

My Crown 1991

Chapter 1991: Accident

No one could beat Apex Academy's luck!

Could this be progressing toward a third round bye?

This luck made people... too envious!

Needless to say, Apex Academy's luck attracted even those big academies' attention.

Especially when one of the students from Apex Academy summoned a sacred beast during the prior match.

Ah, that's not right. That little lady seemed to have two particularly terrifying beasts.

The white snake that suddenly appeared also emanated a heavy pressure. Even though they were temporarily unable to make out the beast's level, they sensed that the pressure it gave them was not any less than what they felt from the bloodfire phoenix.

It was probably going to be a tall order to defeat Apex Academy since there was someone like that in the team.

When everybody came to this conclusion, they could not help but be dejected.

Even if the people from River Horse Academy came, they would probably also be swept off the stage in minutes.

"Alright, time is up. Take down the incense. Right now, I announce that due to River Horse Academy's untimely forfeit of the match, Apex Academy will hence successfully advance to the..."

"Wait!" Someone interrupted Hong Chi.

Everybody turned to look, and they couldn't help but turn boisterous.

They saw Sha Gua leading over the group of students from River Horse Academy. They kept their gazes lowered as they walked over with large strides.

"Something happened on our way here that delayed our arrival!" Sha Gua explained nonchalantly. He glanced at the gradually dimming incense out of the corner of his eye. "Luckily, we could make it at the last second."

The atmosphere in the seating area was instantly set ablaze. Everybody was smacking their chairs and cheering.

River Horse Academy's courage for not fearing the competition was simply commendable!

Everybody clapped their hands and cheered.

For a moment, the atmosphere in the arena reached a boiling point.

"Good!" Everybody clapped with all their might, expectantly awaiting their entertaining battle.

Of course, most of the academies were more interested in observing Apex Academy's battle strategy so as to counter them effectively when they were matched in the future.

Sha Gua led the River Horse Academy team up onto stage. Every one of them was hanging their heads, refusing to look at Qiao Mu and company.

Qi Xuanxuan knitted her brows.

Because they had worked together to the end when they were trapped in the underground base, they had mostly let bygones be bygones with the people from River Horse Academy and Sunlight Academy. Their impression of Sha Gua's group had also improved quite a lot.

Yet upon meeting them again on stage now, Sha Gua's group didn't even give a greeting. The fact that Sha Gua's group didn't even look at them made it feel like they were looking down on them. This pissed off the little fatty and the others.

"Okay!" The head referee Hong Chi announced with a hearty laugh, "Even though River Horse Academy was late, they got here just as the extended time limit ran out. I'll cut out the long-winded talk. Your teams can start battling now!"

After Hong Chi turned and left, Sha Gua suddenly gestured to this team with a look, and ten members simultaneously attacked. Their mystic energy and spiritual energy wove into a net that rushed toward Qiao Mu and company.

After going through so many team battles, Qiao Mu's group had ample experience in team formations.

The eight of them swiftly took their positions.

The little fatty formed an earth spiritual barrier and charged forward as the vanguard, while Qi Xuanxuan and Duanmu Qing darted forth close behind.

Chapter 1992: Manipulated

Duanmu Qing activated his wood spirit, prompting wood brambles to drill out from the ground and entwine Sha Gua and company's legs.

On the other hand, Qi Xuanxuan flung down several thunderbolts.

However, as she had yet to break through to the spiritual realm, she could not wield spiritual energy as she wished.

Nevertheless, under guidance from the academy's thunder spirit specialty mentor, Qi Xuanxuan had already learned how to make use of her limited spiritual energy to exhibit the greatest power while maintaining an optimum duration.

Behind the two were Ma Ta and Hua Tao, who wielded the water spirit, and Jiang Shaoxin, who wielded the fire spirit. They each gave it their all while clashing with their opponents' spiritual energy.

Lastly, Classmate Lu Yu activated an earth spiritual barrier to assist the little fatty in shielding everybody inside it.

Meanwhile, Qiao Mu didn't seem to be responsible for anything. She just tagged along everybody else and flicked over several fire spirit talismans or water spirit talismans wherever she pointed her fingers.

This eight-person team formed an impregnable fortress. Their opponents were simply unable to break their formation.

The mentors from Apex Academy couldn't stop nodding repeatedly in admiration.

The team formation that these young kids had refined was pretty good.

