

## Stranger 631

### Chapter 631: Ugly People Are Prone To Ugly Business

*These people...*

Ye Qing licked his lips as he wondered who these two people were and how they were thinking of robbing the Hill Carrier of all people in the middle of a crisis.

He had to admit that it was an enticing prospect though. If an opportunity really presented itself, should he join in on the fun as well?

“Yawn...”

Ye Qing was calculating the plausibility of a heist when suddenly, the entire Hill of Services trembled. It was followed by a massive yawn that resounded throughout the hill like a thunderclap.

The next moment, a furious roar broke out, “What is it this time, Xi Duoduo?!”

The voice was young, feminine, and sweet, but its content and volume were anything but. It was so loud that even Ye Qing’s ears were shaking a little.

His demonic thought told him that the Hill of Services seemed to have come alive. Literally. The roofs and walls were squirming and bulging here and there until it formed an angry human face.

It looked quite intimidating to say the least.

The roof slowly split open, and a young girl jumped out of the crack. She landed right in front of Xi Duoduo.

The girl looked to be five or six years old. She was wearing a red dress and a pair of braided pigtails. Her cheeks were round and puffy, and her pupils looked as black as the night. She looked both cute and innocent.

Right now though, the girl looked very, very angry. Her cheeks were puffed up so much that it looked like her mouth was full of food. As soon as she landed in front of Xi Duoduo, she immediately raised her little hand and—

*SLAP!*

The slap was so loud and crisp it could be heard throughout the Popularity Tower. Ye Qing’s mouth twitched as he gasped. Xi Duoduo was quite the big man, and yet the little girl had sent him spinning three hundred and sixty degrees in one slap. Talk about ferocity!

The good news was that the slap had snapped Xi Duoduo out of his unusual state. The moment he awakened and saw the young girl, he immediately exclaimed in surprise and joy, “Bunbun!”

“Bunbun your butt!”

Before Xi Duoduo could finish, the girl put one hand on her waist and pointed the other at Xi Duoduo’s face, yelling, “I lent you my body so you can open your stores and do your business, and this is how you repay me?”

“It’s bad enough I can never get more than two or three days of peace because of your business, but it’s like you’re a shit stirrer who can’t stop stirring up shit! Every once in a while, I’ll have to wake up and deal with this kind of nonsense! Why can’t you let me have my beauty sleep? Why can’t you let me grow taller in peace?”

“I er...”

Xi Duoduo looked embarrassed, but the girl interrupted him before he could finish, “You, what? Am I wrong? What did I do in my past life to deserve this? Past me must have been fucking blind to choose you to be my partner!”

The girl was on fire. Ye Qing was surprised Xi Duoduo hadn’t burned into a crisp considering how badly the girl was flaming him.

“Ahem... you’re right. You’re totally right.”

Xi Duoduo hung his head like he was the girl’s grandson while saying awkwardly, “But can we talk about this after we deal with the hand, Bunbun? At this rate, the consequences would be unimaginable.”

Still, the girl did not relent. “Oh really? I thought you didn’t know that! I told you to keep the cheap goods and lowly bitches out of my body, but no, you just can’t help yourself, can you? Now that you’re in trouble, you’re relying on me to bail you out again? Tell me, was I your nemesis in your previous life? Is that why you’re trying so hard to make my life a living hell?!”

“Bunbun, please, it won’t be long before the contamination is irreversible. I’ll let you yell at me as much as you want once the danger is resolved, so please...” Xi Duoduo begged.

“Hmph! Worthless man.” The girl shot him one last glare before turning to look at the man still hugging the hand on the stage.

The man was currently caressing his own face with the hand and mumbling gently to himself, “You’re mine. No one can separate us. No one.”

If the hand wasn’t a hand, it would have been a loving sight. As it was, it only sent chills up everyone’s spine.

“Poo! Who are you putting on a show for, you fuckwit? So disgusting!” The girl put her hands on her waist and yelled.

Seemingly hearing her yell, the man slowly raised his head and stared at the girl with madness and bloodthirst swirling in his eyes.

“Whatcha looking at, fuckwit? Yes, I’m talking about you! You think anyone here wants to see you hugging a rotten hand? Blech!”

The girl continued ferociously, “Stop looking at me, or I’ll beat you so hard your own ma wouldn’t recognize you!”

The man growled, “You shall not insult her. I will kill you.”

Blood streamed down his cheeks and transformed into blood snakes when it hit the ground. They then slithered toward the girl and pounced at her vital spots.

“You think you can kill me?”

The girl didn’t even look at the blood snakes. She took one step forward, and the unnatural creatures exploded into bits just like that.

“Ahhhh!”

The man let out a low growl and rushed the girl himself. In response, she harrumphed and waved her hand in his direction, knocking him back even faster than when he was charging. He slammed hard against the wall at the far end before sliding slowly to the ground, limp and motionless.

It was clear that the impact had completely shattered his already damaged bones and blood vessels.

“Hmph hmph! I can’t believe you think you can actually kill me. Who do you think you are?”

The girl harrumphed scornfully as she looked down on the dying man.

The man’s downfall seemed to anger the hand. It slowly floated into the air and unleashed some sort of terrible power.

In Ye Qing’s senses, a woman wearing a palace dress was floating where the hand was. Her shape was indistinct, and he couldn’t see her face. Despite this, he still lost control and felt an inexplicable yet irresistible attraction toward her. He felt like he was facing his greatest love from his previous life[1].

If even he with the “Paranirmitavaśavartin Heavenly Demon Sutra” could not suppress the sudden outburst of emotions, everyone else could only fare worse. Everyone jumped to their feet at the same time and charged toward the girl, intending to kill her.

“Who are you to get involved in our business? Sit!”

The girl ordered and waved her hand again like she was shooing a dog, and everyone landed back on their chair with a muffled grunt. For a time, no one could not move a muscle.

The moment Ye Qing fell back into his chair, Giggle—who had been hiding inside the Dragon Nursing Nest this whole time—suddenly reached out and tapped him on the forehead.

A cool, refreshing sensation spread out inside his headspace, and the anomalous energy gripping him abruptly disappeared like it never was. Ye Qing immediately regained his clarity of mind.

A few seconds later, he realized that he had somehow become immune to the energy’s influence as well.

“Thanks, Giggle!”

Ye Qing was delighted. As expected of the little Stranger, it possessed all kinds of incredible abilities.

“Hahaha!” Giggle giggled when it heard Ye Qing’s praise.

On the stage, the girl shot Ye Qing and Giggles a glance but ignored them right after. Instead, she stared at the woman and cranked up her flame meter to the max once more, “So you’re the ugly bitch who disturbed my sleep? You don’t even have a face! You must have hid it because it’s so ugly you didn’t dare to show it to anyone!”

“If you’re so ugly that you can’t even bear to show your face around, then why are you running about and causing trouble when you should have hung yourself in a dark corner where no one can see, you shameless whore? No wonder the ancients say that ugly people are prone to ugly business!”

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Chapter 633: Scumbag, Poo

*What are you looking at me for? What, the consequence of your actions is too much for you to bear? Besides, I'm not the only one who thought the same thing, so why are you looking at just me?*

Ye Qing was ranting non-stop on the inside, but of course he didn't say his thoughts out loud. He would have to be suicidal and masochistic to do that. Instead, he let out a cough, stared straight into the girl's eyes and declared with full seriousness, “You're right. A cute and strong girl like you is always right.”

Ye Qing then looked at Xi Duoduo and scoffed with disdain, “Scumbag. You have no idea what's good for you. Poo!”

Xi Duoduo: “...”

Everyone: “...”

This hall is in dire need of some shame right now!

“Hahaha... you're a good lad! I like you.” The girl was happy to hear this though. She looked away from Ye Qing and stared menacingly at the rest of the guests. “What about you guys? Do you guys have something you wish to share with me?”

“Nope!”

“Absolutely not.”

“You're always right.”

Everyone obeyed their instinct without any hesitation whatsoever. Then, as if they had practiced this a million times before, they turned to Xi Duoduo and declared disdainfully, “Scumbag. Pooh!”

“Scumbag!”

“Scumbag!”

Xi Duoduo: “...”

*You’re all a reputable jianghu warrior in your own right. Can we have some backbone in this hall?*  
Ah?

Even if I am a scumbag, what the fuck does it have to do with you? Do you need to grit your teeth like I dumped your wife or something?

