

The Sacred Ruins

Chapter 8: The Changing World

The words spoken by Lin Naoi that day had indeed come true. Even common weeds had come to bear fragrant bright red fruits and were no longer ordinary.

Chu Feng could hardly keep calm and his thoughts were in a turmoil.

The world was no longer the same and had suddenly become impossible to understand.

Chu Feng's heart began to race at the thought of the various changes taking place. These incidents had exceeded normal comprehension and truly made one uneasy.

"Is this thing edible?"

One had to admit, Zhou Quan wasn't really one to care about the convoluted details and was still in the mood to think of eating. He could hardly wait to take a bite out of the fruit after smelling the rich fruity fragrance.

"You can try."

"Nah, I don't dare. What if it's poisonous? A bright red fruit growing from a weed is simply too bizarre!" Zhou Quan shook his head.

Nonetheless, he still swallowed hard. The fruit atop those lush green leaves was truly too alluring and its fragrance was stronger than any other fruit.

This made Chu Feng feel deeply astonished. The fruit was glowing with a translucent radiance like a piece of superior cornelian and the mere sight of it made one drool. How come such a fruit was born from an ordinary grass?

The others on the car were also surprised but it didn't cause too great a shock. Too many things had happened recently, especially the terrifying maidenhair tree in the distance.

Although it was odd that weeds would bear fruit, people weren't overly alarmed.

But that gigantic tree was a different matter. People suspected that it had gained sentience and were worried whether a disaster might follow.

“Let’s leave this place. I feel rather uneasy.” The middle-aged man’s face was pale. He hadn’t gotten off the train and was still in his previous seat.

But the train didn’t show any signs of moving again after it stopped.

Time flowed on and, soon, another quarter hour had passed. Chu Feng also got off the train and stood on the platform, gazing into the distance.

That ancient tree was simply too majestic. It was even taller than a mountain with flourishing branches and verdant leaves, towering over the towns and villages in the vicinity. It was impossible for such a gigantic tree not to cause a commotion.

“Look at what we brought back!”

Some people were returning, each holding onto a leaf as tall as a man. The shockingly large maidenhair leaves were like palm-leaf fans.

A certain young man had also brought back a fruit the size of a water basin. It seemed to be quite the strenuous task for him to bring back this humongous light yellow maidenhair fruit.

“Did you pick them?” Someone asked.

“That’s impossible. We just picked them up from over there.” The group pointed into the distance.

The maidenhair tree was simply too large. Its branches had covered the sky and had almost reached where they stood. Dried leaves and fruits could be seen on the ground.

“Many of the locals intend to leave this place. They’re all feeling uneasy.” One of the passengers had asked around and understood the situation.

“Why isn’t the train leaving after so long? I want to know what really happened up ahead. This isn’t the first time!”

Some people were becoming restless and the attendants weren’t informing the passengers about the details.

Zhou Quan nudged Chu Feng’s arm, “Brother, I feel something is off. Nothing of the sort has happened on this road for years. Today is really too strange.”

“I hope we can leave this place soon.” Chu Feng nodded.

A whole hour passed by, rendering many passengers irritable and anxious. Only then did the train finally show signs of movement.

“Oh thank heavens! We’re finally leaving.” An old man heaved a sigh of relief. Many others felt similarly relieved.

Black clouds rolled in the distant skies and from their midst, a bolt of lightning descended with a loud crackle. The weather had changed too fast.

A torrential rain was upon them in the blink of an eye and the whole area became enshrouded in darkness.

Luckily they were all back inside the train.

“Oh god, why is it shining over there?” Someone pointed out the glass window toward the giant tree which was now enveloped by a layer of hazy light. The scene was truly mysterious.

The large tree appeared rather eerie as it swayed under the lightning and thunder.

Was it glowing on its own or was it enshrouded by lightning?

It seemed as if even such a large tree was about to be destroyed!

“Boom!”

Suddenly, the passengers heard a loud noise as the colossal tree began to glow. Many of its branches had been broken off and its large leaves began to fall.

Black clouds blotted out the skies and turned everything pitch black. Only the vicinity of the tree was glowing visibly.

A bizarre scene ensued—all its fruits burst open and their contents filled the skies like dandelions.

The fallen fruits, enshrouded in a hazy glow, burst into silvery-white filaments which floated away into the distance like little umbrellas.

“Is this a maidenhair tree or a dandelion tree?!” Fatty Zhou swallowed hard. His throat felt dry after seeing this bizarre scene.

Many people within the carriage were also dumbfounded after witnessing the inconceivable bizarreness.

After filling the sky with floating seeds, the ancient tree returned to its previous quiet state amidst the rain and thunder. The tree, once more, stood towering over the land, its branches stable.

The people were still in a daze even after the scene outside their windows became obscured due to the torrential downpour.

They could no longer see anything else as the train rushed into the distance.

“Brother, has this world gone mad? Or have we gone mad? What did I just see? Why is everything going against our normal understanding?” Zhou Quan complained.

He wasn't the only one who felt the conflict. Everyone on the car had become silent and couldn't collect their thoughts for quite a while.