It combined attack and defense and was excellent at executing both. They were able to easily withstand the attacks of 10 people with their eight without any signs of fatigue.

Qiao Mu was even able to weave between the team members to back up whomever needed it. This eight-person formation simply couldn't be any better.

Everybody's position was basically on point, and they complemented each other's strengths and weaknesses very well!

This eight-person formation of theirs could simply toy with any opponents that numbered twenty or less.

Mentor Zhou smiled contentedly at the fact that the academy's students had grown so much. He nodded repeatedly and commented, "Not bad, not bad. It was simply a brilliant decision to throw them into the underground battle arena tournament!"

If they hadn't been teaming up every day to battle, how would they have cultivated such rapport!

Mentor Wei Xu swept Zhou Danjin a nonchalant look. "The decision to boot them into the Qianluo Underground Battle Arena was mine. You had even objected back then!"

Zhou Danjin: ...

Boom! The two teams' attacks collided fiercely.

The leader, Sha Gua, abruptly looked up. His eyes were bloodshot, and an extremely powerful force exploded from his body. It promptly formed a small-scale windstorm that raged toward Qiao Mu.

Sha Gua's abnormal state immediately rang alarm bells for Duanmu Qing and company.

When they suddenly saw him target Qiao Mu, they immediately shifted into a double-sided triangular formation that placed Miss Qiao in the center.

Duanmu Qing's lips were pressed into a frown as he blocked the gust of wind that Sha Gua shot over.

Everybody countered by attacking Sha Gua with several fireballs and ice spikes.

Qi Xuanxuan hollered furiously, "Sha Gua, what are you thinking of doing, you?"

Could this punk be thinking of turning against them completely?

It had to be known that they had been holding back since the start of the match. None of them had summoned their mystic beasts, after all.

If they really did summon their beasts, then there simply wouldn't be any need for this match to continue.

Yet the Sha Gua turned a deaf ear to their shouts. A crimson light flashed through his eyes, and he suddenly howled at the sky.

The nine River Horse Academy team members behind him all opened their eyes wide. Crimson lights also flitted across their eyes, and they grabbed their mystic weapons and pounced madly toward Qiao Mu, whom the others from Apex Academy had shielded in the center.

It was with a vengeance that seemed as if they would not let it rest.

Bewilderment surfaced in everybody's eyes. *Could Sha Gua's group be under someone's manipulation?*

Chapter 1993: Strike like a Thunderbolt

Qiao Mu didn't panic at this situation. She flung out several hundred defensive talismans, which revolved around her and forged an extremely powerful defensive talisman matrix.

She had already darted out from behind her teammates, and she brought down a dozen or so immobilization talismans with a flick of her fingers.

After the talisman energy took effect, the immobilization talismans were only able to barely immobilize four out of River Horse Academy's ten people. The remaining six had gone berserk, and they attacked in unison with a burst of spiritual energy.

It instantly surged toward Qiao Mu with a force that threatened to topple mountains and overturn seas.

Mentor Zhou was about to jump out, but Mo Lian stopped him.

Crown Prince Mo gazed coldly at the battle on the stage. He reassured calmly, "Believe in Qiaoqiao. She will be fine."

The spiritual energy that River Horse Academy's remaining six people generated crashed into the defensive talisman matrix. The collision produced a blinding light.

After the light subsided, Qiao Mu's figure immediately flashed behind Sha Gua.

Sha Gua abruptly turned around, and his bloodshot eyes flickered. Unfortunately for him, Qiao Mu struck him down onto the stage with a knifehand strike before he could react.

Meanwhile, Duanmu Qing used wood spiritual energy to bind two River Horse Academy team members.

Besides the three remaining people who were still desperately resisting, Qiao Mu's immobilization talismans had already frozen the others in place.

Qi Xuanxuan, the little fatty, and the others naturally had an easier time fighting them.

The battle soon came to an end, with Qiao Mu's group restraining all the River Horse Academy students.

However, even though the River Horse Academy students were shackled by spiritual energy, they were still squirming nonstop, attempting to break their binds and counterattack.

Qiao Mu walked up and knocked them all out with knifehand strikes without any hesitation.

Afterwards, she turned around and said expressionlessly, "Bring them off the stage."

If the people in the arena were still unable to see that something was off about Sha Gua and them, then they would be fools.