Oh my heavens that fucker over there actually spat at me! I can actually feel his saliva on my face! I’m gonna—

“Hmph hmph!”

The girl huffed out with delight before turning back to Xi Duoduo. “You see this? Do you admit that you’re a scumbag now?”

“Yes, yes, I’m a scumbag.” Xi Duoduo immediately replied in the meekest tone he could muster. “I promise I won’t do it again, so please... leave me some face.”

“Hmph! If you apologized earlier, then I wouldn’t need to waste all those breaths, would I?” The girl declared like a victorious general after finally squeezing an apology out of Xi Duoduo.

*And how is this my fault?!* Xi Duoduo complained mentally but did not show his emotions on his face in the slightest. “Yes, yes, it’s all my fault.”

“There is no greater good than knowing the error of your ways and correcting it!” The girl nodded in satisfaction. “Alright, I’m tired. I’m heading back to sleep now.”

“Oh, and you better not cause trouble inside my body and disrupt my sleep again. Otherwise, you will regret it.”

“I will remember,” Xi Duoduo replied humbly while thinking, *Please just leave already!*

“Hmph hmph! Here, you can have it back.”

The girl kicked the hand beneath her foot back to Xi Duoduo and gradually turned transparent. A few seconds later, she was gone.

Xi Duoduo sighed in relief only after the girl was completely gone. To say that she was difficult to please would be an understatement. What on earth possessed him back then to choose her? Oh right, he was fooled by her appearance into thinking that she was cute, innocent and friendly. In reality, she was fiercer than a fucking tiger!

Karma truly was a bitch. He had screwed countless people over for profit, so it was his fate to suffer a she-tiger on his hill... forever.

There was nothing he could do about it though, This was the mistress he chose. He had to please her even if his dignity was raked over the coals again and again!



Xi Duoduo thought he had resolved himself, but tears began welling in his eyes when he looked down and saw the hand before his feet. It was such a beautiful, valuable hand, but now it was just a rotting chunk of flesh and bone. Heavens, he could literally smell the rot from where he was. Even with his persuasion skills, could he convince anyone to buy this? Obviously not.

Xi Duoduo felt like crying. This was why the saying, “Having given away a bride, to lose one's army on top of it” existed. Not only did he lose a hand that would've been worth a ton of money, he had to console his customers as well.

Sure, no one was harmed in the end, but it was his mistake that resulted in this shitshow in the first place. He had to make a show of good faith somehow, and what does good faith constituted in this scenario? Money, of course!

*My bride! My army! My money!*

Xi Duoduo was actually crying at this point. Tears wouldn't stop streaming down his cheeks for a time.

Once again, there was nothing he could do about it. He was the one who screwed up. Of course he had to suffer the consequences of his own actions.

So, Xi Duoduo sucked in a deep breath, put a lid on his sorrow, and wore a smile on his face once more. He said, “I'm so, so sorry that happened, dear customers. It was my mistake that this happened. As compensation, I shall prepare a big gift for everyone later. I hope you can find it in yourself to forgive me.”

“You're welcome, Mr. Xi.”

The crowd accepted his apology without any fanfare. No one tried to press him or anything. Was it because they weren't angry that their lives had come under threat just now? Of course not. Petty-minded people were never the minority in the *jianghu*.

However, they had also witnessed a certain girl's power earlier. They would have to be suicidal and addled to stir up trouble at this time!

Besides, no one was hurt. No one was even forced to use a life-saving item or something, not to mention that Xi Duoduo had promised to compensate them for their troubles. It would be too greedy to ask for more.

“Who was that man just now, Mr. Xi? Do you recognize him?”

It was at this moment Ye Qing spoke up. When the man had removed his mask, and Xi Duoduo had seen his face, he could sense just how shocked and surprised the businessman was. Unless he was gravely mistaken, Xi Duoduo recognized the man.

“In fact, I do.”

Xi Duoduo turned to look at the crumpled heap of a man at the far wall and answered with a complicated expression, “Do you still remember that I said that a tomb raider was the one who gave us the hand as a collateral? If I'm not mistaken, that man is none other than that tomb raider.”

“What? Are you sure, Mr. Xi?” Someone exclaimed in shock.

“I’m sure. I remember the scar on his face very well,” Xi Duoduo confirmed. “I already thought that something was wrong with him when he gave me the hand at the beginning. He seemed out of it and was barely coherent most of the time. Perhaps he had already succumbed to the hand then.”

“If that is true, then why would he give the hand to you as a collateral? For over five years no less?” Ancestor Greenwood voiced his puzzlement.

Xi Duoduo shrugged. “That is a question only he can answer, but...”

He glanced at the man again and shook his head. “It looks like that’s a question that will forever remain a mystery.

His little mistress had not held back. She had never planned on leaving him alive.

That was fine though. He was a businessman, not an investigator. He had no interest in finding out the whole truth about something, so the man’s death did not bother him much.

Xi Duoduo snapped his fingers, and two men appeared from the back stage. He ordered, “Take him away and bury him somewhere.”

“As you command!” The two men responded before walking over the man and carrying him on his feet.

It was at this moment the dying man suddenly grabbed one of the servants’ head and bit him right on the nose.

“Aaaaaaaaargh!”

A bloodcurdling scream resounded throughout the Hill of Services. No one had seen this coming. The man should be incapable of lifting even a finger, and yet he had somehow to assault the servant.

By the time they came to, the servant’s nose had already been ripped off his face.

After biting off the servant’s nose, the man charged toward Xi Duoduo—or more accurately, the hand in front of him—while his face was covered in gruesome blood.

“You bastard!”

Enraged, Xi Duoduo brought out his Flame In Stone and showered the man with a jet of flames. His whole body caught on fire like his skin was made of oil.

The man could not seem to feel it though. He managed to grab the hand and hold it tightly against his chest.

“No one will separate us. We will never be separated again!”

Despite being covered in flames, despite the fact that his flesh and blood was turning black by the second, the man didn’t appear to be afraid or in pain at all. There was only infatuation, madness and love on his face.

Chapter 634: A Sunny Day Is A Good Day To Kill

“Hahaha... she’s still alive, and you will meet her very soon.”

Suddenly, the burning man looked at the crowd and let out a crazed laugh. As he laughed, his expression slowly turned gentle, attractive and seductive as if he wasn't a man, but a gorgeous woman whose beauty could topple nations.

The next moment, a feminine voice that didn't belong to him at all actually came out of his mouth, "Haha... we will meet again."

"I await you all at the Death Sea..."

The feminine voice was still echoing throughout the Popularity Tower as the man finally burned into a pile of ash. It was gentle, attractive, seductive and melodious, and yet everyone was wearing an ugly look on their faces.

It didn't take much imagination to figure out why. The man's final act and the unknown woman's words were spine-chilling to say the least. It left a bad premonition in everyone's heart.

A moment later, someone finally mustered the courage to stutter out a question, "Mr. Xi... what on earth was that?"

"Ahem... it's nothing. It's probably a dying, crazed man's last words. You don't need to pay it any heed," Xi Duoduo assured him while watching the pile of ash that was the man and the hand. He waved his hand, and a cool wind swept the ashes clean.

"Really?" Ancestor Greenwood and more exchanged a suspicious glance with each other. However, they couldn't really think of a concrete reason to say otherwise.

The Death Sea again?

Ye Qing was the only one who was lifting an eyebrow and wearing a severe expression on his face.

He did not think that the man had faked the woman's voice in the end, not to mention that she had mentioned the Death Sea. If he combined this clue with everything the man had said earlier, it looked like the hand's owner was still alive and trapped at the Death Sea!

The hand had been strong enough to overwhelm everyone in the Hill of Services. The only one that wasn't affected was the artifact spirit. If the hand alone was so powerful, he could hardly imagine how powerful its owner really was. At the very least, they had to be a Grandmaster.

The Death Sea was dangerous, but it was unlikely it could trap a Grandmaster. In that case, could the hand's owner be trapped at the mysterious land where the Dark Overlord's inheritance lay?

Ye Qing was fairly certain that he was right.

This would also explain why the man hadn't shown up until the Death Sea was close to resurfacing. The man was infected by the hand's power, but because the Death Sea was still submerged, and the hand was cut off from its source, it was much, much weaker than it should've been. As a result, the man was able to resist the hand's influence for a time.

