liang's cultivation level. So, she decided to just test Chu Liang's limits, leading to the current situation.

As Xue Lingxue had said earlier, the song was "Morale-Boosting Melody: The Rise of the Azure Waves"—one of the South Melody Conservatory's most well-known classic divine songs.

Aside from being sonorous and beautiful, the song's greatest effect was indicated in its name. It provided boosts.

Twang, twang, twang.

The melody flowing out from the strings of the guqin became increasingly tense like a raging storm. Xue Lingxue was showcasing her exquisite guqin-playing skills without restraint.

The audience seated at the banquet couldn't help but feel all fired up as if their vitality, qi, and spirit had been set in motion.

With a face filled with zeal, Lin Bei slung his arm around the shoulder of the general of the garrison beside him and said, "Uncle Zhang, my biggest regret in life is not joining the army! Do you think I still have a chance?"

Lin Bei then patted the city's chief official, who was also beside him but on the other side. "Old Chen! Just tell me if you see someone you don't like, and I'll help you give them a punch!"

The music was only affecting them at the spiritual level so far, yet Lin Bei was already this zealous.

Seated beside Xue Lingxue, Chu Liang was receiving the effects of the song head-on, so the effects he felt were even more intense.

As the notes went up in pitch, he felt his qi circulation speed increase several times over. With the Divine Nine's Profound Mental Cultivation Technique, his foundational qi was circulating extremely smoothly within him, like surges of great rolling waves.

This acceleration meant that if he were in a battle right now, the recovery speed of his foundational qi would be several times faster than usual.

Furthermore, he could feel that the music was giving him a holistic boost to his vitality, qi, and spirit. By increasing the circulation speed of his foundational qi, boosting the recovery of his vitality, raising his spirits and in turn his divine intent... the song was able to double his combat power!

There was no doubt that the song's effects would be powerful in an actual battle.

Such a powerful booster... Chu Liang remarked inwardly.

Xue Lingxue was currently concentrating the power of this song on him, but she could definitely boost more than just Chu Liang alone in a real battle. She was just one person, but bringing her along to a battle was equivalent to doubling the combat force.

Such formidable power...

Chu Liang even envisioned it. If he were to find five disciples from the South Melody Conservatory and get them to simultaneously perform the "Morale-Boosting Melody: The Rise of the Azure Waves," they could boost each other. One person made another person stronger, and that person made a third person stronger. Then the third person would make a fourth person stronger...

Could this looped chain of mutual boosting form an endlessly escalating spiral of increments in strength, eventually allowing all of them to attain a terrifying level of power?

While Chu Liang was lost in thought, the song reached its climax. The circulation of his foundational qi reached an unprecedented peak in speed and flow, and a strange sensation surged into his mind. Misty clouds filled his head until they overflowed and leaked out of his body.

Suddenly, Chu Liang radiated with what seemed like the multicolored light of a sunrise!

As Chu Liang remained seated in a cross-legged position on the platform, he was surrounded by fog and rising clouds of mist as if he were manifesting a sacred presence.

Everyone present at the banquet was well-versed in cultivation, so they knew what was happening to Chu Liang.

Someone exclaimed in surprise, "It's the Heavenly Qi-Circulation Phenomenon!"

It was said that when a top-notch cultivation technique was used perfectly, the Heavenly Qi-Circulation Phenomenon would occur. This was unrelated to the cultivator's level of cultivation; it only depended on how well the technique was utilized.

Generally, this kind of flawless utilization only existed in theory. It was almost impossible for a cultivator who had yet to reach the Dao Attainment Realm to achieve the Heavenly Qi-Circulation Phenomenon. Such a feat was rather difficult even for powerful cultivators at the Dao Attainment Realm. In fact, it might only be possible after reaching the eighth realm and attaining the Heavenly Origin.

Yet, with the support of the morale-boosting melody that Xue Lingxue was playing, Chu Liang was experiencing the magic of the Heavenly Qi-Circulation Phenomenon for the first time ever at this moment!

The Divine Nine's Profound Mental Cultivation Technique was running at full power!

"This..." Xue Lingxue muttered.

She looked at the misty clouds around Chu Liang with a surprised gaze.

What a weak phenomenon...