"What happened?" Everybody whispered in bewilderment.

"What are you people doing?" A mentor from Celestial Light Academy questioned as he stood up from the first row, pointing at Qiao Mu's group.

Qiao Mu did not pay the slightest bit of attention to him. She had everyone drag the ten students of River Horse Academy down the stage to an empty area.

Suddenly, Sha Gua opened his eyes and bolted up. He pounced frenziedly at the little fatty, who was restraining his arms.

He was about to bite the little fatty's shoulder.

Yet Qiao Mu's punch fiercely hit Sha Gua's left cheek. This also promptly knocked out several of his teeth, and he spewed out a mouthful of blood.

She then stabbed one needle after another into the back of Sha Gua's neck.

Qiao Mu's movements were vicious and precise. Sha Gua only felt faint for less than a second before hanging his head down again unconsciously.

"You, what are you doing?" The Celestial Light Academy mentor couldn't resist reprimanding her when he saw her extremely frigid and wildly arrogant behavior.

Qiao Mu turned around and swept him an incomparably frosty look.

The Celestial Light Academy mentor got intimidated by this gaze, and he uncontrollably stepped backwards.

"Carry them over there." Qiao Mu was in a very bad mood at the moment. She stated this coldly while pointing at an empty area.

The little fatty and the others of course had no objections. They directly carried the ten people over and lined them up on the ground.

Qiao Mu moved her fingers, and a stream of sacred water shot out from her fingertips.

She swiped her left hand through the air, scattering a handful of medicinal powder that wafted into everybody's noses.

Chapter 1994: A Pill Alchemist's Consummate Skill

“You, what medicinal powder did you use!!” The Celestial Light Academy mentor yelled in a fluster. He hastily covered his nose with his sleeve to avoid breathing in any medicinal powder.

“Wow, it smells so good. What medicinal powder is this? My whole body feels refreshed after smelling it. I feel like the mystic energy in my body is circulating faster.”

“Yeah, I feel like it’s even better than using mystic-returning medicinal solution!”

The students standing behind Qiao Mu all sniffed as hard as they could, clambering to take in the remnant medicinal powder fragrance.

“Don’t randomly sniff when you don’t even know what it is. What if it’s poison?” The Celestial Light Academy mentor scolded the students beside him.

“Mentor, I feel like I recovered a third of the mystic energy I expended in the battle earlier.”

“Right, right, I feel the same way.”

“Ludicrous!” That Celestial Light Academy mentor continued to cover his nose as he scolded those two students who were discrediting them. “How can there be such a fast-acting medicinal powder in this world? Don’t be daydreaming! Beware of any tricks. All of you hold your breaths.”

However, the Celestial Light Academy mentor couldn’t control people’s breathing.

Since they couldn’t reason with the mentor, the students just kept mum. They still stealthily breathed in the medicinal powder though.

Qiao Mu couldn’t care less about that self-opinionated mentor. With a flip of her hand, ten gleaming needles appeared between her fingertips, and she stabbed them at the ten people in front of her like a fairy scattering blossoms.

The ten people from River Horse Academy opened their eyes at the same time and all spit out mouthfuls of black blood.

The Celestial Light Academy mentor screeched in alarm, “Y-You! Stop right now! Quickly have the people in charge of the arena come over! How could they just let this little witch casually harm students from other academies?”

“Who’re you calling a little witch!” Qi Xuanxuan hollered, “If you don’t understand what other people are doing, just shut up, alright?”

Mo Lian’s group had already made their way to Qiao Mu at this point. They swept indifferent gazes at that blustering Celestial Light Academy mentor.

“Get out of the way!” Feng Chen flicked a burst of spiritual energy at the Celestial Light Academy mentor’s knee, which promptly made him drop to the floor on one knee.

Subsequently, a gust of wind from a palm strike swept the Celestial Light Academy mentor away like trash. He tumbled into the seating area, crushing several stools.

Qiao Mu had not even looked that Celestial Light Academy mentor in the face. She took out a porcelain bottle and poured out ten pills. She then struck the ten people's acupuncture points from a distance, forcing them all to open their mouths.

The pills entered each of the ten people's mouths and dissolved upon contact, leaving behind a faint medicinal fragrance in their mouths.

"This great master has incredible medical skills! My senile self is in admiration." A white-haired elder walked out from Shuntian Prefecture's Starlight Academy team. He gave Qiao Mu a friendly smile and cupped his hands courteously.