But now that the Death Sea was close to resurfacing, the connection between the hand and its owner must have grown stronger once more. That was why the owner was able to interfere with the world and retake control of the man.

Unless he was mistaken, the hand's owner was trying to infect and control as many people as possible. She would then use them to break out of her prison somehow.

Of course, this was just a guess. If he was right though, then the owner had won the war despite losing the battle. She might have failed to infect them with her power, but judging from her words, she could have left some sort of imprint inside their body that would activate and compel them to enter the place when the Death Sea resurfaced.

Realizing that he might have entered the attention of a powerful existence, Ye Qing immediately felt like someone had pressed a blade to his neck. Although he had inspected himself multiple times and found nothing amiss, that didn't mean that he was free from danger. He would have to inquire the Annon Sutra about it as soon as he left the Hill of Services.

Meanwhile, the guests slowly calmed down after inspecting themselves and finding nothing amiss. Xi Duoduo engaged them in small talk for a short while before declaring the end of the Treasure Appreciation Auction.

After the auction was over, a female attendant led Ye Qing to a private room to complete the transaction.

Instead of leaving immediately, Ye Qing remained at the Hill of Services. He planned to wait until his fellow *jianghu* warriors had cleared out the minefield that was surely waiting outside the Hill of Services before taking his leave.

A lot of people shared the same idea and stayed behind as well, but the powerful ones such as Ancestor Greenwood, Amorous Mother, Weak Old Man, Defeated and more left the place immediately. They believed in their strength and did not think that there was anyone who could threaten them.

.....

"They're all leaving, Dream Master. When are we going to make our move?"

Inside a room, Slaughterer stared intently at Ancestor Greenwood and more while asking in an urgent tone.

"There's no hurry. Let's give it a bit more time!" Dream Master replied gently.

Slaughterer's red eyes smoldered with impatience. "Seriously? At this rate, even a long yellow daylily would turn cold[1]! You don't want the cooked ducks to fly away to safety, do you?"

"Patience. A cold meal doesn't burn your mouth." Dream Master smiled. "Also, I have planted my Dream Butterflies on them. They cannot escape no matter where they go."

"The reason I don't want to make a move now is because they are still too close to the Hill of Services. It would be bad if one of them managed to slip away and return here."

“There’s nothing to be—” Slaughterer grunted, but cut himself mid-sentence when he recalled the little girl and the hand’s tragic end. The defiance in his voice wilted as he said with a huff, “Fine. I guess they can live a little longer.”

“Good. Now sit down and enjoy some tea.” Dream Master elegantly poured a cup of tea for everyone. “There’s no sense in wasting good tea, don’t you agree?”

When they had all drunk around three cups of tea, Dream Master finally set down his cup and said, “It’s time. Earth Walker, you will handle Greenwood. Slaughterer, you will handle Amorous Mother. Dancer, you will handle Weak Old Man. As for the rest, you can leave them all to me.”

“Finally! My fists have been itching for blood!” Slaughter let out a vicious laugh and clenched his fists so hard that they cracked.

“It’s too bad we couldn’t get our hands on ‘A Celestial Rides A Bull Across A Green Hill’. If Red Calabash Celestial was greedy enough to leave the Hill of Services with the painting, then it would fall into our hands for sure.”

Dancer sighed regretfully. “I’m sure our king would have appreciated it.”

“Greed begets tragedy, and tragedy usually results in death. Who is to say that missing out on ‘A Celestial Rides A Bull Across A Green Hill’ isn’t a blessing in disguise?” Dream Master said with a smile.

“True. The painting’s existence is no longer a secret. It is only a matter of time the True Martial Sect finds out about it. I doubt we’ll be able to safeguard it even if everything had gone as we hoped.”

Earth Walker said in a low tone, “Those bullnoses[2] aren’t exactly small fries, you know?”

“Hmph! Like we’re scared of those hypocrites.” Slaughterer snorted in disdain.

“We’re not, but there is no need to court unnecessary trouble,” Dream Master said.

“Oh right, I almost forgot. If we all left, then what about Nanke?” Dancer suddenly recalled something important. “He’s not leaving the Hill of Services yet. Shouldn’t we leave someone behind to watch him?”

Dream Master shook his head. “There’s no need. I’ve afflicted him with my Ghost Marriage. He cannot escape.”

“Wonderful. Let’s move then!”

Dream Master waved his hand, and a swarm of colorful, fantastical butterflies burst into existence. He said, “Simply follow my Dream Butterflies, and they will lead you to our targets.”

The swarm of butterflies flew out of the window, and the group exchanged one last glance with each other. Then, they left the Hill of Services one after another.

#### Chapter 635: Plants Live Only One Autumn

“Sigh... I can already imagine the bloody storm that is about to ensue!”

Inside a room on the topmost floor of the Hill of Services, Xi Duoduo was standing by a window and watching a couple of butterflies flying toward somewhere.

“Hmph! You’re as pretentious as a cat crying over a dead mouse. If you really detest death, you should never have held a Treasure Appreciation Auction in the first place!”

A young girl scoffed disdainfully while sitting on a very, very tall chair and kicking her legs unconsciously.

“What does my Treasure Appreciation Auction have to do with them? I give them what they want, and they give me what I want. It’s a mutually beneficial relationship, isn’t it? That they succumb to their greed and hunt down their fellow warriors is their sin, not mine,” Xi Duoduo argued with an innocent expression on his face.

“Mutually beneficial relationship my butt, just say you want their money, you hypocrite.” The girl scoffed harder. “Besides, I know you want them to fight each other to the death. After all, how can you loot their corpses if they don’t?”

“I’m wounded by your misunderstanding, Bunbun.” Xi Duoduo continued to feign innocence. “I’m just a businessman. What malice could I possibly harbor?”

“I offer medical care for the wounded, protection for those who are hunted, and even cemetery services for those who passed away. Everything I do, I did it for the good of the people.”

“I know you’re a businessman. Who else could dress up robbing and looting and profiteering off people’s misery in such high-sounding words?”

The girl rolled her eyes at him. “You’re a hypocrite and a scumbag. Hmph!”

Xi Duoduo: “...” I admit that I’m a hypocrite, but scumbag again? Am I going to hear that insult for the rest of my life?

Xi Duoduo wanted to argue some more, but one look from the girl was enough to shut him up.

*Fine! You’re strong, so everything you say is right! You happy?*

“Humans are so hypocritical. If only everyone is a pure, cute and innocent artifact spirit like me!” The girl sighed.

Cute? Innocent? Pure?? That is easily the biggest lie I ever heard in my life! If you know better, you would stop shaming those words with your presence!

Xi Duoduo ranted inside his head but replied with a flattering smile on his face, “Yes, you’re right.”

“Alright, I’m going to get my beauty sleep now. You can earn all the money you like, but don’t you dare disturb my sleep again, get it? Otherwise, you will regret it.”

“Mm,” Xi Duoduo replied.

“And what the hell does ‘mm’ mean, huh? Speak properly!” The young girl glared at him.

“I heard you! I heard you, okay?” Xi Duoduo replied helplessly while massaging his head. Please just leave already, mistress.

After the girl was finally gone, the Hill Carrier clasped his hands behind his back and stared at the blue sky outside the window. His gaze was distant and deep.

“A sunny day too is a good day to kill. The sun is bright, and the blood is bright red.”

.....

“A sunny day,

A beautiful day.

The flowers are red,

The grass is green.

A litter on my shoulder,

I run like the wind.

Never faltering,

Never slowing...”

Inside a forest, four men were carrying a high quality litter on their shoulder, singing a merry song and running like the wind.

They weren’t really men though. Their body was covered in green, moss-like grass, and their head was covered in purple red flowers.

Despite carrying a litter on their shoulder, the four men ran like they were traversing flat land—fast and perfectly steady.

Sitting inside the litter was none other than Ancestor Greenwood. Right now, the young-looking old man was half-lying on the litter floor, waving a fan with one hand and holding up the Wenliang Pearl with the other. He examined the pearl closely and carefully.

A moment later, he muttered to himself with a frown, “This pearl doesn’t really look all that extraordinary.”

Suddenly, Ancestor Greenwood's expression changed. He sat up immediately and barked, "Stop!"

His men obeyed the order but exchanged confused glances with each other.

Ancestor Greenwood did not explain why he ordered them to stop. He simply scanned his surroundings with a deep frown on his face.