They had already left that area and no longer knew what was happening behind them but everyone felt that things would no longer be the same in this restless world.

Many people lowered their heads to glance at their communicators, hoping to find some clues from the news.

But there wasn't anything related to the maidenhair tree.

There were, however, quite a lot of reports on the various odd phenomena from all parts of the country. Long-instinct beasts were spotted in certain regions while spring water gushed out of centuries-old dried wells in others.

Every omen was extraordinary as if they were hinting at something.

“I heard Mount Wangwu is enshrouded in flowing auspicious purple clouds. Is this true?” Someone exclaimed in astonishment.

This report astonished everyone but looking at the responses on the communicator, not many believed it to be true.

The passengers on the train were half-inclined to believe the news after experiencing so many odd things.

There were even more reports that followed. Spirals of hazy mist had enveloped Lake Dongting which, reportedly, was now sparkling with great resplendence like an immortal realm.

This invited a considerable amount of comments and conjectures.

As time elapsed, they were eventually taken past the rainstorm and into a different region. The sky here was bright and clear, a stark contrast from the previous darkness.

Roughly an hour later, more news regarding the vegetation in space had surfaced. All news agencies were reporting on these high-resolution images taken from a certain satellite.

All those rapidly growing trees were identified by botanists as species that could be found on earth.

As for why they were floating and growing in outer space, there was no definite answer to date.

Doubtlessly, this leg of the journey didn't go smoothly either as they were once again forced to stop towards the evening.

Furthermore, this time their stop was out in the wilds with neither town nor station nearby.

The dissatisfied passengers began to ask the train attendants what had happened.

"We've received notification that various problems had arisen on this railroad—some parts of the track are no longer stable—as such, it's likely that our journey will have to terminate here."

The passengers went into an uproar and commotion ensued.

The attendants announced that emergent inspections were already being carried out on the road ahead but they would only be able to resume transportation when the road was sufficiently safe and stable.

Chu Feng contacted his parents that night. He was worried about the two of them because so many abnormal things were happening as of late.

In fact, his parents were also concerned about his safety. They were worried he might encounter mishaps while traveling alone.

Sure enough, the train moved no more. Due to safety concerns, they couldn't move until all potential danger had been ruled out.

Many people on the train began to contact their friends and family. Some were frightened after hearing of the various bizarre happenings across the country. They longed to return to their familiar hometowns.

The staff provided everyone with water and food.

They would've arrived at the terminal station by sundown if only there weren't forced to stop like so.

The restless passengers could hardly find any sleep that night as they discussed the recent matters in hushed tones.

Silence returned to the carriage only much deeper into the night.

The world outside was completely cold, dark and terrifying. Even the stars weren't shining and it was difficult to make out one's own extended fingers.

During the latter half of the night, a loud sound resounded and shook everyone awake. They all opened their eyes and looked around in bewilderment

What had happened? It was strong enough to shake the whole carriage! Did anything crash into our carriage?

Many people had gone pale as they looked out restlessly.

But the entire hilly region was dark and devoid of starlight. Visibility was almost non-existent and the cold darkness was enough to make one palpitate.

The silhouette of the mountains stretched far into the distance. The sounds of wild beasts and owls were transmitted time to time from the dense woods. The scene was truly frightening.

Some people screamed as another vibration ran through the carriage and shook it with great violence.

"What's outside? The force must be immense to be able to shake the whole carriage.

Clamor ensued.

"Stop shouting!" Chu Feng roared.

It would be quite problematic if everyone was hysteric.

"I know this area. This used to be an ancient battlefield where many had died in the past!" A middle-aged woman said shakily.

"Shut up, stop speaking nonsense!" Fatty Zhou yellowed at her. Nonetheless, his own pale face had turned rather ugly.

"There's no such thing as ghosts in this world. These things are only caused by electromagnetic fields and will disappear very quickly." Another person stood out to calm down the people.

The passengers soon found that their communicators had lost all reception.

This time, everyone felt chilled and all their hair stood on end.

They couldn't sleep at all that night; no one was in the mood for rest.

Many were terrified as they gazed restlessly out of the window, hoping for morning sun. They felt great pressure as if some gigantic lifeform was moving around them.

Just before dawn that day. It was still quite dark when mist began to rise over the mountainous area, soon enshrouding everything in a vast expanse of white.

“What’s the situation outside?” Zhou Quan asked.

“Let’s go down and see,” Chu Feng replied.

“No, don’t go!” Zhou Quan shook his head.

“I think there shouldn’t be any problems. If there was a problem it should’ve arisen long ago.” Chu Feng said.

Finally, Chu Feng, Zhou Quan, and a few other youths decided to get off and go and take a look at the situation.

The rolling white mist made it difficult to see clearly beyond a few meters. The scene indeed appeared ominous and frightening.

The surroundings were completely silent as if it was devoid of all life.

“Oh God, what’s that?!” Suddenly a youth called out in terror. His eyes had gone wide as he stared fixedly at something midair.

That scream not only alerted the surrounding people but also terrified the passengers within the carriage. Everyone felt their scalp go numb and their hair stand on end.

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