"Ah? Isn't that Starlight Academy's great pill master, Great Master Zhou?"

"Even Great Master Zhou is so respectful toward this young lady. It looks like this young lady's medical skills are truly incomparably impressive."

Qiao Mu turned around and politely returned the greeting to Great Master Zhou. "Senior is exaggerating. You flatter me by saying great master. I merely studied several years of medicine with my teacher and only know a bit."

"Ay, Little Great Master, you're too modest." Great Master Zhou waved his hand with a smile.

By this time, the ten River Horse Academy students were also slowly stirring awake.

Chapter 1995: Tracking Down

The leader, Sha Gua, looked dazedly at the people around him. He struggled to sit up and asked in bewilderment, "What, what happened?"

Qiao Mu flicker her fingers, and several talismans shot into all ten of the River Horse Academy students' foreheads with a faint blue light.

"Someone poisoned you guys, and they even used a forbidden curse on you. When we were facing off earlier, you guys went completely berserk and tried to kill us." Qiao Mu explained calmly, "Rest well once you get back. You guys are fine at the moment."

After saying this, she tossed Sha Gua a porcelain bottle. "All of you take one pill each day, and you'll fully recover in three days."

"Thank, thank you." Sha Gua could hear himself speaking with a lisp, and he hastily covered up his mouth and smiled at Qiao Mu in embarrassment.

Although he didn't know what exactly had happened, he could tell that it wasn't anything good from everybody's expressions.

"Do you all still remember when you lost consciousness?" Mo Lian suddenly asked.

Sha Gua furrowed his brows in deep contemplation. He was at a loss and shook his head, recalling, "I-I don't remember. I only remember that we went out together as usual in the morning. When we walked

past a black carriage parked by the side of the road, I saw a corner of the carriage curtain lift up. Other than that, nothing abnormal seemed to have happened.”

Qiao Mu nodded. “This person’s poisoning methods are shrewd and ruthless. There is no wonder that you guys fell victim.”

“Many thanks for Miss Qiao’s assistance.” Sha Gua and the other River Horse Academy students who barely managed to get up bowed toward Qiao Mu again. He then left with his companions.

Qiao Mu gazed grimly at the direction they left in. With a flick of her sleeve, a line of miniature black poison-tailed butterflies fluttered out and chased after Sha Gua and company.

—My Qiao’s section break—

The Ultramarine Province, located in the southeast territory of the Upper Three Provinces.

From a bird’s-eye view of the entire Ultramarine Province, it looked like an immortal realm wreathed in wispy clouds, with the multitudinous birds soaring among these lofty immortals’ mountains.

Because the Northern Hope Forest and the Wangchuan Sea in the west separated this southeast territory from the Divine Province and the Nether Province, it was rather content with its existing governance.

It had been more than a hundred years since the Ultramarine Province had been in war. The citizens lived and worked in peace and contentment, happy and harmonious.

The latest topic of conversation that everybody on the streets was chatting about was... the emperor of the Ultramarine Province had grandiosely brought his fourth son and the latter’s mother back to the imperial palace.

The imperial palace, in a corner of the southern court of the Nanqiao Palace.

A man wearing a white robe sprawled lazily on the stone table in the gazebo at the center of the lake. He used his slender fingertips to fiddle with a cup filled halfway with jade flower wine.

The man rotated the white jade cup with his fingers as he propped his hand on his forehead and let his mind wander from boredom.

“Your Fourth Highness, Your Fourth High... Your Fourth Highness!”

“Ah.” The man gave a dull response. His voice sounded drowsy, as if he had just stirred awake.

“Your Fourth Highness. His Highness the Crown Prince, His Second Highness, and His Third Highness’ carriages have reached the Donggu Gate. W-Will Your Fourth Highness please ti-tidy up before heading to the main hall to greet, greet the three highnesses.”

Clunk. The man’s cup got knocked over, and a small stream of jade flower wine spilled out before flowing along the cracks in the stone table.

“So boring.”

“Y-Your Highness.” His personal junior eunuch was nearly frightened to death. He dropped to the floor and repeatedly kowtowed, “Your-Your Highness, the three highness should jus-just about be entering the main entrance now.”