His main cultivation art was called "Plants Live Only One Autumn". Most plants couldn't live past autumn, and most humans only enjoyed one lifetime. In that sense, both humans and plants shared very, very short lives. "Plants Only Live One Autumn" could convert a plant's essence into lifeforce. According to the manual, it could extend one's lifespan infinitely and allow one to live for ten thousand years.

Of course, it was just an exaggeration, though its rejuvenating effects were definitely the real deal. Besides that, the practitioner could forge a communication with the surrounding plants after they reached a certain level.

That was why he ordered his men to stop. The surrounding plants had detected some form of danger.

Unfortunately, Ancestor Greenwood wasn't able to find anything after a moment of observation.

"Strange?" He muttered under his breath before coming to a decision. "Speed up so we may return to Greenwood Abode as soon as possible."

He received no response from his men, however. It was almost as if they hadn't heard him.

"Are you deaf?!"

Ancestor Greenwood was about to rebuke his men when suddenly, the plants growing on their bodies slowly began to wither bit by bit. The flowers on their heads were dying as well. As for the men themselves...

They were long dead.

A cold chill gripped Ancestor's Greenwood's heart at that moment. The four men were his disciples, and he had refined them using a method called "Plant Puppet" since they were young. First, he planted flower and grass seeds inside their bodies. Their flesh and blood would provide nourishment to the seeds. Once the seeds had sprouted, the seeds would replace their original organs, and their roots would replace their blood vessels. They would essentially become one with the plants and transform into a Plant Puppet.

It should not need to be said, but the method was both cruel and painful. But in exchange, the Plant Puppets would become as strong and tenacious as plants. Not only were they resistant to conventional weapons, they were insanely strong and even more tenacious. Just like a normal plant, not even cutting off their heads would be enough to kill them.

If the four men came together to attack him, he wouldn't die, but he wouldn't be able to harm them either. The battle would have ended in a stalemate.



The reason he dared to leave the Hill of Services alone as soon as the Treasure Appreciation Auction was over was one, because he was confident in his own strength, and two, he had four Plant Puppets. They were his trump cards.

He was confident that he and his four Plant Puppets combined could survive any ambush attempt.

However, his four Plant Puppets had died without a sound. He never even felt their demise until after the fact. How could he not be scared by this?

The next moment, a green light wrapped around Ancestor Greenwood, and he disappeared into thin air just like that. He did not bring his litter or his four withered Plant Puppets with him as a matter of course.

“You think you can run?”

After Ancestor Greenwood was gone, a disdainful voice came from somewhere. The voice was quickly swept away by the wind.

.....

*Rustle rustle...*

A cool breeze suddenly blew through a grove of trees. The leaves and branches shook like waves and rustled melodiously.

Suddenly, a green bamboo about the diameter of a bowl slowly cracked open. Then, a man tumbled out of the opening.

The bamboo was only as wide as a bowl, and the opening was only as long as a chopstick. However, the man was over 1.7 meters tall. It should be impossible for such a large man to appear from such a thin bamboo and tiny opening, and yet there was no denying that it had happened.

The man who fell out of the bamboo looked yellow in the face. Once he hit the ground, he abruptly bent down and began coughing violently. Every time he coughed, he would spit out a mouthful of withered yellow liquid.

Over time, the man’s complexion slowly turned from yellow to white. He was, of course, Ancestor Greenwood.

Ancestor Greenwood was looking much older than he was, however. His hair was turned a little white, and his face was covered in wrinkles. He looked like he had aged forty or fifty years.

Chapter 636: Your Killer Is The Eight Legions of Devas and Nagas

After his complexion had completely returned to normal, Ancestor Greenwood wiped away the yellowish liquid still clinging to his lips and muttered,

“I got away... right?”

He was afraid not just because of his mysterious pursuer, but also his “One Autumn Life”.

“One Autumn Life” was an escape technique in “Plants Live Only One Autumn”. It was also his life-saving trump card. A form of Wood Escape of the Five Phases Escape, it allowed the Ancestor Greenwood to escape through plants. It was easily one of the best escape techniques out there.

Of course, “One Autumn Life” was no match for the orthodox Taoist’s Wood Escape. It cost the practitioner their life essence to activate and infected them with a plant’s energy of decline.

It was why “One Autumn Life” was named the way it was. It implied that those who used it would probably live and die within one autumn.

Just now, he had used “One Autumn Life” to travel tens of kilometers in just a short time. Not only did it rob him of a ton of life force, he was tainted by much energy of decline as well. That was why he had aged between forty to fifty years in an instant.

Even with his cultivation art, it would take him at least five or six years to replenish it. Such was the cost of using “One Autumn Life”.

Still, it was worth it. After all, it kept him alive, and so long he was still alive, anything was possible.

Ancestor Greenwood stared at his aged, wrinkly hands before declaring fiercely and hatefully, “Cough! Cough... I don’t know who you are, but you shall pay once I’ve thoroughly grasped the secrets of the Wenliang Pearl!”

“I don’t think you will get that chance.”

A voice suddenly came from somewhere in the forest.

“Impossible!”

Ancestor Greenwood’s pupils shrank. His already pallid complexion instantly turned as white as paper.

He had traveled at least tens of kilometers with “One Autumn Life”. How was it possible for his pursuer to catch up to him?

There was no time to think. He immediately tried to use “One Autumn Life” again. Although his previous usage had already damaged his foundation, and a second use would most likely worsen his injuries and even kill him outright, dying later was still better than dying now.

Besides, Ancestor Greenwood hadn’t given up hope yet. Every second he could buy for himself was a second he might escape his pursuer and live to see another day.

Unfortunately, the forest within a hundred meters of him suddenly burst into green flames and began wilting earnestly. The color green usually symbolized life and nature, but this one oozed an aura of death, inauspiciousness, and calamity.

In just a matter of seconds, every plant around him was dead.

“...”

Ancestor Greenwood was speechless. Suddenly, he didn’t know what to do anymore.

“One Autumn Life” could only be executed if there were plants around him, but now, every plant within a hundred meters of him was dead. How could he possibly escape like this?

*This is unfair!*

“Who are you?!” Ancestor Greenwood roared in despair.

*Whoosh...*

Right after he said that, the weak-looking flames abruptly swelled into a towering inferno.

Suddenly, the wall of flames parted, and a man slowly stepped out into the open. He too was covered in green flames, and he had cold, emotionless eyes.

“Who are you? Why are you trying to kill me? Perhaps there is a misunderstanding between us?” Ancestor Greenwood stuttered. He knew that his assassin was targeting his Wenliang Pearl as a matter of course, but he wasn’t willing to give it away just like that. What if the assassin actually wasn’t targeting his treasure? What if there was a chance he could get away with both his possessions and his life?

“There is no misunderstanding.”

Unfortunately, the man replied in a low tone, “Remember. Your killer is Earth Walker of the Yaksas, one of the Eight Legions of Devas and Nagas!”

“Wait! I’ll give you the Wenliang Pearl! All I ask is—”

Ancestor Greenwood blanched knowing that luck definitely wasn’t on his side today. Unfortunately, he couldn’t even finish his pleading before the fire behind Earth Walker surged another fifty meters into the air before crashing down on Ancestor Greenwood like a tidal wave.

When the green flame finally dispersed, everything within a hundred meters had burned down into an ashen wasteland. Ancestor Greenwood was nowhere to be seen, but where he was standing a moment ago lay a single pearl. It was emanating a cool energy.

The pearl was, of course, the Wenliang Pearl. Although the Wenliang Pearl turned hot when it was cold and vice versa, Earth Walker had attacked far too swiftly and fiercely. As a result, Ancestor Greenwood had burned into ash before it could activate its full power.

Earth Walker walked up to the Wenliang Pearl and picked it up. Then, he looked at the pile of ash that was once Ancestor Greenwood and said indifferently, “Your offer is unnecessary. I prefer picking up the stuff I like with my own two hands.”

.....

The Amorous Mother Palace was originally a massive grave until Amorous Mother renovated it into the Amorous Mother Palace. It looked just as luxurious and splendid as any human palace.

Right now though, it was a pile of ruins that was covered in broken limbs and bodies. There was enough blood to form a river.

Right now, a tall, muscular man was doing battle against five children inside the hypogeum[1]. Young they might be, the children were anything but human. Covered in black hair like monkeys,

they had blue faces, sharp fangs, and dark green arms. They also ran and leaped around as lithely as monkeys. An expert would recognize them as mythical Flying Zombies.

A zombie was a type of Stranger. If a human died, and their body refused to be subsumed by nature, then they would become stuck in the limb between life and death. Hence, a zombie.

A zombie could be categorized as White Zombies, Black Zombies, Jumping Zombies, Flying Zombies, Ba[2] and Hou.

When a corpse was placed inside a corpse breeding ground, it would grow long, white hair in about a month's time. This type of corpse moved slowly and was exceptionally easy to handle. It was also weak to many things such as sunlight, fire, water, chickens, dogs and of course, humans. This was what they called a White Zombie.

If a White Zombie was fed the blood essences of livestock for several years, it would eventually shed its white hair and grow a coat of black hair that was just several inches long. It was still afraid of sunlight and fire, and its movements were still very slow. However, it no longer feared chickens and dogs, and its fear of humans were slightly diminished. It avoided humans who were awake and feared head-on fights, but it would feed on their blood once they were asleep. This type of zombie was called a Black Zombie.

A Black Zombie who fed on human blood for a couple centuries would shed their black fur. They also gained the capability to hop, which was much faster than dragging their feet. They still feared sunlight, but they no longer feared humans and animals. People called them Jumping Zombies.

Jumping Zombies transformed into Flying Zombies by absorbing the essence of the moon and yin energy. A Flying Zombie was usually a zombie that had lived at least a century or even several centuries. Swift and agile, they possessed explosive jumping power that enabled them to leap up trees and houses like nothing. They could also feed on essences without leaving external wounds.

A Flying Zombie who had absorbed essences for a couple centuries grew increasingly horrifying in appearance. Often described as having man-eating Rakshasha with a blue face and long fangs, they could mask themselves with illusions, slay dragons and start plagues. At this level, the zombie was known as a Ba.

Finally, A Ba who had transformed into a Hou possessed great magic and could spit smoke and fire from their mouths. They could toy with dragons like nothing, fly into the sky or slip into the earth. They were supposedly omnipotent.

To put it in simpler terms, a White Zombie was a Mortal-class Stranger, a Black Zombie was a Malice-class Stranger, a Jumping Zombie was a Hatred-class Stranger, a Flying Zombie was a Phenomenon-class Stranger, a Ba was a Disaster-class Stranger, and a Hou was an Ancient-class Stranger.

The five children weren't Bas yet, though they were fairly close judging from their appearance. Possessing the strength of a Phenomenon-class Stranger, they were fast, immune to most weapons, and insanely strong. Their teeth, fingernails and such also possessed deadly poison that could transform someone into a zombie. They were terrifying foes to say the least.

The five children were currently flying all over the big man and attacking him frantically. However, the terrifying Flying Zombies might as well be ants before the big man, weak and pathetic. Their deadly teeth and nails could not break his skin, leaving behind only white marks that looked like

scratch marks one left behind when they scratched an itch. On the other hand, the big man was like a walking cyclone that sent the five children flying as soon as they made even the slightest contact with him. It was clear who held the advantage between the two sides.

#### Chapter 637: Five Spirit Zombies

A few breaths later, the big man let out a huge roar. His eyes turned crimson, and his movements suddenly became quicker than before. His hand was as big as a palm-leaf fan, but it moved like lightning and caught a boy's ankle in an instant.

Before the boy could react, the big man let out a savage laugh and swung him at two other children who were intending to ambush him. They were sent flying into a pile of rubble. Not stopping, he proceeded to leap into the air—knocking another child away in the process—and stomped the last child into the underground.

The ground was made of hard limestone, but it cracked easily like a mirror. The child who was supposedly immune to most weapons was flattened like a pancake as well.

“Hahaha! Five Spirit Corpses my ass! This is pathetic!”

The big man continued to guffaw as he scanned around the area. “Quit hiding and show yourself already. I know where you are. If you come out now, I promise I won't desecrate your corpse.”

Inside a secret room, Amorous Mother was hiding with an ugly expression on her face. She did not dare to take even a single breath, not that she needed any since she was a corpse.

To say that Amorous Mother was miffed would be an understatement. By coincidence, the Treasure Appreciation Auction was held very close to her Amorous Mother Palace. So, she rushed back to her domain as soon as the event was over. She had even caught a few juicy snacks along the way for dinner.

However, her butt hadn't even warmed the stool yet<sup>[1]</sup> when suddenly, a loud boom had stolen her attention. As it turned out, something had crashed through her roof!

This was no easy feat since her palace was located fifty to sixty meters underground. Not only was it incredibly well hidden, it was also as solid as a rock. The fact that it had stood strong for hundreds of years without weakening even a little was proof of that.

However, something—or more accurately, someone had crashed through her roof. As the saying went, not all creatures who descended from the sky were celestials. They could very well be gods of death as well.

The Amorous Mother Palace was her headquarters, and despite what most people might think, it was actually quite the lively place. There were wulin warriors who threw in their lot with her, zombies and Strangers living in this place. At the top rung, she had three Spirit Masters and eighteen Soulstealer-class zombies. The zombies especially were tough as nails and unafraid of death. She called them her Eighteen Corpse Generals. At the lower rungs, she had hundreds of underlings, servants and flesh food. It was a sizable force to put it mildly.

And yet, the big man had crushed her force almost effortlessly. What were the consequences of letting a tiger into a pen of lambs? That was what had befallen her people.

Her prided Eighteen Corpse Generals and three Spirit Masters? They barely managed to pin down the big man for a couple of exchanges before he tore them all to shreds. The rest only fared worse.

At first, Amorous Mother didn't think much about the situation. It was because she was sure that she would become the ultimate victor.

The big man was a Half-Step Grandmaster, and so was she. By the time he slew all of her people, he would have expended most of his strength. All she needed to do then was to swoop in and score the kill. If she could refine his body into a zombie, then this loss would be no loss at all. In fact, it would be one of the greatest winnings she had made in her life.

When she thought that the time was right, she went out fully assured of victory. A short while later, she slunk back to her hidey-hole with her tail tucked between her legs.

It wasn't that she was weak. Her opponent was simply too powerful.

She was a zombie, but the big man's stamina seemed bottomless. Not only that, he was only growing stronger as time passed. In just a dozen of exchanges, he had found an opportunity to burst one of her arms like a bubble. If she hadn't reacted decisively and summoned her Five Spirit Corpses to keep the big man busy while she escaped, she would probably be as dead as her people already.

The Five Spirit Corpses were the five children she had shown off at the Treasure Appreciation Auction earlier. They were dead infants, but they inherited her origin corpse qi. It was why she had little trouble refining them into zombies and innate magic. She called them the Five Spirit Corpses.

After several hundred years of nurturing, the Five Spirit Corpses had evolved into Flying Zombies, a.k.a Spirit Masters in terms of human cultivation. Although they lacked the Magia and sentience of a Spirit Master, they possessed a tenacious body and incredible strength. When they worked together, they could keep even a Half-Step Grandmaster on their toes.

However, her Five Spirit Corpses failed to last more than a few exchanges against the big man. Already, four out of five of her Five Spirit Corpses were killed, and the last one was barely hanging on.

The Five Spirit Corpses were connected to her. Every time one died, she would suffer great damage and lose much of her strength. Now that she had lost four of them, she was seriously injured and much, much weaker than she was before.

If she left her secret room now, she would die faster than she could ask, "Why?!" Naturally, she wasn't leaving no matter what.

She was a corpse anyway, meaning that she did not need to eat or drink like a normal human. If she wanted to, she could just stay hidden for decades or even centuries. She might not be able to defeat her opponent, but she could most definitely outlast him.

"Mm!"

It was at this moment a heart-wrenching pain twisted her guts and elicited a muffled groan from her mouth. She knew it was because her last Spirit Corpse was killed by the big man.

“Hahaha! Found you.”

The next moment, a vicious laugh and an ominous declaration resounded throughout the palace. Despite her condition, Amorous Mother’s heart skipped a bit. Did he hear me groaning? Dammit!

Every second counted. Amorous Mother immediately jumped to her feet, opened the door, and got ready to make a run for it. However, she had only taken two steps when she suddenly stopped in her tracks and really thought about her situation.

*Shit! I think he tricked me!*

She had specifically built the secret room to be inconspicuous, nigh undetectable, and completely cut off from qi sense and ordinary senses. Forget her muffled groan, she could be singing and dancing inside her secret room, and there was still no way the big man could have detected her.