Chapter 1996: The Fourth Highness of the Ultramarine Province

Swish. The man ruffled his robe as he stood up, and he made large strides toward the main hall. “Let’s go.”

“Y-Your Highness!” Looking at his slovenly and indolent highness, with his long hair undone and hanging to the waist, the junior eunuch wished for nothing more than to cry.

His Fourth Highness was too unparticular about appearances!

He casually flicked his sleeve as he stepped through the door in his pitch-black boots. He could see the three tall and refined young men standing inside the main hall at a glance.

The man’s eyes flickered before he said out loud with a smile, “Duan Yue was unaware that Elder Brothers were coming to visit, so please excuse me for not going out to meet you all.”

The three young men turned around. They all had elegant bearing and handsome countenances, with dashing eyebrows and bright eyes. However, the eldest one in front had a somewhat abnormally pale complexion.

“Fourth Brother.” That man nodded at him with a smile. “How are you forgetting again. You have already returned to the palace with Imperial Father, and it has already been announced to the world that you are the fourth prince of the Ultramarine Province. Your original name is Rong Yue...”

“Oh?” Duan Yue cut off the crown prince’s words with a chuckle and waved it off. “It’s only a name. The designation doesn’t matter.”

“Fourth Brother, Eldest Brother is right...”

“These twenty years, I’m already used to other people calling me Duan Yue. Suddenly hearing people calling me Rong Yue, ah Rong Yue, ha, I really have no idea who they’re referring to.” Duan Yue flicked his sleeves and sat in front of the table languidly. He pursed his lips and asked the three young men, “Elder Brothers made this long trip here to talk to Younger Brother about this trivial matter?”

“Of course not.” The crown prince of the Ultramarine Province smiled faintly with his pale complexion, but his pitch-black eyes were staring straight at this younger brother of his.

Truthfully speaking, ever since Imperial Father brought back this younger brother several days ago. He had been unable to see through him at all.

If you said that he didn’t bother about trifles, you could see that he had a meticulous mind from the finer points. If you said that he was reserved, he treated everybody carefreely. He gave everybody a breezy smile, as if he was openhearted and wasn’t afraid of gossip.

Even though all kinds of legends revolving around this fourth prince who had met with misfortune were circulating on the streets, he seemed as if he didn't care at all.

"Ha, Fourth Brother. During the trip to the imperial ancestral temple tomorrow, Imperial Father will personally record your name and Her Highness Noble Consort Duan's name into the imperial genealogy. As your elder brothers, we have come first to congratulate Younger Brother."

Duan Yue laughed out loud and waved his hand. "Elder Brothers are treating me as an outsider like this, no? How could I trouble Elder Brothers to personally make this trip for such a small matter? It will do to send a messenger."

"This is a major event for Fourth Brother. How could we not come congratulate you," the second prince said with a smile.

"Then many thanks to Elder Brothers. Duan Yue... oh, that's not right. Rong Yue thanks Elder Brothers for your kind thoughts."

"Ah-Yue, actually, according to usual convention, any descendants of our Ultramarine Province's imperial clan, no matter male or female, will be brought to the imperial ancestral temple where the clan elders will carry out an inheritance ceremony."

Duan Yue smiled without saying anything, merely listening to them talk.

During times like this, he just need to listen. There was no need for him to cut in and express some other opinion.

"The origin of our Ultramarine Province's imperial clan can be traced to the ancient demon emperor. Unfortunately, ever since an almighty predecessor obtained this inheritance more than a thousand years ago, no one else has obtained it since."

"This almighty predecessor who obtained the inheritance of the ancient demon emperor is the founding emperor of our Ultramarine Province."

Duan Yue furrowed his brows slightly but did not say anything.

Chapter 1997: I Have No Expectations

"Fourth Brother, if you obtain the inheritance of the demon emperor during this trip to the imperial ancestral temple, your fortunes will definitely differ greatly from the past," the third prince commented with a smile.

"Even though it has only been several days since Fourth Brother has come home, Brother has heard Imperial Father mention multiple times how Fourth Brother is gifted with unusual talent and insight. Most likely, only someone like Fourth Brother can catch the ancient inheritance's fancy."

Duan Yue smiled without saying anything, merely giving the second and third princes mocking looks.

These two people were being too eager!

They were already anxious to put pressure on him when he hadn't even gone to the imperial ancestral temple yet.