Besides, she had groaned when she had lost her previous four Spirit Corpses. If the big man really could hear her, then he would’ve barged into her secret room and killed her already. Therefore, he was just tricking her into revealing herself.

Amorous Mother tried to return to her secret room, but of course, it was already too late. The big man was already racing toward her.

“Hahaha! I finally found you, you stupid fool!”

Amorous Mother agreed with the assessment, but she also believed that the fault didn’t lie completely with her. Who would’ve believed that a thick-browed, big-eyed meathead like the big man was really a slick liar?

That was why people said that one should not judge a book by its cover. Pretty or ugly, both were equally undeserving of trust.

Now was not the time to think about such things, however. As the big man pounced toward her like a tiger, Amorous Mother immediately dropped to her knees and begged him in a sweet voice, “Mercy, brother! I surrender! I’ll do anything you want, so please!”

*You’re an ugly bastard, and even you know how to trick and lie. Naturally, a pretty woman like me can only do better!*

There was no such thing as a beautiful woman who didn’t know how to trick and seduce in this day and age, and Amorous Mother was certain that no man could resist her charm. When the opportunity was right, she would feed on his blood essence and kill him for everything he did.

She waited confidently for the big man to succumb to her beauty, and the next thing she knew, her head was twisted clean off her shoulders.

“Why?”

She couldn’t believe it. Why hadn’t the big man followed the script?

“Why do you look so shocked? You’re the one who said I can do whatever I want, so I did!” The big man laughed harshly while stomping Amorous Mother’s body into bits.

“You bastard...”

Amorous Mother’s eyes rolled to the back of her head, and her consciousness sank forever into darkness. Humanity was too dark and dangerous even for a corpse like her!

“Ahahahahaha!”

The big man clenched his fingers, and Amorous Mother’s head too exploded in a shower of blood and gore. Although his face was dirtied by a splash of blood, gore and brain matter, he continued to laugh like a madman.

“She actually thought she could trick me! Did she seriously think that I, Slaughterer, am stupid? Stupid woman!”

Chapter 638: Plague Goat

“Cough... cough cough cough...”

On a sand dune, weak Old Man was clutching his chest and coughing non-stop. Over time, the surrounding sand and even the dust slowly began turning into a sickly color. All living creatures within sixty meters of him began weakening and coughing violently as if they had caught a severe disease as well. But unlike Weak Old Man, their heart and lungs slowly gave out until they finally died, not understanding what had happened to them until the last moment.

This phenomenon was due to Weak Old Man’s Stranger bloodline, the Plague Goat. The Plague Goat was a Disaster-class Stranger with a goat’s head and a human’s body. It had two horns that were curled like crescents, and it spread sickness and calamity wherever it went. Everyone who caught its plague would feel weak in the limbs and cough violently. When their heart and lungs had weakened to a certain extent, they would begin coughing up blood. Eventually, they all died.

Back when Weak Old Man was still a child, a Plague Goat had appeared in his town and infected all one thousand or so civilians with its plague. They tried desperately to cure or stall its progression to no avail. By the time the men dispatched by the imperial court arrived, nearly everyone in the entire town had succumbed to the plague already.

Weak Old Man had lost both his parents and his relatives to the plague. He was the only one in his family to survive it.

Of course, he had caught the plague as well.

The soldiers were planning to burn everyone both alive or dead to prevent the plague from spreading. Naturally, Weak Old Man was unwilling to succumb to such a gruesome fate. He managed to avoid detection for a time by hiding underneath a pile of bodies, but the soldiers soon discovered him and gave chase.

While Weak Old Man was escaping, he accidentally entered a swamp that was chock-full of all kinds of diseases, deadly insects and more. Caught between a rock and a hard place, Weak Old Man



somehow subsumed the plague inside him and awakened the Plague Goat's bloodline. Since then, his ascension could not be stopped.

However, there was no such thing as an absolutely beneficial boon in this world. The Plague Goat's bloodline was powerful, but it was also too powerful. Unable to fully control his bloodline's power, he became infected by his own plague and was stuck with a weak body. It was how he got his title.

He didn't like his title as a matter of course, but what could he do? He really was weak.

But of course, he was just weak in body. His power was a completely different story.

He could unleash the Plague Goat's plague and infect anyone with an incredible disease with a single sneeze or breath.

Just now, he noticed a woman who seemed hostile toward him and did not hesitate to unleash his plague. Hence the unusual change in the environment around him.

Weak Old Man was never merciful toward enemies, and he did not believe that the woman could survive his plague.

He was wrong, however. Weak Old Man's eyes slowly widened when he saw the woman walking through his plague cloud without a scratch.

The woman's short height and innocent face gave her the appearance of a young girl, but she was filled in all the right places. She wore a long dress with colorful ribbons dancing all around her. It gave her an elegant and graceful appearance.

Right now, the woman was making an auspicious mudra while wearing a bright smile on her face. The ribbons dancing around her were creating waves of light that dispelled the plague in the air and the taint on the ground. She seemed untouchable like a goddess who had descended from the heavens.

"Cough cough... who are you, and why are you blocking my way?" Weak Old Man asked with a serious expression. Although he did not sense any killing intent from the woman, she definitely possessed the power to threaten his life.

"My name is Dancer. I am one of the Four Divinities serving under Lakshmi of the Gandharvas, one of the Eight Legions of Devas and Nagas."

Dancer introduced herself in a soft, gentle voice.

"The Eight Legions of Devas and Nagas? The Gandharvas?" Weak Old Man thought long and hard until a memory hit him, and he blanched immediately. "Do you mean the legendary Eight Legions of Devas and Nagas?"

"The one and truly," Dancer answered.

Weak Old Man gulped at the confirmation and responded in a meek tone, "Well met, Divinity. What do you want with little ol' me? I shall die a thousand deaths to fulfill your request."

He wasn't a coward, but the Eight Legions of Devas and Nagas were seriously bad news. So bad, that the mere mention of their name sent chills up his spine.

“Very good.”

Dancer nodded with a smile. Her smile was bright, beautiful, and auspicious, but her next words chilled Weak Old Man to the core,

“I would like to borrow your head.”

“That’s a funny joke, Divinity,” Weak Old Man replied with a smile that didn’t reach the eye.

“You misunderstand me. I never joke,” Dancer replied.

“If you must force my hand, then so be it.”

Weak Old Man’s eyes turned cold. It was clear that there was little chance he was going to wriggle his way out with words. In that case, he did not mind staking it all for a chance to survive.

It was true that he feared the Eight Legions of Devas and Nagas, and he was willing to do anything to appease them. However, that was only assuming that he would be alive after all was said and done.

He was a survivor who once hid beneath a pile of rotting, disease-ridden bodies to stay alive. It was clear that his desire to live was greater than most. However, just because he had an undying lust for life did not mean he feared death.

Having made up his mind, Weak Old Man’s head slowly transformed into a goat’s. A pair of curled horns covered in plague fire slowly grew out of his scalp.

When a Stranger’s bloodline was pushed to its limit, the host would transform into a Stranger. That was what was happening to Weak Old Man right now. Knowing that he could not afford to hold back, he had transformed into the Plague Goat without hesitation and unleashed all the power he possessed.

The Plague Goat was a Disaster-class Stranger and the equivalent of a human Grandmaster. Of course, Weak Old Man wasn’t a Grandmaster and so could not unleash the power of a Grandmaster even after fully awakening his bloodline. Even so, the attack was far, far stronger than what he could’ve brought forth as a human.

Naturally, the decision was incredibly risky. After all, he hadn’t fully mastered his bloodline yet. At full power, it was entirely possible he would lose control of his power, fall unconscious, and transform into a true Plague Goat in both heart and soul.

He had no choice though. Considering the circumstances, he couldn’t afford to hold back. It was do or die.

*Boom!*

After Weak Old Man had transformed into a Plague Goat, he let out a mighty roar that could bend steel and shatter rocks. The next moment, he slammed a bony scepter against the ground.

The yellow sand beneath his feet turned grayish black as his plague infected every grain. Then, it surged into the air and pounced toward Dancer like a diseased dragon.

The plague sand looked like it could crush heaven and earth into bits. In response, Dancer smiled and parted her lips a little. She exhaled, and her sweet breath transformed into a gust of wind that clashed against the plague sand directly.