On the other hand, although his eldest crown prince brother was a bit sickly, his brains and insight was not something those two oafs could hold a candle to.

No wonder even though he had been ill all these years, no one was able to shake his position as crown prince.

The crown prince of the Ultramarine Province smiled. "Second Brother, Third Brother, the demon emperor's inheritance also relies on luck."

"That is true." The second prince pressed his lips into a smile. "When the most outstanding member of our Rong Clan, the Qing Vassal Prince Rong Qing, was born, it was said that the sky was streaked with resplendent colors, and daytime lasted for three days and nights in the entire Ultramarine Province without turning dark."

Duan Yue nodded smilingly. He had already heard a lot of legends about this Qing Vassal Prince along the way before even stepping foot into Phoenix Imperial City.

This Qing Vassal Prince was two years older than him. Apparently, he was the youngest person in the entire Ultramarine Province Continent to break through to divine realm cultivation before the age of 25.

As for the legends concerning this Vassal Prince Rong, there were numerous wildly vivid versions.

Duan Yue alone had heard no less than 17 versions, and the most ridiculous one said that Vassal Prince Rong was born with eight heads and 16 arms!

Even spiders weren't so horrifying...

"Three days after the Qing Vassal Prince was born, the people from the Council of Elders carried him to the imperial ancestral temple." The second prince smiled with slight schadenfreude. "Yet he did not obtain a shred of the demon emperor's inheritance."

"Mhm." Duan Yue tilted his head and tapped his chin. "That really is unfortunate."

"Ho, Fourth Brother, there is something you are unaware of. Gifted imperial clan members like the Qing Vassal Prince have another chance to enter the imperial ancestral temple. After 18 years, they get a second attempt at the ancient inheritance."

"Oh." Duan Yue nodded his head.

"But unfortunately, outstandingly gifted as the Qing Vassal Prince is, he still was unable to obtain the recognition of the demon emperor's inheritance."

Duan Yue nodded emphatically and concluded comprehendingly, "Brother is persuading me not to have too much expectation! Without expectation, there naturally won't be disappointment. Many thanks for your reminder. Younger Brother cannot thank you enough."

"You?" The third prince was momentarily at a loss for words.

He indeed wanted this exceedingly gifted fourth brother to know that it wasn't that simple to obtain the demon emperor's inheritance. Naturally, he had selfish motives to dampen this person's confidence, but... wasn't this young man too cooperative!

He hadn't even said anything, yet this fourth brother had already taken over and said such demoralizing words. This guy who didn't follow convention made him lost for words, with no idea how to respond.

The crown prince of the Ultramarine Province, Rong Li, smiled faintly. He took the teacup the servants handed him and sipped from it. "Ah-Yue, We heard that Noble Consort Duan is feeling slightly unwell from the fatigue of the long journey."

Chapter 1998: When Will You Come?

"We have prepared a small present for Noble Consort Duan that will nurse her body. We hope that Fourth Brother will not decline."

"Then thank you, Eldest Brother."

"After Fourth Brother goes to the imperial ancestral temple tomorrow, Imperial Father should be bestowing an estate to you. Brother come visit again then for your estate's housewarming."

Duan Yue continued nodding with a smile. After making some more small talk with those three elder brothers, he personally escorted them out of Nanqiao Palace. However, his gaze instantly turned distant as he watched those three people leave.

Only after a long time did he turn around and follow the path through the garden toward the study.

"Your Highness." The junior eunuch followed his master with fear and trepidation. It hadn't been long since this master came to Nanqiao Palace, and he was usually smiling, but for some reason, the junior eunuch couldn't help feeling a chill seep into his heart.

Which personage in Phoenix Imperial City was a simple one?

"Bring their presents to the study first."

"Understood."

Duan Yue entered the study and carelessly kicked the door closed. He kicked back on the divan in front of the window and lay down for a while with his legs crossed and his hands behind his head.

This was until the junior eunuch knocked the door and entered.

He led a group of junior eunuch and junior royal maids in carrying all the presents into the study.

"Your Highness."

Duan Yue nodded and waved to dismiss them. Afterwards, he flashed in front of the pile of presents.

He spent the whole afternoon opening presents. After opening them one by one, he examined them for a while before putting them back into their boxes one by one.

He exchanged some of the contents of the gift boxes and also threw out some others.

By the time he finished admiring all of them, it was already dusk.

Duan Yue sat down in front of the desk and looked at the tree outside the window. After letting his mind wander for a while, he then pressed open a concealed space under the desk.

He took out a rolled-up scroll from within.

He propped his forehead with one hand while slowly unscrolling this painting with the other hand.

Duan Yue's gaze landed on the expressionless girl in the painting. He caressed her face gently and murmured, "When will you come."

"Your Highness, would you like the lamps lighted and dinner served?"

Duan Yue let out a long sigh and rolled up the scroll again, putting it into the concealed space under the desk.

He got up and strode outside. "We're going to Chengren Palace."

After a moment, Chengren Palace's senior royal maid came in quickly and reported, "Your Highness, His Highness has come."

Noble Consort Duan stood up in delight. Just as she was about to go out to welcome her son, she saw his handsome figure appear at the entrance. He walked toward her with large strides.

"Mom." Duan Yue sauntered over to his mother's side with a grin.

Elderly Nanny Lin, who had taken care of Duan Yue and his mother for many years while still on Sikong Planet, said with a smile, "His Fourth Highness must not have yet eaten dinner. This old servant will call for dinner to be served."

Noble Consort Duan grasped her son's hand with a smile and tapped his forehead with her finger. "You child have no sense of etiquette. Look at this indolent attire of yours. You still think that this is the Duan Clan on Sikong Planet?"

"Mom, does your son need to doll up before coming over to your place?"

Noble Consort Duan burst out in chuckles and gave him both an annoyed and amused glare. She took the comb the senior royal maid handed her and unhurriedly combed out her son's long hair. She couldn't resist nagging, "Son, you're not young anymore. After coming back from acknowledging your ancestors at the imperial ancestral temple, how about your mom having your Imperial Father arrange a marriage for you?"

Chapter 1999: He's a Bushy Beard!

Duan Yue nearly bolted up from his chair when he heard this. He grasped his mother's hand desperately and argued, "Mom, don't randomly start matchmaking for your son! With my age, your son can only be considered a baby in this Ultramarine Province!"

Noble Consort Duan nearly burst into laughter, and she swatted the back of her son's head. "Nonsense!"

“Mom, your son’s every sentence is true. Look at Eldest Brother. He’s almost 40, yet he still hasn’t married or had children. Why the rush?”

“But your eldest brother already has a fiancée. How about you?” Noble Consort Duan asked gently, “Ah-Yue, tell Mom. Do you... have someone you like?”

“What do you mean!” Duan Yue tucked a strand of hair behind his ear and held his mom’s hands, saying, “Mom, if I do have someone I like, how would I not tell you.”

“A son escapes his mother’s supervision once he grows up. Don’t keep saying these things to trick me! I have a feeling that my son has someone he likes.”

Duan Yue’s smile turned a bit stiff before blossoming into a wide grin. “Mom, really! Ah, that’s right, I came over to bring you Eldest Brother, Second Brother, and Third Brother’s presents.”

“They brought over a lot of nourishing tonics.” Duan Yue spoke quietly into his mother’s ear, “I have already inspected each of them. They are rather good medicinal materials that Mom can consume. Later, have an imperial physician come over and prescribe Mom some recipes that you can use in conjunction with your diet.”

“You impish brat.” Noble Consort Duan smiled with closed lips, and she patted her son’s forehead. “Think over what Mom discussed with you when you go back, got it? Son, marriage should happen as soon as possible! Mom can also get a grandson sooner.”

Duan Yue looked exasperatedly at the ceiling. “Mom! Like I said, the normal life expectancy in the Ultramarine Province is more than 200 years. Your son is only 20! I’ll only be 21 after the new year! Is there any need for the urgency?”

“That’s right.” Noble Consort Duan sighed in melancholy. “People like you who embark on the path of cultivation have a life span of more than a hundred years at least. But Mom is only a normal person. Mom is worried that in this lifetime...”

“Mom! Rest assured. There are many pills and elixirs in this world that can lengthen people’s life spans. Besides, I have a friend who is an extraordinarily outstanding pill alchemist. Don’t worry, the next time we meet, I’ll ask for some pills that can lengthen one’s life span. I guarantee that Mom will be free from illness and live for two or three hundred years!”

Noble Consort Duan couldn’t help rolling her eyes at his glib tongue. “Friend? What friend? Is it a girl?”