The wind was soft, gentle, and full of wonder. Like the spring wind that melted the cold of winter, it too scattered the tidal wave of taint in front of her.

The plague sand that was like a dragon scattered into nothing, and everything was back to normal.

For a few seconds, Weak Old Man simply stood there with a dumb look on his face.

When the spring wind passed, his head suddenly fell off his neck like a ripe apple.

The spring wind came, and the human head fell.

.....

“Hah... hah... I should be safe now, right?”

A man was leaning against a rock and removing a waterskin from his waist. He took a few deep gulps before his pallid complexion finally regained a bit of rosiness.

His name was Fan Yiming, and he was a middle-stage Spirit Master. They called him the “Little Cyclone”. An expert in movement arts and sprinting, he was somewhat famous in Bei Mo.

This was the first time he participated in the Treasure Appreciation Auction, and he had gotten very, very lucky. Not only did he purchased a Spirit Master stage martial art called the “Seven Climax of The Waves”, he even managed to buy a century-old vermillion jujube and a Soulstealer-class Strange Artifact for cheap. It was a worthwhile trip overall.

#### Chapter 639: When Butterfly Kills

With these items, he was certain he could grow stronger and become a late-stage Spirit Master. A couple more years of hard work and training after that, and he could even become a Half-Step Grandmaster.

He did not dream any higher than that. For a wanderer with no patron, no background, no savings, and mediocre talent like him, Half-Step Grandmaster was his absolute limit. Short of stumbling upon the opportunity of a lifetime, his chances of entering the Grandmaster stage in his lifetime was almost nil.

That was why he did not dream bigger. Those who knew contentment were happy and at peace.

The “Seven Climax of the Waves” and the century-old vermillion jujube were enough to see him become a Half-Step Grandmaster. Once he returned to his home, he was going to seclude himself until he became a late-stage Spirit Master.

Of course, he was well aware that his plans would come to fruition only if he returned home alive. He hadn’t bought too many items, and they weren’t too valuable. Even so, what he had was enough to make a man seethe with greed. From what he heard, every time a Hill Carrier held a Treasure Appreciation Auction, countless bastards would lie in ambush just outside the Hill of Services. They would attack and rob anyone who left the place.

He was no exception. Not long after he left the Hill of Services, he immediately felt someone’s eyes on him. Luckily for him, his reputation and moniker weren’t undeserved. Without hesitation, he

executed his movement art and ran at least dozens of kilometers in one breath. Forget a human, not even a dog could track him down across such a long distance.

Of course, the escape cost him quite a bit of stamina as well, but it was worth it. After all, he was safe now, wasn't he?

“Huh? What's that?”

A short rest later, Fan Yiming rose to his feet and got ready to leave. It was at this moment he saw something flying out of his head from the shadows on the ground.

Alarmed, Fan Yiming jumped ten meters away from his original position and stared. It was only then he realized that the thing that flew out of his head was a beautiful butterfly.

The butterfly was about as big as a baby's palm and extremely colorful. A persistent halo shone where the sunlight had struck it, giving it an ephemeral, fantastical appearance.

“What a beautiful butterfly,” Fan Yiming couldn't help but praise. It was around this time he saw another two butterflies flying out of his head out of the corner of his eyes.

Fan Yiming might be slow, but even he realized that something was wrong at this point. He immediately took a swipe at the butterflies fluttering above his head.

That was the wrong move. As soon as he took the swipe, he felt his consciousness scattering like dandelions.

It wasn't dandelions that appeared in his vision, however. It was butterflies.

“Beautiful...”

That was Fan Yiming's last thought before his consciousness disappeared completely, and his body collapsed on the ground.

After Fan Yiming was dead, a butterfly descended and grabbed his Nature's Shell. Then, it took off into the sky and disappeared somewhere.

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“You... You're the Eight-armed Rakshasa?”

A woman was standing at the center of a battlefield full of blood and broken limbs. She was covered from head to toe in blood. Not far away, five men wielding various weapons were staring at her with pallid complexions and frightful expressions.

“You attacked me without even knowing who I am? You're a bold one, aren't you?”

The cute woman's lips curled into a devilish smile while she licked away the blood on her fingertips.

One man stuttered, “We... we were foolish, Rakshasa. Can you please forgive us?”

His weapon hand trembled as regret dyed his heart whole.

It was just a standard ambush, and they weren't even looking to kidnap someone. They just wanted to rob someone of their wealth. Unfortunately, the very first person they targeted turned out to be someone they couldn't afford to offend.

The Eight-armed Rakshasa, Lu Rumei was an infamous she-devil in Bei Mo. An expert in fast sabers, her saber art was as swift as the wind and as rapid as a thunderstorm almost as if she had eight arms. Hence the first half of her moniker.

As for why she was called a Rakshasa, that was because Lu Rumei loved killing people. Not only that, she enjoyed cutting them into many pieces. Brutal and bloodthirsty, it was why people called her the Eight-armed Rakshasa.

It was said that the Eight-armed Rakshasa never left behind an intact body, and now, they knew it to be true. The broken limbs, diced meat and crushed heads around her were the living example of her atrocities.

They were a group of thirty bandits, and they made a living by raiding villages or robbing wanderers on the road. The reason they appeared today was, of course, to rob the *jianghu* warriors participating in the Treasure Appreciation Auction.

This wasn't their first rodeo, and they knew their limits quite well. They were also aware that anyone who dared to participate in the Treasure Appreciation Auction was probably quite strong in their own right. If they were careless, then the raid could very well be the last raid of their lives.

But what could they do? Business was difficult these days. They had no choice but to risk it.

Of course, just because they were taking a risk didn't mean that they committing suicide. They made sure to evaluate a target's strength carefully before deciding if it was safe to attack them.

At first, everything had gone perfectly. Their earnings were so great that they literally couldn't stop themselves even if they wanted to.

Not long after that, they saw a petite, weak-looking woman who, as far as they could tell, was traveling alone. Thinking that they had hit another jackpot, they did not hesitate to attack her.

Of course, they weren't planning to kidnap her or rape her. They were bandits, not rapists or kidnappers. They just wanted her possessions.

Then, disaster struck. The woman had killed over half their numbers in a single exchange. Another second later, and only five of them were still standing.

Ironically, they survived because their movement art was lousier than their brothers. The woman had specifically targeted the fastest warriors probably because she didn't want to allow anyone to escape.

"You want my forgiveness? Sure. I'll forgive you if you can survive one hit from me!" Lu Rumei said with a bloody smile.

"Er... how about a different condition, Rakshasa?"

The five men exchanged despairing glances with each other. Survive a hit from the infamous Rakshasa? Did she think that they were masters of the bare-handed blade block or something? Considering what happened earlier, one hit was all she needed to slice their bodies into cubes of all shapes and sizes.

“Do you think you have the right to negotiate?”

Lu Rumei’s smile widened. It was such a beautiful smile that it laid bare the depths of her cruelty.

Not a single man was able to move their feet as Lu Rumei began stepping toward them. They were so scared that they couldn’t even muster the courage to escape.

“You... You...”

Suddenly, one of the bandits pointed a finger at Lu Rumei. His eyes were wide open, and his voice was full of shock.

“Rather than wasting your breath, you should save that energy and find a way to survive my blade,” Lu Rumei said while licking her lips.

“A... A butterfly just f-flew out of your head!”

It took the man a while, but he ultimately managed to stutter out the whole sentence.

“Excuse me?”

Lu Rumei was confused at first. She thought that the man was just trying to pull the good ol’ “Look behind you!” on her. But when she noticed that the rest of the bandits wore the same expression, she finally realized that it wasn’t a trick.

So, she held her saber in front of her and checked herself out using the reflection. It was then she saw something that chilled her to the core.

It was like her head was some sort of egg nest. Butterflies were crawling out of her head and flapping its wings.

Every time a butterfly flew away, she felt like she lost something critical to her. It was too late though.

She should be responding to the unknown threat, but instead she simply stared at the reflection with blank eyes. As more and more butterflies flew away from her head, her consciousness grew blurrier and blurrier until she stopped breathing completely.

“What... what the *hell* was that?”

The five bandits exchanged a glance with each other before someone asked the question.

“They’re... butterflies?”

“I’m not blind, you doofus. I want to know why butterflies are flying out of her head!”

“And what makes you think we have an answer to give you?”

“Are you guys stupid? Unless you idiots are planning to die here, we need to run! NOW!”