Duan Yue twitched his mouth and hastily shook his head. “No, it’s a man. A bushy beard!”

Noble Consort Duan looked at him in exasperation. “So useless! Look at you, my son. You’re young and talented, with such handsome looks. How come you haven’t gotten yourself a wife yet in these past 20 years?”

Duan Yue simply wanted to flee out of there.

Whenever his mother got to this topic, it was like she had gotten hit with a repetition talisman. She would go nonstop about getting a daughter-in-law!

It was so difficult to divert her attention elsewhere!

“Son, have you finished packing your luggage for tomorrow’s trip to the imperial ancestral temple?”

“Mom, what luggage do I need to pack? Everything I need I have in my inner world.”

“Oh, that’s right. My son is a very impressive grand mystic cultivator.”

Duan Yue couldn’t help but feel helpless. His mother was only an ordinary woman. After failing to trigger her mystic meridians, she had never come into contact with the path of cultivation.

Chapter 2000: Caught Red-Handed

That’s why his mother simply didn’t know what cultivation realm he was in right now.

It seemed like in her eyes, a grand mystic cultivator was the most ultimately impressive cultivator...

Only after eating dinner with his mother and listening to her nag for a while longer did Duan Yue return to the Nanqiao Palace.

After he spent the entire night cultivating in the inner palace until dawn, a manager eunuch came to bring him to bathe and dress.

It was already evident that this day would be extremely busy and filled with overelaborate formalities.

—Duan Yue’s section break—

The sky had only just brightened.

Crown Prince Mo and Miss Qiao’s figures appeared together by the side of the empty road.

Qiao Mu gazed coldly at the black carriage that was parked by the side of the road. Just as she was about to go up, Mo Lian gripped her wrist gently.

“Stay here. I’ll go over first and take a look.” Mo Lian spoke softly before flying over with a leap.

Just as he landed in front of the black carriage, a scarlet flame flew up and burnt the black carriage’s curtain to a crisp.

The carriage was empty, but there were a good few poison-tailed butterflies on the floor inside.

Qiao Mu walked over quickly, and her expression turned even colder after probing her head inside.

“That person shouldn’t have escaped far. Let’s pursue,” Qiao Mu concluded coldly.

Mo Lian naturally nodded. He scooped up his wife by the waist and leaped up. At the same time, Little Seven transformed into a meandering golden light.

He jumped onto the dragon’s back, and they pursued for several kilometers while the sky was still dim.

They finally discovered two black flying hawks in the wilderness beyond the city outskirts. The two panicked men on them were currently fleeing for their lives.

Qiao Mu squinted her eyes frostily. She stared at the hawks’ backs and contracted her pupils. Subsequently, a red light shot out from her eyes.

The two men who were sprawled on the flying hawks' backs and urging the latter to accelerate instantly felt gusts of wind approaching from the back.

When they turned around to look, their hearts nearly jumped out from their chests.

They saw two uprooted trees plowing through the air toward their backs.

The two men hastily hit their flying hawk mounts, urging them to dodge in trepidation. Yet how was that fast enough!?

The moment Qiao Mu activated her psychokinesis, it performed seamlessly and was as fast as lightning.

With only a thought, she could use any object within a hundred meters as she pleased.

Boom!

Boom!

After getting hit by the trees, their flying speed immediately slowed down.

A streak of fire promptly landed on the two flying hawks' backs.

The two hawks' shrill cries pierced the air when their feathers got set ablaze.

The two flying hawks were unable to withstand the flames' sizzling, so they plummeted from the sky while giving off smoke and crashed to the ground.

Mo Lian leaped forward while securing his arm around Qiao Mu's waist and appeared in front of them.

The two men attempted to resist, but Crown Prince Mo's two kicks to their chests caused them to tumble backwards and slam their backs on the ground.

Qiao Mu cut to the chase and sent two dictum talismans at the two men with a raise of her fingers.

"Who are you people?" She knew that after the mastermind realized the poison and puppet curses afflicting the River Horse Academy students got dispelled, the person would definitely come investigate.

Hence, she had the poison-tailed butterflies trail after the River Horse Academy students and waited for these people to come knocking on their door.

"We are disciples from the Clear Sky Faction."

"Clear Sky Faction! I haven't come to ferret you guys out, yet you're causing trouble for me at every opportunity." Qiao Mu was livid, and she clenched her fists tightly.