That snapped them out of their inane discussion and spurred them into a run. If they survived this, they would never work as bandits ever again.

After the five men were gone, a butterfly descended and picked up Lu Rumei's Nature's Shell. Then, it flew toward the horizon.

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Similar incidents were occurring everywhere at the same time.

A bunch of butterflies flew out of someone's head while they were on the road.

A bunch of butterflies flew out of someone's head while they were in the middle of fighting.

A bunch of butterflies flew out of someone's head while they were resting.

A bunch of butterflies flew out of someone's head while they were running, and more.

The butterflies were like dreams. When a dream ended, so did the dreamer.

Chapter 640: Square Circle Lock, Thoughtful

Dream Master was standing on a small hill and plucking a withered yellow flower from a dead branch. His movement was gentle, and his expression serious.

The next moment, the flower actually regained its vitality and lushness. It was even giving off a sweet floral scent.

Dream Master held the flower to his nose, closed his eyes lightly, and took a small sniff. He looked like he enjoyed the scent very much.

It was at this moment a colorful, phantasmal butterfly flew over from somewhere. It landed right on top of the flower.

"Is it done?"

Dream Master opened his eyes and caressed the butterfly gently. "Well done."

A dozen or so breaths later, more butterflies flew in from every direction. When they got close, they circled around Dream Master as if dancing.

From a distance, it looked as if Dream Master was surrounded by a whirlwind of flowers.

"Alright."

Dream Master held out his hand, and the butterflies dropped the Nature's Shells they were carrying into his palm. After he put them all away, he said smilingly, "Save the games for another time, okay? We have a guest."

As if they were sentient, the butterflies immediately gathered behind Dream Master until they formed a tidal wave of colors. At the same time, a man approached from a distance.

It didn't look like the man was moving quickly, but he arrived at the hill Dream Master was standing on in just the blink of an eye.

After arriving at the foot of the hill, the man stopped in his tracks and looked up.

He was Defeated.

The two men stared at each other for a moment. One man had eyes as gentle as a dream, and the other as tough and stubborn as a rock.

“You killed those people.”

It wasn't a question. It was a declaration of certainty.

“I did.”

Dream Master admitted without fanfare. “Are you here to take revenge for them?”

Defeated countered, “I do not know any of them. Why would I take revenge for them?”

“Are you carrying out the heavens' will<sup>[1]</sup> then?” Dream Master asked.

“What does the heavens' will have anything to do with me?” Defeated countered again.

“Then why are you here?” Dream Master asked.

“I am here for you,” Defeated answered.

“For me? I do not remember offending you in any way!” Dream Master asked. He knew how strong Defeated was. There was no way his Dream Butterflies could kill the man on their own, which was why he hadn't sent them after him. He had no wish of entering the attention of a powerful enemy he couldn't kill.

Unfortunately, Defeated came to him anyway.

“You have not!” Defeated shook his head.

“If you're not looking to enact righteous justice, nor are you here in search of vengeance, then why have you sought me out?” Dream Master asked puzzledly.

Defeated looked at Dream Master and declared with full seriousness, “I wish to challenge you do a duel!”

“A duel?” Dream Master was surprised to hear this, but in hindsight, it made perfect sense.

He had heard of Defeated's character. He knew that he was obsessed with martial arts and adored dueling against those stronger than him.

“I can tell that you're stronger than me. You're at least a top five elite in the Human Champions ranking, but I have never met you before. That is why I wish to challenge you to a duel.”

Defeated clasped his hands together in salute. “I look forward to your teachings!”

“Thank you for your praise,” said Dream Master with a smile, “but I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint you. I have business to attend to, you see.”

“I look forward to your teachings!” Defeated did not give an inch.

Dream Master remained calm and collected as he said again, “I'm truly sorry, but I really am quite busy today. I'll happily trade pointers with you on the next opportunity, but not now.”



There was a moment of silence. Then, Defeated saluted Dream Master again and said, “Apologies.”

Like an arrow, Defeated started running up the hill in a straight line. Despite the vertical climb, he kept moving faster and faster like he was running downhill. By the time he was halfway up the hill, the man could no longer be seen at all. All that was left was the howl of the wind.

A mad gale sweeps a ledge, a thought forms a fist.

Bang!

There was a soft bang, and the wind scattered to reveal Defeated and Dream Master. The latter had caught the former’s fist firmly in his palm and prevented it from moving an inch closer.

“The Thoughtful Fist of the Boundless Mountain? Not bad,” Dream Master remarked indifferently.

Defeated frowned and withdrew his right arm. Before the motion was complete, he thrust his left fist forward swifter than the wind and faster than thunder.

Bang bang bang bang...

The sounds of impact could be heard, but not the image. It was because Defeated had thrown over a hundred punches in a single breath. This was the power of the Thoughtful Fist.

Boundless Mountain was just a small, no-name sect, but the Thoughtful Fist was famous throughout the world. Most fist arts claimed their victories through strength, force or intent, but the Thoughtful Fist focused on one and only one aspect: speed. A fist faster than thought was what the Thoughtful Fist preached.

Back when Defeated was still an Astral Refiner, he had challenged the head of the Boundless Mountain, Boundless Ji to a duel. He could still remember how the man had utterly overwhelmed him from the start until the end. While it was partially because Ji Wuliang’s cultivation level was higher than his, it was also because the Thoughtful Fist was faster than his eyes could capture, or his body could react.

Realizing how powerful the Thoughtful Fist was, he memorized the martial art during the duel and later added his own martial insights and understanding into it. As a result, his version of the Thoughtful Fist was even faster and stronger than the original. Today, he dared to say that his Thoughtful Fist was better than Boundless Ji’s.

Because of this, he rarely encountered a peer who could block his Thoughtful Fist. But Dream Master did it with one hand only.

This stunned him as a matter of course, but his shock was mixed with a tinge of expectation and excitement.

After all, Dream Master just proved that he was an opponent who deserved his full strength.

As soon as the thought crossed his mind, Defeated abruptly took a step back, raised his right foot high into the air, and brought it down like he would cleave Dream Master in half.

Buzz!

Space shuddered, and a massive giant appeared in the sky. It held a giant axe that looked like it could a mountain range in half.

### *“Mountain Splitting Leg”*

If the “Thoughtful Fist” was a speed-based martial art, then the “Mountain Splitting Leg” was based on strength. It was a powerful martial art meant to dismantle all opposition via pure strength.

If speed wasn’t enough to defeat his opponent, then what about power?

BOOM!

There was a terrible boom, and the entire hill was split in half just like that. The man-made chasm was at least sixty meters deep, and the sides looked as smooth as a mirror.

Defeated did not look happy, however. In fact, his eyebrows were knitted together in a frown. It was because his attack had missed its target.

Not only that, he had completely lost track of Dream Master.

Defeated wasn’t worried though. He crossed his arms in front of his chest with one hand clenched into a fist, and the other stretched into a palm. He then drew a square with his fist, and a circle with his palm.

The fist and palm formed a boundary, and the boundary formed a world.

Everything within tens of meters of him plunged into chaos in the blink of an eye. The energies froze solid, and the space within the boundary was locked down completely.

### *“True Martial Mountain: Square Circle Lock”*

The “Square Circle Lock” was a martial art from the Heaven Sealing Peak of the True Martial Mountain. The fist represented the earth, and the palm the heavens. Since he was the one controlling the fist and the palm, it meant that everything was under this control, wasn’t it? Therefore, the “Square Circle Lock” was an offensive-type sealing martial art that locked down an area and prevented one’s opponent from running away.

Defeated had learned this when he challenged the descendant of the Heaven Sealing Peak to a duel. Astounded by his martial talent, his opponent had taught him the martial art after the duel.

Naturally, he could not lock down everything within several kilometers of himself like the descendant of the Heaven Sealing Peak could, but tens of meters was well within his limits.

The reason he locked down the space around him was to find Dream Master, of course.

“Found you.”

Defeated looked at a certain spot in the sky and opened his mouth, and a purple pellet shot toward his target.

Thunder roared, and sword intent filled the sky as the purple pellet shot into the sky. Sword beams sprayed in every direction like a rainstorm while the sword qi narrowed into threads, and the threads transformed into dragons and serpents.

When dragons and serpents rise, the heavens turned, and the earth flipped upside down.

The pellet was no ordinary object. It was a sword pellet.